

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 Four *December 24, 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.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;

for he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name

The promise God made to our mothers and fathers,

to Sarah and Abraham and their children forever.

On this fourth Sunday of Advent,

we light the first, second, third and fourth candles of the wreath.

The candles of HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE

All four candles are lit.

HYMN ELW 257 O COME, O COME EMMANUEL VERSE 6

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.**

***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 the Angel
Who was welcomed by a servant of the Lord
Stir us up to receive Messiah among us
And prepare us to be your Advent people.
Amen.

ELW 436 WAKE, AWAKE, FOR NIGHT IS FLYING

**Wake, awake, for night is flying,
the watchmen on the heights are crying;
awake, Jerusalem, at last.**

**Midnight hears the welcome voices,
and at the thrilling cry rejoices:
"Come forth, you maidens! Night is past.
The Bridegroom comes! Awake;
your lamps with gladness take!"
Alleluia!**

**Rise and prepare the feast to share;
Go meet the bridegroom who draws near.**

**Zion hears the watchmen singing,
and all her heart with joy is springing.
She wakes, she rises from her gloom,
her dear friend comes down all-glorious,
and strong in grace, in truth victorious.
Her star is ris'n; her light is come.
O, come, you Blessed One,
Lord Jesus, God's own Son.
Sing hosanna!
Oh, hear the call! Come one, come all,
and follow to the banquet hall.**

**Gloria! Let heav'n adore you!
Let saints and angels sing before you.
With harp and cymbals clearest tone.
Gates of pearl, twelve portals gleaming,
lead us to bliss beyond all dreaming,
With angel choirs around your throne.
No eye has caught the light,
no ear the thundering might
of such glory.
There we will go: what joy we'll know!
There sweet delight will ever flow.**

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 defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

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

ROMANS 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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.

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.

GOSPEL

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

LUKE 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN 265 THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail" to thee O lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favoured lady," Gloria!**

**"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honour thee,
Thy Son shall be Emanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favoured lady," Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favoured lady. Gloria!**

**Of her, Emanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favoured lady," Gloria!**

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 272 LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING VERSE 1

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming

From tender stem hath sprung!

Of Jesse's lineage coming, as seers of old have sung.

It came, a flow'r so bright,

amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

PRAYERS

Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people.

A Brief Silence

Your eternal reign has come into the world. Give us ears to hear your call to serve your kingdom, and send us out to those who are hurting and in need of good news.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You created the mystery and beauty of the earth. Replenish rivers, lakes, seas, and all bodies of water, so that plants, animals, and all humanity can have life and be refreshed. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You bring down the powerful and raise up the lowly. Where war rages, shatter hatred with forgiveness and peace. We hold in our hearts Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Iran, India, and Sudan. Where fear rules, make your all-powerful presence known.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant your holy presence in these days of Christmas. Protect all who travel, that their way may be safe. Bless families as they gather in celebration and give to all peace and love.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, comfort your children with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, especially Ingrid and the Takahashi family. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Be a steadfast presence for all who know depression or anxiety, feel lonely or forgotten. Stay close to those in our hearts for whom we pray.....

Pause

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SINGING INTO PEACE

ELW 272 LO, HOW A ROSE E'ER BLOOMING VERSE 3

**This Flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendour the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us, and lightens every load.**

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 292 LOVE HAS COME

Love has come, a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it.
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Saviour!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

Love is born! Come share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of His mother.
What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers;
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

Love has come, and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE