THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:15 a.m.



Le songe de Joseph Joseph's Dream Jean-Marie Pirot (1926-2018) Known as "Arcabas"

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

SERVING THE COMMUNITY TODAY:

Kelli Oliver, Jennifer Parker & Kim Fetchel, *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*

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. When the instruction for standing * appears, please stand as you are able and as seems comfortable. At the \pm , you may make the sign of the cross, which reminds us of our baptism.

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

GATHERING

PRELUDE

"The Little Shepherd" from Children's Corner, L. 113

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



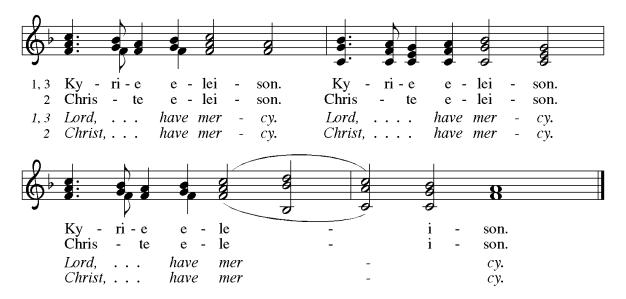
* GREETING

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

Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

And also with you.

* KYRIE

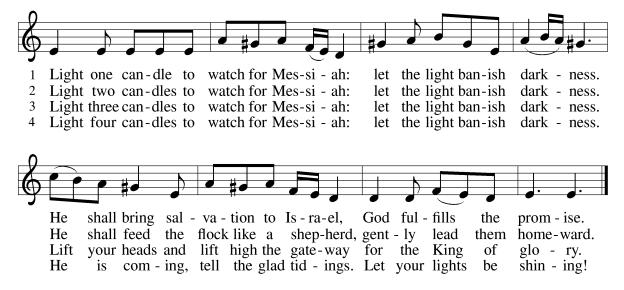


* PRAYER OF THE DAY

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**.



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.

PSALMODY Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

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.

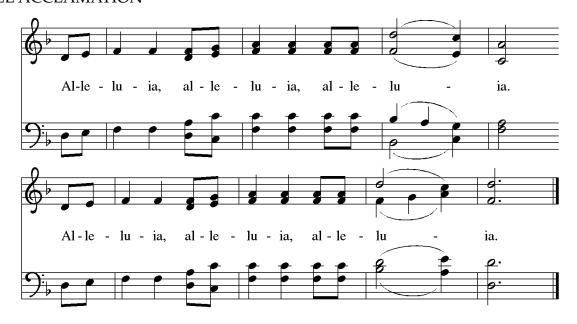
Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.

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.

* GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



* GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

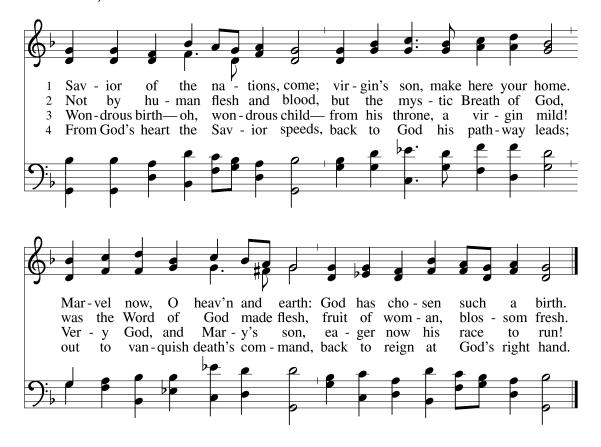
CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Don Larsen

SERMON Pastor Don Larsen

ELW 263

Savior of the Nations, Come



- 5 Now your manger, shining bright, hallows night with newborn light. Night cannot this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.
- 6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word!
 To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally!

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. hymnal version Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524



*NICENE CREED

In trust and hope, we confess our faith.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;

he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;

he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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



* 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.

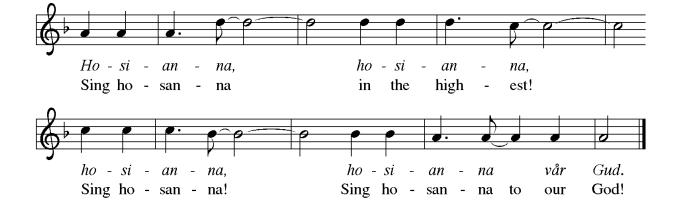
We lift them to the Lord.

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:





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,

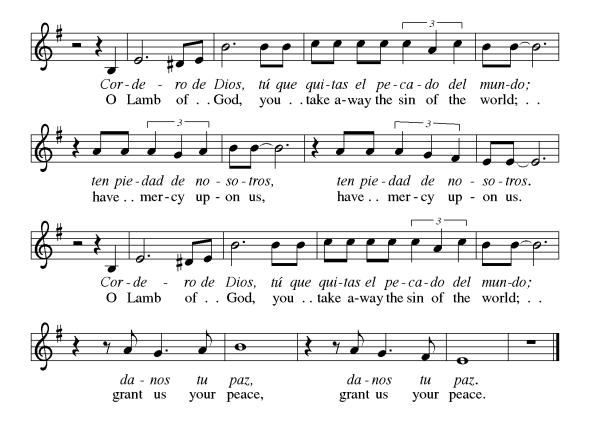
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

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.





*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 thy Je - sus, peo-ple free; born to set
- 2 Born thy peo-ple child, and to de - liv - er, yet a king; born a



find our from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us 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;



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788 Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835

*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

C. Debussy Reverie

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 be 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 (stepsularlingtonvicar@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 4:00 PM Wednesday, December 24 Festival Holy Communion 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*

stpaularlington.interim.pastor@gmail.com stpaularlingtonvicar@gmail.com anazecicjeffers@gmail.com stpaularlingtonfamily@gmail.com parishadmin@stpaularlington.org

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Transition Committee Peter Hedlund & Sandy Walker





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