

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10:30 a.m.



December 21, 2025

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Welcome to ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

We are happy you have joined us for worship today. Wherever you are on your journey with or toward God, you are welcome here—you are a blessing to this assembly. We welcome all who are seeking God's love and grace. We welcome all because God welcomes all, regardless of race or culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship status.

We welcome all without regard to addictions, physical or mental health, imprisonment, socio-economic circumstances, or anything that too often divides us. Our unity is in Christ.

Lutherans believe, teach, and confess that in, with, and under the bread and wine in Holy Communion we receive the true Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation. All who are drawn in faith are welcome to join in this confession and receive the Sacrament.

We invite and encourage your full participation in our worship this morning. With this service bulletin you can follow and participate in this morning's liturgy.

New to St. Paul? If you have questions or want more information, please fill out a newcomer form with the QR code at the right. Questions about transferring membership from another Lutheran church, or for beginning the process for baptism, confirmation, membership, or transferring from one of the other Christian traditions, may be directed to the Church Office at 781-646-7773 or parishadmin@stpaularlington.org.



SUNDAY SERVICE

8:15am | Holy Communion

9:00am | Choir Practice

9:30am | Education Hour with Sunday School, Adult Forum, Confirmation

10:30am | Holy Communion and online

11:30am | Coffee Hour

LIVESTREAMING

Worship is streamed on the St. Paul Lutheran Arlington Facebook page. A Facebook account is not necessary to stream, however, without a Facebook account the stream works on a computer browser only and not on a phone.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY TODAY:

Kelli Oliver, Jennifer Parker & Kim Fachtel, *Altar Guild*

Adelaide N. and Clara R., *Acolytes*

Kathleen Kean, *Lector*

Kerri Frick, *Deacon*

Andy Airasian and Dan Ries, *Ushers*

Hollie Schmidt & Mat Carter, *Livestream Broadcast Team*

Peter & Hollie Schmidt & Lisa Chiulli Lay, *Coffee Guild*

*When the instruction for standing * appears, please stand as you are able and as seems comfortable.*

At the ✠, you may make the sign of the cross, which reminds us of our baptism.

*The congregational responses are printed in **bold**.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE

“Clair de lune” from *Suite Bergamasque*, L. 75 Sara Lay, piano

C. Debussy (1862-1918)

WELCOME

* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

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

*The assembly faces one another across the aisle and keeps silence for self-examination. The pastor begins, those on the **Right Side** of the sanctuary joining him.*

**I confess to God Almighty,
before the whole company of heaven,
and to you, my siblings in Christ,
that I have sinned by my own fault
in thought, word, and deed.
I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me,
forgive me all my sins,
and bring me to everlasting life.**

*Those on the **Left Side** of the sanctuary speak this assurance of forgiveness.*

Almighty and merciful God grants you healing, pardon, and forgiveness of all your sins for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Those on the **Left Side** of the sanctuary then confess their sin.*

**I confess to God Almighty,
before the whole company of heaven,
and to you, my siblings in Christ,
that I have sinned by my own fault
in thought, word, and deed.
I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me,
forgive me all my sins,
and bring me to everlasting life.**

*Those on the **Right Side** of the sanctuary speak this assurance of forgiveness.*

Almighty and merciful God grants you healing, pardon, and forgiveness of all your sins for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

* GATHERING HYMN

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

ELW 265



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
 and Chris-tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

* GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

* KYRIE



| | | | | |
|------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1, 3 | Ky - ri - e | e - lei - son. | Ky - ri - e | e - lei - son. |
| 2 | Chris - te | e - lei - son. | Chris - te | e - lei - son. |
| 1, 3 | Lord, . . . | have mer - cy. | Lord, | have mer - cy. |
| 2 | Christ, . . . | have mer - cy. | Christ, | have mer - cy. |

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
 Chris - te e - le - i - son.
 Lord, . . . have mer - cy.
 Christ, . . . have mer - cy.

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE ELW 240 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah
*As four candles on the Advent wreath are lit, we sing **the entire hymn.***

1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
 Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10-16

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

Restore us, O God;

let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,

how long will your anger fume when your people pray?

You have fed them with the bread of tears;

you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

Restore us, O God of hosts;

let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

And so will we never turn away from you;

give us life, that we may call upon your name.

Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;

let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRISTMAS

The Annual Christmas Pageant

The congregation will be invited to join in singing the following carols.

The First Noel

1 The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel.

2 They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain*

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,
and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

See him in a manger laid whom the angels praise above;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, while we raise our hearts in love.
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

We Three Kings of Orient Are

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Refrain

Oh, star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice;
heav'n sings alleluia: alleluia the earth replies. *Refrain*

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew
the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the
gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us.
God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder
as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the
common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us,
come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are
ill. We pray especially Bobby, Dan, Diane, George, Jim, Lynn, Meredith, Naomi, Paul, Roberta,
and Susan. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of
grace, **hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your in love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

***PEACE**

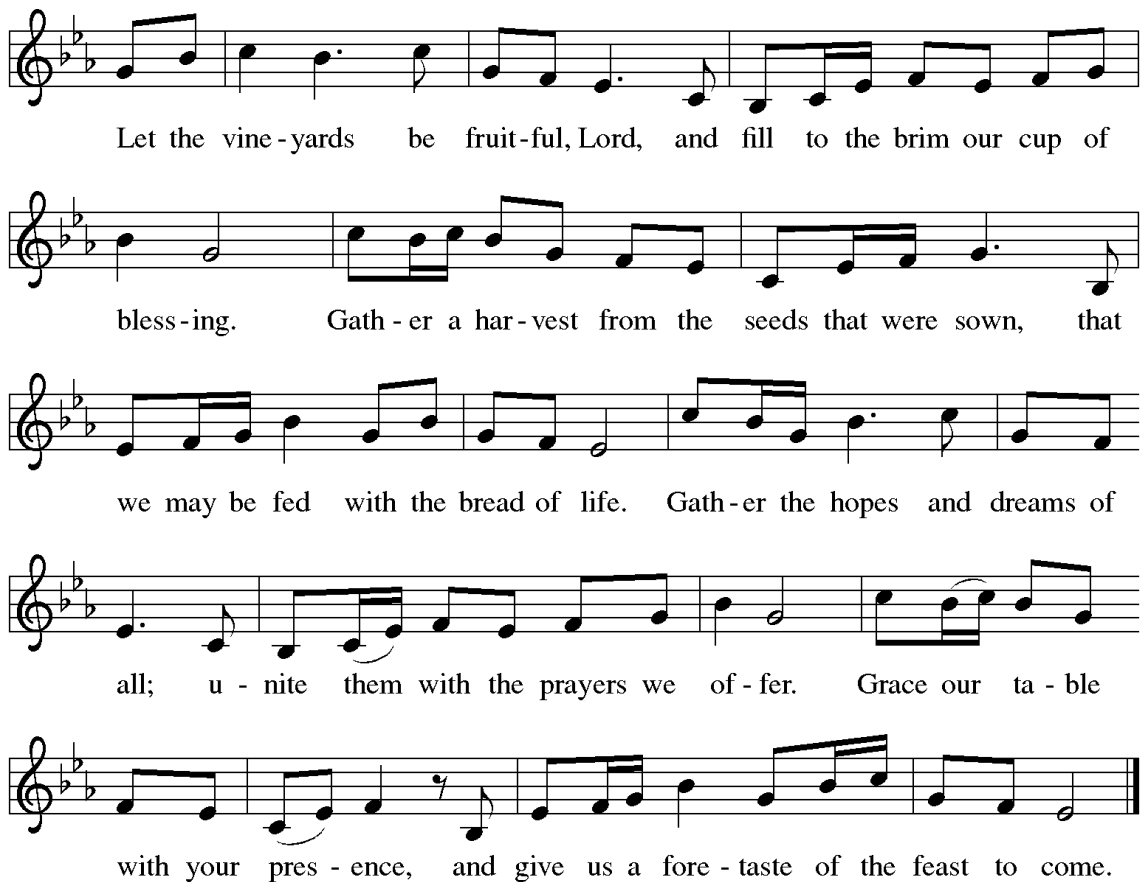
Keep your hands close together or make the peace sign if you'd rather not pass the peace with touch.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

***OFFERING SONG**



Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

* OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

You may give an offering through the Givelify app by scanning this QR code.

You may also make an offering by placing a gift in the offering plate, which is in the narthex.



* GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Du är he - lig, du är hel. Du är all - tid myck-et mer
You are ho - ly, you are whole. You are al - ways ev - er more



än vi nån - sin kan för - stå, du är nä - ra än - då.
than we ev - er un - der - stand. You are al - ways at hand.



Väl - sig - nad va - re du som kom - mer hit just nu,
Bless - ed are you com - ing near. Bless - ed are you com - ing here

väl - sig - na - de vår jord, blir till bröd på vår jord.
to your church in wine and bread, raised from soil, raised from dead.

²
Du är he - lig, du är hel - het,
You are ho - ly, you are whole - ness,

du är när - het he - la kos - mos lo - var dig!
you are pres - ent. Let the cos - mos praise you, Lord!

Ho - si - an - na, ho - si - an - na,
Sing ho - san - na in the high - est!

ho - si - an - na, ho - si - an - na vår Gud.
Sing ho - san - na to our God!

We praise you, living and loving God, that you have sent your Son into this world.
Christ is your Wisdom, sweetly ordering all creation,
our Lawgiver, burning with justice,
the Branch from Jesse's tree, sprouting flowers from old roots,
the Key of David, opening our prison doors.

And let the people cry, O come and save us:

O come and save us!

We praise you, serving and saving God, that you send your Son also to this table,
who on the night before he died 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.

And let the people cry, O come and save us.

O come and save us!

We beg you, mighty and merciful God:
send us the Spirit of your Son.

Dwell in this food and in all who share it,
that the earth may rejoice in your presence.

In Christ, the Dawning Day, enlighten a darkened world,
reign as Sovereign to unite all peoples,
and live among us, Emmanuel,
our deepest desire now and forever.

And let the people cry, O come and save us.

O come and save us!

Even so, come, Lord Jesus, with your Father and your Spirit, to the church, and receive our
praises, now and forever. Amen:

Amen.

And let the people pray:

**Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest,
and let these gifts to us be blessed.**

**Blest be God, who is our Bread;
may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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.**

COMMUNION

All are welcome to receive the bread and the wine. Gluten free wafers are available on request. Both wine and grape juice are available in each tray; the wine is red and the grape juice is white.

Come forward in the center aisle starting at the front of the church. The pastors will motion the first people forward.

Cor - de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

ten pie-dad de no - so-tros, ten pie-dad de no - so-tros.
have . . mer-cy up - on us, have . . mer-cy up - on us.

Cor-de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

ten pie-dad de no - so-tros, ten pie-dad de no - so-tros.
have . . mer-cy up - on us, have . . mer-cy up - on us.

Cor-de - ro de Dios, tú que qui-tas el pe-ca-do del mun-do;
O Lamb of . . God, you . . take a-way the sin of the world; . .

da - nos tu paz, da - nos tu paz.
grant us your peace, grant us your peace.

*TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

*BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ grant you peace. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

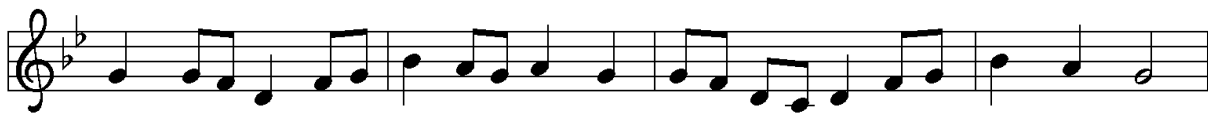
* SENDING HYMN

Come, thou Long Expected Jesus

ELW 354



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

*DISMISSAL

Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those who travel with us. So be swift to love, make haste to be kind, and go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Reverie

C. Debussy

ANNOUNCEMENTS *and* UPCOMING HAPPENINGS

at SAINT PAUL



GENTLE REMINDER: PLEDGES FOR 2026

The coming year promises an exciting new chapter in St. Paul's story: the call and welcome of the next Pastor. The Transition Team and the Congregation Council have been hard at work behind the scenes preparing for the next steps in the call process, the adoption of a Ministry Site Profile and the formation of a Call Committee in late January or early February.

You can help prepare the way for this next exciting chapter by pledging financial support for St. Paul's ministry in 2026. Pledges are being received now. You are invited to prayerfully consider making a generous pledge that will help the congregation and its next Pastor move into the future on a solid financial footing. If you are new to the congregation or have not pledged in the past for other reasons, please consider a pledge for the coming year. You may fill out the pledge form and mail it back to St. Paul or put it in the offering plate during worship on Sunday mornings.

COOKIES FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

Calling all cookie bakers! Help St. Paul host a festive and welcoming coffee hour after each of our Christmas Eve services. If you're willing to bring 1-2 dozen Christmas cookies to share, please RSVP to Lisa at lisachiullilay@gmail.com and note which service, the 4pm or 8pm, you will be attending. Fresh fruit, or cheese & crackers, are also welcome!

ADULT FORUM | Sunday, December 21, 9:30

We will build on last week's conversation around topics for forum in the coming year with a view toward identifying topics through January and February. We'll meet in the Goodman Fellowship Hall from 9:30-10:15am. All are invited to join the discussion!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP | December 24 at 4pm & 8pm

We will gather for worship on Christmas Eve, Wednesday December 24, at 4pm and 8pm. The 4pm service will include a special children's message. 8pm will bWee a candlelight service.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT | December 21, 10:30 Service

St. Paul's annual Christmas Pageant will take place on Sunday, December 21 at the 10:30 service. We look forward to witnessing the story of Christ's birth told from the perspective of St. Paul's youngest disciples in word and song. If your child would like to participate, please contact Sarah Carter, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry, at stpaularlingtonfamily@gmail.com. Pageant rehearsal will take place during the education hour on December 14 and December 21.

ARLINGTON EATS DECEMBER NEEDS

At this time of year especially, we focus on baking at home. As you gather your own ingredients, please consider donating some to Arlington Eats. As always, thank you for being a part of our year-round food donors!

- Sugar
- Baking soda
- Baking powder
- Spices - Cinnamon, Ground ginger, Garlic powder
- Baking chips (chocolate, etc)
- Cereal (especially Cheerios!)
- Laundry detergent sheets
- Dish soap

ST. PAUL BIBLE STUDY | Thursday Evenings, 7-8pm by Zoom

All are invited to join our bible study! We will gather on Thursday evenings on Zoom from 7-8pm. Each week, we will study the upcoming Sunday's lectionary texts, which are the bible readings we hear in worship. To access the readings and Zoom link, please see St. Paul's Weekly Update email. If you are not a subscriber, you can sign up on our website or email Vicar Sam for the Bible Study Zoom link (stpaularlingtonvicar@gmail.com).

THEOLOGY ON TAP | December 21, 4PM

We will gather once more **at 4PM at Mighty Squirrel** (411 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham). Vicar Sam will lead a relaxed conversation about a different theological topic each month. The brewery welcomes families and includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. All are invited!

SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

| | |
|--|---|
| Advent 4 | Sunday, December 21 |
| 8:15 AM | Holy Communion |
| 9:30 AM | Pageant rehearsal, confirmation, adult forum, choir |
| 10:30 AM | Christmas Pageant with Holy Communion |
| Christmas Eve | Wednesday, December 24 |
| 4:00 PM | Festival Holy Communion |
| 8:00 PM | Festival Holy Communion |
| Coffee and Cookies after both services | |
| Holy Innocents | Sunday, December 28 |
| 9:30 AM | Holy Communion with Farewell & Godspeed |
| 10:30 AM | Celebration of Vicar Sam's Ministry |
| Epiphany | Sunday, January 4 |
| 8:15 AM | Holy Communion |
| 9:30 AM | Potluck Breakfast with Carols |
| 10:30 AM | Holy Communion |



SAINT PAUL

LUTHERAN CHURCH

ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

www.stpaularlington.org | 781-646-7773

Staff

The Reverend Don Larsen, *Transition Pastor*

Samantha Menapace, *Vicar*

Ana Zecic Jeffers, *Director of Music*

Sarah Carter, *Children, Youth and Families Director*

Jennifer White, *Parish Administrator*

Paul Ricci, *Business Administrator*

Dennis O'Brien, *Church Property Manager*

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Church Council and Officers

Kerri Frick, *President*

Sandy Walker, *Vice President*

Eric Haugen, *Treasurer*

Elizabeth Heichler, *Secretary*

Mark Olson, *Financial Secretary*

Kristen Anderson

Eric Carlson

Dave Hering

Kathleen Kean

Kevin Kreutter

Pierson Oliver

Taryn Walsh

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Altar Guild

Faith Formation Committee

Intern Committee

Social Ministry Committee

Nomination Committee

Worship & Music Committee

Finance Committee

Audit Committee

Usher Committee

Transition Committee

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Kristen Anderson

Janice Sniffen

Taryn Walsh

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Eric Haugen

Dan Ries & Andy Airasian

Peter Hedlund & Sandy Walker



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



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