

Worship Notes for Visitors & Members

Welcome to worship - Welcome to all, and especially to our visitors, we are glad you are here today, and hope that you will worship with us again soon and often. Please fill out an attendance card and place it in the offering plate. These will aid our record-keeping. Thank you. Large print bulletins are available from an usher in the narthex. *“It is good to worship the Lord together, and to come into his presence with thanksgiving.” Psalm 95*

Welcome children - Jesus said “Let the children come to me.” Children are welcome and encouraged to worship here at St. Paul. We rejoice that they are among us; however, if you need it, our nursery is available at all services and you can hear the service on audio. An usher will guide you.

St. Paul welcomes all to the Communion Table. Christ is the Host and the Meal. Come, taste, and see that the Lord is good. Grape juice is available for those who prefer it rather than wine. Children and those choosing not to receive Holy Communion are invited to come forward to receive a blessing.

There are **restrooms** located in the basement of this building and on the ground floor of the hallway leading to our fellowship hall and on each floor of the educational building.

PARTICIPANTS

<u>MINISTERS</u>		The People of God
<u>PASTOR</u>		Rev. John Shipman
<u>ORGANIST</u>		Marvis McNeil
<u>CHOIR DIRECTOR</u>		Marty Cantleberry
<u>ASSISTING MINISTER</u>	5:30 p.m.	
	9:00 a.m.	Scott Parkham
<u>LECTOR</u>	5:30 p.m.	Phil Wickstrom
	9:00 a.m.	Cathy Kieliszewski
<u>FELLOWSHIP VOLUNTEERS</u>	5:30 p.m.	Anita Laub
	9:00 a.m.	Nancy Clark, Angie Parrish
<u>USHERS & GREETERS</u>	5:30 p.m.	John and Linda Snyder
	9:00 am.	Owen Werth, Dennis Dziesinski
		Richard Miller, Kathy Burton
<u>ACOLYTE</u>	5:30 p.m.	Emily Smith
	9:00 a.m.	Alex Wickstrom
<u>ALTAR CARE</u>		Patti Byce and Laurie Stafford

We thank all participants for enriching our worship service.

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Worship Service
celebrates and shares God’s love and compassion
727 S. 2nd, Alpena, MI 49707
Phone 989-356-1658
www.stpaul.org
A Stephen Ministry Congregation



December 23, 2023 - 5:30 p.m.
December 24, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.

Please join us for our Christmas Day Worship on December 25th at 9:00 a.m.

We welcome into the kingdom of God through the sacrament of Holy Baptism (Sun. 9:00 a.m.) **Maelynn Raye Saddler and Huxley Thomas Saddler**, children of Andrew and Ashley Saddler. Maelynn’s sponsors are Ashley and Nicholas Lacross and Huxley’s sponsors are Jolene St. Charles and Adam Rose Sr. May our Lord surround them with His grace as they grow to know Him as Lord and Savior.

We will have a Unity Service on December 31st at 9:00 a.m. Please note, there will be no other services that weekend.

The **Epiphany Dessert** event will be January 6, 2024 after the Saturday service. We need volunteers to make desserts and/or host a table. Questions? Please contact Doreen at 989-916-9172.

All are invited to our January Video Educational Experience on January 10th at 6:00 p.m. We will be watching “Breakthrough” and a meal will be provided with discussion throughout.

The Forget-Me-Nots will not meet on Tuesday, January 2. We will gather on Saturday, January 20 at 2:00 pm to attend a special event to honor the Girl Scouts of America at the Jesse Besser Museum. Our troop from St. Paul will be represented. If you have not visited the Museum recently, this will be a good time to tour the museum and also support the Girl Scout troop affiliated with St. Paul.

Save the date – Saturday, January 20th! The Stewardship Committee will again be hosting a PASTA NIGHT following the Saturday 5:30 p.m. service. Plan to come and enjoy good food, fellowship, and fun. A Chinese auction and 50/50 raffle will be part of the evening. If anyone would like to donate raffle items, please contact Dennis or Lori Dziesinski at 989-464-7112 or 989-590-8568. This year we are requiring people to get a ticket. The tickets will have no cost, but will help with making sure we have enough food or not too much. Get your ticket from committee members or at the church office.

Mark your calendars for our next Women’s Retreat on Friday, January 26th. Our theme is “Vision of Leadership for Women.” The event will take place at 1921 Long Rapids Road and there is no cost associated with this event. We will explore God’s promises for community and fellowship for women. Ages 18 – 100 are invited to discover God’s faithfulness in your faith journey.

WEEK AT A GLANCE: DECEMBER 24 – 31, 2023	
<u>SUN.</u>	Sunday Worship/HC – 9:00 a.m.; Fellowship – 10:00; Contemporary Service & Children’s Church –10:30; Christmas Eve Services – 3:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m., and 8:00 p.m.
<u>MON.</u>	Christmas Worship Service – 9:00 a.m.
<u>TUES.</u>	Church Office Closed
<u>WED.</u>	Church Office Closed
<u>THURS.</u>	Church Office Closed; Stitched Together – 11:00a.m.
<u>FRI.</u>	Church Office Closed
<u>SAT.</u>	No Worship Service – Join us for the Unity Service Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
<u>SUN.</u>	Unity Service – 9:00 a.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church celebrates and shares God's love and compassion.

WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS: Don Urban, Sr. – health issues Alisha Freese - illness
Tammy Stoutenburg - unspecified need Annette Wade – medical issues Art Hoffmeyer – heart issues
Danielle Lawrence – health issues Bodo Hanson – health issues Bodo Hanson – health issues
Barbara Carlson –unspecified need John Wegmeyer – health issues David Reeves – health issues
Marty & Liz Smith – home sells Kevin Langerfield - recovery Eugene Brooks–health issues
Sutton Badder –unspecified need Dolores Libka – unspecified need Jake Shipman – accident
Phyllis Robb - unspecified need Karen Wallace–unspecified need Marian Dove–unspecified
(Prayer is the best medicine and we are prepared to pray indefinitely for folks. Would you please help the church office keep our list current? Unless we know otherwise, our normal practice is to remove names after a month. Thank you for your partnership in prayer.)

We remember our prayer partners in the North/West Lower Michigan Synod: Mamrelund Lutheran Church, Kent City, Rev. Michael Conklin.

We pray for the Dynamic Ministries here at St. Paul Lutheran Church. This week we specifically pray for the Recovery Yoga Classes.

THE FLOWERS IN THE CHANCEL (foot of the cross) are given in loving memory of Barb Spragg from Gary and family.

<u>WORSHIP ATTENDANCE</u>			<u>END OF OCTOBER</u>		<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Wednesday (12/13)	12:25 p.m.	40	Income	25,620.92	266,579.91
Saturday (12/16)	5:30 p.m.	50	Expenses	<u>26,162.41</u>	<u>288,926.06</u>
Sunday (12/17)	9:00 a.m.	68	Difference	(541.49)	(22,346.15)
	10:30 a.m.	<u>30</u>			
Total		188			

The December Service Activity is Sanborn Elementary School. Items needed: Chapstick - plain non flavored, Gold Bond Healing Lotion, freezer gallon sized zip lock bags, 24 pack of small sized disposable water bottles. **Clothing** - girls underwear size 10 & 12, girls short sleeved shirts size 14/16, girls long sleeved shirts sized 14/16, boys underwear size 6, boys athletic pants sizes 6, 8, 10 & 12, Boys tennis shoes size 3 & 4. Please leave items on the altar. Thank you for your generosity.

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Services will be held at 3:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 24th. Holy Communion will be served at all services. We will also have all of our regular services that weekend.

The church office will be closed the week after Christmas, December 25th – January 1st. We will be back in the office on Tuesday, January 2nd.

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD
The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 23, 2023 - 5:30 p.m.
December 24, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.

Congregational responses are printed in bold.

Welcome! Celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries and a time to welcome our guests. We ask that you fill out the communion card and place it in the offering plate.

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Please Stand)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

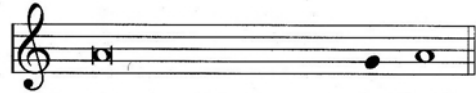
Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN "My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness" (Red) #251

GREETING

Pastor: The free gift of grace in Jesus Christ, the reconciling love of God, and the life and peace of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
People: And also with you.

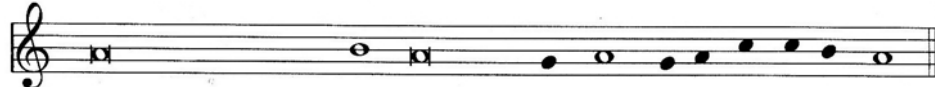
KYRIE *(Sung at the 9:00 a.m. service)*



A In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



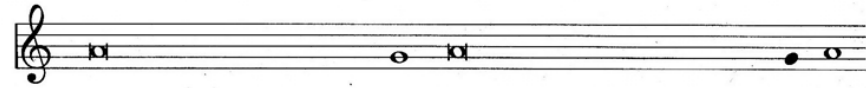
C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal-vation, let us pray to the Lord.



C Lord, have mer - cy.



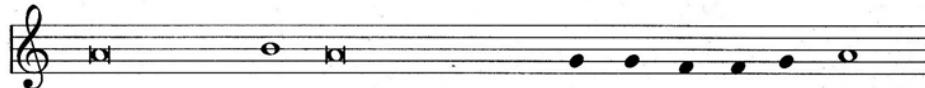
A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



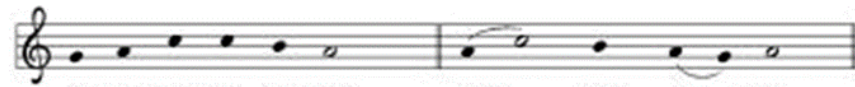
and for the uni-ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



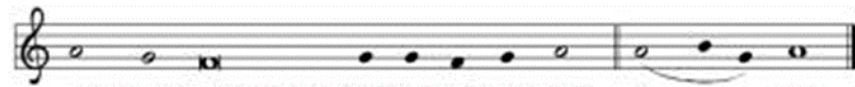
C Lord, have mer - cy.



A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

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SERMON NOTES

POST COMMUNION CANTICLE

“Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise”

C Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
 one what God has done. Let all who seek the
 Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.
 Send us with your prom - is - es, O God,
 and lead us forth in joy with shouts
 of thanks - giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray: 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.**

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN

“Joy to the World”

(Red) #267

HYMN OF PRAISE (Sung at the 9:00 a.m. service)

Refrain
 Assisting minister
 This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

All
 1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us
 free to be peo - ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and
 strength, and hon - or and bless - ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain
 This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the
 hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and
 might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



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.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we dream and wait for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. **Amen.**

Light four candles.

(Please be seated)

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now 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.”

⁴But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, ⁵“Go 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

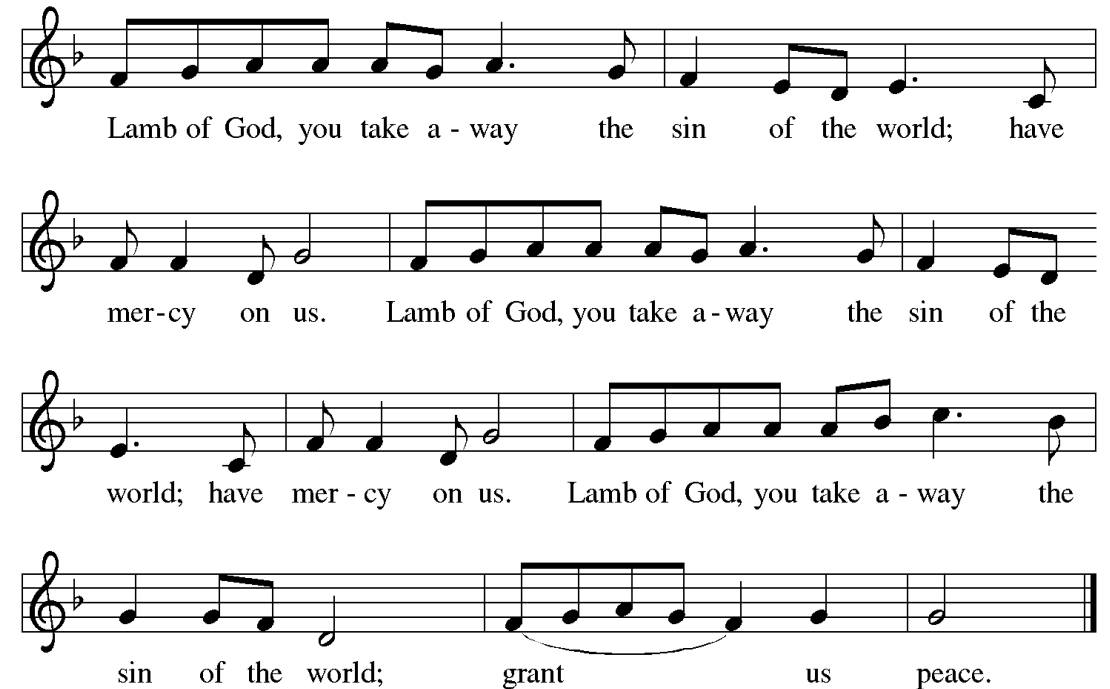
People: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

(Pleased be seated)

HOLY COMMUNION

All are welcome at the Lord’s Table. Christ is both the host and the meal. Come, taste and see that the Lord is good. Those not receiving Communion are invited forward for a blessing. There is grape juice for those who prefer it.

“Lamb of God”



Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

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.

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise . . . *(concluding)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, my heart, my heart a - dore you! My
San - to, san - to, san - to, mi cor - a - zon te a - do - ra! Mi
heart is glad to say the words: you are ho - ly, Lord.
cor - a - zon te sa - be de - cir: san - to - e - res Se - ñor.

EUCCHARISTIC BLESSING

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us:

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, ¹¹ from 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.

¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.”

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

PSALM: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 (Read Responsively)

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to my servant David:

‘I will establish your descendants forever and build your throne for all generations.’

Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one and said, “I have set the crown on one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people.

I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him; my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.

The enemy shall not outwit him; the wicked shall not humble him.

I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.

My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name his horn shall be exalted.

I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.

He shall cry to me, ‘You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!’

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27 (Sunday 9:00 a.m.)

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 ²⁶ 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—²⁷ to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

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

(Please Stand)

Gospel Acclamation



The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In 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.

The Gospel of Our Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Children's Message

"This Little Light of Mine"
 This little light of mine
 I'm gonna let it shine
 This little light of mine
 I'm gonna let it shine
 This little light of mine
 I'm gonna let it shine
 Let it shine let it shine let it shine

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(Please be seated)

SERMON

"Servant of the Lord"

Pastor John Shipman

(Please stand)

HYMN OF THE DAY

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

(Red) #257

Confession of Faith: The Nicene Creed

People: 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 THE CHURCH

Merciful God,
 receive our prayer.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. 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.**

(Please stand)

(Sung at the 9:00 a.m. service.)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING