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Gathering
The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist’s plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF HOPE

“And again, Isaiah says, ’The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.’ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” ~ Romans 15:12-13

We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace.

Amen.

Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

The assembly shall stand, or kneel, as they are able.

God of all time,
we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us.
We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace.
In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and all things are made new.
Rejoice in this good news!

Amen.
Lord Jesus Christ, be present now;
our hearts in true devotion bow.
Your Spirit send with light divine,
and let your truth within us shine.

Unseal our lips to sing your praise
in endless hymns through all our days;
increase our faith and light our minds;
and set us free from doubt that blinds.

Then shall we join the hosts that cry,
"O holy, holy Lord Most High!"
And in the light of that blest place
we then shall see you face to face.

All glory to the Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
be praise throughout eternity!

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.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God’s people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Revuelve tu poder, Señor Cristo, y ven. Por tu misericordiosa protección nos despiertas a los peligros amenazantes de nuestros pecados, y Mantennos sin culpa hasta la venida de tu nuevo día, para que vivas y Reines con el padre y el Espíritu Santo, un Dios, ahora y para siempre. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

Word
God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

1 O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
2 as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—
   to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
4 From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
   no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.
5 You meet those who gladly do right,
   those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.
6 We have all become like one who is unclean,
   and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
   We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
7 There is no one who calls on your name,
   or attempts to take hold of you;
   for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
8 Yet, O Lord, you are our Father;
   we are the clay, and you are our potter;
   we are all the work of your hand.
9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever.
   Now consider, we are all your people.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.
RESPONSIVE PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

R Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

1Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

2In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.

3Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

4O Lord God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray? R

5You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

6You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

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

17Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself. R

18And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.

19Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. R

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

3Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.
In today’s reading, Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] 24 In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. 27 Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 28 From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32 But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35 Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, 36 or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37 And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, O Christ!

The assembly is seated.

SERMON     Rev. Arden Dorn

The assembly stands.

WORDS OF THE DAY    (ELW p. 242)    Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,  
for angels herald its dawning.  
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,  
behold! the Child of our longing.  
Come as a baby weak and poor,  
to bring all hearts together,  
he opens wide the heav’nly door  
and lives now inside us forever.  

To us, to all in sorrow and fear,  
Emmanuel comes a-singing,  
his humble song is quiet and near,  
yet fills the earth with its ringing;  
music to heal the broken soul  
and hymns of loving-kindness’,  
the thunder of his anthems roll  
to shatter all hatred and blindness.  

In darkest night his coming shall be,  
when all the world is despairing,  
as morning light so quiet and free,  
so warm and gentle and caring.  
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder, 
the weak be raised above the strong, 
and weapons be broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night, 
though dark the winter and cheerless, 
the rising sun shall crown you with light, 
be strong and loving and fearless. 
Love be our song and love our prayer 
and love our endless story; 
may God fill ev'ry day we share 
and bring us at last into glory.

APOSTLE’S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, 
creator of heaven and earth. 
I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s 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 to the dead.* 
On the third day he rose again; 
he ascended into heaven, 
he is seated at the right hand of the Father, 
and he will come to judge the living and the dead. 
I believe in the Holy Spirit, 
the holy catholic church, 
the communion of saints, 
the forgiveness of sins, 
the resurrection of the body, 
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God’s people.

Give light to your people, Lord. As the darkness grows and we await the return of daylight, give new life to your church. Shape our communities to be faithful vessels of the gospel for the sake of the world. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Restore your creation, Lord. You give the earth opportunities for both sleep and awakening. Thank you for the gift of restful seasons so new life may grow according to your appointed time. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Bring peace to the nations, Lord. Keep us alert to injustice and oppression, give us courage to cry out for what is right, and guide world leaders toward fairness and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.
Stir up compassion in us for all who wait for you. Be near to those whose lives are shaken, those who are experiencing loss, those who long for healing and wholeness, those who live with HIV and AIDS, and those who are in any kind of need, especially Elvira, Lorain, Pauline, Shane, Linda, Norma, Ann, Jack, Lorene, Steve, Evalena, Francis, Carol, Ella, Charles, Eli, Steve, Hope, Tom, Jackie, Yvonne, Mary Ruth, Kyle, Cody, and Norma. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for child care workers, teachers, Sunday school leaders, and all who nurture and educate children. We give you thanks for their diligence and devotion. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

From ages past, your faithfulness has never failed. Shine your face upon us and bring us into the company of all your saints in light. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**SHARING OF THE PEACE**

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

*Peace is shared among the assembly, and then the assembly is seated.*

**Meal**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**OFFERING** An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

*The assembly stands.*

**OFFERING WORDS** *(ELW p. 439)*

*Soon and Very Soon*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Savior of the nations, come.
Make your home here in us.
Feed us with your love,
that our faith shine ever new
and our lives reveal your light.
Amen.

Der Heiden Heiland, kommen.
Ihr Haus hier in uns.
Ernähren uns mit deiner Liebe,
daß unser Glaube/immer neue

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.
*And also with you.*
Lift up your hearts.
*We lift them to the Lord.*
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
*It is right to give our thanks and praise.*
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:

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.
LORD’S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us: (The assembly joins hands to pray)

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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.

The assembly is seated.

DISTRIBUTION – All are WELCOME at the table of the Lord.

This meal gives you strength for your journey of faith & life. Go forward as the body of Christ in your family, community and the world. Children or anyone choosing not to commune, but wishing to be blessed, may indicate this by folding their arms across their chest. Anyone who is unable to come forward may indicate to an usher that you wish to receive communion where you are seated.

Following Communion, the assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Sending
God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING
May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you
and scatter the darkness from before your path.
Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING WORDS  (ELW p. 765)  Lord of AllHopefulness

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy:
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindliness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

DISMISSAL
Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

DOXOLOGY  (ELW p. 884)  Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
Welcome!

We have all come to St. Paul’s by different paths, and from various walks of life. Through worship, study, prayer and fellowship we each seek to deepen our faith, comfort and encourage one another and dedicate our lives more fully to sharing Christ in our homes, our community and the world. All are welcome at St. Paul’s. We are eager to know you, and we invite you to get to know us.

A Nursery is located at the rear of the sanctuary in the overflow area.

If you are unable to hear, require a bulletin, or need any other assistance, please signal an usher.

For Prayerful Consideration

Ill or Injured

For those in the military
Nick Adams, Allen Bowles, Justin Chandler, Justin Elkins, Rodney Foreman, Jamaica Goodhue, Jacob Jones, Felipe Leal, Jr., Garrett Peterson, Michael Rosales, James Skinner, Chris Sustaita, Kassie Thompson, John Vasquez, and Delmiro Villanueva.

Our floral arrangement is provided for the glory of God by the Tom Shockome Family in loving memory of Gwen Evans, Mary Lou Fenner, and Paula Pfeifer.

Sunday, December 3, 3:00 p.m. – Faith Lutheran, Beeville
40th Annual Advent Music Festival

Sunday, December 10, 9:30 a.m. – Christmas Program Rehearsal

Sunday, December 17, 10:30 a.m. – St. Paul’s Multi-Generational Christmas Program

Sunday, December 17, 6:30 p.m. – Faith Lutheran, Beeville
One Magic Night (Live Nativity)

Sanctuary Poinsettias are available for purchase and delivery from Victorian Country. They are $15 per plant. Place your order with Viv by December 8: 780-3300

Sunday, December 24, 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School
10:30 a.m. – 4th Sunday in Advent Worship Service

7:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, December 31, 10:30 a.m. – Service of the Word
In the Spring of 2008, four women wanted to make a prayer garden on the church grounds. It would be for those who wanted a quiet place to pray, or just rest on one of the benches and relax after a busy day. The surroundings would be peaceful for anyone.

The prayer garden was an act of love and a commitment to serve others. The women offer their heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to the prayer garden in so many different and useful ways, from its beginning and through the years. Your generosity made it possible for them to make the garden become a reality.

Reluctantly, after nine years, the garden had to be closed because we were unable to properly maintain it. We are grateful to those who volunteered to finish the work at the prayer garden and restore that part of the church grounds. Your kind offer to help was very much needed at the time.

We are thankful to God for the opportunity to serve others, and for the memories we share of the prayer garden.

“Always remember the beauty of the garden, for there is Peace”
-Anonymous

With Love and Thanks,

Lisa Collins, Helen Grimm,
Frances Kempe, Meredean Shockome