



St. Paul Lutheran Church

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La Grange, Texas

Rev. Stan Larson, Interim Pastor
Praise Band Sunday

Sunday, 9:00 am
December 3, 2023
First Sunday of Advent



**HEAVEN AND EARTH
WILL PASS AWAY, BUT**
my words
WILL NOT PASS AWAY.
MARK 13:31

Next weekend's readings:

Isaiah 40: 1-11; Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3: 8-15a

Mark 1: 1-8

Visit our webpage, www.stpaulg.org, and click **"Live Worship"** to hear our services live on your smart phone or computer! You can choose to watch live or listen only. You can also view our bulletin, weekly service video, newsletters and current calendar. Visit our Facebook page to view the service live Sunday morning at 9 a.m.

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PO Box 567 / 110 W. Walnut Street, La Grange, Texas 78945

Parish Office: 979-968-5657 Fellowship Hall: 979-968-9603

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.; 2 - 5 p.m.

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Welcome!

- + Welcome to worship! All are welcome at the table of grace. We believe that Christ is truly present as we share the bread and wine. Those at home are invited to participate with appropriate elements.
- + The 9 a.m. service will be on Facebook live & audio streamed on our webpage, www.stpaullg.org. It will also be posted on our Facebook page. You may listen to last week's service on KBUK 104.9 FM on Sundays at 10 am.

GATHER

Prelude

Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

A: Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your arrival. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace. **Amen.**

Hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Verse 5 #257

Stand as able

Invocation *The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism.*

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Hymn

(See Overhead Screen)

Greeting

P: 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

P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen

Sit

First Reading: Isaiah 64: 1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴**O LORD God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Stand as able

Gospel Acclamation

(See Overhead Screen)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The Gospel: Matthew 13: 24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sit

Children’s Word

Pastor Stan Larson

Sermon

Pastor Stan Larson

Stand as able

Hymn

(See Overhead Screen)

P: 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, 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

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

Call your church into holy fellowship as we await the restoration of all things. Reenergize your faithful people to live with hope and compassion, especially those who serve as missionaries near and far. Center us on your promise to come among us and make all things new. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

All creation signals your presence, O God: the vastness of the cosmos, the turn of the seasons, and living things that both rest and flourish. Rekindle our commitment to care for the earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Let the nations tremble at your holy presence, that justice and liberation prevail in all corners of the earth. Restore peace to nations in conflict, teach righteousness to corrupt leaders and systems, and bring stability to areas facing uncertain futures. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Enrich the spirits of all who feel hopeless, fearful, or despairing. Stay close to those who await healing or relief especially: Myrtle, Delores, Russell, Aldine, Mary Ann, and Ruth. Deliver all in any need. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Be with those who keep awake at night: nurses working overnight shifts, caregivers of newborns and aging adults, stargazers, those who are anxious, or those who are traveling. Reveal to all that the dark can be a place of calm and comfort filled with your presence. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You have sent out your angels and gathered your faithful people from every time and place, calling them into one fellowship of saints. Bless the witness of those who dwell in your eternal presence especially Francis Xavier, whom we commemorate today. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

Amen.

The Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Sit

Offering *The offering plates will be passed.*

Stand as able

Offertory *(See Overhead Screen)*

Offering Prayer

P: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

MEAL

The Great Thanksgiving *ELW 144*

P: 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:

(See Overhead Screen)

Words of Institution

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.

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

Communion

All are welcome to the Lord's table. White grape juice is in the center of the tray of cups. If you are physically unable to come forward for communion, please tell an usher and communion will be brought to you. You may also remain in your pew and use a prepackaged kit.

Prayer after Communion

P: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

P: The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✝ remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Song *(See Overhead Screen)*

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

This Weekend: 12/3

9:00 am **USHERS:** Billy & Christy Nietsche
JoLene & Gerald Hughes

LECTOR: Praise Band

ALTAR GUILD: Sharon Elias

FELLOWSHIP REFRESHMENTS: Church Council

FLOWERS: In Honor of Pastor Sid and Susan Roden

Next Weekend: 12/10

9:00 am **USHERS:** Don Koether, Rhonda Koether
Bonnie Sladek, Jackie Skelton

LECTOR: Bonnie Sladek

ALTAR GUILD: JoLene & Gerald Hughes

FELLOWSHIP REFRESHMENTS: Open

FLOWERS: Ginger Friemel

SUNDAY: 9:00 am Worship

10:30 am Sunday School

MONDAY: 6:30 pm Friends in Faith

WEDNESDAY: 8:30 am Bible Study

5:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Handbells

6:30 pm LYO

7:00 pm Choir

8:00 pm Praise Band

SUNDAY: 9:00 am Worship

10:30 am Sunday School

This morning we welcome Pastor Stan Larson as our presiding minister and our new Interim Pastor at St. Paul.

Pastor Stan will be in the office Monday thru Wednesday weekly. He can be reached at: (830) 203-4442.

Reminder—Friends in Faith will meet Monday December 4, 2023 at 6:30 pm at the home of Faith Frerichs; 5739 Mueller Rd; La Grange. They will assemble Fruit Baskets for the members of St. Paul that are homebound. Please bring fruit for the baskets and a snack to share for the evening.

The Church Office will be closed on Thursdays and Fridays while Office Manager Ruth Poncik is out recovering from knee replacement surgery. Phone calls to the office (979-968-5657) will be monitored during this time if you need pastoral care or have other concerns.

Please contact a member of the executive committee of the church council for any other assistance: Karen Bellue (979-966-2889), Paul Mikula (979-250-3362) or Donnie Dippel (979-966-7426).