

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## 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

“Because of Bethlehem” by Matthew West

## 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-

“Lift Up Your Heads” (W&P 88) (Words on Screen)

### DISMISSAL

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

**A: Thanks be to God!**

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**Presiding Minister:** Pastor Christine McNeal

**Worship Steward:** John Mehlberg

**Greeter/s:** Mark Mackinson

**Usher:** Dawn Boitnott & Pat Lund

**Lector:** Julie Mehlberg

**Comm. Prep:** Pat Lund

**Communion Asst.:** Nathan Joerndt & Marvin Miller

**Musician:** Sandy Erickson

**SS Teacher:** Betsy Westergreen

**Hospitality:** Teresa Masching & Sadie Leach

**Counters:** Mark Mackinson & Jake Dixon

**Livestream:** Louis Kehinde



St. Paul Lutheran Church

December 8, 2024

2nd Sunday of Advent

**Introduction:** Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer’s voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi’s prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the “salvation of God.”

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Praise to you, O God, who gives us courage to start again. You fasten righteousness around your waist and baptize with the Holy Spirit’s fire. Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames, and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare. We ask that peace abound, until none hurt or destroy over all the earth.

**A: Amen**

### GATHERING HYMNS

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

“Wake, Awake” - (ELW 436) (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 our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; 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- Malachi 3:1-4**

**L:** A reading from Malachi

1 See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; 3 he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. 4 Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

**L:** Word of God, Word of Life

**A: Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm: Luke 1:68-79**

A reading from Psalm

<sup>68</sup> Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free.

<sup>69</sup> **You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of your servant David.**

<sup>70</sup> Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,

<sup>71</sup> **from the hands of all who hate us,**

<sup>72</sup> to show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant.

<sup>73</sup> **This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:**

<sup>74</sup> to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship you without fear,

<sup>75</sup> **holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.**

<sup>76</sup> And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

<sup>77</sup> **to give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.**

<sup>78</sup> In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

<sup>79</sup> **to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

**L:** Holy Wisdom, Holy Word

**A: Thanks be to God**

**Second Reading – Philippians 1:3-11**

**L:** A reading from Philippians

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup> constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup> because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup> I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup> to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup> having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**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 3:1-6**

**L:** The Holy Gospel according to Luke

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

<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup> as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. <sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; <sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

**L:** The Gospel of the Lord.

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

**SERMON:**

**Pastor Christine McNeal**

**Hymn of the Day**

**“There's a Voice in the Wilderness” (ELW 255)**

**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.**