

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN "BLUE" CHURCH

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Fourth Sunday of Advent ✦ December 20, 2020

**PRELUDE — "SANCTA LUCIA" - 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 #277 AWAY IN A MANGER

ADVENT CANDLE LITURGY & LIGHTING 4TH CANDLE

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. 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 4)

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 your power, LORD Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST LESSON:

2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16

PSALM 89:1-4, 19-26

- ¹Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
- ²**For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever;**
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.
- ³I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- ⁴**I will establish your line forever,**
and preserve your throne for all generations."
- ¹⁹You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:
"I have set the crown upon a warrior
and have exalted one chosen out of the people.
- ²⁰**I have found David my servant;**
with my holy oil I have anointed him.
- ²¹My hand will hold him fast
and my arm will make him strong.
- ²²**No enemy shall deceive him,**
nor shall the wicked bring him down.
- ²³I will crush his foes before him
and strike down those who hate him.
- ²⁴**My faithfulness and steadfast love are with him,**
and he shall be victorious through my name.
- ²⁵I will set his hand on the sea,
and his right hand on the rivers.
- ²⁶**He will say to me, 'You are my father,**
my God, and the rock of my salvation.'

SECOND LESSON:

ROMANS 16:25-27

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 1st Chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: LUKE 1:26-38

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

SERMON

HYMN – #270 O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

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 #282 IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

DISMISSAL

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

**POSTLUDE – “VOLUNTARY ON ‘IN DULCI JUBLIO’” –
JAMES MANSFIELD**

✕ ✕ ✕

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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: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ABOUT THE SCRIPTURE READINGS.....

God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16: *Instead of David building a house (temple) for the Lord, the Lord promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, the Lord's anointed.*

ROMANS 16:25-27: *Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.*

LUKE 1:26-38: *In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people (Mary) from little-known places (Nazareth). This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in his gospel.*

PRAYER FOR THE DAY...I am your servant. Help me live according to your word. *(Isaiah 61:1)*

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK...God our Savior, nothing is impossible for you. Prepare our hearts to rejoice in your glorious advent. Amen.

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.

**WEEKLY GIFTS, PRESENTED TO THE GLORY OF GOD...
ALTAR FLOWERS...**by Anne Nichols in honor of Chase Coleman's Birthday; and by Sherry Farrell.

SANCTUARY LAMP...by Bill and Kathy Exner.

LEADING OUR WORSHIP

CELEBRANT	The Rev. James Hammond
ORGANIST	Dr. Jennifer Dodd
ASSISTING MINISTER	Dick Storat
LECTOR	Dick Storat
GREETER	Maggie Fried
CHURCH COUNCIL REP	Ed Risi

LOOKING AHEAD

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

THURSDAY – DEC. 24 – 7 PM CANDLELIGHT

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP.

PLEASE NOTE – NO SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27TH
WORSHIP. A Coronavirus break will be observed.

Merry Christmas to all and we will resume in-person
Worship on 10:30 AM, January 3, 2021

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.

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.
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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.*

LESSONS

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.

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!

BLUE CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	<u>NOVEMBER</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
RECEIPTS	\$ 7,756.13	\$120,906.62
EXPENSES	\$16,380.41	\$ 128,931.60
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) (\$ 8,624.28)		\$ (8,024.98)

ENDOWMENT FUND WITHDRAWN TO COVER EXPENSES
\$ 2,907.85 \$20,500.00

ENDOWMENT FUND INTEREST/REFUND -
\$0 \$ 5,686.89

Stewardship Snippets

December 20, 2020 (Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year B)

"For nothing will be impossible with God."— **Luke 1:37**

This Sunday we celebrate Mary's faithfulness and willingness to do God's will. This brave young woman hears the angel's words and believes. As a faithful steward, what possibilities do you see for our community and congregation?

JUST A REMINDER THAT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27TH is the last day to receive credit for your 2020 contributions. Any offerings received after that date will be credited to 2021. Thank you for your cooperation.

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 – 1st Lesson

7Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' ³Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.'

4 But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders* of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made

sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Romans 16:25-27 – 2nd Lesson

25 Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Luke 1:26-38 - Gospel

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old

age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

St. Paul's Lutheran "Blue" Church
Prayers ✕ Fourth Sunday of Advent ✕
December 20, 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: Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A brief silence

A: Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God.

"Your mercy is great."

A: Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God.

“Your mercy is great.”

A: Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence. 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: Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. 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.



Fourth Sunday *of* Advent