

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinabek Nations, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

This territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

This territory is also covered by the Toronto Purchase, Treaty 13 of 1805, and the Williams Treaties of 1923. Today, our community is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We gather by these territorial lands and waters to worship, listen, learn, share, and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Advent Two *December 10, 2023*

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

In Advent, the Church is called to join again with the people of Israel, our ancestors in faith in waiting for Messiah.

We gather around the wreath, lighting a new candle each week as a sign of the growing light of God's promise among us and Messiah's come near.

A voice cries out:

**"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

On this second Sunday of Advent,
we light the first and second candles of the wreath.

The candles of HOPE and PEACE

Signs of God's promised Messiah proclaimed by John.

The first and second candles are lit.

HYMN ELW 257 O COME, O COME EMMANUEL VERSE 4

**O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave.**

***Refrain:* Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

We await your promise O God,
Of the One coming to bring light in our darkness
Who was foretold by Isaiah
And who was prophesied by John
Stir us up to receive Messiah among us
And prepare us to be your Advent people. **Amen.**

ELW 259 FLING WIDE THE DOOR

**Fling wide the door, unbar the gate; The King of glory comes in state;
The Lord of lords and King of kings, The Saviour of the world who brings
His great salvation to the earth. So raise a shout of holy mirth
And praise our God and Lord, Creator, Spirit Word.**

**He is the rock of our belief, The heart of mercy's gentle self.
His kingly crown is holiness; His scepter is his loveliness;
He brings our sorrows to an end. Now gladly praise our king and friend,
And worship him with song, For saving us from wrong.**

**Oh, happy towns and blessed lands That live by their true king's commands,
And blessed be the hearts he rules, The humble places where he dwells.
He is the rightful Son of bliss. Who fills our lives and makes us his,
Creator of the world, Our only strength for good.**

**Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ; Our hearts are open wide in trust.
Oh, show us now your lovely grace, Upon our sorrows shine your face,
And let your Holy Spirit guide Our journey in your grace so wide.
We praise your holy name, From age to age the same!**

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the communion of
the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

ISAIAH 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

2 PETER 3:8-15a

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

PEOPLE:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The musical notation is for a two-staff piece in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a whole rest, followed by a melodic line for the lyrics "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,". The second staff continues with "al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." and ends with a double bar line.

LEADER:

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

PEOPLE:

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The musical notation is identical to the first block, featuring a two-staff piece in G major and 3/4 time with the lyrics "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." and a double bar line at the end.

GOSPEL

The holy gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

MARK 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN ELW 266 ALL EARTH IS HOPEFUL

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!

Furrows lie open for God’s creative task:

**this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God’s truth and justice set ev’rybody free.**

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:

“A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel”;

she conceived him, “God with us,”

our brother, whose birth

restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;

new highways opened, new protocols declared.

Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!

All clear ev’ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!

**We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he his present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.**

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, light from light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

SINGING INTO PRAYER

ELW 247 COME NOW, O PRINCE OF PEACE verse 1

**Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body;
come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**

PRAYERS

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A Brief Silence

Send forth your faithful people with words of promise and forgiveness.

Teach your church to be bold in revealing your good news in word and in deed.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Reveal your majesty in mountain peaks, flowing rivers, and blossoming wilderness roads. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal. Bring wholeness to the earth and all its creatures. May your wisdom rest upon the UN Climate Change Conference, COP 28, as the nations gather seeking to foster ways to sustain creation. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Turn the hearts of the nations toward righteousness and peace. We hold in our hearts Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Iran, India, and Sudan. Increase cooperation for justice between countries, commonwealths, political parties, and diplomatic leaders. In times of prosperity, direct leaders to be generous for the sake of all.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten. Be a steadfast presence when all else feels uncertain.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Grant holy patience to all who are waiting this season. Give hope to those seeking employment. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Stay close to those who await healing or relief especially Ingrid, Bryan, Tom, and all we name in our hearts.....

Pause

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

Amen.

SINGING INTO PEACE

ELW 247 COME NOW, O PRINCE OF PEACE verse 2

**Come now, O God of love, make us one body;
come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**

PEACE AND OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

The offering will now be received and may God bless the gifts of your life.

MEAL

OFFERING PRAYER

Saviour of the nations, come. Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light.

Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

it is right to give our thanks and praise.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

For the power of love in human life and history,
we give thanks and praise.

Long ago our ancestors knew love's power
and they became the tellers of love's tale.

Love bound them in covenant,

teaching them to live in community

with compassion and concern for the poorest among them.

Yet centuries of domination and violence
shaped a different kind of community based on selfishness and inequality.
In the struggle against oppression,
Jesus became the face of love,
showing us the way to abundant life.
In word and deed, he announced love's new reign
of justice, reconciliation, and peace.
Filled with the courage and passion of love's spirit,
he gave his life to challenge the unjust systems of this world.
On the last night of his earthly life,
as he shared a meal with his friends,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it,
and gave it to his followers, saying:
"Share this bread among you; this is my body which will be broken for justice.
Do this to remember me."
When supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it to his disciples, saying:
"Share this wine among you; this is my blood which will be shed for liberation.
Do this to remember me."
God of love, spirit of compassion,
bless us and this bread and wine.
May this meal be food and drink for our journey—
renewing, sustaining, and making us whole.
When we eat this bread and drink from this cup
we experience again the presence of Jesus in our midst.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.

Thanks be to God.

HOLY COMMUNION AND BLESSING

*Please come forward to the communion rail, receive the communion wafer in your hand from the pastor
and the wine in an individual glass from the assisting minister.*

Place your communion cup in the basket provided.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BENEDICTION

May Christ, the sun of righteousness shine upon you
and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

HYMN ELW 248 PEOPLE LOOK EAST

**People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the guest, is on the way.**

**Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the rose, is on the way.**

**Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the star, is on the way.**

**Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming
With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord, is on the way.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE