# "Glory to God in the highest and on earth Peace



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

As we now draw very near to the Christmas celebration, we move from the ministry of John the Baptist to Mary in Nazareth, and the Advent readings for this Sunday emphasize the prophetic coming of Christ's birth and His incarnation. Now, in the annunciation, we are reminded that by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary will conceive a Child and Christ will enter the world through a woman to save us all! We welcome those who are worshipping with us this morning!

<u>The Lord's Supper</u> 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**

<u>US.</u> 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.

**Peace.** Our dictionary calls peace the absence from war; freedom from quarrels and disagreements; harmony. **But what is the true Peace of Scripture?** Peace in Hebrew is Shalom. Shalom is peace, prosperity, welfare, completeness, being whole. It is a greeting and a farewell. Shalom is multi-faceted and can mean one or all of these things. Jesus is our Shalom, our Peace. We will still have fears, doubts, troubles, and grief but we also have the depth, and height, and width of HIS Shalom! May you be blessed with His Peace today and always. (*See John 14:25-27*)

### **Bell Choir** "Away In a Manger"

### **Opening Hymn 357** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

### + CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION +

- P In the name of the Father and of the 

  → Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19b)
- **G** Amen.
- P Our help is in the name of the Lord,
- who made heaven and earth.

(Psalm 124:8)

- P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
- **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.** (Psalm 130:3-4)
- P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.
- Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.
- Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- C Amen.

### → SERVICE OF THE WORD →

Introit Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5-6; antiphon: Isaiah 45:8

P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

- let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.
- P The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.
- In them He has set a tent for the sun,
- P which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
- and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
- P Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
- and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
- 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 Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
- let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.

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

LSB 204



C Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

### Salutation and Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

(2 Timothy 4:22)

And also with you.

P Let us pray.
Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**G** Amen.

### **Old Testament Reading**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, <sup>2</sup>the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." <sup>3</sup>And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup> Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build Me a house to dwell 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 for My dwelling. <sup>7</sup>In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges 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, that you should be prince over My people Israel. <sup>9</sup>And 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, <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>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. . . .

<sup>16</sup>And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever."

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

### **Proper**

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26

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

### **Epistle**

Romans 16:25–27

<sup>25</sup>Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring

about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup>to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

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

### **Alleluia and Verse**



### **Holy Gospel**

Luke 1:26-38

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

### Glory to You, O Lord.

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup>But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He 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 father David, <sup>33</sup>and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup>And the angel answered 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 called Holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- **P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to You, O Christ.

### Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life  $\pm$  of the world to come. Amen.

**Hymn 934** "My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord"

Sermon Text Luke 1:26-38

# Sermon "It's All About God's Plan!" 1. Like Mary, we have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this time of year. 2. But God has a different plan: coming in \_\_\_\_\_\_ to save us. 3. May we, with Mary, trust that \_\_\_\_\_. God's Plan—Jesus, His Son, Coming to Save the World—Is Better than Ours. Hymn 356 "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" Prayers H SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT H Preface LSB 208 P The Lord be with you. (2 Timothy 4:22)

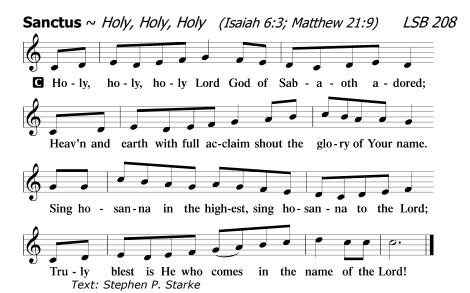
P Lift up your hearts.

And also with you.

**We lift them to the Lord.** 

(Colossians 3:1)

- **P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.** (Psalm 136)
- It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:



### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your boundless mercy You sent Your servant, John the Baptist, to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of heaven draws near.

With thankful hearts we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," confident that in His body and blood, given us to eat and drink, we receive the forgiveness of sins and so proclaim His death until He comes again in glory.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

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

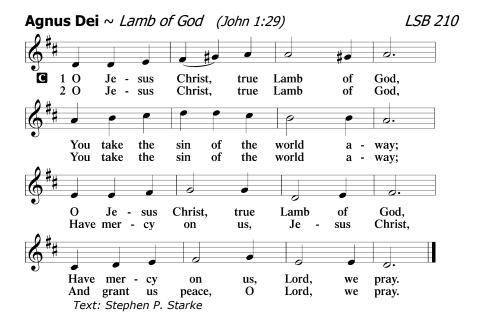
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the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

### Pax Domini ~ The Peace of the Lord

(John 20:19)

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

### Amen.



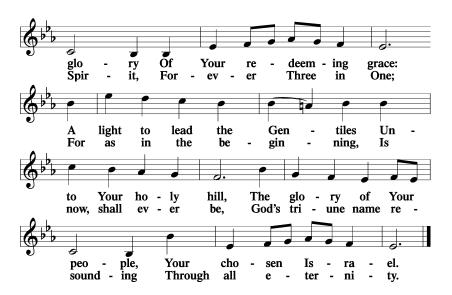
**Hymn 625** "Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread"

**Hymn 619** "Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior"

**Hymn 621** "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

**Hymn 622** "Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared"





### **Post-Communion Collect**

P Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

**Duet** "O Little Town of Bethlehem" by Jamie & Lilly Rogers

**Benedicamus** ~ *Let Us Bless (Psalm 103:1)* 

LSB 212

- **P** Let us bless the Lord.
- Thanks be to God.

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

- The Lord bless you and keep you.
  The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
  The Lord look upon you with favor and 

  → give you peace.
- Amen.

Adult Choir "He Is Born"

He is born, blessed Child divine, Play on the oboe and sound the musette! He is born, blessed Child divine, Let all sing on this joyful day! Many years now have come and gone, Since the prophets foretold His coming, Many years now have come and gone, We have waited this happy time.

### Repeat

O Jesu, blessed King o're all, To us He came a helpless tiny child, O Jesu, blessed King o're all, Grant us peace with Thy heav'nly reign.

### **Acknowledgments**

Divine Service, Setting Four from Lutheran Service Book

at 7:00 pm led by St. Paul's Youth.

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### **Calendar of Events**

Sunday School & Bible Classes	8:30 am9:30 am
No Bell or Choir Practice	
MON: Christmas Day – Christmas Break - No S Worship Service with Communion TUES:	
~ Pastor Wonnacott & Family on Vacation Th	rough January 4 <sup>th</sup> ~
WED: Men's Breakfast Bible Study THURS:	6:30 am
FRI: SAT:	
NEXT SUNDAY	.December 31st, 2023
Joint Sunday School & Bible Classes Hymn Sing Worship Service with Communion No Bell or Adult Choir Practice	9:30 am

Please join us this evening for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

<u>Christmas Day Service is tomorrow, December 25<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am</u> with Holy Communion. Let us come together and celebrate our Lord's birth!

New Year's Eve Service is Sunday, December 31st at 9:30 am. \*Please note that there is no 7:00 pm service.

### Merry Christmas from the Library!

Check out the library cart for Christmas books to read during your Christmas Break! We have a Christmas book written by Norman Rockwell. "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" is a book written about naughty children who have the lead roles in the church's Christmas pageant. Want to learn about the real meaning of the Twelve Days of Christmas? Check out the book "The Real Twelve Days of Christmas". We also have children's books celebrating Jesus' birth.

### **CHRISTIAN MEN - AWAKE!**

If you're at least 18 years of age, wake up on Wednesday morning every other week and join in a Bible Study at the Bremen Hospital cafeteria conference room at 6:30 AM. Enter the cafeteria area entrance on the south side patio to the left of the main entrance portico (presently the covid testing drive-thru). The cafeteria has an excellent breakfast menu and we enjoy our study with discussion and fellowship until 7:30 A.M. Bible study is a means of strengthening our understanding of God's plan for us and strengthening our faith, which we all can use in the daily challenges we face. Bring your Bible and join us as we study, eat and fellowship! The last date we meet this year is 12/27.

If you have questions, please contact Dave Burcham or Tom Coxey.

**Join us on December 31**st for a continental breakfast and hymn sing. We will have a fun time reviewing the history and Scriptural content behind some of the most beloved Christmas hymns; then sing them together. All Sunday School classes (adults & children) will meet in the Bethany Room from 8:30-9:15 am. Come for an uplifting time!

Thank you to all who donated candy for the children's treat bags. Your help was greatly appreciated.

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.

Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study will resume January 11th.

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 next Parish Fellowship Meeting is Wed., January 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am.

Meals on Wheels Door Offering: We would like to keep our prices low so that meals can be affordable for all seniors. If you are interested in helping, we will have a door offering on December 31st after the service. Checks may be made payable to St Paul's Lutheran Church with Meals on Wheels noted in the memo section. If you have questions about the program, you may contact Joanna Fox.

For those who would like to give their offerings to the Lord electronically, there is a QR Code link posted next to the offering box in the Narthex.

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.

### **YOUTH NEWS**

Christmas Eve Service (7 pm): We invite all who are able to join us here at St. Paul's for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service tonight, during which Youth from Grades 4-8 share the Christmas Gospel by acting out scenes from the Biblical account of the Christ Child's birth.

Youth Activities (early 2024): The Youth Board is planning various activities for the New Year, the first of which will be ice skating for Youth in Grades 4-High School tentatively scheduled on Sunday, January 14th (Time to be determined). Look for more information in the weeks ahead through our Youth communication channels.

### **NOTICE REGARDING VOTERS MEETINGS IN 2024**

In the November 27<sup>th</sup>, 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 21<sup>st</sup> after worship service, in the Bethany (big) room Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup> after worship service, in the Bethany (big) room Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup> – 7PM in the Bethany room/Fellowship Hall Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup> after worship service, in the Bethany (big) room Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup> – 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.

### SCHOOL CORNER

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the students and staff of St. Paul's schools! We hope you have a peaceful and joyous celebration of the birth of our Savior, with family and friends. We thank all of you for your support of the school, whether it is through finances, volunteering, or prayer. We appreciate all of you!

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!

We have ended our Second Quarter of school, and will start the second half of the school year when we resume January 8, 2024.

## December is your last chance to donate to the SGO and get a 2023 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 <a href="https://www.lutheranSGO.org/Donate">www.lutheranSGO.org/Donate</a>. 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.

### Servants for Today'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

### Servants for Next Sunday's Worship December 31, 2023

Pastor Gregory Fiechtner Organist: Anita Eichinger

Ushers: Eric Thornton & Richard Sickman

Acolyte: Abby Wildauer Elder: Dennis Sienicki

Communion Assistant: Larry Britt

Video Streamer: Tyler & Dakota Schmeltz