

John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands One you do not know, even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”

John 1:26-27



**St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church LCMS
605 South Center Street
Bremen, Indiana 46506
574.546.2332
stpaulsbremen.church**

Third Sunday in AdventDecember 17, 2023

Advent is a special time in the life of the church, and anyone familiar with this season knows that people in general understand Advent as a preparation for Christmas. But in fact, Advent is Advent! *Advent* means “coming.” Who is coming? Jesus, of course! And He is coming in glory to judge both the living and the dead, as we confess our faith.
Welcome to all who worship here today!

The Lord's Supper is a very special privilege God gives to His people. Because those who eat and drink our Lord's body and blood unworthily do so to their great harm and because the Holy Communion is a confession of the faith which is confessed at this altar, any who are not yet instructed, in doubt, or who hold a confession differing from that of this congregation and the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, and yet desire to receive this sacrament, are asked first to speak with the pastor or an elder. If you are not partaking of the Lord's Supper but would like to receive a blessing, please come up to the communion rail when sent by an elder, kneel, and cross your arms over your chest. The Pastor will then know that you desire a blessing.

OUR OFFERINGS TO THE LORD FROM HIS BLESSINGS TO US. Offerings remind us of the blessings God has given us and are an opportunity to thank Him for what He has done in our lives. Please place your offerings in our Offering Box located in front of the water fountains in the narthex of the church.

In Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” We welcome children and all the joy and little chatter that comes with them. If for any reason you want to take your little one out, there is a Nursery (Cry Room) available for use during our worship service. It is located just outside the sanctuary.

Chrismons were first developed in 1957 by Frances Kipps Spencer of Ascension Lutheran Church, Danville, VA as a way to reflect the Christian faith through ornaments. She then created books with the patterns for other churches to use. **Did you know that the white and gold chrismons** (white is the color for purity and gold symbolizes value, worth and God's majesty and glory) **that adorn our tree were lovingly made by St. Paul's members?** Many of these ornaments are over 60 years old! Please take the time to take a closer look at these symbols that speak of our one, true, living God.

Bell Choir “Oh Come Little Children”

Opening Hymn 341 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

✠ CONFESSIO AND ABSOLUTIO ✠

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. *(Matthew 28:19b)*

C Amen.

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

(Hebrews 10:22)

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. *(Psalm 124:8)*

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. *(Psalm 32:5)*

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. *(John 20:19-23)*

C Amen.

Adult Choir “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” *(LSB 357 v. 1, 2, & 6)*

Adult Confirmation of Lisa Clark

Song “Out of This World” **Solo by Kali Rose**
accompanied by Ellia Foster

✠ SERVICE OF THE WORD ✠

Introit

Psalm 85:8-9, 12-13; antiphon v. 7

P Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD,

C and grant us Your salvation.

P Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,

C for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

P Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,

C that glory may dwell in our land.

P Yes, the LORD will give what is good,

C and our land will yield its increase.

P Righteousness will go before Him

C and make His footsteps a way.

All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,

C and grant us your salvation.

Kyrie ~ Lord, Have Mercy (Mark 10:47)

LSB 186



C Lord, have mer - cy up - on us. Christ, have mer - cy up -



on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

(2 Timothy 4:22)



C And with thy spir - it.

P Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C A - men.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,
because the LORD has anointed Me
to bring good news to the poor;
He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

³to grant to those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations. . . .

⁸For I the LORD love justice;
I hate robbery and wrong;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful
headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Proper

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26

- P** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.
- C** **Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.**
- P** Behold, your King is coming to you;
- C** **righteous and having salvation.**
- P** Blessèd is He who comes in the name of the Lord.
- C** **From the house of the Lord we bless You.**

Epistle

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia

LSB 190



C Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia. Al-le - lu - ia.

Holy Gospel

John 1:6–8, 19–28

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.



C Glo - ry be to Thee, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. . . .

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us.

What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands One you do not know, ²⁷even He who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.



G Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

G I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life † everlasting. Amen.

Hymn 345 "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"

Sermon Text

John 1:6-8; 19-28

Sermon "Not an impersonator!"

John Was Not an Impersonator but a True Witness of Christ!

1. John refused to impersonate the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet to

be the _____ .

2. John was happy being what he was—only a witness pointing us to _____ who takes away our sin.
3. We aren't being impersonators either when we direct others to Christ; we are only being what we are - baptized and redeemed _____ .

Hymn 354 "Arise, O Christian People"

Prayers

Lord's Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*) *LSB 162*

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- C** **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.**

Benedicamus ~ Let Us Bless (*Psalms 103:1*) *LSB 202*

- P** Bless we the Lord.



- C** Thanks be to God.

Benediction (*Numbers 6:24-26*) *LSB 202*

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.



- C** A-men, a-men, a - men.

Closing Hymn 940 "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name"

Acknowledgments

Divine Service, Setting Three from Lutheran Service Book
Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.
Used by permission. All rights reserved. Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2023 Concordia Publishing House.
Cover Art: Vanzki Design; Vecteezy.com

The flowers on the altar have been placed there in loving remembrance of Anna Tjernagel, who was welcomed home by her Savior on December 17, 2017.

The arrangement of purple flowers (Desi’s favorite color) are given in loving memory of Desi Jones from her family.

The flower chart for 2024 is up! It is hanging in the Narthex next to the Altar Guild room. Please feel free to sign up if you’d like to place flowers on the altar.

Calendar of Events

TODAY December 17th, 2023

Sunday School & Bible Classes..... 8:30 am
Worship Service..... 9:30 am
Bell Choir Practice5:00 pm
Adult Choir Practice6:00 pm

MON:

TUES:

WED:

Day School/Preschool Chapel..... 11:00 am
Children’s Worship Service..... 7:00 pm

THURS:

.....**NO** Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study

FRI:

SAT:

NEXT SUNDAY December 24th, 2023

.....**NO** Sunday School & Bible Classes.....
Worship Service with Communion..... 9:30 am
Candlelight Christmas Eve Youth Worship Service..... 7:00 pm
No Bell or Adult Choir Practice.....

Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study will resume January 11th.

New Year’s Eve Service is Sunday, December 31st at 9:30 am.

***Please note that there is no 7:00 pm service.**

The new Portals of Prayer and Hope-full Living magazines for January-March 2024 and **LWML Winter Quarterly** are in the tract rack in the Narthex.

The Children's Christmas Service is December 20th at 7:00 pm. The children of our preschool and day school will participate in this service and share with us the birth of Jesus. Everyone is welcome!

Christmas Day Service is Monday, December 25th at 9:30 am with Holy Communion. Let us come together and celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus!

Christmas Lunch for the Bremen Police Department will be tomorrow, December 18th, at noon. The food will be provided by an action team card from Thrivent. We need a few desserts, and we are also in need of Christmas cards for our men and women on the force. If you are willing to help, please call Wayne Spicher or Pastor Wonnacott.

Christmas Eve Services. On this day we will have two services. The first is at the normal time of 9:30 am with Holy Communion. Our youth will lead the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:00 pm. Join us!

The Board of Christian Ed. is in need of individually wrapped candy to fill "goodie" bags for the Children's Christmas Service. Donations may be placed in the designated box located in the Narthex by Sunday, December 17th. Thanks for your help!

*** Special Note – There will be no Sunday School on Sunday, December 24th.**

Haiti Art will be available through Dec. 20th! Please see the table in the Narthex if you would like to purchase a unique decoration for your home or for a Christmas gift. All proceeds will go to support the Lutheran school teachers in the Jeremie area. There are suggested donation prices listed with the artwork. If you have any questions, please see Terry or Janet Miller. Thank you for your love and generosity for God's children in Haiti

PTL offers gift cards through Scrip. The commission they receive helps support our Youth Ministries! Orders can be taken from the school office, Heidi Wildauer or online at *raiseright.com*. *Enrollment code: 9EF639F559681*. **A great Christmas gift idea!** If you have any questions, please see Heidi, Rebecca Mejia or Jennifer Harman.

NOTICE REGARDING VOTERS MEETINGS IN 2024

In the November 27th, 2023 congregational voters meeting, a motion was made and approved to change the schedule for congregational voters' meetings in 2024. The change in schedule was made to give members a better opportunity to attend the voters meetings where there may have been schedule conflicts with other activities outside of St. Paul's or where the normal congregational voters meeting time of 7PM was a problem for members who cannot drive at night.

The schedule for 2024 Congregational Voters' Meetings is as follows:

Sunday, January 21st after worship service, in the Bethany (big) room

Sunday, April 21st after worship service, in the Bethany (big) room

Monday, June 24th – 7PM in the Bethany room/Fellowship Hall

Sunday, August 18th after worship service, in the Bethany (big) room

Monday, November 25th – 7PM in the Bethany room/Fellowship Hall

There will be a babysitting service available for families with young children who want to attend the Sunday voters' meetings that will be held after worship service. Heidi Wildauer has agreed to organize this. If you have interest in using this service or in assisting in providing this service, please contact Heidi.

If you have questions regarding the congregational voters' meetings or schedules for them, please contact Dave Burcham.

All 6th-8th students are invited to join us, with their parents and grandparents, for **Sunday School each Sunday from 8:30-9:15** in the Middle School classroom of the school, starting **Sunday January 7th, 2024**. We will Launch into the teen years with videos and discussions about topics your children will face during adolescence. We encourage 6th-8th grade children, parents, and grandparents to join us as you have an important role to help your children navigate the teen years in a God pleasing way. This 6-8 week study will discuss your child's self-identity, peer relationships and dating, the physical changes of puberty, and God's loving design for our sexuality. The study will be led by Mark and Heidi Wildauer and we are open to meeting with any parents that desire to preview the content we will cover ahead of time. We will have 1 teen journal available for each child (suggested donation \$13) to use throughout this study. As we begin the New Year, we will help parents and children have the necessary discussions that will prepare them for adolescence, and help them thrive through these years of change ahead. God's blessings to you all this Christmas, and we'll see you in January.

**In addition to Our Regular Sunday Morning Services,
You Are Invited To Our Extra Advent and Christmas Services**

Children's Christmas Service – Dec. 20th at 7:00 pm

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – Dec. 24th at 7:00 pm
(December 24th Sunday morning Service
w/Communion will be at 9:30 am)*

Christmas Day Service – Dec. 25th at 9:30 am

*New Years' Eve Service – Dec. 31st at 9:30 am
No evening New Year's Eve Service*

YOUTH NEWS

Christmas Eve Service: Practice for those Youth in Grades 4-8 participating in our Christmas Eve Service continue today following the church service. We will also practice on December 24th (time to be determined). Please contact Andy Wildauer with any questions.

Youth Activities: The Youth Board is busy planning activities for the New Year, including service projects, ice skating, our annual Middle School Lock In, and more. Stay tuned for more information to be shared on all of this in early 2024.

Servants for Today's Worship December 17, 2023

Rev. Neil Wonnacott (574-546-2332 or 574-301-9291)

Organist: Anita Eichinger

Ushers: Richard Sickman & Jim Mitchell

Acolyte: Karli & Kayli Miller

Elder: Dennis Sienicki

Video Streamer: Bruce Schmidt

Servants for Next Sunday's Worship December 24, 2023

Rev. Neil Wonnacott (574-546-2332 or 574-301-9291)

Organist: Anita Eichinger

Ushers: Tyler Schmeltz & Bruce Augustine

Acolyte: Jessica Rogers

Elder: Dave Burcham

Communion Assistant: Terry Miller

Video Streamer: Tyler & Dakota Schmeltz

SCHOOL CORNER

Check out our Kindergarten and First Grade Classes on the school bulletin board in the narthex! All of our kindergarteners came through our Preschool and we have one new student (Nolan Helton) in the First Grade class. That's a total of 15 students between the two classes!

Mark your calendars and invite family and friends for the Children's Christmas Service, December 20th, 7:00pm. The preschool and day school students are busy learning songs and speaking parts for this student-led service entitled "For Unto Us a Child is Born". A cookie reception will follow the service. Students should be in their classrooms by 6:40pm, that night, to prepare.

We thank you, teachers, for ALL you do! Please "do not grow weary in doing good" this hectic time of year. There is a lot going on practicing for the Christmas service and finishing report cards from the Second Quarter. One week to go before Break! **We see your hard work and hearts, and appreciate you!**

We thank you for your continued prayers this school year.

December is your last chance to donate to the SGO and get a 2022 tax credit!

We continue to use SGO scholarships to assist with tuition, so please continue to give, and receive the tax credit and deduction for your donations! **Now, there is a link to donate to the LSGO on the church's website under the School drop-down menu.**

You can also find several (easy) ways to donate at www.lutheranSGO.org/Donate. Donations can be given through a check, IRA, stocks, Donor Advised Funds, PayPal, credit card, and **NOW electronic giving! Benefits to you are a 50% state tax credit for your donation and eligibility for a tax deduction.** These scholarships make a big difference for our families. Please contact Jennifer Harman, in the school office, if you have questions.

We also continue to take donations to St. Paul's tuition assistance fund. Checks for tuition assistance can be made out to the church.