

# ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN "BLUE" CHURCH

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**Third Sunday of Advent ✕ December 12, 2021**

PRELUDE – "WHAT CHILD IS THIS?" – HUGH LIVINGSTON, JR.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity ✕ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

God for whom we wait,  
**in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✕ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace. **Amen.**

### HYMN #246 *HARK! A THRILLING VOICE IS SOUNDING!*

### ADVENT WREATH BLESSING & LIGHTING 3<sup>RD</sup> CANDLE

P: 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)

### 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

Let us pray...Stir up the wills of your faithful people, LORD God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; 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: ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20

### PSALMODY: ISAIAH 12:2-6 *(Spoken responsively)*

<sup>2</sup>Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might,  
and has become my salvation.

<sup>3</sup>**With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.**

<sup>4</sup>And you will say in that day:

Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;  
make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations;  
proclaim that this name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup>**Sing praises to the LORD, who has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.**

<sup>6</sup>Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

### SECOND LESSON: PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

### HOLY GOSPEL: LUKE 3:7-18

P: The Gospel of the LORD.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

### SERMON



**3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT: ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE READINGS....**

*Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with his winnowing fork in his hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.*

**ZEPHANIAH 3:14-20:** *The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7:** *Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns, with the hope they will experience God's joy and peace.*

**LUKE 3:7-18:** *John the Baptist heralds the mighty one "who is coming." John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.*

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**PRAYER FOR THE DAY:** Bring us home, O God.

*(Zephaniah 3:14,20)*

**PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:** God who comes to us from the future, make your church a holy and merciful temple, a people eager to prepare your way. Amen.

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**BLUE CHURCH PRAYS FOR...** Marie Berghold, Cyndi Cline, Sandra Denora, Irene Frederick, Gwen Gibiser, Ann Greensweig, Ray Hammond, Anita Johnson, Frank Kelly, Stephen, the family and friends of Karen Agrippine (Carl and Joanne Ritter's daughter)

**Other concerns:**

*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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**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>	Karen Kelly
<b>GREETERS</b>	Shirley Hildebrand, Maggie Fried
<b>CHURCH COUNCIL REP</b>	Ed Risi

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**WEEKLY GIFTS, PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD:  
ALTAR FLOWERS.....**in honor of Krysta Nichols' Birthday.  
**COMMUNION BREAD & WINE...**by Joyce Fulford

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**LOOKING AHEAD**

**MON. DEC. 13 – 7 PM Church Council Meeting.**

**SUN. DEC. 19– 9:30 AM Choir Rehearsal.**

**SUN. DEC. 19 – 10:30 AM Worship – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

**FRI. DEC. 24 – 7 PM Christman Eve Candlelight Service.**

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**ELCA Good Gifts** provides more than 50 different gift-giving options that grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives. These gifts, starting at just \$10, provide direct support for the churchwide ministries of the ELCA.

Simply take an ornament from the Advent Tree in the Narthex. Make your check payable to Blue Church and deposit in the offering plate or mail to the church.

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***The Sheets to sponsor Altar Flowers, Bulletins, the Sanctuary Candle, and the monthly Communion Wine for 2022 are on the bulletin boards in the Narthex. It is an opportunity to honor a loved one, commemorate a special occasion, or celebrate a milestone. Please make sure to sign the appropriate chart.***

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**HELP BLUE CHURCH BY SHOPPING AT AmazonSmile.** Each time you do Amazon will donate 0.5% of the amount of the purchase. Each Quarter Blue Church will then receive a check. Before shopping simply select **ST PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH** Location: Coopersburg, PA as your charitable choice to receive your donation.

## **LESSONS**

### **Zephaniah 3:14-20 – 1<sup>st</sup> Lesson**

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgements  
against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.  
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you\* in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing

<sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.\*  
I will remove disaster from you,\*  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

<sup>19</sup> I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.  
And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the LORD.

### **Philippians 4:4-7 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Lesson**

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice\* in the Lord always; again I will say,  
Rejoice.\* <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to  
everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about  
anything, but in everything by prayer and  
supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be  
made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God,  
which surpasses all understanding, will guard your  
hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

### **Luke 3:7-18 - Gospel**

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds that came out to be  
baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who  
warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear  
fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to  
yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor";  
for I tell you, God is able from these stones to  
raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup>Even now the axe  
is lying at the root of the trees; every tree  
therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down  
and thrown into the fire.'

10 And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' <sup>11</sup>In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' <sup>12</sup>Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' <sup>13</sup>He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' <sup>14</sup>Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,\* <sup>16</sup>John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with\* the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup>His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

**St. Paul's Lutheran "Blue" Church**  
**Prayers ✠ Third Sunday of Advent ✠**  
**December 12, 2021**

A: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence, responding,

**"Your mercy is great."**

*A brief silence*

A: Holy God, renew your church and raise up leaders who announce your good news. Grant peace to congregations and seminarians in the midst of transition. Guide the work of candidacy and call committees. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: Creating God, your Spirit brought forth the earth and all that is in it. Breathe life into us, that we are inspired to live in harmony with one another and the planet. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: Shepherding God, you lead your people in paths of righteousness. Raise up prophets in our own day who warn against captivity to greed and point us to the freedom found in generosity. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: Nurturing God, you come near in times of worry and need. Cradle us in your arms, that we trust you and are not afraid. Attend to any who are hungry, imprisoned, or ill this day. Today we pray especially for: Marie, Cyndi, Sandra, Irene, Gwen, Ann, Ray, Anita, Frank, Stephen, the family and friends of Karen Agrippine, and everyone who has asked for our prayers or known only to the Lord. Hear us, O God.

**"Your mercy is great."**

A: Rejoicing God, you exult over us in singing. Enliven the song of Blue Church and bless the ministry of church musicians. With instruments and dance, join our voices to the song of all creation. Hear us, O God.

**“Your mercy is great.”**

A: We give you thanks for your servants who showed us your goodness and grace. By the power of your Spirit, keep us steadfast in faith until we make our home with you. Hear us, O God.

**“Your mercy is great.”**

**Pastor: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus. Amen.**