Rev. Arden Dorn, Transitional Minister
Stacey Mika, Lay Reader
Rita Jordan, Organist

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Gathering

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

The presence of the Lord “in your midst” in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the Lord in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one “more powerful” than John, even with his winnowing fork in his hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE 3rd ADVENT CANDLE

When we look around, we see shadows of sadness, families in homeless shelters, refugees in detention centers, people in prison, people who have become invisible and forgotten...
In the face of sadness, we light a candle of joy...

When we look around, we see shadows of grief and loss, people dreading the holidays because they've lost a loved one, because they're recently divorced, because they don't want to spend another Christmas alone...
In the face of grief, in the face of loss, we light a candle of joy...

May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.
May the light from this candle say to all that God’s joy is coming on earth as it already is in heaven.
Brothers and sisters in Christ, be not afraid, God’s joy is at hand!

God’s joy is at hand!

CONFESSION AND GOOD NEWS

Blessed be the ☩ holy Trinity, One God, the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free, the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy, the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace. Amen.

Let us confess our sin, calling for God’s transforming power.
The assembly shall kneel or stand, as they are able.
Great God of Presence and Promised Coming,
We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to fulfill your desire for us to love one another.
We have not followed the paths you have given us,
Choosing instead to follow our own.
We have broken relationships, We chase consumer desires, We treat those who wait on us as less than human.
We have rebelled against your love;
We spend our time and money, on gifts for those who give us gifts.
We have not loved our neighbors, we spend time
With family and friends out of obligation rather than sincere love.
We have not heard the cry of the needy,
The mouth of the poor is still hungry for mercy,
The cause of the oppressed is still thirsty for justice.
Free us for joyful obedience, through the Advent of Christ,
Our Lord, Our Messiah, Our Hope. Amen.

Good News! Good News! Good News!
God so loved the world that he gave
Sinful and broken humanity a gift: Emmanuel, God with us.
This proves God's love toward us!
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
Glory to God! Amen.

GATHERING HYMN (ELW p. 239) Hark, the Glad Sound!

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

1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.

We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!
CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The assembly is seated

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

1 Glory be to God in heaven; peace, goodwill to all the earth.
2 Glory be to Christ forever, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Holy One we now acclaim you; Lord alone, to you we call;

Mighty God of all creation, Father of surpassing worth:
Son of God and gracious Savior, you have come from heav’n above;
Holy One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:

we exalt you, we adore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God’s right hand.
Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit, in the Father’s splendor bright.

Saints and angels bow before you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; restore, forgive us; in your promise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in her it, glory be to God on high!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Oremos. Suscite las voluntades de su pueblo fiel, Señor Dios, y abra nuestros oídos a la predicación de Juan, que, regocijándose en su salvación, podamos hacer salir los frutos del arrepentimiento; por medio de Jesucristo, nuestro Salvador y Señor, que vive y reina con vosotros y con el Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios, ahora y para siempre.

Amén.
FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah’s message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God’s salvation is at hand.

14 Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

16 On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

17 The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

18 I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

19 I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

20 At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.
RESPONSIVE READING: Isaiah 12:2-6

R: In your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

2Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

3With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. R

4And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on God’s name; make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.

5Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.

6Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. R

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns, with the hope they will experience God’s joy and peace.

4Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Word of God, word of life.
Thanks be to God.
The assembly stands.
Glory to You, O Lord!

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one "who is coming." John teaches that preparation for God’s reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” 10 And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” 11 In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” 13 He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” 14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.” 15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. 17 He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 18 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” 18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ!

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

(ELW p. 267) Joy to the World

APOSTLES’ 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

As we await the coming of Christ, we pray in hope for the church, the world, and all of creation. *The assembly shall kneel, as they are able*

For choirs, hymn writers, musicians, and off-key singing, we give you thanks, Holy One. Fill us with your song of joy. Open us to proclaim your glory in our singing, speaking, and silence. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the hurting places in creation; for seas and lands ravaged by natural disasters; for communities and creatures displaced by fires, floods and droughts. Grant peace through your presence and joy in your healing. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace to ring out in our hearts and in our homes; for mercy and forgiveness to reign in every community; for war to cease and hunger to end. Give us this joy now, Holy One. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are oppressed; for soldiers and veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and their families; for neighbors who have no access to medical care; for those who mourn and those who are ill or injured, especially for Elvera, Laura, Mitch, Laquita, Mary Louise, Helen, Francis, Linda, Leroy, and John, as well as those that we name out loud or in our hearts… Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For foster families opening their homes; for grandparents raising grandchildren; for single parents struggling to make ends meet; for expectant parents who now grieve. Give strength and comfort, Holy One. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

In thanksgiving for preachers and teachers who have guided us on the way. Bring us with them to rejoice eternally in you. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

As we sow Seeds of Hope, we pray for St. John Lutheran in Westhoff. Guide them to new opportunities and abilities to draw younger people into the congregation. We pray also for St. Peter’s in Elgin that they may have vision, direction, and that God would use them as an instrument of grace in their community. We pray for St. Paul’s – Karnes City and St. Paul’s – Nordheim as the congregations continue discussions of the St. Paul’s Squared opportunity. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

With all churches in the Southwestern Texas Synod we pray for each other and also for ELCA member congregations such as those in the Southwest California Synod, Bethany Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, and Southwestern Texas Synod Lutheran Men in Mission. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Confident that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we bring to you these prayers and those unspoken, in the name of Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PEACE

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

**OFFERING HYMN** *(ELW p. 674)*  
*Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. God of abundance,
we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.  
*Amen.*

Lasset uns beten. Gott des überflusses,  
Wir bringen Euch die kostbaren Früchte eurer Schöpfung und mit Ihnen unser Leben vor. Lehren Sie uns Geduld und Hoffnung,  
während wir uns um alle Bedürftigen kümmern bis zum kommen deines Sohnes, unseres Erlösers und Herrn.  
*Amen.*

**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.
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
LORD’S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God fills the hungry with good things. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

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.

1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy One, we give you thanks that in this bread and cup we have feasted again on your endless love. Let that love overflow more and more in our lives, that we may be messengers to prepare your way, harvesters of justice and righteousness, and bearers of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus. Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. Amen.

SENDING SONG  (ELW p. 257)  O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you. Thanks be to God.

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

For Prayerful Consideration

Ill, Injured or Otherwise Struggling: Sadat Abrihim, David Anaba, Sharon Baumann, Ellvera Boehm, Laura Burney, Mitch Dorn, Shane Edens, Norma Foreman, Laquita Gibbens, Helen Grimm, Linda Henning, Jack Hockey, Andy James, Michael Janysek, Raymond Jenkins, Mary Louise Jonas, Steve Kelly, Evalina, Francis Kempe, Linda Lathrop, Ella Manka, Khloe Martinez, Moma Ndeh, the Ndeh family, Charles Pierce, Leroy Polderick, Carly Rosenboon, John Tackitt, Yvonne Watkins, Kyle Worthy, Cody Zaiontz, and Norma Zamzow

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

Birthdays: Barbara Jonas, Evelyn Hoffman (Dec. 17), Orlis Jonas (Dec. 19), Jaiden Robinson (dec 31)
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. If you are unable to hear, require a bulletin, or need any other assistance, please signal an usher.

Coming Events

Let’s join together and PARTICIPATE

KARNES COUNTY DETENTION CENTER
CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

COLLECTION DATE: 12-17-18

WE WILL BE COLLECTING TOYS FOR THE KARNES COUNTY DETENTION CENTER. ALL CHILDREN ARE MALES AGES FROM 3 TO 17. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE PLEASE PURCHASE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS SUGGESTED BY THE CENTER’S CHAPLAIN:

MEGA BLOCKS (3 YEAR OLDS)
TRUCKS (3 YEAR OLDS)
SPORTS SOCKS (YOUTH)
BOOKS (EDUCATIONAL OR FUN – SPANISH)
DINOSAURS (YOUNGER ELEMENTARY AGE)
BASEBALL CAPS (YOUTH)
HACKY SACK BALLS (YOUTH)
HANDHELD ELECTRONIC BASKETBALL OR SOCCER GAMES
COLORING BOOKS

ADULT MALE SUGGESTED ITEMS INCLUDE:
SNACK ITEMS: POPCORN, CHIPS, COOKIES, SODAS (IN PLASTIC BOTTLES ONLY)
RAMEN NOODLES
BASEBALL CAPS
PENS/COLORED PENCILS

PLEASE DO NOT PURCHASE:
CLOTHING/GIFT CARDS
SMALL TOYS THAT ARE CHOKING HAZARDS
LARGE BALLS OR BIKES

PLEASE LEAVE EVERYTHING UNWRAPPED.

CONTACT: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH KARNES CITY, TX WITH QUESTIONS AND FOR DROP OFF OR PICK UP LOCATIONS.

EMAIL: KARNES1STPRES@GMAIL.COM OR PHONE: 830-780-3538
Arden & Roxanne Dorn
Wish you a
Frohe Weinachten!
Merry Christmas!
And
Invite you
To their Annual festive

German Christmas Dinner Party
on
Sunday, December 23, 2018
6:00 pm
at
714 Turtle Hill
San Antonio, Texas 78260

Special Guest Entertainment
Celeste Morales

RSVP: ardenborn@aol.com: 602-565-9793
Gate Code:1289

Christmas Eve Worship Service, December 24, 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 20, 2019 will be the Annual Meeting immediately following the worship service. All members of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

Anyone that would like to place their name on the ballot for council member contact a council member.

For those that would like for the church to record offerings to St. Paul’s, the Council will offer that service beginning January 2019. Please contact a member of council for more information.