

FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN, MARTYR  
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS  
DECEMBER 26, 2021

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



PRELUDE

*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*  
Setting: Donald Rotermund

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #374

*Gentle Mary Laid Her Child*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Gentle Mary laid her child<br/>Lowly in a manger;<br/>There He lay, the Undefined,<br/>To the world a stranger.<br/>Such a babe in such a place,<br/>Can He be the Savior?<br/>Ask the saved of all the race<br/>Who have found His favor.</p> | <p>2 Angels sang about His birth,<br/>Wise Men sought and found Him;<br/>Heaven's star shone brightly forth<br/>Glory all around Him.<br/>Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,<br/>Heard the angels singing;<br/>All the plains were lit that night,<br/>All the hills were ringing.</p> |
| <p>3 Gentle Mary laid her child<br/>Lowly in a manger;<br/>He is still the Undefined<br/>But no more a stranger.<br/>Son of God of humble birth,<br/>Beautiful the story;<br/>Praise His name in all the earth;<br/>Hail the King of glory!</p>     |   |

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

p. 203

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

Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
**who made heaven and earth.**

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?  
**But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

*(Silence for reflection)*

**Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life.  
Amen.**

Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

*KYRIE*

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation; and for the peace of the whole world and the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise; and for the well-being of the whole church of God in Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

**1 To God on high be glory  
And peace to all the earth;  
Goodwill from God in heaven  
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!  
We praise and bless You, Father;  
Your holy name, we sing—  
Our thanks for Your great glory,  
Lord God, our heav'nly King.**

**2 To You, O sole-begotten,  
The Father's Son, we pray;  
O Lamb of God, our Savior,  
You take our sins away.  
Have mercy on us, Jesus;  
Receive our heartfelt cry,  
Where You in pow'r are seated  
At God's right hand on high—**

**3 For You alone are holy;  
You only are the Lord.  
Forever and forever,  
Be worshiped and adored;  
You with the Holy Spirit  
Alone are Lord Most High,  
In God the Father's glory.  
"Amen!" our glad reply.**

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY*

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Heavenly Father,  
**in the midst of our sufferings for the sake of Christ grant us grace to follow the  
example of the first martyr, Stephen, that we also may look to the One who suffered  
and was crucified on our behalf and pray for those who do us wrong; through Jesus  
Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now  
and forever. Amen.**



*THE LITURGY OF THE WORD*

*FIRST LESSON (Be seated)*

2 Chronicles 24:17-22

Now after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king. Then the king listened to them. And they abandoned the house of the LORD, the

God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention.

Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and he stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God, 'Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.'" But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!"

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*PSALM 119:137-144 (Read responsively)*

Righteous are you, O LORD,  
and right are your just decrees.

**You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness  
and in all faithfulness.**

My zeal consumes me,  
because my foes forget your words.

**Your promise is well tried,  
and your servant loves it.**

I am small and despised,  
yet I do not forget your precepts.

**Your righteousness is righteous forever,  
and your law is true.**

Trouble and anguish have found me out,  
but your commandments are my delight.

**Your testimonies are righteous forever;  
give me understanding that I may live.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law, for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" And Stephen said:

You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**These things are written that you may believe  
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

*GOSPEL*

Matthew 23:34-39

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] “Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

*SERMON*

*HYMN OF THE DAY (Stand) #661*

*The Son of God Goes Forth to War*

**1 The Son of God goes forth to war  
A kingly crown to gain.  
His blood-red banner streams afar;  
Who follows in His train?  
Who best can drink His cup of woe,  
Triumphant over pain,  
Who patient bears his cross below—  
He follows in His train.**

**2 The martyr first, whose eagle eye  
Could pierce beyond the grave,  
Who saw his master in the sky  
And called on Him to save.  
Like Him, with pardon on His tongue  
In midst of mortal pain,  
He prayed for those who did the  
wrong—  
Who follows in his train?**

**3 A glorious band, the chosen few,  
On whom the Spirit came,  
Twelve valiant saints—their hope they knew  
And mocked the cross and flame.  
They met the tyrant’s brandished steel,  
The lion’s gory mane;  
They bowed their necks their death to feel—  
Who follows in their train?**

**4 A noble army, men and boys,  
The matron and the maid,  
Around the Savior’s throne rejoice,  
In robes of light arrayed.  
They climbed the steep ascent of heav’n  
Through peril, toil, and pain.  
O God, to us may grace be giv’n  
To follow in their train!**

### *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.**

### *OFFERING*

*Offerings can be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance following the service. Please place Fellowship Cards there too.*

### *PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH (Stand)*

*The response to each petition will be:*

**“let us pray to the Lord:”  
“Lord, have mercy.”**



*THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION*

*PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION*

p. 208

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*

p. 208

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;  
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.  
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;  
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

*PARYER OF THANKSGIVING*

*THE WORDS OF OUR LORD*

*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*

P. 210

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

*AGNUS DEI*

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
You take the sin of the world away;  
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.**

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,  
You take the sin of the world away;  
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,  
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.**

*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*

*Of the Father's Love Begotten  
Setting: Wilbur Held*

*NUNC DIMITTIS*

p. 211

**1 O Lord, now let Your servant  
Depart in heav'nly peace,  
For I have seen the glory  
Of Your redeeming grace:  
A light to lead the Gentiles  
Unto Your holy hill,  
The glory of Your people,  
Your chosen Israel.**

**2 All glory to the Father,  
All glory to the Son,  
All glory to the Spirit,  
Forever Three in One;  
For as in the beginning,  
Is now, shall ever be,  
God's triune name resounding  
Through all eternity.**

*POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)*

*BENEDICTION*

- 1** Now sing we, now rejoice,  
Now raise to heav'n our voice;  
He from whom joy streameth  
Poor in a manger lies;  
Not so brightly beameth  
The sun in yonder skies.  
Thou my Savior art!  
Thou my Savior art!
- 2** Come from on high to me;  
I cannot rise to Thee.  
Cheer my wearied spirit,  
O pure and holy Child;  
Through Thy grace and merit,  
Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,  
Draw me unto Thee!  
Draw me unto Thee!
- 3** Now through His Son doth shine  
The Father's grace divine.  
Death was reigning o'er us  
Through sin and vanity  
Till He opened for us  
A bright eternity.  
May we praise Him there!  
May we praise Him there!
- 4** Oh, where shall joy be found?  
Where but on heav'nly ground?  
Where the angels singing  
With all His saints unite,  
Sweetest praises bringing  
In heav'nly joy and light.  
Oh, that we were there!  
Oh, that we were there!

*ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)*

*DISMISSAL*

*POSTLUDE*

*In Dulci Jubilo*  
Setting: Paul Manz

*ALTAR FLOWERS: "In memory of Albert Jacquez, born December 24, 1953."*

*By Lynn Jacquez*

Those serving:

Sunday, December 26, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Rich Kauzlarich  
Comm. assist: Judy Koucky  
Reader: Judy Koucky

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Bob Juenger  
Comm. assist: Judy Koucky  
Reader: Judy Koucky

## 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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