St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
2nd Sunday of Advent
December 8, 2019

Sergio Rodriguez, Vicar
Mike Tessman, Worship Assistant
Rita Jordan, Organist
Mike Tessman, Lay Reader

Wait in Hope
For the LORD
Psalm 33:20 NIV

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Gathering

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

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord’s table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

CONFESSION and FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
the parent who rouses us from slumber,
the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain,
the deliverer who sets us free.

Amen.

Let us come before the living God in confession.

As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation,
we open our hearts to you, O God.
Search us and know us. Reveal all that we keep inside.
To you, O God, we confess our sins, known and unknown.
Forgive us, renew us, and lead us in your ways of justice and peace.
Make us reflections of the radiant love of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Beloved children of the Most High,
you are gathered before the righteous judge
who has mercy on all.
Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism,
where sin is washed away in the river of life.
Dwell peacefully in the loving arms of the one who nurtures all creation.
Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven
in the name of the one who is coming and is already here, + Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen

GATHERING HYMN     (ELW p. 249)     On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry

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.
Let us pray.  

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Oremos. 

Revuelve nuestros corazones, Señor Dios, para preparar el camino de tu Hijo único. Al nutrir nuestro crecimiento como personas de arrepentimiento y paz; a través de Jesucristo, nuestro Salvador y Señor, que vive y reina con ustedes y con el Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios, ahora y para siempre. Amén.

LIGHTING of the ADVENT WREATH

Blessed are you, God of hope, for you promise to bring forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse who will bring justice to the poor, who will deliver the needy and crush the oppressor, who will stand as a signal of hope for all people. 

As we light these candles, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the hope of all nations.

O people of hope, come, 

let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.

Word

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

FIRST READING:  Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David’s royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

1A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, 
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

2The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, 
the spirit of wisdom and understanding, 
the spirit of counsel and might, 
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

3His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. 
He shall not judge by what his eyes see, 
or decide by what his ears hear;

4but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, 
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; 
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, 
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

5Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

6 The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

7 The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.

9 They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

10 On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

R: May the righteous flourish; let there be an abundance of peace.

1 Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king’s son; that he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;

2 that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

3 Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor. R

5 May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.

6 Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.

7 In his time may the righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

Blessed are you, Lord God, the God of Israel; you alone do wondrous deeds!

18 And blessed be your glorious name forever, and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen. R

SECOND READING: Romans 14:4-13

God’s promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God’s blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God’s family.
Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, “Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name”; and again he says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people”; and again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”; and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.”

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Glory to You, O, Lord.

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.
In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume 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. 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.

“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

(ELW p. 253) He Came Down

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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

The assembly shall kneel, as they are able

God, our shepherd who rules with righteousness, empower and enliven the shepherds and Synods of your church, especially our Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop Sue Briner, the Lower Susquehanna Synod, the Southwestern Texas Synod and House of Prayer Lutheran Church in San Antonio, TX, in their mission to share in the inheritance of the saints and to proclaim the message of Christ’s reconciling work for all peoples, creatures, things on earth and in heaven above.

God of promise, your reign has come near. Call your people to the way of repentance and inspire your church to bear fruit in the world through acts of faithful service. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of creation, we pray for the wolf and the lamb, the lion and the calf, and all species whose lives are intertwined. Repair and preserve ecosystems that all life on earth may be sustained. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of the nations, teach those with power and privilege to serve the vulnerable. Give to all leaders wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, and a heart of compassion for the world you so love. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of the poor, set tables of abundance in all places where hands are empty, where stomachs ache with hunger, and where hearts and minds suffer pain. Feed and heal all who are in need. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of hope, renew in your people all joy and peace in believing, especially those facing anxiety, depression, or alienation. Guide this community of faith to welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed us. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of eternal life, you promise to take away our sin and gather us in your care forever. We give thanks for those who now rest from their labors on earth, freed from pain and the power of death. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Not knowing the day or hour of your coming, O Lord, this congregation cries to you. Guide our worship, service, and outreach, that our hearts and hands may be opened in generosity toward others. Equip the outreach ministries of St. Paul’s Squared, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Karnes City and St. Paul Lutheran Church in Nordheim. Use our hands and feet, sharing Christ’s love with neighbors in need.

You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus’ name.

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.

(ELW p. 465)  As the Grains of Wheat

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.  Giver of every good thing, we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger.  

Amen.

Lasset uns beten.  Geber aller guten Dinge, wir stellen Ihnen die Geschenke vor, die Sie bereits gegeben haben um unser Leben zu erhalten und mit anderen zu teilen. Hilfe uns, gute Verwalter der Erde zu sein und alles, was darin ist, und lass unser Leben ein Zeugnis für das reiche fest sein Sie bereiten für alle, die hungern.  

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

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets’ hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary’s openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.
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:
Christ has died.  Christ is risen.  Christ will come again.
With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.
Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us. Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people. Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit.
All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.  Amen
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

Come now with joy to Emmanuel’s table. Feast at the banquet of hope and love.
The assembly is seated.

COMMUNION SONG

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.

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

Jesus Christ, who is God with us, is present here with us as the host of this meal and in the bread and wine. In this meal, Jesus Christ gives you strength for your journey of faith and dwells with you in your daily life as you go forward as the body of Christ in your family, community and the world. 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. Communion will be by Intinction. After receiving the bread from the Vicar, please receive the wine by dipping the bread into the chalice that is offered by the communion assistant. This meal is for you because God is for you. Taste and See that the Lord is good and his mercy endures forever.
TABLE BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
God of abundance,
we give you thanks that in this holy meal
you have invited us to feast with you and one another.
May the taste of your love remain with us,
and may our words and our work in your name
invite others into your bountiful grace.
Send us from your table to proclaim your presence,
even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior.  Amen.

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

BLESSING
May God, who gathers us in love,
lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice.
May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves,
lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom.
May God, who fills us with good things,
lead you in pathways of equity and abundance.
The blessing of the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
be upon you and remain with you forever.
Amen.

SENDING SONG  (ELW p. 246)  Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!

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

DISMISSAL
Go in peace. Set your hope on Christ.
Thanks be to God.
For Prayerful Consideration

**Ill, Injured or Otherwise Struggling:** Suzanne Dietzel, Diane Dziuk, Shane Edens, Norma Foreman, Linda Henning, Jack Hockey, Evelyn Hoffman, Raymond Jenkins, Mary Louise Jonas, Steve Kelly, Frances Kempe, SuzAnn Kroll, Khloe Martinez, Krys & Jamie Michael, Elfren Moczygemba, Jimmy Moore, Moma Ndeh, Alejandra, Carly Rosenboon, Meredene Shockome, Casey Stagg, Jerry Vajdos, Enedina Vasquez, Cody Zaintz, 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

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.

Announcements

Opportunities to Learn, Worship, Pray, and Serve

**Did you know?**

St. Paul’s donated a $250 Thanksgiving Dinner gift certificate to a local family in need.

**It’s Poinsettia Time!**

Poinsettia’s may be purchased from Viv’s Victorian Country (780-3300) for $15. Please order from Viv before Monday, December 16. The flower shop will deliver the poinsettias to the church prior to our Christmas Eve Service.

**Acts Bible Study**

Tuesday, December 10 at 6:00 p.m.
Music Academy Recital

The Christmas Recital will be December 15, here at the church, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

In Celebration of Vicar Rodriguez’ Ministry at St. Paul’s

Sunday, December 29, will be Vicar Rodriguez’ last Sunday with us. We will join with St. Paul’s – Nordheim for worship in Nordheim at 10:30 a.m. A potluck luncheon will follow the worship service. There WILL NOT be a worship service at St. Paul’s – Karnes City on December 29.

Annual Meeting in January

If you would like to run for Council, or would like nominate someone to run, please speak with Ronnie Retzloff.
REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Please leave your contributions in the red tub located in the Narthex. All donations will be delivered to the San Antonio Food Bank.

December 1 - box of cereal
December 2 - peanut butter
December 3 - stuffing mix
December 4 - boxed potatoes
December 5 - macaroni and cheese
December 6 - canned fruit
December 7 - canned tomatoes
December 8 - canned tuna
December 9 - dessert mix
December 10 - jar of applesauce
December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
December 12 - cranberry sauce
December 13 - canned beans
December 14 - box of crackers
December 15 - package of rice
December 16 - package of oatmeal
December 17 - package pasta
December 18 - spaghetti sauce
December 19 - chicken noodle soup
December 20 - tomato soup
December 21 - can corn
December 22 - can mixed vegetables
December 23 - can carrots
December 24 - can green beans