

St. Paul Lutheran Church
of Stillwater, Minnesota
November 30, 2025
First Sunday of Advent



Your presence at worship is important to God and to us! Whether you are a first-time visitor, frequent participant, neighbor, member, or friend, please take a moment as you prepare for worship to share some information on the "Welcome to Worship" card included with your bulletin. Place it in the offering plate at the time the offering is received.

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's gospel Jesus challenges us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

Many of our worship materials are taken from the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Page numbers are located in the front half of the book and hymn numbers are located in the back half of the book.

The assembly **speaks** or **sings** the bold responses.



GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Prelude



Advent Invocation

I was glad when they said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

Now our feet are standing

within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May they prosper who love you.”

Let us pray . . .

God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,
as we begin this journey through Advent
remind us that your time is different from our time.

Your peace is not our peace,
and your ways are not our ways.

Though we do not know the hour of your coming,
keep us watchful for all the ways you appear,
and assure us that you will be with us to the end.
With hope, peace, joy, and love we pray.

Amen.

Gathering Song

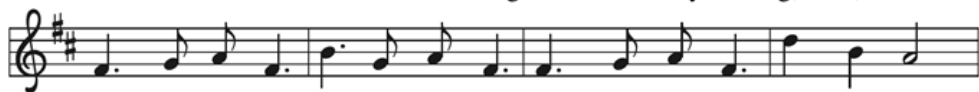
"Now the Heavens Start to Whisper"



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ner. teach our hearts to wel - come you.

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.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading

Pew Bible: Old Testament Pages 631-632

Isaiah 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshipping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.



Psalm 122 (paraphrase)

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Come Sing with Me"

1 *Re-joyce, re-joyce, come sing with me: "This is the house of God!"*

2 In mar - ket square and cit - y street we seek the peace of God.

[illegible]

The tem - ple gates swing wide and free—this is the house of God!
Be - fore the rul - er's judg - ment seat, we seek the peace of God.

Be - fore the rul - er's judg - ment seat, we seek the peace of God.

[illegible]

For ev - ery tribe and ev - ery race this is the house of God!

In joy-ful song and whis-pered prayer we seek the peace of God.

Musical notation for the bass line of 'The Rose Tree'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some chords indicated by vertical lines. The final measure is circled.

God calls us to this ho - ly place—this is the house of God!

God's cit - y can be an - y - where we seek the peace of God.

The bass line of 'The Rose Tree' is written on a single staff with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, starting on a B-flat and ending on a whole note B-flat. The notation includes various rests and accidentals to indicate the pitch and rhythm of the melody.

Romans 13:11-14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

At the conclusion:

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Children's and Outreach Message

Jenny Brelje

Gospel Acclamation

"We Are Waiting for Jesus"



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Matthew 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

The gospel is introduced:

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion:

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Nathan Baker-Trinity

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Hymn of the Day

ELW Hymn 244

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

Prayers of Intercession

After each prayer:

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

At the conclusion:

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

Amen.



Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering *"Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"*

Setting by Mary Howarth

Our offering is a collection of money for the church's mission, including the care of those in need, as a sign of the giving of our whole selves in grateful response for all God's gifts. Your offering and "Welcome to Worship" card may be placed in the offering plate. The QR code on the right may be used if you wish to give electronically.



Offering Prayer

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.

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 . . .

. . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus 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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours,

Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate,

Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever.

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

We celebrate at an open communion table. All who hear our Lord's invitation are welcome to participate. Receive the bread first with an open hand and eat immediately, followed by the juice (white) or wine (red). Gluten-free bread is available at the front end of the center aisle. Please indicate to an usher if you need to receive communion from your pew. Children who have received age-appropriate instruction are welcome to commune. If you prefer instead to receive a blessing, please indicate by crossing your arms over your shoulders.

*When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say:
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond:*

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

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Announcements

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

Sending Song

ELW Hymn 253

"He Came Down"

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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DAILY PRAYER

Peace Among the Nations



Gracious God, grant peace among nations. Cleanse from our own hearts the seeds of strife: greed and envy, harsh misunderstandings and ill will, fear and desire for revenge. Make us quick to welcome ventures in cooperation among the peoples of the world, so that there may be woven the fabric of a common good too strong to be torn by the evil hands of war. In the time of opportunity, make us be diligent; and in the time of peril, let not our courage fail; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONNECTIONS WITH THE LITURGY

Keeping Advent



Although the historical record is sketchy, it appears that Advent arose out of a season of fasting to prepare for baptisms at Epiphany on January 6 (the 12th day of Christmas). By the sixth century, Advent focused on the final coming of Christ (as spoken of in our gospel reading today) and now comprises the four Sundays before Christmas. Each year, the first Sunday contains the theme of readiness for divine judgment, while the second and third Sundays focus on the ministry of John the Baptist and his call to a repentant life. Only on the fourth Sunday do we hear a narrative concerning the birth of Jesus. The good news is that God comes, in the past in the history of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus, in the present in the word and sacrament of each Sunday, and in the future at the end of all things. The readings for Advent fit this centuries-old pattern, and its tone stands in stark contrast to our modern society's weeks of preparation for Christmas.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

"Is" means "Is"



Jesus came as a baby centuries ago and will come again in glory, but Jesus still comes to us whenever we gather in his name around the communion table. As the words are spoken and the gift is given, Martin Luther encourages us to trust the promise: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink." When Christ says he will show up in the communion meal, he will! "This is my body! This is my blood.

This is my full presence with you now!" "Is" means "Is"!

UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

Andrew, Apostle

Sunday, November 30, 2025

The first of the disciples to be called by Jesus, Andrew quickly began to bring others to the Savior, including Simon Peter. The Bible also shows him leading some Greeks to meet Jesus, and he brought forward the boy with five loaves and two fish, with which Jesus fed thousands.

Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, died 1552

Wednesday, December 3, 2025

A native of the Basque region of Spain, Xavier became a missionary to India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and the Philippines. He also helped to found the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, died around 749

Thursday, December 4, 2025

A monk in an abbey near Jerusalem, John wrote many hymns as well as theological works. One of his works, *The Fount of Wisdom*, remained influential for centuries.

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342

Saturday, December 6, 2025

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

Advent Signs

Few things in life are as jarring as awakening to the shriek of a fire alarm. Of course, that is by design. The safety of those gathered indoors calls for a blaring warning of impending danger so that all might be delivered from harm. Jesus offers a similar signal to his beloveds today, begging us to pay attention to the seriousness of the message he bears: Be ready! Keep awake! Pay attention to your surroundings! Deliverance is coming soon!

Advent is a season of preparation, directing our focus toward the incarnation, toward Christmas, when God becomes human and the weary world rejoices. Sometimes preparations take the form of monthslong laborious planning, as we might do for an international trip or the renovation of a home. Other times, preparations must happen immediately, within hours, minutes, or seconds. When a fire alarm sounds, there's no time to plan: We must act quickly, gathering what is most important to get to safety together.

This first Sunday of Advent is a chance to take stock of what is most important in life, to attune our spirits to the reign of heaven that God is birthing in our world. We may be unsettled by these gospel images of the great flood and of field workers being disappeared. Such stories indeed may spark fear, anxiety, and distrust. Yet God comes to be with us amid all the great uncertainties of life, amid the atrocities of human violence, amid the worst of our losses and fears. Jesus reminds us that God is always drawing near to the world, always extending mercy, always acting with love. Mercy and love are Advent signs worth paying attention to, worth staying awake for. Be ready, beloveds, and fear not! God's deliverance is coming soon.