

You are to name him

# Jesus

MATTHEW 1:21

# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

25 W. Springettsbury Ave., York, PA 17403

Church Office 717-843-8155

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

[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 189 years. By worshipping with us today, you become part of that living tradition.

**Offerings** Offerings are received during the liturgy. They are presented along with gifts of bread and wine at the altar. You may also donate via our website at [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org) or use the QR Code provided.

**Restrooms** are located 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. The restrooms are independent units. Please remember to latch the door.

**An AED/Defibrillator** unit is located in the Good Shepherd room. It is placed on the wall left side of the Springettsbury door exit.

**The Nursery** is accessed through the front right double doors. The liturgy is live-streamed into the Nursery. Parents are asked to stay with their children. Quiet activities are also available in the Narthex for infant through preschool children to use with an adult.

**We ask parents to accompany their children** to the restroom during the liturgy and wait with them. This is a way for us to practice good safety protocol within our building.



*The altar flowers are presented to the Glory of God  
In Loving Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Melvin E. Lanning by daughter, Mrs.  
Richard Ault & Family*



**Lutheran Church in York, PA - St.  
Paul's Lutheran...**

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

STAFF		
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# Fourth Sunday of Advent

## December 21, 2025 10:30 AM

*Musical Setting #5 Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

### PRELUDE

*Each Winter as the Year Grows Older*

Ron Schmoltze

*Stand turning to face the font*

### ENTRANCE HYMN

*Creator of the Stars of Night (ELW 245) stanzas 1, 4 & 5*



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -  
2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in  
3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all  
4 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e -  
5 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,



last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,  
splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child  
hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,  
ter - nal day; de - fend us while we dwell be - low  
Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you hear us when we call.  
of Mar - y, bless - ed moth - er mild.  
like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.  
from all as - saults of our dread foe.  
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

### 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  $\text{†}$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

## 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** *During the singing of the Kyrie the procession moves to the Chancel.*



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



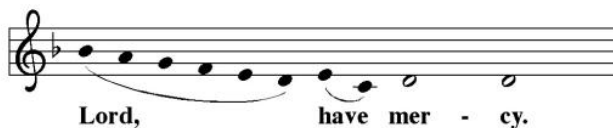
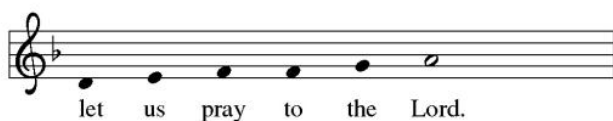
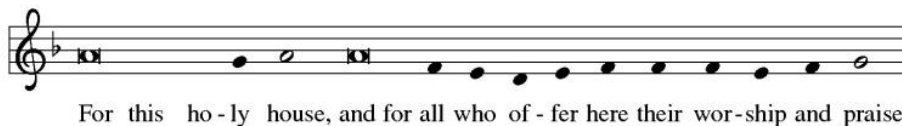
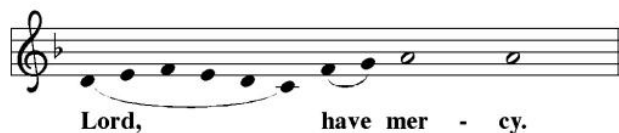
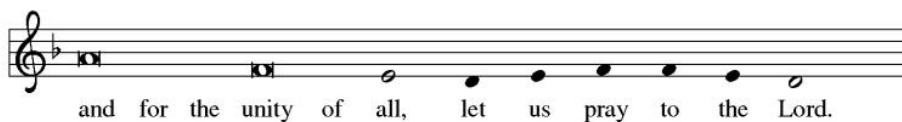
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



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



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. . . Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the hindrance of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Sit*

**FIRST READING**

**Isaiah 7:10-16**

*(back cover)*

**PSALM Psalm 80: 1-7, 16-18**

**Sung Cantor/Congregation**



*The antiphon is introduced by the Cantor and then sung by all at the appointed time.*

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.

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

<sup>3</sup>Restore | us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

<sup>4</sup>**O LORD | God of hosts,**  
**how long will your anger fume when your | people pray? R**

<sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the | bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

<sup>6</sup>**You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,**  
**and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.**

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

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

<sup>18</sup>And so will we never turn a- | way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

<sup>19</sup>**Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;**  
**let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved. R**

**SECOND READING**

**Romans 1:1-7**

*(back cover)*

*Stand*

## HYMN

***O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257)***

*Please sing the Carol as indicated by the stanza designations.*



All 1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 All 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things  
 High voice 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on  
 Low voice 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

All 5 O come, O Key of David, come,  
 and open wide our heav'nly home;  
 make safe the way that leads on high,  
 and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

High Voice 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
 O Sun of justice, now draw near.  
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
 and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

Low Voice 7 O come, O King of nations, come,  
 O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
 refresh the hearts that long for you;  
 restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

All 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 and ransom captive Israel,  
 that mourns in lonely exile here  
 until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

## **HOLY GOSPEL**

**Matthew 1:18-25** (*back cover*)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew  
*At the conclusion of the Gospel.*  
The Gospel of the Lord.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Sit*

## **SERMON**

The Reverend Stanley Reep

*Stand*

## **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.*

O God, use the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers to stir our spirits as we  
we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**



Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill  
(*especially*). God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service.

Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held fully in your love. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The ministers and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

*Sit*

## OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

Chancel Choir

*Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

arr. David H. Williams

*Stand*

## OFFERTORY

*What Feast of Love (ELW 487)*



1 What feast of love is of-fered here, what ban-quet come from heav-en?



What food of ev-er-last-ing life, what gra-cious gift is giv-en?



This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heav-en.



Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man-na giv-en!

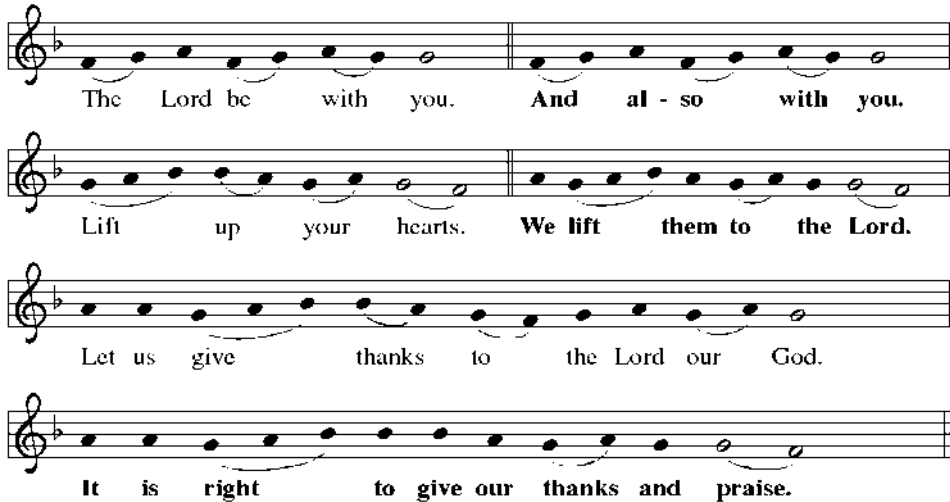
## OFFERTORY PRAYER

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

*Sung by Pastor and congregation*



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

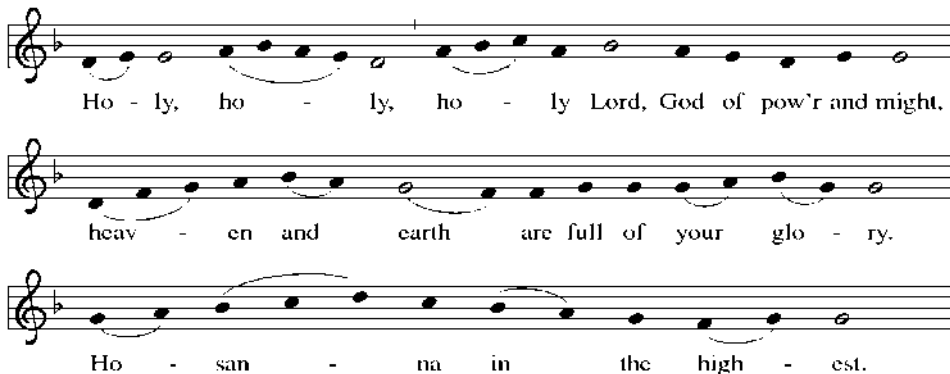
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## PREFACE *The preface appropriate to the day is sung.*

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:

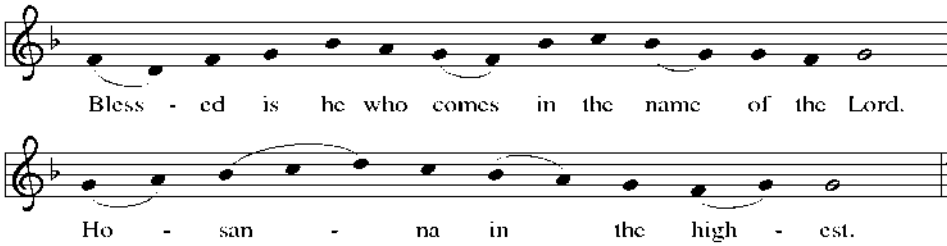
## SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est.



## THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth.

In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son,  
that all those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ.

Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a  
living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

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, then, his death and resurrection, we lift this bread and cup before you,  
giving you thanks that you have made us worthy to stand before you and to serve  
you as your priestly people.

And we ask you:

Send your Spirit upon these gifts of your Church; gather into one all who share this  
bread and wine; fill us with your Holy Spirit to establish our faith in truth, that we may  
praise and glorify you through your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him all glory and honor are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
in your holy Church both now and forever. **Amen**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

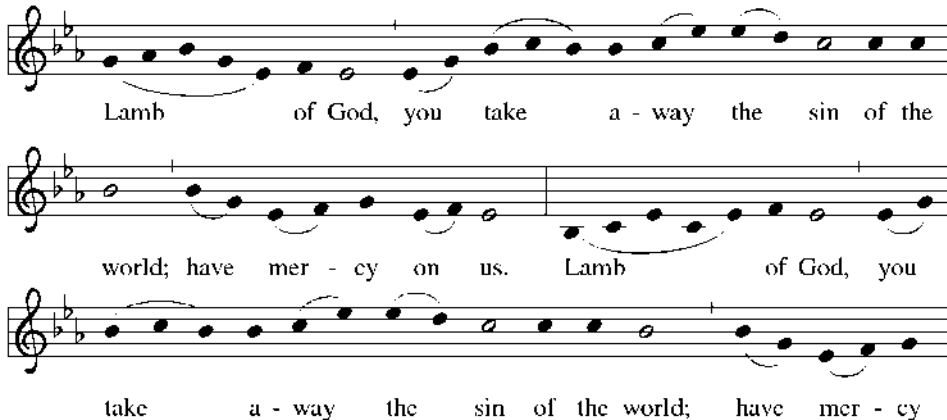


Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,  
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.  
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we  
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al  
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,  
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

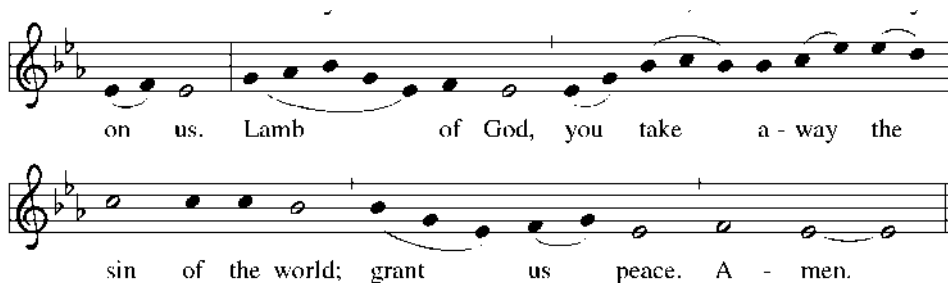
## FRACTION

*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



*Sit*

## 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.

*Procedure for receiving Communion:*

1. Come to communion using the center aisle.
2. Take a communion glass from the tray of glasses.
3. Take your place along the chancel step.
4. The ministers will bring the bread and wine to you.
5. Place the used cup in an empty tray located on a credence table at the side aisle.
6. Return to your pew using the side aisle

## COMMUNION HYMN

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



*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 you Holy Sacrament; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**BLESSING**

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

**RINGING IN OF CHRISTMAS**

**HYMN**

*Joy to the World (ELW 267) next page*

**DISMISSAL**

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

*Sit*

**POSTLUDE**

*Fling Wide the Door*

Klaus Uwe Ludwig

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***Serving the Lord with Gladness***

DATE	TIME	Assisting Minister	Crucifer	Lector	Greeters	Ushers -	Altar Guild	Bread Bakers
12/21 Advent 4	10:30 AM	Harrison Palmer	Christine Kates	James Palmer	Tom Gibson, Gail Kerchner	Team 2E: Ron Riese, Kathy Monk, Ken Hinkle, Alex Bastian	Lois Ann Schroeder, Kathy Monk	Norma Shue

**This Week at St. Paul's**

Church office open Mon–Tues 8:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

**Sunday, December 21 Fourth Sunday of Advent**

9:15 AM Sunday School for All Ages  
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist Combined Liturgy—  
Live Stream  
10:30 AM Ringing in of Christmas  
6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm

**Tuesday, December 23**

9:30 AM Pantry

**Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve**

3:30 PM Children's Choir reports  
4:00 PM Holy Eucharist  
7:00 PM Holy Eucharist—Live Stream

**Thursday, December 25 Christmas Day**

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist Combined Liturgy—  
Live Stream


**Sunday, December 28 Lessons & Carols**

**Holy Innocents**

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist Combined Liturgy—  
Live Stream  
6:30 PM AA Meeting—Community Rm



# Joy to the World



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin, and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,



**Visit from the Bishop**—The Rev. Stephen Herr, Bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA, will be with us on Sunday, January 25, 2026 for both liturgies and a Forum at 9:15 AM in Christ Hall. We are delighted to have him as our guest.

**BASKETBALL REFEREES NEEDED**—On Tuesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Jackson Elementary School is having a basketball “tournament” and is in need of referees or people who are somewhat proficient in basketball rules. It’ll be held from 9 a.m. till 11:30 a.m. This is a grand opportunity to interact with kids engaging in a healthy activity. Please contact Nancy Bennett if at all interested.

### **The Children Need You in the New Year**

Jackson Elementary School needs some adult volunteers for their kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms. They’re asking for an hour or two per week, more if desired in order to read to/with children and assist teachers. This need is a result of the former “grandparent” program losing its funding. If you have any interest or questions, please contact Nancy Bennett

**St Paul’s is collecting clothing for Union Lutheran Church’s Clothing Ministry** and your help is requested. Union’s volunteers are very appreciative of our cooperation and our help. If you have large donations you may take them directly to Union Lutheran Church. Simply call them to arrange a time.



**ADDITIONAL DATES HAVE BEEN ADDED! You may schedule your photo session on December 29 & 30. To keep the 30th date we must have 12 households register. Please do so ASAP. Please call the church office if you** have any questions. And remember that the 8 X 10 family portrait is free! Go to the Universal Church Directories website ([www.ucdir.com](http://www.ucdir.com)) to schedule your appointment.



**Food Pantry Needs:** St. Paul’s Food Pantry needs **Whole Grain Cereal donations**. We give out 80 boxes of cereal each week and our sources for cereal currently have very little available.



**Other Pantry Needs:** Peanut butter, Plastic and paper shopping bags, Monetary donations. Monetary donations can be placed in a special” envelope marked “Pantry”.

### **A Partnership Between Local Churches & LifePath Thrift Stores**

*Now is the time to clear out unwanted toys and donate them to LifePath BEFORE Christmas so families can purchase them to give to children at Christmas.* The stores then return a portion of the value of these items in the form of gift cards to your church to help those directly in your care. Look in your newsletter for more information.





## **Christmas Worship Schedule**

Please note the alternate service times throughout the Christmas Season

### **Sunday December 21, Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:30 AM**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

The Holy Eucharist

*The Ringing in of Christmas*

***Joy to the World***

### **Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve - The Nativity of Our Lord 4:00 PM**

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

The Holy Eucharist

Lighting of Hand Candles

*Children's Choir*

**7:00 PM**

*Once in Royal David's City*

The Holy Eucharist

Lighting of Hand Candles

*Handbells, Organ, Chancel Choir,*

### **Thursday, December 25, Christmas Day 10:30 AM**

*When Christmas Morn is Dawning*

The Holy Eucharist

### **Sunday December 28, The Holy Innocents, Martyrs 10:30 AM**

*Lully, Lullay, Thou Little Tiny Child*

The Holy Eucharist

### **Sunday January 4, Second Sunday after Christmas 10:30 AM**

*A Stable Lamp is Lighted*

The Holy Eucharist

Installation of Congregation Council

### **Tuesday, January 6, Epiphany of Our Lord 6:00 PM**

*What Child is This?*

The Holy Eucharist

*A liturgy designed for the children of the parish*

*All are welcome and encouraged to attend.*

## **Advent 4 A 2025**

### **Isaiah 7:10-16**

### **Romans 1:1-7**

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

Names tell a lot about places and people. York, Hanover, Lancaster local communities share something with York, Hanover and Lancaster across the Atlantic Ocean. As far as people are concerned, names are either part of a family's ancestry, or they are familiar reminders of another place, time, or situation. Names are fashionable. This year Noah and Olivia along with Liam and Emma top the list of popular names.

When I married Emily, my mentor professor friend Dr. Brown teased me and suggested that I take her maiden name of Wysocki. "Stanley Wysocki, now there's a good Lutheran pastor's name," he would say in Pennsylvania Dutch. Later he presented me with an old religious picture of the martyrdom of Saint Stanislaus. It graces the top shelf in my office. When my parents named me, it wasn't for St. Stanislaus, but rather for my great uncle. He was a simple hard-working farmer. When we had our daughter, I was unaware of the popularity of "A names.

In some families, names are used so frequently that they require numerals. It is not uncommon to end up with the third, or fourth, or the fifth in the same family. But whether it is number or popularity, names give shape to life and keep chronology and genealogy in a correct line.

That is where the writer of Matthew begins his account of the Lord's birth. Matthew wants us to follow the ancestral tree to recall the past saving action of God, as well as to point us toward God doing a new thing. The beginning of Matthew starts off with a report akin to something you could download from Ancestry.com. Great care is given to substantiate the genealogical line of David, from Abraham, all the way to Joseph, the husband of Mary.

This morning, we hear how the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary as his wife and that she will bear a son and then he is to name their newborn son Jesus; for he will save his people from their sins. Joseph in this account of the birth of Jesus is the one who gives the name to the newborn child. Joseph is the one who passes on the Davidic line. The child is named Jesus.

Now it seems that in the day of Mary and Joseph "J" names where as popular as "A" names where in the late 90's when our daughter was born. As Jesus grows, we hear about John the Baptizer, Jesus' cousin, who shares a "J" name. And then later in adult life we hear of another Jesus, another man sharing a "J" name.

This time it is not about a man who will save people from sin. This other Jesus indulges in acts of aggression, is a common criminal, robber, murder, a savage disserving of the punishment which awaits him. This one is standing trial in Pilate's court in

Jerusalem when Jesus of Nazareth is hauled into court for erroneous charges. Jesus Barabbas is the name people shout out. They scream Jesus Barabbas when asked by Pilate Which Jesus should go free. The people cried out to let Jesus Barabbas go free! *“And what should I do with the Jesus who is called Messiah?”* asks Pilate. And the crowd together, their voices raised *“let him be crucified!”*

The kingly line of David didn’t silence the crowd that day. Prestige, number, namesake, popularity must have ruled the day, or perhaps those with the loudest voices. They shared the name Jesus, but it was their action that identified them and told them apart for everyone to see.

Amid Christmas crowds shoving and shouting, honking horns and waving vulgar hand gestures, we wait for Jesus, Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph and his betrothed Mary. We wait for the one whose actions speak louder than words. Among the multitude who sell out the season for another good bargain, another holiday sale or bonus coupon, we look for the one named Jesus to come establishing his gentle reign punctuated by peace and good will, justice and righteousness. His action speaks in contrast to a world engulfed in high decibel meaninglessness.

The fourth Advent candle is lit as we await Jesus. Which Jesus? King Jesus, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus born of Mary whose earthly father was Joseph. This is the one who takes us into his reign and grafts us into his family through Holy Baptism. The font stands in our midst reminding us of the powerful event of God’s Spirit poured out on us, the water washing us from the filth of our human existence, the oil of gladness anointing us for service in his earthly and heavenly kingdom. This is the Jesus who welcomes us at his table and invites us to be his guests. In the Eucharistic fellowship we share with him and with one another a simple meal of bread and wine assuring us of his presence now, and in the future. Jesus saves us from our sins and offers us a new lease of life. He gives us another go at things we have royally botched. We are granted another day to share in his gracious love.

Names are important because they connect us. They tell us about ourselves and give shape to our lives. Through Jesus of Nazareth, we are connected to the history of salvation beginning from Abraham. Jesus gives shape to our lives, the cruciform shape of his cross traced on us, marking us for eternity. Let there be no confusion about which Jesus we await, which one we celebrate on Christmas. This is Emmanuel, God with us. The one who gives us his good name, a name above all names. Amen.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16**

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>“Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

**Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19****SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7**

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup>the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name,

<sup>6</sup>including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

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

**GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.