



The SIGNS of CHRISTMAS

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 17, 2023**

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!

SIGNS OF CHRISTMAS

A service led by the Youth and Children of St. Paul's

WELCOME

PROCESSIONAL HYMN (Stand) Hark the Glad Sound

LSB 349

- 1 Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song.**
- 2 He comes the pris'ners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.**
- 3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.**
- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Thy belovèd name.**

INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

P: The Lord has made known His Word. Alleluia!

C: The Word of His salvation. Alleluia!

P: The Lord established His covenant forever;

C: He has sent redemption to His people:

P: Christ the Lord, our Savior, everlasting God and Son of Mary!

C: Oh, come, let us worship Him!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P: Isaiah wrote that the coming of the Messiah would mean change as great as having “waters break forth in the wilderness.”

C: Help us value the Word of God and the water of our Baptism.

P: When nothing appears to change, and our Lord’s return seems too far in the distant future, James urges: “Be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

C: Help us grow in patience.

P: When our Lord returns, Isaiah promises: “He will come and save you.”

C: Forgive us, Lord, for our sins of thought, word, and deed.

P: Long ago, Christ Jesus came into our world and paid for all sins. Today, he comes through Word and Sacrament to proclaim God's forgiveness to you and assure you of your salvation. When he returns, he will lead you to a New Eden. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I joyfully announce the forgiveness of God to you in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

(Be seated)

GREETING

We greet you, friends! We’re glad you came.

We welcome you in Jesus’ name.

We join with Christians everywhere

Who, at this time, their hearts prepare

To mark the birthday of God’s Son

And know the reason He has come.

So listen to the things we say,
And kindly join us when we pray,
And when we come upon a song
In which you are to sing along,
Let every heart and voice unite
With angels 'round the throne of light.

**C: May God the Father, Son, and Spirit
Grant faith that we may life inherit. Amen.**

HYMN (Remain seated) O Come All Ye Faithful

**C: O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him
Born the king of angels:**

*Children Venid, adoremos,
venid, adoremos,
venid, adoremos
a Cristo el Señor. (Spanish)*

**C: Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing!**

*Children Kommt, lasset uns anbeten,
kommt, lasset uns anbeten,
kommt, lasset uns anbeten,
den König, den Herrn. (German)*

**C: Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
In the highest:**

*Children Oh, venha, vamos adorá-lo,
oh, venha, vamos adorá-lo,
oh, venha, vamos adorá-lo,
o Cristo, o Senhor. (Portuguese)*

THE TREE

The Christmas tree is easily one of the most recognizable symbols of the Christmas season. Some believe that Martin Luther may have been the first to set up an evergreen tree in his home and decorate it with candles. We harken back to the beginning of time when God placed two special trees in the Garden of Eden: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

God gave special instructions to Adam and Eve regarding these trees: Don't eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or you will die. One day in the garden, Satan, in the form of a serpent, tempted Adam and Eve to eat from this tree. Adam and Eve both ate fruit from the tree and had to answer to God for their sin. But before God told them of the consequences, he first gave them a promise.

This was the first promise of the Savior, who would be born to pay for that sin in the garden as well as the sins of the entire world. This promise was found in God's curse on Satan, who would be defeated by the Savior's death on another tree.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head and you will strike his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

God's plan for the Savior is like a red thread woven through the fabric of the Old Testament, reminding believers of the Messiah and his work for them.

The Holy Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah about another tree. He was speaking of the promised Messiah. But the picture doesn't stop with a tree. He also speaks of the work the Messiah would do on earth. This Prince of peace would return his people to the state of perfection that they had in the Garden of Eden.

RESPONSIVE READING (Stand)

P: A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;

C: **from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.**

P: The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—

C: **the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,**

P: the Spirit of counsel and of power,

C: the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

P: He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,

C: or decide by what he hears with his ears;

P: but with righteousness he will judge the needy,

C: with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.

P: He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;

C: with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.

P: In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples;

C: the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.

(Isaiah 11:1-4,10)

HYMN

O Sing of Christ Sts. 1 and 2

LSB 362

- 1 Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song.**
- 2 He comes the pris'ners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.**

(Be seated) The first chapter of the gospel of Matthew shows how Jesus' family tree grew from the seed of Adam and Eve to its sturdy trunk in Abraham, Jacob, and David, all the way to the branches of Joseph and Mary. In the first chapter of Luke, we hear how Mary, an ordinary young woman, received a visit from an extraordinary messenger.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel?

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:26-38)

Mary rushed to see her cousin Elizabeth and tell her the news. Elizabeth, however, was not the only one to hear this announcement and rejoice.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" (Luke 1:41,42)

On hearing Mary's news, Elizabeth was overjoyed. Her unborn son, whom we know as John the Baptist, leaped with delight. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth prophesied, and Mary confessed in song.

HYMN (Stand) O Sing of Christ Sts. 3 and 4 LSB 362

- 3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.**
- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Thy belovèd name.**

THE MANGER

(Be seated) A nativity scene reminds us of the meaning of Christmas. At the center of any nativity scene is a manger, a feedbox. That bed for the Creator of the universe was not the ideal place for a newborn. But it was the perfect start in life for our Savior. It was a picture of the humility that he took on himself all through his life—a picture of his submission to God’s law and the laws of men.

The account of Jesus’ birth begins in Luke chapter 2, with Mary and Joseph obeying the law of the Roman emperor that the population of the entire empire should be counted.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

HYMN *Away in the Manger*

*Children Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

Congregation **The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

ANGELS

Scripture speaks of angels throughout its pages. They are God's messengers. God sent angels to people to announce important news. Angels visited Abraham to tell him that he and his wife, Sarah, would have a baby boy in their old age.

The angel Gabriel announced the birth of John to Zechariah and Elizabeth. Later he proclaimed to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Savior. After the birth in the manger, angels made an announcement to shepherds at work in the fields.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them,

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.

HYMN

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Children Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

APOSTLES' CREED (Stand)

(LSB Back Cover)

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church as it prepares to celebrate the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, that remembering John the Forerunner's preaching of the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, we, too, may die to sin and rise to new life, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church as we carry out our mission, that the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world would richly and daily forgive our sins and the sins of all believers; and for Matthew, our synod president; Bill, our district president; and all pastors in Christ,

that they would remain faithful to not deny but confess Him in truth, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our children, that every darkness would be lightened by Christ's gracious visitation; and that God would preserve them from dangers to body and soul, guide them by His Word in wise paths, and keep them firm in the faith until life's end, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For Joseph our president, Glen our governor, and for all who are in positions of worldly authority, that they would be given wisdom and insight until the day when Christ comes again in glory to usher in His new kingdom, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those afflicted with pain, sickness, trials and difficulties, especially those on our prayer list and all whom we name in our hearts at this time... that they may be granted improved health, along with the certainty that our bodies will be made incorruptible and immortal when Christ returns to make all things new, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church as she eagerly awaits the return of her Bridegroom, that we would not grow weary but be strengthened through the Word and Sacraments to ever hold fast to Christ's promise of salvation, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

O Lord, heavenly Father, we gratefully remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Rejoicing in His victorious resurrection from the dead we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OFFERING

***Offerings** support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. **Fellowship Cards** help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.*

OFFERTORY (Be seated)

Silent Night

Children *Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!*
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.

Congregation **Silent night, holy night!**
Son God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.



THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION

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 that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

**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!**

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

LSB 963

**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 Your peace,
grant us Your peace.**

Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, You
take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world;
grant us Your peace, grant us Your peace.

DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)

COMMUNION HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

LSB 357

- 1 **O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. Refrain**
- ref **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**
- 2 **O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. Refrain**
- 3 **O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain**

- 4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Refrain
- 5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. Refrain
- 6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain

Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come

LSB 350

- 1 Come, Thou precious Ransom, come,
Only hope for sinful mortals!
Come, O Savior of the world!
Open are to Thee all portals.
Come, Thy beauty let us see;
Anxiously we wait for Thee.
- 2 Enter now my waiting heart,
Glorious King and Lord most holy.
Dwell in me and ne'er depart,
Though I am but poor and lowly.
Ah, what riches will be mine
When Thou art my guest divine!
- 3 My hosannas and my palms
Graciously receive, I pray Thee;
Evermore, as best I can,

Savior, I will homage pay Thee,
And in faith I will embrace,
Lord, Thy merit through Thy grace.

- 4 Hail! Hosanna, David's Son!**
Jesus, hear our supplication!
Let Thy kingdom, scepter, crown,
Bring us blessing and salvation,
That forever we may sing:
Hail! Hosanna to our King.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)

The King of kings and Lord of lords humbled himself by taking on the form of a human. God be praised that this “riches to rags” story turns into a “rags to riches” story for us sinners. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, wrote:

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir. (Galatians 4:4-7)

PRAYER

Almighty God, you made your holy night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that as we have known on earth the wonder of that light, we may also behold him in all his glory in the life to come; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**
- 3 No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.**
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)

DISMISSAL

Flowers: *"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."* Philippians 4:4-6 By: Jennifer Zambone

Those serving:

8:00 a.m.

Greeter: Steve Janssen
Comm. assist: Jim Easterly
Reader: Rich Kauzlarich

10:30 a.m.

Greeter: Lynn Jacquez
Comm. assist: Dan Buuck
Acolyte: Daniel Wang
AV Assistants: Hannes Buuck
Andreas Buuck

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- 368 Angels We Have Heard on High Text: tr. The Crown of Jesus, 1862, Part 2, London, alt. Text and tune: French Text and tune: Public domain
- 363 Silent Night, Holy Night Text: Franz Joseph Mohr, 1792–1848; tr. John F. Young, 1820–85 Tune: Franz Xaver Gruber, 1787–1863 Text and tune: Public domain
- 357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt. Tune: French, 15th cent. Text and tune: Public domain
- 350 Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come Text: Johann Gottfried Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. August Crull, 1845–1923, alt. Tune: Neu-verfertigtes Darmstädtisches Gesang-Buch, 1699, Darmstadt Text and tune: Public domain
- 387 Joy to the World Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Tune: George Frideric Handel, 1685–1759, adapt. Text and tune: Public domain