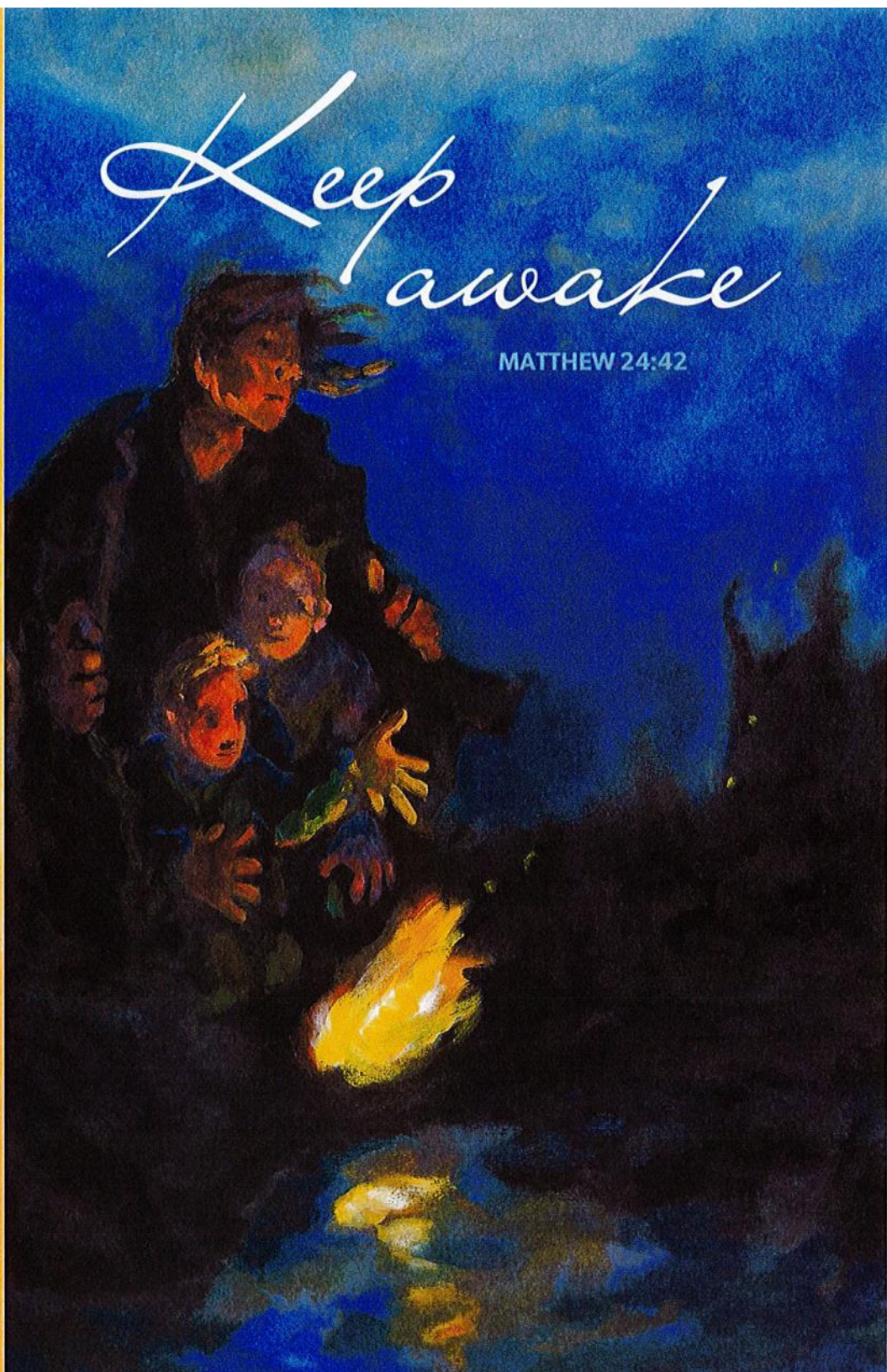


# Keep awake

MATTHEW 24:42



# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

[www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

Email: [st.paulsyork@comcast.net](mailto:st.paulsyork@comcast.net)

[www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com](http://www.stpaulspreschoolyork.com)

Facebook: St. Paul's Lutheran Church York PA on Springettsbury & George

YouTube: St. Paul's Lutheran Church - South George St. York

**WELCOME** Thank you for being with us.

**We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition** (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 186 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

**Postlude** It is our tradition to remain seated for the postlude. If you need to leave we ask that you do so reverently. This tradition developed as a result of our livestream. We want anyone viewing to be able to listen to the postlude without unnecessary distraction. Thank you.

**Restrooms** are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex (George St). Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms as well as in the nursery.

**Offerings** Monetary offerings may be placed in the basins provided at the entrances to the nave prior to the service. You may also donate via our website at [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

**The Nursery** is accessed through the front right double doors. The 10:30AM liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Currently, we are working to secure volunteer staff for the Nursery. Carrie Oberholtzer is coordinating a schedule. Please contact the office to volunteer.

## First Sunday of Advent November 27, 2022

**Holy Communion 8:00 & 10:30 AM**

*Musical setting 1 from Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

### PRELUDE

*Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*

Leo Sowerby

*Stand turning towards the font.*

### CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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.**

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are in bondage 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**

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**

## ENTRANCE HYMN

### *Rejoice, Rejoice Believers (ELW 244)*



- 1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
- 2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
- 3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'nings bore,
- 4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.  
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.  
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.  
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.  
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.  
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;  
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.  
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.  
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.  
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

## APOSTOLIC 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.**

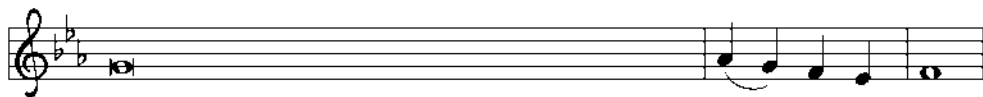
## KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



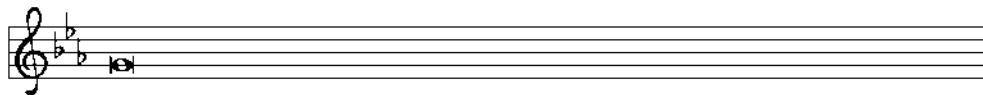
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



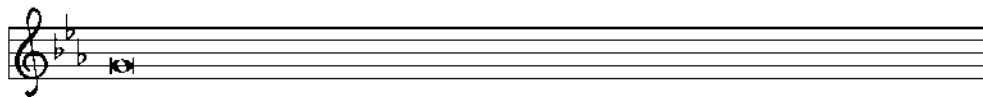
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



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



A - men, a - men.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. . . . Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Protect us by your strength and save us from the threatening dangers of our sins, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

*Sit*

## CHILDREN'S SERMON

### FIRST READING

Isaiah 2:1-5 *(back cover)*

### 8:00 AM PSALMODY **Psalm 122** *Spoken Responsively*

- <sup>1</sup> I was glad when they | said to me,\*  
"Let us go to the house | of the LORD."
- <sup>2</sup> **Now our | feet are standing\***  
**within your gates, | O Jerusalem.**
- <sup>3</sup> Jerusalem is built | as a city\*  
that is at unity | with itself;
- <sup>4</sup> **to which the tribes go up, the tribes | of the LORD,\***  
**the assembly of Israel, to praise the name | of the LORD.**
- <sup>5</sup> For there are the | thrones of judgment,\*  
the thrones of the | house of David.
- <sup>6</sup> **Pray for the peace | of Jerusalem:\***  
**"May they pros- | per who love you.**
- <sup>7</sup> Peace be with- | in your walls\*  
and quietness with- | in your towers.
- <sup>8</sup> **For my brethren and com- | panions' sake,\***  
**I pray for | your prosperity.**
- <sup>9</sup> Because of the house of the | LORD our God,\*  
I will seek to | do you good."

### 10:30 AM CHANCEL CHOIR *As the Dark Awaits the Dawn*

Carl Schalk

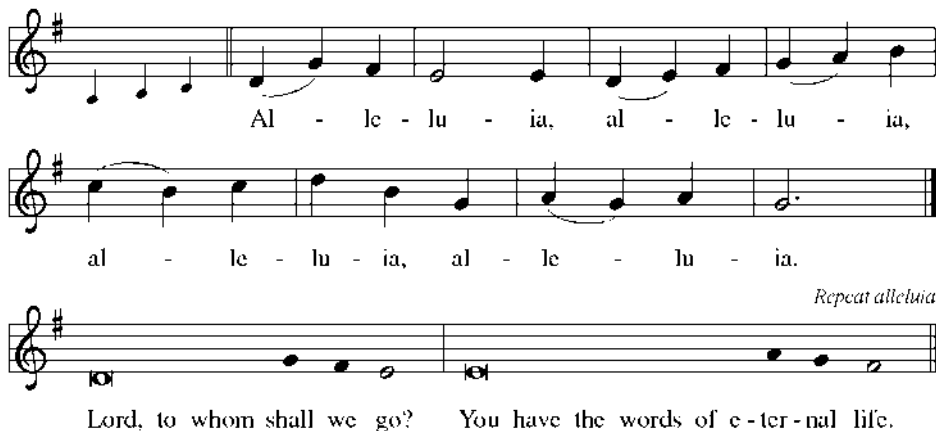
### SECOND READING

Romans 13:11-14 *(back cover)*

*Stand*



## VERSE



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.  
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

*Repeat alleluia*

## HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 24:36-44 (*back cover*)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the conclusion of the Gospel.*

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

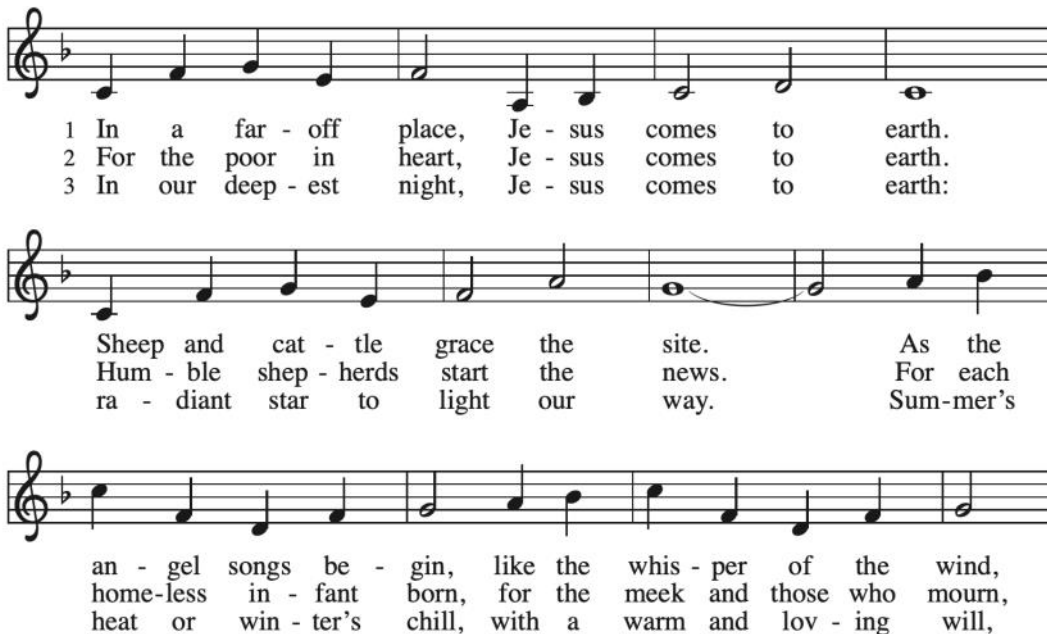
## SERMON

Pastor Stan Reep

*Stand*

## HYMN OF THE DAY

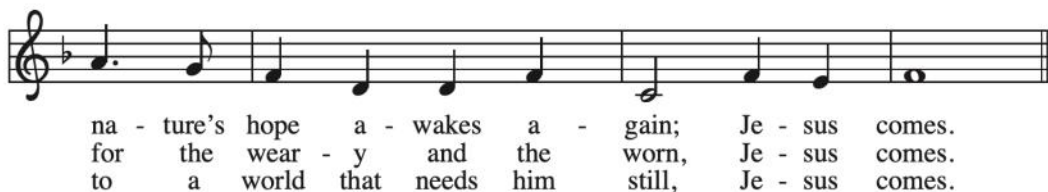
*In a Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes (ACS 908)*



1 In a far - off place, Je - sus comes to earth.  
2 For the poor in heart, Je - sus comes to earth.  
3 In our deep - est night, Je - sus comes to earth:

Sheep and cat - tle grace the site. As the  
Hum - ble shep - herds start the news. For each  
ra - diant star to light our way. Sum - mer's

an - gel songs be - gin, like the whis - per of the wind,  
home-less in - fant born, for the meek and those who mourn,  
heat or win - ter's chill, with a warm and lov - ing will,



## 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**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs. *A brief silence.*

Lord God, awaken the global church to the urgent needs of our time. Break down barriers through your redemptive and healing work. God, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Teach us your ways of sharing resources and caring for life. Guard fragile habitats, preserve the wild places, and protect endangered plants and animals. God, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Beat our weapons into tools for serving the neighbor. Strengthen the resolve of all who work for an end to war. God, in your mercy,  
**hear our prayer.**

Fill those who hunger. Comfort the grieving *especially the family and friends of Orven Cook* and attend to those to whom death draws near. Bring help and hope to any who are sick or needing your care (*especially Carolyn Kapoun, Hugh Miller, Bill Diaczun, Kathy Ruth, Wayne Umland, Jim Yanick, Maria Laczkoskie, Mary Buler, Marcie Walker, Bonnie Schmidt, Jim Young, Gary Bilbie, Erin Bastian, Harry Harman, Katie Guyer, Amy Hollis, Heidi Glaudel, Kristine Gross, Rachel Barnes, Courtney Snell*). God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Guide congregations in transition or conflict (*especially*). Give wisdom to congregation councils, call committees, and ministry leaders. Keep us alert to unexpected opportunities for mission. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for the lives of the faithful who now rest in you. We trust that you will bring us into the company of all the saints with rejoicing. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**  
*The people share signs of peace.*

## OFFERTORY *O Little Town of Bethlehem stanza 3 (ELW 279)*

How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!

So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.

No ear may hear his com - ing; but, in this world of sin,

where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.

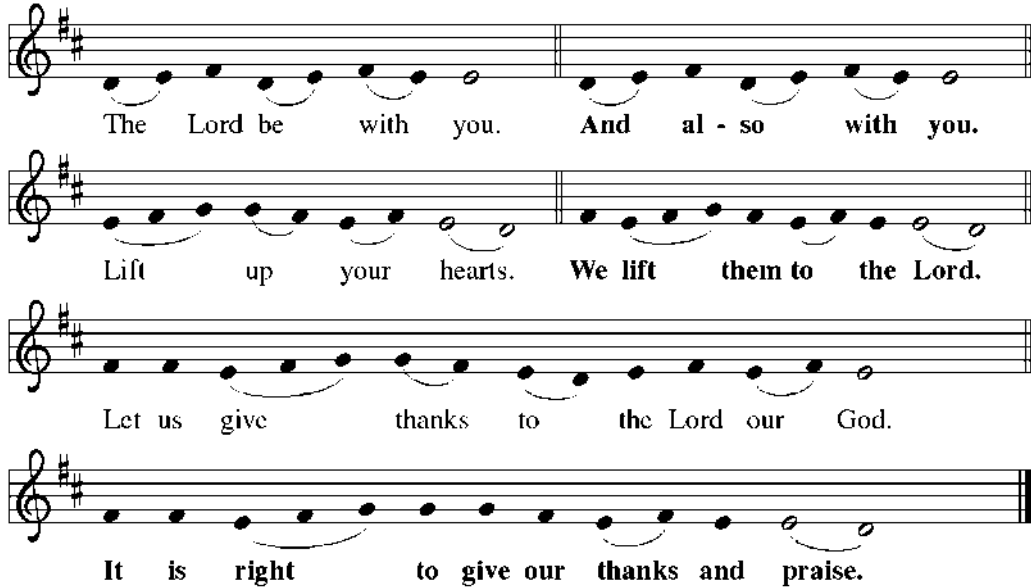


## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are you,

**O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

## PREFACE

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:

## SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -  
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the  
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

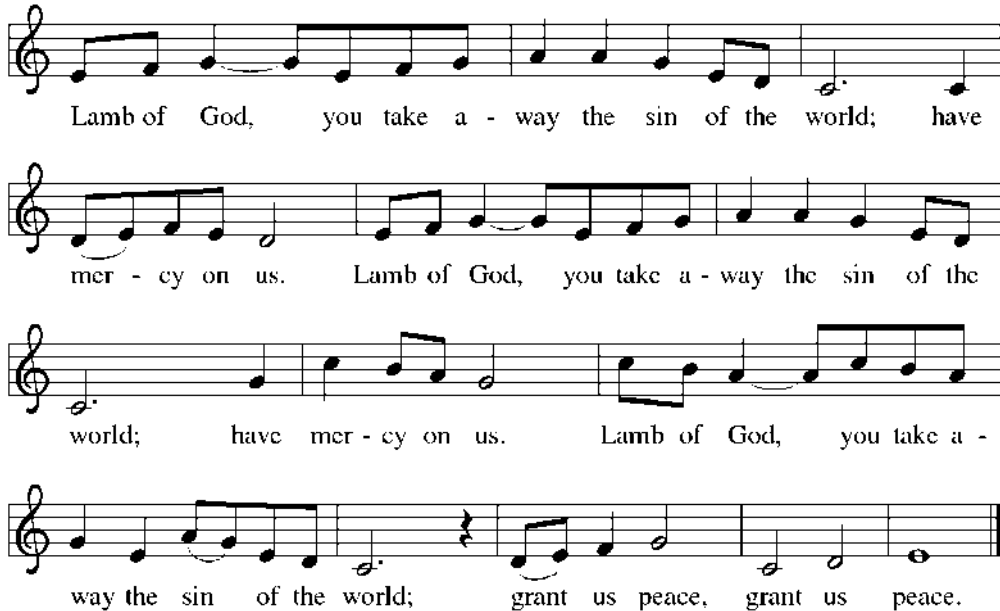
Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

## THE 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

**FRACTION** *A brief silence is kept.*

## AGNUS DEI



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have  
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the  
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -  
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

**Sit** *The pastor cleanses hands and prepares for the distribution of Holy Communion.*

## COMMUNION OF THE FAITHFUL

Our Communion is “open” to all believers who trust that the Risen Christ is present for his people in the Holy Eucharist.

1. Come to communion using the center aisle (about 10 adults per side).
2. Communion glasses are placed on credence tables at the front pews (left and right side).
3. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.
4. Take your place along the chancel step. The ministers will bring the bread and wine to you.
5. Extend your hands to receive the communion host.
6. Consume the communion host.

7. Hold the communion glass with both hands at chest height so that the communion assistant can easily pour the wine into the glass.
8. Consume the wine before you leave the chancel edge.
9. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.
10. Return to your pew using the side aisle.

### **Music during Distribution**

### **Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (ELW 254)**



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - `ry na - tion, joy of ev - `ry long-ing heart.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

### **Stand**

### **POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

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

### **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray. Almighty God, in the Eucharist you cleanse us from our sins and prepare us for the coming of your Son. Make us ready always to welcome Him into our hearts as we receive your Holy Sacrament; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Bless you now and forever. **Amen**

## HYMN

*Before the Ancient One, Christ Stands (ACS 953) next page*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## POSTLUDE

*Toccata on Veni Emmanuel*

Andrew Carter

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Flowers This Week

*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God  
In loving memory of Gene and Neil Shue by Norma Shue and Family*

**Advent Vespers**—Every Wednesday we will gather at 7:00 PM for the beautiful service of Evening Prayer. We are host for collaborative services with Grace York, St. Peter's N. York, and Christ Manchester.



### *Serving the Lord with Gladness*

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Communion Assistants	Greeters	Ushers	Altar Set-up & Altar Clean-up	Acolyte
11/27 Advent 1	8:00 AM	Ken Hinkle	Jennifer Ports			Mike & Linda Hanson	Jeff Riese, John Monk	Kathy Monk, Lois Ann Schroeder	
11/27 Advent 1	10:30 AM	Tristan Ericson	Janet Fitch	Ed LeCates	Larry Becker	Deb & Larry Becker	Dave Kopp, Dan Mays, Sandy Dickensheets, *Steve Heistand,	Deb Becker, Isabella Lehr	

### **Guidelines for Worship during the time of COVID-19**

*Wearing a mask while in worship is optional, recommended or required based on the CDC guidelines. Green/Optional, Yellow/Recommended, Red/Required. The instruction will be posted on the entry doors. Please be sure to bring a mask in the event of required/recommended masking. Disposable masks are available at the entrance to the church nave.*

**Our COVID-19 task force** is assisting us as we remain open. Please thank Dr. Jessica Ericson, Sheridan Palmer, Deacon Harold Sargeant, Norma Shue, and Dr. Martha Thomas for their dedication and service.

# Before the Ancient One, Christ Stands



1 Be - fore the An-cient One, Christ stands, en - robed in cloud and  
 2 Who was, who is, and is to come as ser - vant lived in  
 3 Now in the lat - ter days you call, O Christ, and plead the



bright as snow, five wounds im - print his side, feet, hands, and  
 hu - man sphere; com - pas - sion was his di - a - dem; his  
 prem - ise clear, that pow - er grasped is none at all, and



thorns, the gar - land on his brow. Yet thrones and  
 glo - ry was the gen - tle tear; hu - mil - i -  
 serv - ing shows your Spir - it near. As na - tions



pow'rs fall to the knee and weave a song of maj - es - ty,  
 ty, his pur - ple garb; the heal - ing hand, his roy - al orb.  
 clash and wis - dom wanes, as glo - ries tempt and greed sus - tains,



for what the world ad - mires as gain is not the es - sence  
 Such love drew ire and ire drew death, but God has proved the  
 you bid us choose in ev - 'ry hour the pow'r of love, the



of Christ's reign, and strength is his, and name and  
 tru - er strength, and through all space the host pro -  
 great - est pow'r, that love may her - ald God's do -



might, be - cause he pit - ied hu - mans' plight.  
 claims the name a - bove all oth - er names.  
 main, and you, at last, may come to reign.



**This Week at St. Paul's**  
Church office open 7:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Mon—Thurs

**Sunday, November 27 Advent 1**

**Poinsettia orders due today**

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for all ages  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist  
6:30 PM AA meeting Community Rm

**Monday, November 28**

7:00 PM Mutual Ministry.—Christ Hall

**Tuesday, November 29**

9:30 AM Pantry  
6:00 PM Nativity play practice  
Children age 3 through grade 6

**Next Sunday, December 4, 3:00 PM**  
**St. Paul's to host York College Choir**  
**Holiday Concert.**

**Wednesday, November 30**

10—10:30 AM Pastor & Preschool - Nave  
10:30 AM Scripture Study—Christ Hall  
7:00 PM Vespers—Hope

**Thursday, December 1**

10—10:30 AM Pastor & Preschool - Nave  
6:30 PM Handbells—Christ Hall  
7:30 PM Chancel Choir—Music Rm

**Saturday, December 3**

10-12 noon York College Choir Rehearsal  
12:30 PM Private event Christ Hall

**Sunday, December 4 Advent 2**

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist  
9:15 AM Sunday School for all ages  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist  
3:00 PM York College Choir Holiday Concert

**News and Updates November 27, 2022**

**GOD'S GLOBAL BARNYARD IS IN FULL SWING!** Yes, last week our 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grades Sunday school class kicked off this mission project which offers support to family farmers worldwide. The “quarter tube” awaits your quarters in Good Shepherd Hall. Also, your Advent offerings are designated for this worthy cause.

**Church Offering Envelopes** are ready for you to pick up in the Good Shepherd Room.

**2023 Calendars** are available for a requested donation of \$20.00. They make wonderful Christmas gifts! All proceeds go towards the construction of a canopy for the Food Pantry.

**Hospitality Team**—Volunteers are needed to host the York College Choir, Sunday December 4th. The concert starts at 3pm. Please call the office if you can help.

**Mpuguso Raise the Roof** offerings may still be given today. Simply place your gift in a special pew envelope at mark it “Mpuguso Roof”.

**Advent Resources** are available in the Good Shepherd Room for all ages. Check it out!

STAFF		
Pastor	Rev. Stanley Reep	prreep.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Youth Director	Kelly Moore-Spencer	kmoorespencer.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Organist, Choir Director	Victor Fields	vfields.stpaulsyork@comcast.net
Bell Choirs Director	Leah McComas	lmccomas.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Children's Choir Director	Julianna Jones	jjones.stpaulsyork@gmail.com
Secretary	Patee Pizzirusso	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Sexton	Ted Weikert	st.paulsyork@comcast.net
Preschool Director	Deb Becker	director@stpaulspreschoolyork.com

Advent is here; and with it invitations; to come to Mount Zion, to live honorably, and to stay awake. This is a season that is different from other seasons in our life together. Most of my adult life I have tried to keep Christmas from steamrolling over Advent. Most of the time it seems that I am just not much fun, a stick in the mud, holding out for some obscure reason when attempting to guard this holy Advent season. Time spent in reflection exposed weakness on my part that I haven't done a good job of inviting people into the critical themes revealed in this first Sunday's readings. Nor have I provided church members with something other than the tinsel and glitter and favorite carols and greens with bright red bows that accompany Christmas. I, however, remain a stalwart of the Advent invitation for us to enter into a season of the Word because it is real and needed.

The Prophet Isaiah invites us to the mountain of the Lord. Here it is that we will be provided instruction accompanied with the word of the Lord. The wedding of instruction and word of the Lord provides a situation where nations and peoples *"beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."* The prophet proclaims that it is the Lord who judges and it is the Lord who arbitrates and through such judging and arbitration the people learn something other than war. If we are learning something other than war, then we must be learning about peace, not peace at any cost, but peace as made known through the word of the Lord. Such an invitation is truly needed, such instruction is needed, and what, according to the Prophet Isaiah, brings it about is the word of the Lord.

The Apostle Paul invites us to live honorably. The invitation alone suggests that the people in Rome, the newly formed Christian community and us by extension, were living dishonorably. Paul sets the alarm clock announcing a new tone, salvation is near! My first alarm clock was a wind up version with two bells that announced the appointed set time. My second alarm clock was in the form of a clock radio so you could choose between; the annoying buzzing sound or your favorite radio station. With the advent of cell phones I discovered the nearly endless possibilities of tones and tunes to raise me from slumber. In ancient Rome as advanced as they were the announcement of the new day, the alarm was rather fixed and limited. Paul reminds the early Christian community of the nearness of salvation and the importance of honorable living making known a way of life reflective of Christ. He couches it in language as if in the morning when you get up and change out of your pajamas, you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, you dress yourself in the Lord Jesus and all of his hope, love, joy and peace. This is the clothing that we reference in baptism. It is the kind of clothing that reminds you and those with whom you come in contact that you belong to Christ, and as God's child you walk in his ways and reflect them to others.

The first gospel, Matthew, invites us to stay awake. It is easier to be awake if you know the schedule. It isn't so difficult to be ready if you are aware of the time. Matthew relays how Jesus told his disciples about vigilance in faith and following. *"About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."* And as example Jesus reminded them of the story of Noah; how suddenly all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened and the rain fell on the earth for forty days

and forty nights, and Noah and his family were shut safely inside the ark which the Lord had commanded him to make. By further example we hear of the two women grinding meal together and the person whose house is plundered. And then another plea to be ready, stay awake!

In late 2020 my minivan slowly began to self-destruct. After more than a decade of faithful service to me and several additional years to the previous owner, I suppose I should have been aware of the time. In those days I was carpooling Allen and two of the neighborhood children to the middle school each day. These were the days of the pandemic and we didn't want the kids to be confined on the school bus 40 minutes to school each day. First it was the CD player that gave out, then the AC gave out, and then the electric motor on the driver's side rear door gave out. But it was the day that the kids got out curb side at the middle school and the passenger's side rear door wouldn't close, when I physically had to get out and go around to the other side and wrestled the door closed stopping traffic and the flow of student drop off and as you well might imagine the embarrassment to three middle schoolers who walked away pretending that they didn't know me, that I decided to purchase a newer vehicle. I will not elaborate on student drop off procedure for the ensuing weeks where the three kids exited the van through the back lift gate! But the kids were elated that the new vehicle has doors that work. There are other fabulous features which I will not enumerate. But there is one feature that I have grown to appreciate. When driving along especially on longer trips occasionally you hear a simple non-threatening chime and an image of a coffee cup appears in red on the dash with the words, "*Consider taking a break.*" The vehicle senses that I have drifted out of my lane and is kindly alerting me to the importance of a break in order to stay awake!

Today it is the Risen Ascended Lord announcing to us the importance of taking a break, of being ready. It is the Lord reminding us that in baptism we are set free from things that hold us and bind us, and that lure us away from his way of hope, love, joy and peace. He clothes us with forgiveness and life preparing us for the unexpected hour. *Consider taking a break* chimes the dashboard knowing that I have not been as attentive to my task. The word of the Lord comes to us in Jesus the righteous judge. His desire is that we are ready, awake, watchful, living as children of his light and life and love.

Often when I hear stay awake or keep awake what I miss is the importance of the "break." I miss the significance that I have drifted out of my lane, off of the right path, begun to drift taking a different course. To take time, pull over, rejuvenate, get rest, refuel, walk, and even if possible switch drivers is important and can be lifesaving. That is the call of Christ Jesus to us this morning on this first Sunday in Advent. Had I made this connection with the season of Advent earlier in ministry it may have been helpful for others. Rushing to Christmas only keeps "the peddle to the metal." It doesn't provide the break in our lives, a season that is needed in order to be ready, ready to engage with others about being clothed in Christ, about beating plowshares into pruning hooks, about the peace of Christ, and the readiness that makes for faithful confident living. The Advent lending library in the Good Shepherd Room may provide you with a resource to assist you in this break, a gift to take time, pull over, rejuvenate, get rest, refuel, walk, and even if possible switch drivers. The word of the Lord comes to us in this Advent season inviting us to a fuller, richer, way of life through Christ Jesus. He tells us, his followers "*Keep awake!*" Amen.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5**

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house  
shall be established as the highest of the  
mountains,

and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

<sup>3</sup>Many peoples shall come and say,  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of  
the LORD,

to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths."  
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the LORD from  
Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup>He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into  
plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against  
nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

<sup>5</sup>O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk  
in the light of the LORD!

**Psalms 122****SECOND READING: Romans 13:11-14**

Besides this, you know what time it is, how  
it is now the moment for you to wake from

sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than  
when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is  
far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay  
aside the works of darkness and put on the  
armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in  
the day, not in reveling and drunkenness,  
not in debauchery and licentiousness, not  
in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put  
on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision  
for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36-44**

[Jesus said to the disciples,] "About that  
day and hour no one knows, neither the  
angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only  
the Father. <sup>37</sup>For as the days of Noah were,  
so will be the coming of the Son of Man.  
<sup>38</sup>For as in those days before the flood  
they were eating and drinking, marrying  
and giving in marriage, until the day  
Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and they knew  
nothing until the flood came and swept  
them all away, so too will be the coming  
of the Son of Man. <sup>40</sup>Then two will be in  
the field; one will be taken and one will  
be left. <sup>41</sup>Two women will be grinding meal  
together; one will be taken and one will  
be left. <sup>42</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you do  
not know on what day your Lord is coming.  
<sup>43</sup>But understand this: if the owner of the  
house had known in what part of the night  
the thief was coming, he would have stayed  
awake and would not have let his house be  
broken into. <sup>44</sup>Therefore you also must be  
ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an  
unexpected hour."