

PREFACE

L: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and ever living God. But chiefly we are bound to praise you for the glorious resurrection of our Lord; for he is the true Passover Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin, who by his death has destroyed death; And by his rising has brought us to eternal life. And so with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Le Lo Le Lo Lay Lo” (see insert)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

L: Holy, living and loving God, we praise you for creating the heavens and the earth. We give you thanks for Jesus who, living among us, healed the sick, fed the hungry, and with a love stronger than death, gave his life for others. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Remembering, therefore, his life-giving death and glorious resurrection, we await your promised life for all this dying world. Breathe your Spirit on us and on this bread and cup: Carry us in your arms from death to life, that we may live as your chosen ones, clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

A: Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, both now and forever. Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

L: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us,
A: 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; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

L: Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

Communion Music Video
“Noel” by Lauren Daigle

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.
A: Amen.

SENT FOR WORK AND WITNESS

BLESSING

L: The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon you now and forever.

A: Amen.

SENDING HYMN- “Emmanuel” Sing twice (words on screen)

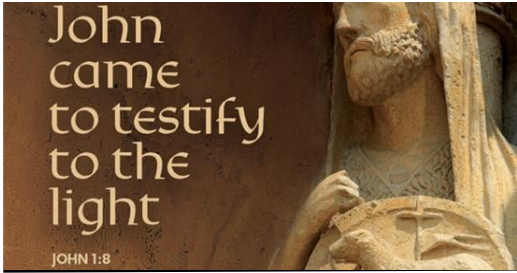
DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Keep awake!

A: Thanks be to God!

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Presiding Minister: SAM Marcia Buchs
Worship Steward: Mark Mackinson
SS Teacher: Mary Leach
Greeters: Marty & Shelly Heller
Musician: Julie Mehlberg
Lector: John Mehlberg
Ushers: Karen Hoegger & Judy Sykes
Communion Prep: Karen Hoegger
Comm. Asst: Nathan Joerndt & Marvin Miller
Counters: Dennis Leach & Mark Mackinson
Hospitality: Darlene Miller & Pat Lund
Livestream: Louis Kehinde



St. Paul Lutheran Church
December 17, 2023
Third Sunday of Advent

Introduction: “Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to the Dixon family for donating the Altar flowers in memory of Levi

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace.

A: Amen

GATHERING HYMNS

“While We Waiting, Come” - words on screen

“Infant Holy, Infant, Lowly” - ELW 276

Confession and Forgiveness

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen.

L: God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Everlasting God,
A: you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation’s bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world.
Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God’s covenant is eternal, and God’s blessing rests upon us all.
Amen.

GREETING
L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
A: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY
Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
A: Amen.

Children’s Message—Dismissal to Children’s Chapel

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD
First Reading- Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
L: A reading from Isaiah
1The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; 3to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. 4They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. 8For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. 9Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. 10I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.
L: Word of God, Word of Life
A: Thanks be to God.

Psalms 126
A reading from Psalm 126
L:1When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.
2Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”
3The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.
4Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb.
5Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

6Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.
L: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word
A: Thanks be to God

Second Reading – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
L: A reading from 1 Thessalonians
16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not despise the words of prophets, 21but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22abstain from every form of evil. 23May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.
L: Word of God, Word of Life.
A: Thanks be to God.

Please rise, as you are able, for the reading of the Holy Gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (music available ELW 171)
“Hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah.
“Hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le-lu-jah, hal-le, hal-le-lu-jah.

Gospel - John 1:6-8, 19-28
L: The Holy Gospel according to John
A: Glory to you, O Lord.
[6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 19This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” 20He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” 21And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” 22Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 23He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. 24Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” 26John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” 28This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.
L: The Gospel of the Lord.
A: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon SAM Marcia Buchs

HYMN OF THE DAY “Hark the Glad Sound” (ELW 239)

Nicene Creed
L: Let us confess our faith in the words of the Nicene Creed.
A: 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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
Each petition will end “Merciful God”
and the congregation will respond “**Receive our Prayer**”

SHARING OF THE PEACE
L: The peace of Christ be with you always.
A: And also with you.
You are invited to share a sign of God’s peace with your neighbors by turning to the people near you saying, “Peace be with you.”

OFFERING
Offerings can also be sent by mail or given online. You can send a check to St. Paul Lutheran Church 210 Deerfield Rd Pontiac, IL 61764 or give online at stpaulpontiac.org

Offering Prayer
L: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.
A: Amen.

MEAL
All are welcome at Christ’s table. Communion is distributed in front of the altar by intinction. Please dip the wafer into the lighter colored liquid which is grape juice or the darker liquid which is wine. If you prefer not to receive communion you may come forward with your hands crossed over your chest to receive a blessing or you may remain in your seat.

GREAT THANKSGIVING
L: The Lord be with you.
A: And also with you.
L: Lift up your hearts.
A: We lift them to the Lord.
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.