

## 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:

“Holy, Holy”

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

L: Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

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, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

**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: God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

**Communion Music Video**  
“Hope is Alive” by Ellie Holcomb

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L: Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

**A: Amen.**

## SENT FOR WORK AND WITNESS

### BLESSING

L: God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, + bless and keep you now and forever.

**A: Amen.**

### SENDING HYMN-

“Lord, Be Glorified” (ELW 744) (Words on Screen)

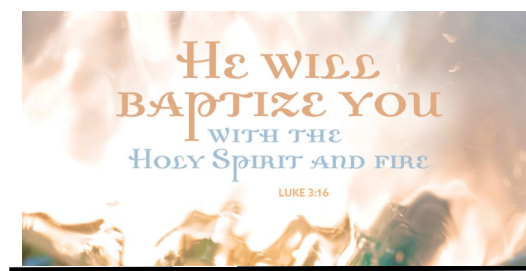
### DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

**A: Thanks be to God!**

Licensing information for this Worship Service:  
CCLI Copyright License A 2440181 5/31/23 + Streaming Plus License A 211196712 5/31/24Sundays and Seasons License Sundays and Seasons v.20200325.1254

**Presiding Minister:** Pastor Christine McNeal  
**Worship Steward:** Marty Heller  
**Greeter/s:** Marty & Shelly Heller  
**Usher:** Judy Sykes & Karen Hoegger  
**Lector:** Carissa Webster  
**Comm. Prep:** Mark Mackinson  
**Communion Asst.:** Kris Lambert & Judy Sykes  
**Musician:** Julie Mehlberg  
**SS Teacher:** Blayne Dixon  
**Hospitality:** Jack Bristow & Carissa Webster  
**Counters:** Carrie Leuker & Marv Miller  
**Livestream:** Louis Kehinde



**St. Paul Lutheran Church**  
**December 15, 2024**  
**3rd Sunday of Advent**

**Introduction:** Christ’s presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one “more powerful” than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

**A: Amen**

### GATHERING HYMNS

“While We are Waiting, Come” - (words on screen)

“In a Far Off Place” (ACS 908) (Words on Screen)

### Confession and Forgiveness

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

**Amen.**

L: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

L: God of Mercy,

**A: we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

L: God of might,

**A: we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

**Amen.**

L: God in our midst,

**A: we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

L: A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through + Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

**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 preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; 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- Zephaniah 3:14-20

L: A reading from Zephaniah

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. <sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. <sup>17</sup> The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing <sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. <sup>19</sup> I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. <sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

L: Word of God, Word of Life

**A: Thanks be to God.**

### Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6

A reading from Psalm

<sup>2</sup> Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

<sup>3</sup> **With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.**

<sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God’s name; make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> **Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.**

<sup>6</sup> Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

L: Holy Wisdom, Holy Word

**A: Thanks be to God**

### Second Reading – Philippians 4:4-7

L: A reading from Philippians

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. .

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

“Alleluia, Lord” (words on screen)

### Gospel - Luke 3:7-18

L: The Holy Gospel according to Luke

**A: Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” <sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” <sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” <sup>13</sup> He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.” <sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup> So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

L: The Gospel of the Lord.

**A: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON:**

**Pastor Christine McNeal**

**Hymn of the Day**

**“We are Waiting for Jesus” (ACS 905)**

## 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 “Lord in your mercy”

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](http://stpaulpontiac.org)*

## Offering Prayer

L: Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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.**