

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 12, 2021

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA



PRELUDE

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Calling
Setting: Malcom Archer

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #345

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Calling

- 1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
"Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness,
All you children of the day!"
- 2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.
- 3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all, to be forgiv'n;
- 4 So, when next He comes in glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.

CONFESSIO AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid:
**cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You,
and worthily magnify Your Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our sin, be our advocate in heaven, and bring us to eternal life. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

(Silence for reflection)

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

we confess that we have sinned against You and against our neighbor in thought, word and deed; through negligence, through weakness, and through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us on the cross, forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may serve You in newness of life, to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

KYRIE (Kyrie eleison means "Lord have mercy")

(LSB #943)

Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

For peace in our hearts as we gather for worship, and for the peace of the whole world and the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

For the proclamation of the Gospel in this and every place and for the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

For grace to await our Lord's coming again in glory, and for the joyful anticipation of his coming into our hearts today, let us pray to the Lord:

Kyrie, Kyrie eleison. Kyrie, Kyrie eleison.

HYMN OF PRAISE (omitted during this penitential season)

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ,

we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion;
shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall never again fear evil.
On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
"Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.
The LORD your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.
Behold, at that time I will deal
with all your oppressors.
And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.
At that time I will bring you in,
at the time when I gather you together;
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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHORAL ANTHEM Jubilation Choir

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1 Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born Thy people to deliver;
Born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

SECOND LESSON

Philippians 4:1-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

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

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 7th chapter

Glory to You, O Lord.

The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you."

I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

On this third Sunday in Advent the anticipation of Christmas continues to build. But now the great celebration is well in sight. The Advent wreath gives us a lovely pink candle to light on this day, reflecting the joy expressed in our first two readings. And we at St. Paul's have put up our Christmas tree – beautifully decorated to reflect this festive time.

Regarding our tree's decorations, I will remind you that the ones we use have a particular name. They are called Chrismons. Chrismons are renderings of the many different names for Jesus. The word comes from joining together the abbreviation of two words: "Chris" which is short for "Christ" and "mon" which is short for monograph – a monograph being a stylistic rendering of someone's name.

Chrismons are often abbreviations of Christ's name or title in the Greek language. Or images reflecting names derived from references to him in the Bible, such as "The Sun of Righteousness." Chrismons are not an ancient tradition; they've only been a part of the church since the 1800's. But they are a growing tradition and one that enables people to explore the many ways Jesus our Savior has been described and honored by the Church over the centuries.

Jesus Christ is certainly worthy of our honor. Yet sometimes people question this – even those who at one time were thoroughly convinced.

In our Gospel reading today, John the Baptist—the forerunner of Christ, the voice of one crying in the wilderness "prepare the way of the Lord" – that John, now sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus: "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

How could John ask this? Didn't he just baptize Jesus, perhaps a year or so earlier? At that time, didn't the Spirit come down upon Jesus and a voice speak from heaven, proclaiming him God's beloved Son? Didn't John honor

Jesus with one of those great names by which we remember him, calling him “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?” How could John now question whether Jesus was, indeed, the One God had sent in fulfillment of his promise?

Readers of this text have long struggled with John’s question. Some have suggested that John himself was not questioning Jesus but that his disciples were. In this view, John sent his disciples to Jesus so that they could ask their question to Jesus directly. However, there is nothing in the text itself to indicate this. Instead, Jesus explicitly tells John’s disciples to “go tell him” what they had seen and heard. Jesus is clearly concerned here about John, not John’s disciples.

To me it seems very clear that this text records a wavering of John’s faith. A time of doubt. John may have been strong in faith at one point, but now he was wondering. And questioning.

On the one hand this is troubling to us. For we would prefer those so close to Jesus to have a great and unwavering faith. On the other hand, knowing that someone so close to Jesus once struggled is also a powerful witness to us, showing that struggles can happen to anyone. And that includes us.

Struggles of faith, whether of John or others, are not hidden by the Biblical writers as if they are a great disgrace. Jesus reacts to these struggles with love and grace. He does not chastise John for doubting. And when he calls out his disciples for doubting—saying things like “oh you of little faith” or “stop doubting and believe”—he does so in ways that encourages them, not in ways that condemn them.

Having said this, a strong faith is still better than a weak faith. For doubts can lead to trouble.

To help us avoid the trouble, let’s do some more thinking about John and try to understand what may have caused his doubts.

One of the things John preached was that after the Messiah appeared, John himself would need to diminish in importance. “He must increase, but I must decrease,” he had once said (John 3:31). Messages like this are easier to say than to accept. No one likes to experience loss, even if they know it’s supposed to happen. When John made his statement about decreasing, he added quite a bit more explanation on this – almost as if he needed to convince himself.

We have the same kinds of feelings. We are happy when the next generation grows up and assumes responsibility for the things we once did, for we know that’s the way it’s supposed to go. But we also feel sad when our turn is over. And this gets us thinking about why. Why must we diminish? Is this really the plan of a loving God? Is this something I want to submit to?

John may just have been looking for an extra bit of peace about how things were going. He may have just needed a little more assurance. Jesus was happy to provide it – at least to the extent he could. Ultimately, John would have to believe it in faith. The same is true for us.

Perhaps even more challenging to John was the fact that at the time of his doubting, John was locked up in prison. He was there, you may recall, because he had faithfully carried out his task as prophet of God and condemned a very public sin of King Herod. Herod, in turn, responded by throwing the prophet into prison—playing out a scene which had happened frequently in Israel’s past.

John had the satisfaction of knowing he was in the right. But that didn’t make the consequences of his action any easier to face. One can only sleep so well in prison. The isolation, the fear, the injustice—these all certainly wore on John. And they may have worn down his faith as well.

That’s often what happens to us. I’ve walked with many faithful people over the years who have experienced troubling doubts when physical or emotional pain arises. In fact, I would say just about every time of pain is also a time when people do some questioning. And this is especially the case when a person hasn’t experienced much pain in their life before.

That same pain, however, can also cause people to lean even more heavily on the Lord. And ultimately strengthen faith. This takes time, for the change from doubt to faith is a process. But it can happen. And it often does.

As stated before, God understands our times of questioning. In them he encourages us, speaks to us and lovingly endures our doubts, calmly answering us as Jesus did with John. He is patient with us and helps us through the process.

We'll do some more thinking about that response of Jesus to John in a minute. But first, there's one more possibility for John's doubts that we should consider.

John's message, you may recall, was primarily a message of preparation. As such, he ended up preaching a lot of law. He told the people the right way to live. And he urged them to turn from their sins. "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance," he said, while also warning: "even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees."

With all of this emphasis on repentance and judgment, could it be that John was a little too anxious for this repentance and judgment to happen? Could it be that he expected to see quicker results?

Perhaps John, as he sat there in prison, thought about his world and despaired that people were still so immoral and that their repentance seemed so insincere. Perhaps he was hoping that the one sent by God would do his judging quickly, swiftly and thoroughly in his own day. And maybe even that he, John, would be able to see the sinners of his day pay for their sins.

We can't say for sure that John thought this way. But we know that we sometimes do. We get tired of the godlessness around us. We get frustrated that sinners keep hurting us and others with their sin. And then we wonder if God is really ever going to do something about it. We get impatient. We get angry. And sometimes we doubt.

Maybe John's question was one of impatience. Or maybe it was one of misunderstanding the "coming one's" real task. Everyone else in Jesus' circle had times of misunderstanding what Jesus was doing. Why not John?

As Jesus did to his disciples, many times, so he also did to John. He answered him. He told John's disciples: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard."

And what had they seen and heard? Jesus reminds them. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them."

As we examine this list of evidence that Jesus points out, we immediately note how much of it involves miracles of healing. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, etc. These things were happening quite literally everywhere Jesus went. The scriptures record multiple examples for us. John would certainly have heard of these. But maybe he hadn't seen.

You and I have seen. We've seen many, many examples of help and healing in our day. But maybe we've given all the credit to our doctors or to nature or to simple good fortune instead of the power and will of God.

Why do we doubt that God is behind all healing? Maybe it is because there are times when God doesn't heal the way we want him to. Or maybe it's because we don't like his plans.

Or maybe it is because our view of healing is too narrow. Maybe we only think about the body and don't appreciate the healing which comes to our souls. Maybe we overlook the small steps of healing which come through things like kind words, messages of hope and acts of forgiveness.

When John questioned Jesus, Jesus put forth the evidence of his healing as reason to believe in him as God's chosen. That same evidence needs to be pointed out today. Where Christ Jesus is present healing is taking place.

Jesus' list of evidence to John included many kinds of healing. The last miracle listed stands out. When Jesus notes that "the dead are raised" it may sound like just one more item on a list. But we know that's not the case.

The raising of the dead is the ultimate miracle – one that cannot be explained by skilled doctors, natural causes or good fortune. The raising of the dead is the defeat of our greatest enemy. The raising of the dead is given only by God.

Jesus raised the dead during his ministry, and then was raised himself from the dead to show that death is not the end of God’s plan for His people. All people will be raised from the dead someday. Those who have received and acknowledged God’s forgiveness of their sins through Christ Jesus will live forever in the new life to come. Those who do not receive God’s forgiveness in Christ face God’s judgment of sin on their own.

In the list of evidence he presents to John, Jesus mentions one more item—an item which doesn’t seem to fit with the rest because we don’t think of it as a healing or as a miraculous event. But its inclusion here means that it’s very important, nonetheless. Jesus tells John that “the poor have good news preached to them.”

This preaching is listed at the end because it is the natural extension of Jesus’ miraculous works, and because it leads to the healings people need the most.

True Christian preaching is good news because it heals the poor in spirit—those who realize their need before God. It includes the Law of God – telling us how to live and reminding us of how we come up short. But it is dominated by the Gospel—the good news that in Christ Jesus we find the forgiveness of our sins.

In last Sunday’s Gospel reading we heard that John was preaching this good news – “evangelizing,” as it can also be called. Preaching the good news is our task too.

Jesus concludes his message to John with these words: “Blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” Jesus, here, is calling John to believe. But his statement seems bigger than this, too. Taken at face value, it suggests that God blesses any who merely refrain from finding offense with Jesus. We can’t say for sure what these blessings might be. But perhaps this speaks to a door which remains open to them. Or God’s continued patience. Or further invitations. God, of course, wishes his Son to be more than just inoffensive to people. But it is a start.

As Christmas approaches, many people will wrestle anew with the message of Jesus Christ. Through this holy time they will see a little more clearly the blessing of lifting up voices of celebration and observe with a little more clarity how the message shines light in the darkness of the world. Many, too, will be moved by God coming to us in such a gentle and beautiful way through the birth of a child.

Some of these will be moved to faith. Others, sadly, will find some kind of offense. People are easily offended, as we know.

We who believe must be careful not to impose our celebration on anyone. At the same time, we can’t help but give voice to our joy. And our joy moves us to share its source with others.

Let us, therefore, resolve to show our joy in gracious and loving ways, with an eye toward works of healing and an appreciation of the miracle of God’s word doing its work. We know the good news! And we know that the good news overcomes the darkness of doubt.

May it be so. In the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

1 When all the world was cursed
By Moses' condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came
With words of consolation.
With true forerunner's zeal
The greater One he named,
And Him, as yet unknown,
As Savior he proclaimed.

2 Before he yet was born,
He leaped in joyful meeting,
Confessing Him as Lord
Whose mother he was greeting.
By Jordan's rolling stream,
A new Elijah bold,
He testified of Him
Of whom the prophets told:

3 Behold the Lamb of God
That bears the world's transgression,
Whose sacrifice removes
The devil's dread oppression.
Behold the Lamb of God,
Who takes away our sin,
Who for our peace and joy
Will full atonement win.

4 O grant, dear Lord of love,
That we receive, rejoicing,
The word proclaimed by John,
Our true repentance voicing,
That gladly we may walk
Upon our Savior's way
Until we live with Him
In His eternal day.

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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. 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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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 THE CHURCH (Stand)

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, You rescue the daughter of Zion from her enemies and take away the judgments against her. Look with compassion upon Your people, especially in their times of questioning and doubt. Give them wisdom to understand your word, provide for them when they suffer, give courage when they are afraid, and strengthen them in the midst of trials until You deliver them. Preserve them always in the joyful hope that You will restore all that is lost with that which cannot be taken away. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, as You once sent messengers before the face of Jesus to prepare His way, so strengthen and encourage all pastors and church workers as they make known His saving name. Open the ears of all who hear to rejoice, repent and firmly believe. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Giver of all good gifts, look upon the households of Your people. Provide companionship for those who are alone, strengthen the bonds of marriage and equip parents to raise their children in love and faith. Grant that our homes may be places of joy, reasonableness, peace and prayer. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, You set the prisoners free. Remember those who are incarcerated and grant that they might repent, be freed from the clutches of sin, accept the consequences of their wrongdoing, and learn to live honestly and peacefully. Remember also those who are imprisoned unjustly. Restore their freedom according to Your will and preserve them in Your grace and the confidence that You know what is true and just. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, Your Son became flesh and healed the sick of diseases and afflictions, demonstrating His power and giving us a foretaste of the resurrection on the Last Day. Have mercy upon all those in need of deliverance today especially Eric, Geraine, Ann G, Arlo, Sophia, Dolly, Melissa, Gloria, Norma, Trudy, Mary Ann, June, Peter, Wendy, Halle, Arthur, Ron, Jim, Nadine, Linda, Tawni, Reaghann, and all we name before you. Heal them in Your time and according to Your will; preserving them in the confidence that You will deliver Your people from all afflictions at the resurrection of all flesh. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, the Son of Man came eating and drinking with sinners, that He might proclaim the kingdom and bring them to it by the forgiveness of sins. As He hosts His Supper this day for His repentant people, grant those who partake of His body and blood to be worthy and well-prepared, firmly believing the words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**



THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION

p. 160

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 Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy God, mighty Lord, gracious Father:
Endless is Your mercy and eternal your reign.
You have filled all creation with light and life;
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Through Abraham you promised to bless all nations.
You rescued Israel, your chosen people.
Through the prophets you renewed your promise;
And, at this the end of all ages, you sent your Son,
Who in words and deeds proclaimed your kingdom
and was obedient to your will, even to giving his life.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Therefore, gracious Father; with this bread and cup
We remember the life our Lord offered for us.
And believing the witness of his resurrection,
We await his coming in power to share with us
The great and promised feast.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and place,
And unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest
Until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Amen.

THE 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; 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.

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)

The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all

communicants. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.

COMMUNION MUSIC

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

Setting: J. S. Bach

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN #354

Arise, O Christian People

- 1 **Arise, O Christian people!**
Prepare yourselves today;
Prepare to greet the Savior,
Who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone
The truth and light were given;
The promised Lord from heaven
To all the world is shown.
- 2 **Prepare the way before Him;**
Prepare for Him the best.
Cast out what would offend Him,
This great, this heav'nly guest.
Make straight, make plain the way:
The lowly valleys raising,
The heights of pride abasing,
His path all even lay.

- 3 **The humble heart and lowly**
God raises up on high;
Beneath His feet in terror
The haughty soul shall lie.
The heart sincere and right,
That heeds God's invitation
And makes true preparation—
It is the Lord's delight.
- 4 **Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus;**
Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive You
This blessed Adventtide.
From stall and manger low
Come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing Your praises gladly
And forth Your glory show.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)

DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE

Arise, O Christian People

Setting: Anne Krentz Organ

ALTAR FLOWERS: "In celebration of my mother's birthday and in honor of Lucia, saint and martyr. Gaudete!" By Jennifer Zambone

Those serving:

Sunday, December 12, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Michael Chamberlain
Comm. assist: Jim Easterly
Reader: Rich Kauzlarich

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Marian Robinson
Comm. assist: Dan Buuck
Reader: Dan Buuck

Worship Notes

Thank you for worshiping with us at St. Paul's! In worship Christ is present among His gathered people and the Holy Spirit is poured out through Word and Sacrament.

If you have a need or concern that you would like us to lift up in prayer, you may fill out a yellow **Prayer Request Card** and give it to the greeter or pastor. **Restrooms** can be found both downstairs and near the parking lot entrance. Parents can take their children to the **Cry Room** as needed, but we love to have them with us in worship. Before you leave, we ask that you fill out a **Fellowship Card** and place it in the offering box at the sanctuary entrance.

In **the Lord's Supper**, Jesus gives us his true body and blood. This meal forgives our sins and strengthens our faith. The Supper is for baptized Christians who have been taught the faith, examined themselves and share with us in confession. If you are not communing, you may still come forward for a blessing (bow your head or cross your arms). If you're not sure whether you should commune, please speak first to one of our pastors.

We pray that God's love and care be evident to you in our gathering, and that He gladden your heart and give peace to you this day!

Acknowledgements

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