

# ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN "BLUE" CHURCH

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**Third Sunday of Advent ✕ December 13, 2020**

**PRELUDE – "IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR" - TRADITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, ✕ Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

**Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence for reflection*

Loving and forgiving God,

**we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love ✕ comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## HYMN #249 ON JORDAN'S BANK THE BAPTIST'S CRY

### ADVENT CANDLE LITURGY & LIGHTING 3<sup>RD</sup> CANDLE

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

*Third candle is lit.*

**HYMN #240 "LIGHT ONE CANDLE TO WATCH FOR MESSIAH"**  
(STANZA 3)

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray...Stir up the wills of your faithful people, LORD God and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and LORD, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11**

## PSALM 126

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
then were we like those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations,  
"The LORD has done great things for them."**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things for us,  
and we are glad indeed.

<sup>4</sup>**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

<sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**SECOND LESSON: 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

**THE HOLY GOSPEL: JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28**

The Gospel of the LORD.  
Praise to you, O Christ.

## SERMON

**HYMN – #490 LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE**

## 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**

## THE PRAYERS

**EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER** *The pastor offers the prayer.*

### 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**

### HOLY COMMUNION

#### BLESSING

The Body and Blood of our LORD Jesus Christ strengthen you and  
 keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## PRAYER

A: Let us pray...Gracious and abundant God, you have done great  
 things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup, you give us life  
 forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts  
 to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected  
 Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, ✠  
 now and forever. **Amen.**

## HYMN #270 *HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE – “ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH” – HUGH LIVINGSTON

✠ ✠ ✠

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 Fortress, license #15175-L. All rights reserved. Psalm 126, reprinted from *Psalter for Worship Year B*  
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 permission.

## WELCOME TO ALL IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!

We especially welcome those who are visiting. We invite you to sign our guest  
 register in the narthex. Blank envelopes in the pews are for visitors.  
*“God’s purpose for St. Paul’s Lutheran Blue” Church is to spread the Good  
 News of Christ’s love for all people in the Southern Lehigh community and  
 beyond.”* –Blue Church Mission Statement, adopted 2012

## THE DAY IN THE CHURCH YEAR: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE READINGS.....** *“Rejoice always,” begins the reading  
 from First Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is  
 turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children get a  
 robe,” go the words of the spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed  
 outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes that make us feel happy just to put  
 on. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of  
 God’s party.*

**ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11:** *Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile  
 in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of  
 the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of the  
 Lord, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those  
 who mourn.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24:** *Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by  
 encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The  
 closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ’s coming.*

**JOHN 1:6-8, 19-28:** *John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

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**PRAYER FOR THE DAY...**The Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the oppressed. (*Isaiah 61:1*)

**PRAYER FOR THE WEEK...**Lord Jesus, you continue to do great things for us. Give us your gift of peace as we await your coming. Amen.

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**BLUE CHURCH PRAYS FOR...**Bill Exner, Ron Fried, Shirley Hildebrand, Jerry Smith, Hattie Smith, Bob Storat, Sue Storat, Dean Stover

**Other concerns:** Kevin Jones, deployment.

*Note: This is a short-term list, for those who are in "acute care" situations—hospitalized or in recovery, dying, facing the recent death of a loved one, or presently facing a severe life crisis. The names of those for whom we pray will be kept on the list for one month. If you wish to have them placed back on the list please contact the church office.*

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**WEEKLY GIFTS, PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD...**

**ALTAR FLOWERS...**by Anne Nichols in honor of Krysta Nichols' Birthday.

**SANCTUARY LAMP...**by Bill and Kathy Exner.

**COMMUNION BREAD & WINE...**

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### LEADING OUR WORSHIP

<b>CELEBRANT</b>	The Rev. James Hammond
<b>ORGANIST</b>	Dr. Jennifer Dodd
<b>ASSISTING MINISTER</b>	Ron Fried
<b>LECTOR</b>	Maggie Fried
<b>GREETERS</b>	Roger & Edie Knappenberger
<b>CHURCH COUNCIL REP</b>	Amy Ortwein

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**THE ANNUAL COAT DRIVE - Blue Church** is collecting gently used coats for the winter season to help those who can use them. You can bring in coats and drop them in the bin in the narthex. They are greatly appreciated.

Many thanks to all those who have already donated coats. They have been delivered to St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Allentown.

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## BLUE CHURCH NOTES IN-PERSON WORSHIP

- Masks must be worn at all times properly covering one's nose and mouth.

- There will be no formal collection of offering or passing of the peace. Receptacles will be provided in the narthex area for worshippers to deposit their offering envelopes (which may also be mailed in to the church office).
- In order to provide a sanitary and safe Holy Communion experience we are using pre-filled Communion chalices.

**PLEASE NOTE** – *If you would like to help defray the extra expense of the Communion cups you can use your Communion envelope in your box of offering envelopes or a plain envelope marked "Communion" with your name.*

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**THE CHARTS TO SPONSOR ALTAR FLOWERS, BULLETINS, SANTUARY CANDLE AND WINE FOR 2021 ARE NOW ON THE BULLETIN BOARDS IN THE NARTHEX.** Please check the appropriate charts.

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### LOOKING AHEAD

**MONDAY, DEC. 14 – 7 PM Church Council Meeting.**

**SUNDAY, DEC. 20 – 10:30 AM Worship – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent.**

**MONDAY, DEC. 21 – 7 – 8 PM Girl Scouts.**

**THURSDAY – DEC. 24 – 7 PM CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP.**

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**WE ARE STILL COLLECTING DETERGENT DONATIONS FOR BETTY LOU'S FOOD PANTRY.** They can be left at the side entrance to the church (red door) and someone will put them inside. Thanks again for being so generous with all your donations and volunteering to help those in need in our community!

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## **Stewardship Snippets**

**December 13, 2020** (Third Sunday of Advent)

*"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him."*– **John 1:6-7**

Like John, we are sent as witnesses to testify to the Christ at work in the world. In addition to preparing our own hearts and minds in Advent, faithful stewards know that the Spirit gives us the power to share the good news of God among us.

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## **WE REMEMBER THIS WEEK...**

### **December 13 – Lucy, martyr, died 304**

Lucy was a young Christian of Sicily who was martyred during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Apparently she had decided to devote her life to God and her possessions to the poor. Beyond that, however, little is known for certain about Lucy. However, her celebration became particularly important in Sweden and Norway, perhaps because the feast of Lucia (the name means “light”) originally fell on the shortest day of the year. A tradition arose of a girl in the household, wearing a crown of candles, bringing saffron rolls to her family early in the morning on the day of Lucia.

## **LESSONS**

### **Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 - 1 Lesson**

<sup>61</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the broken-hearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favour,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup> to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

<sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup> For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;\*  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup> Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.  
<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
<sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson**

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks  
in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ  
Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not  
despise the words of prophets,\* <sup>21</sup>but test everything;  
hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of  
evil.

23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound\* and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

## John 1:6-8, 19-28 - Gospel

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' 20He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.\*' 21And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' 22Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' 23He said, 'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord"', as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah,\* nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' 26John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' 28This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

baptized you with\* water; but he will baptize you with\* the Holy Spirit.'

St. Paul's Lutheran "Blue" Church  
Prayers ✠ Third Sunday of Advent ✠  
December 13, 2020

A: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need, responding,

**"Your mercy is great."**

*A brief silence*

A: God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

*A brief silence*

A: God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon Blue Church and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Today we pray especially for: Bill, Ron, Shirley, Jerry, Hattie, Bob, Sue, Dean, Kevin, and everyone who has asked for our prayers or known only to the Lord. Hear us, O God.

Hear us, O God.

**“Your mercy is great.”**

A: God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God.

**“Your mercy is great.”**

**Pastor: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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**Third Sunday *of* Advent**