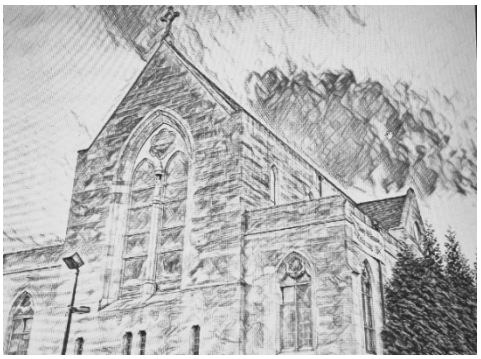
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Canton, Ohio

Gaudete Sunday
Third Sunday of Advent
Holy Eucharist Rite 2
Dec. 14, 2025, 10:30 a.m.

Welcome to St. Paul's

Online and in-person services begin with music at 10:25 a.m.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church
425 Cleveland Ave SW
Canton OH 44702
(330) 455-0286

Website: www.stpaulscanton.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/stpaulscanton
e-mail: stpaulsoffice@att.net
We're on YouTube: StPaulsCanton

Our mission

St. Paul's is an exceptionally welcoming Episcopal community in downtown Canton, grounded in faith, and called by God's Love to minister to the world.

Third Sunday of Advent
Holy Eucharist
Celebrant: The Rev. Audra Abt, canon for innovation for the Diocese of Ohio

Readings and Psalm

- Isaiah 35:1-10
- Psalm 146:4-9
- James 5:7-10
- Matthew 11:2-11

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Prelude: *Vom himmel hoch,* Johann Pachelbel

Lighting the Advent Candles

Advent means "the coming." It's a season of preparation and anticipation, a time of repentance and reflection, and the first season of our church year.
The four candles we light over these four Sundays of Advent are set in a wreath, a circle with no beginning or end, representing the eternity of God's love. For these four weeks, it sits prominently at the front of St. Paul's.
Three of the candles – those lit on the first, second and fourth Sundays – are blue or purple, the liturgical color of the season. The candle lit today is rose, the color of joy. At the center of the wreath is the large white candle we light on Christmas Eve.

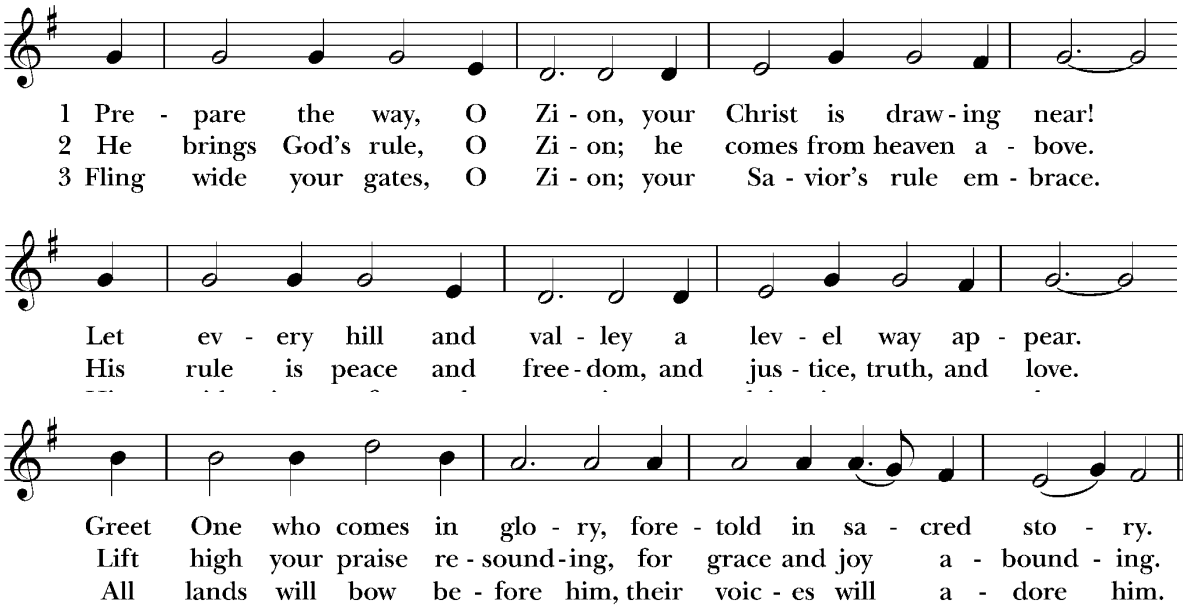
Lighting the third Advent candle: the Shepherd's Candle on Gaudete Sunday (Latin for "rejoice in the Lord always") representing Joy

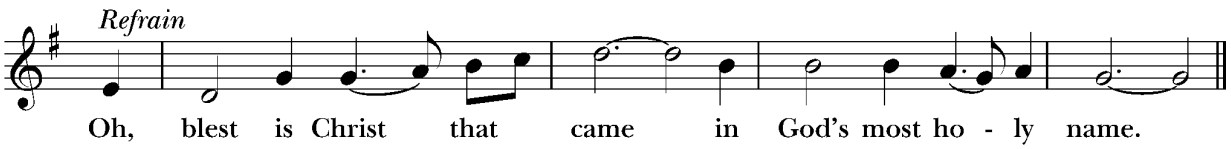
Reader: Lord God, we light this candle to thank you for your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who brings us great joy. We who have walked in the shadow of the valley of death have found life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We give you thanks and praise in Jesus' name, because he lives and reigns with you in your glory, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit, Amen.
(Three candles are lit.)

The Word of God

Please stand in body or spirit

Entrance Hymn: Prepare the Way, O Zion *(Bereden vag for Herran* (H 65)





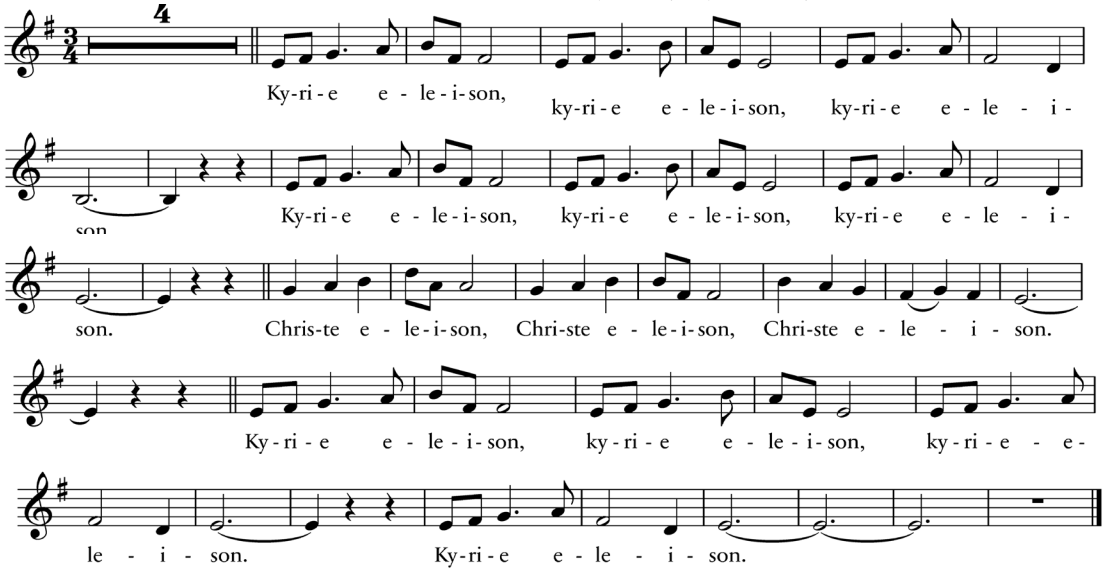
Opening Acclamation

Celebrant Blessed are you, holy and living One.
People You come to your people and set them free.

Collect for Purity

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

KYRIE ELEISON: *Celtic Waltz (Tan) (AS20)*



The Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. *Amen*.

The Lessons

Please sit.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

[1]The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus [2]it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

[3]Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
[4]Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

[5]Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
[6]then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
[7]the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

[8]A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
[9]No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,

but the redeemed shall walk there.
[10]And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

PSALM 146: 4-9

[4]Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, *
whose hope is in the Lord their God;
[5]Who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; *
who keeps his promise forever;
[6]Who gives justice to those who are oppressed, *
and food to those who hunger.
[7]The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; *
the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;
[8]The Lord loves the righteous; the Lord cares for the stranger; *
he sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.
[9]The Lord shall reign forever, *
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

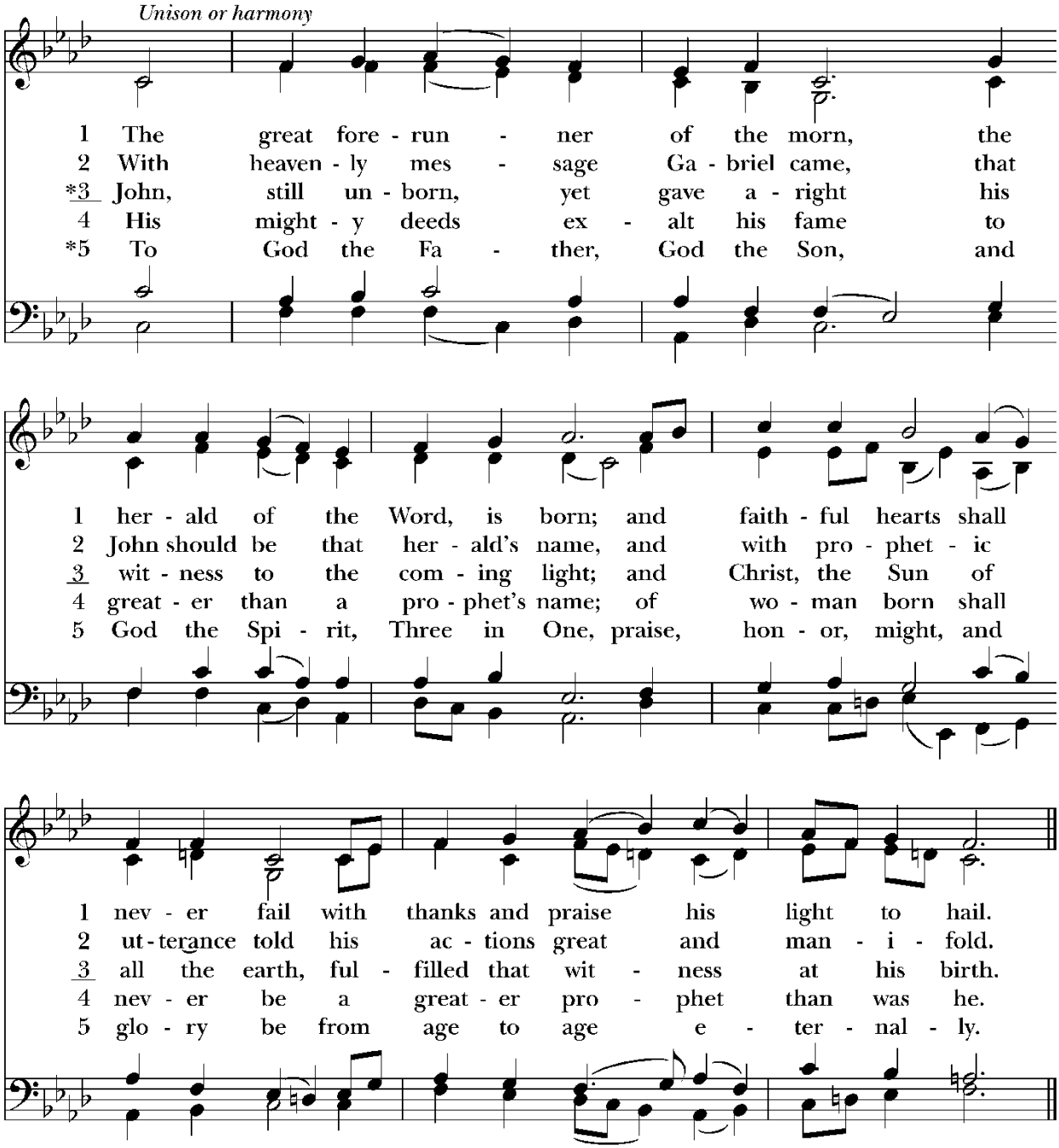
READING: James 5:7-10

A Reading from the letter of James.

[7]Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. [8]You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. [9]Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! [10]As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Please stand in body or spirit

Sequence Hymn: *The great forerunner of the morn (The truth from above) (*H272)

Please remain standing if able

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

[2]When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his
disciples [3]and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for
another?" [4]Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: [5]the blind
receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are
raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. [6]And blessed is anyone who takes
no offense at me."

[7]As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go
out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? [8]What then did you go out
to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal
palaces. [9]What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a
prophet. [10]This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

[11]Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the
Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Celebrant The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon: The Rev. Audra Abt

The Creed

Please stand in body or spirit

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:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He 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.

The Prayers of the People

Please remain standing

Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble, especially Peggy Neidig, Cara Warren, Alice Bolam, Valerie Frear, Molly Weisel, Gene, Andrea, Marilyn Dickinson, Ed Denning, Doug Geissinger, Joanne, Jackson, Gary, Richard Green, Steve Hamilton, Deborah Starkey, John Titmas, Holly Hillen, Bob Reiner, Frances Beacon, Vicki Simpkins and Ashley Stroud.
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest;
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Please pray the St. Paul's Discernment Prayer together:
O Lord our God,
May we, the parish of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, embrace your commandment of loving our neighbors as you have loved us while we discern who we are and how best to serve you.
We ask that you quiet our souls, so we may listen to you.
We ask that you grant us wisdom as we seek new leadership.
And lastly, we ask for the courage to follow wherever you lead us.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty and eternal God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth: mercifully accept the prayers of your people, and strengthen us to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Confession of Sin

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Minister and People
Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Priest
Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen*.

The Peace

All stand.

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.
The People greet one another in the name of the Lord.

Church Announcements

Holy Communion

Offertory Sentence (Psalm 50:14)

The Celebrant says
Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *Adam lay y bounden,* Peter Warlock

The Great Thanksgiving

The People remain standing.

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

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. For you are the source of light and life; you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name: ♪♪♪

Sanctus

Celebrant and People
Holy, holy, holy lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the

prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.
On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." ♪
After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." ♪

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;

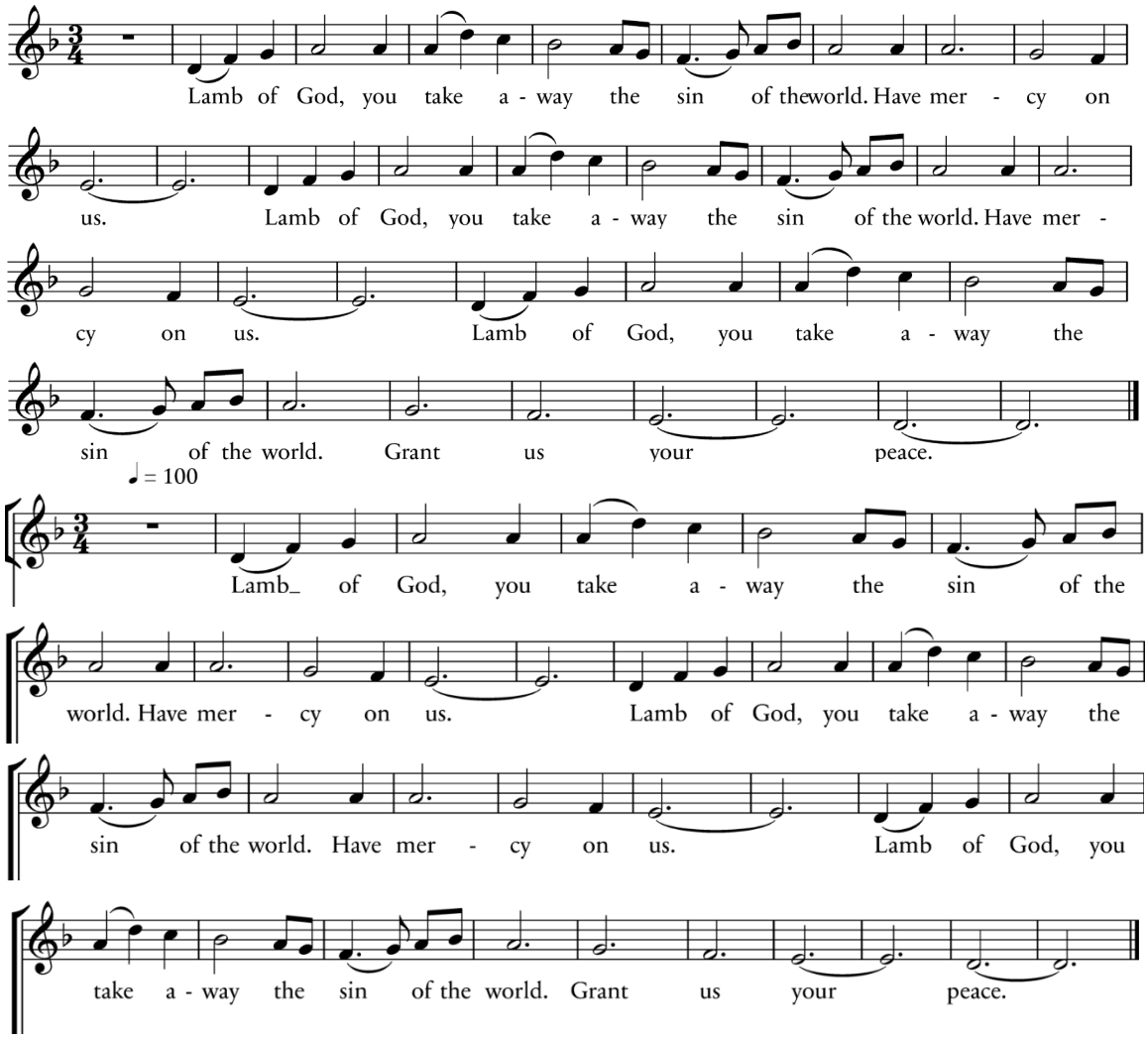
And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.
We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with Paul and all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.
By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. ***AMEN.***

The Lord's Prayer

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,
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.

The Breaking of the Bread

FRACTION ANTHEM: *Lamb of God Agnus Dei* (Dunphy) (AS11)

Spiritual Communion

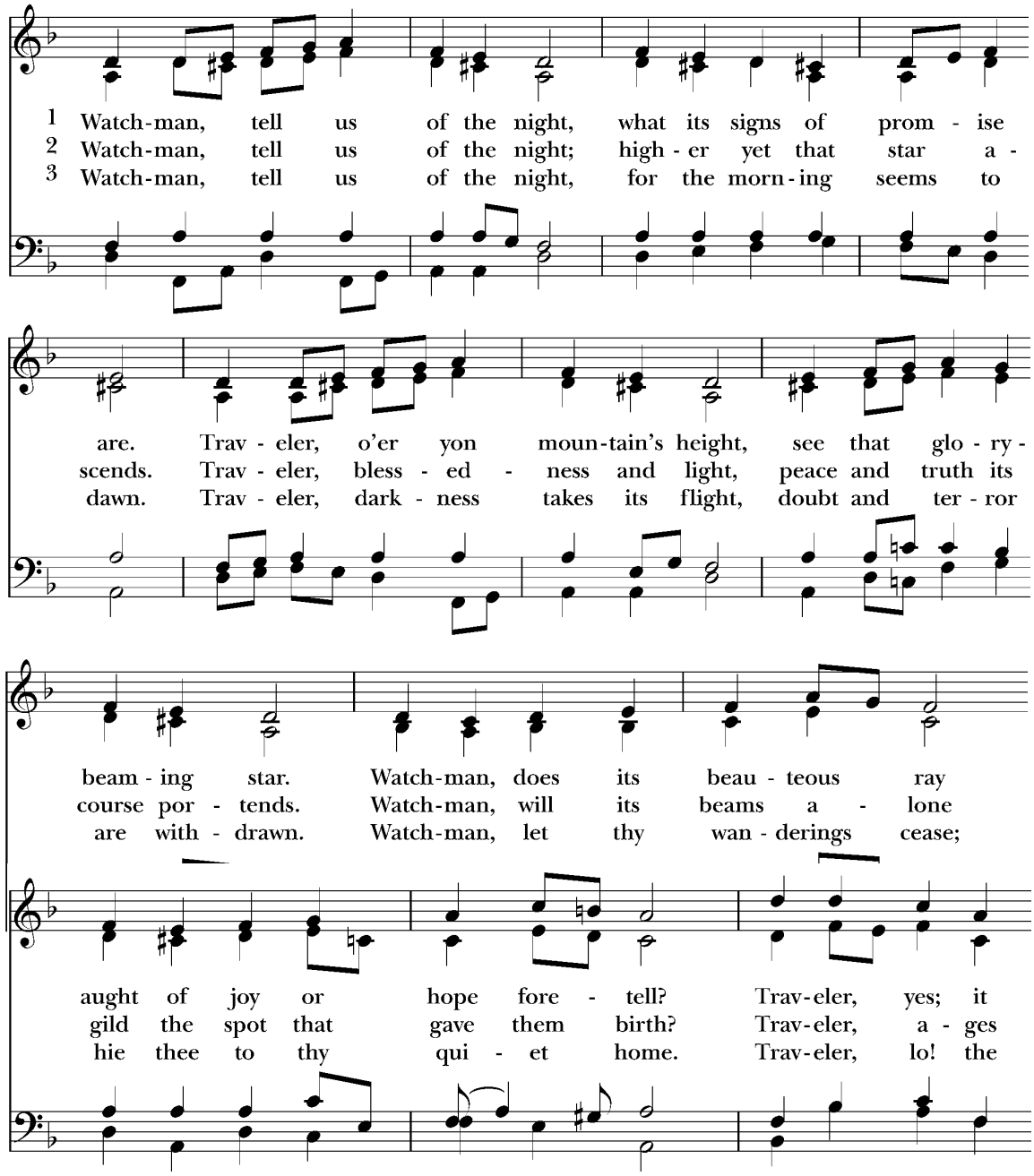
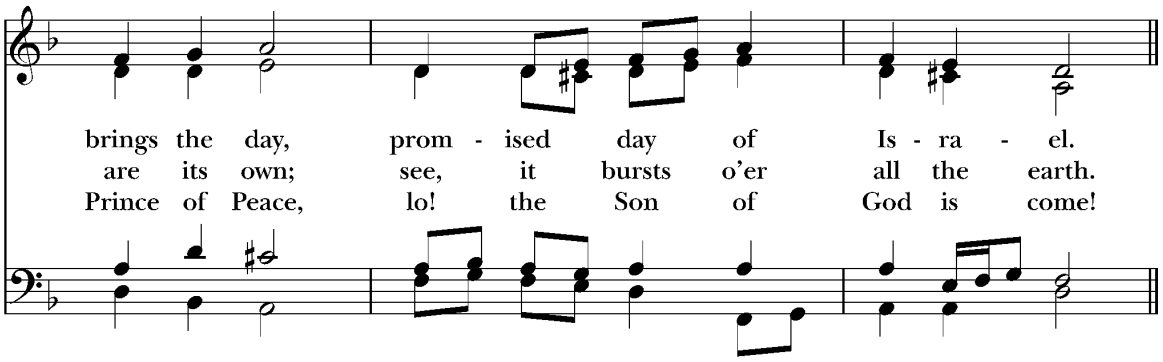
Celebrant: Please join us in praying with our siblings in Christ who are with us online and receiving communion spiritually.

Dearest Lord Jesus, we believe that you are truly present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. We love you above all things and long for you in our souls. Since we are not altogether in our church today to receive the bread and wine made holy, we ask you to

come spiritually into our hearts. Fill us with your light and nourish us all with your word and Spirit. Amen.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

All are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please tell the clergy if you need gluten-free bread. If you come to the communion station for a blessing instead, please cross your arms on your chest. If you are interested in being baptized, please contact the Priest of St. Paul's.

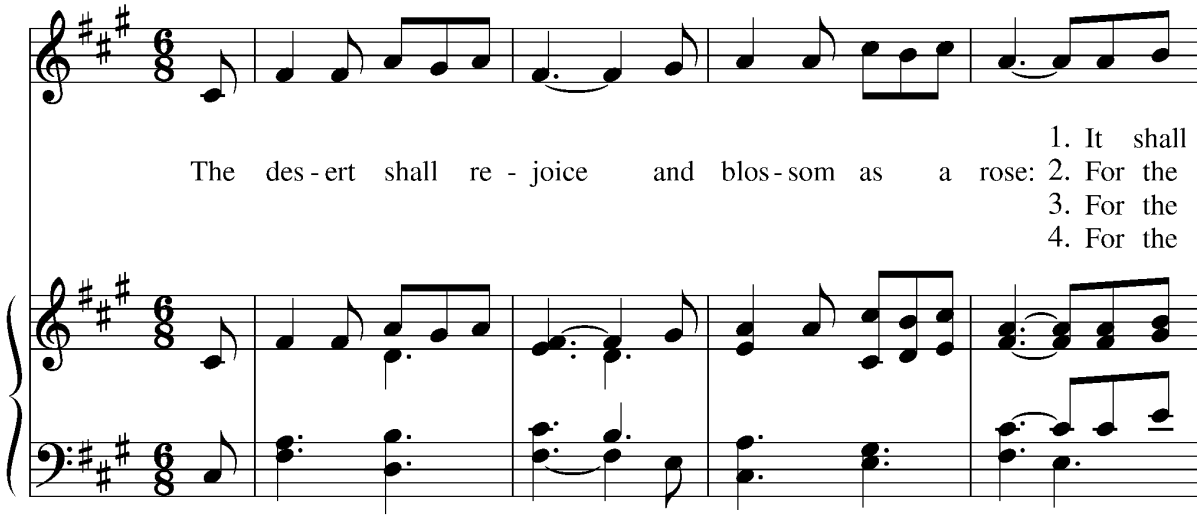
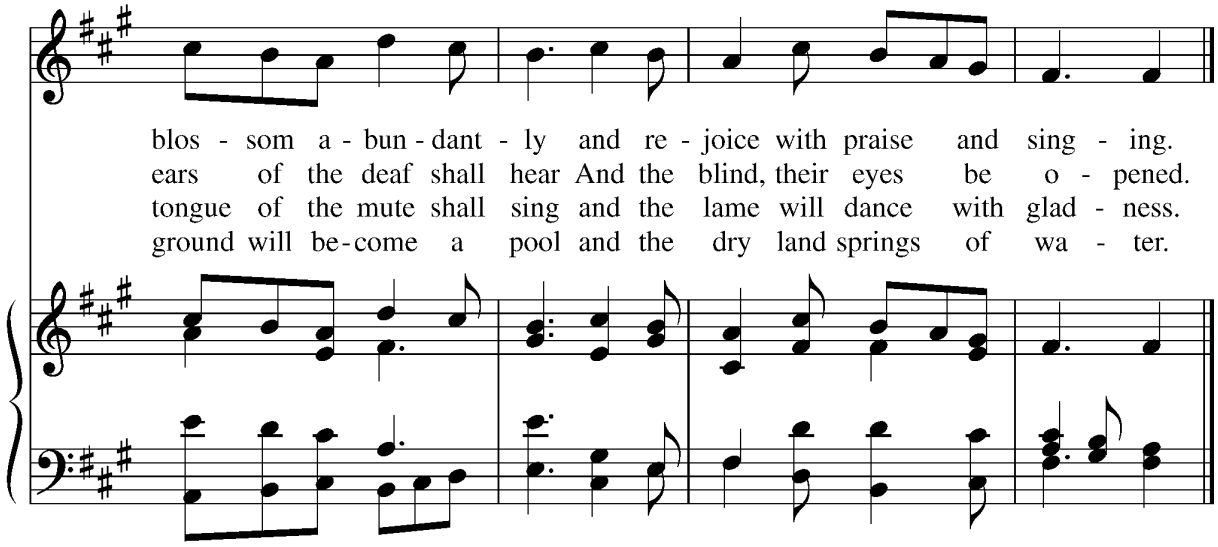
POST-COMMUNION HYMN: *Watchman, tell us of the night* (Aberystwyth) (H640)



Two groups may sing antiphonally, alternating by sentences.

Post-Communion Prayer

Let us pray.
Celebrant and People

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

RECESSIONAL HYMN: *The desert shall* rejoice (Sterling) (WLP 722)

5. The desert shall rejoice
and blossom as a rose:
as the ransomed return to God
and come singing back to Zion.

6. The desert shall rejoice
and blossom as a rose:
unto Zion we come with joy,
for our God has come to save us.

Blessing

Celebrant: The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you for ever. *Amen.*
People: Thanks be to God.

Postlude: *Wachet auf,* A.D. Miller

TODAY'S SERVERS:
Celebrant: The Rev. Audra Abt
Parish musician: Edward Grimes
Greeters: David Lewis
Crucifer: Douglas Colmery
Eucharistic Minister: Demetrius Carrothers
Video: David Lewis and David Rotthoff
Altar Guild: Demetrius Carrothers and Karen Swope
Lector: Carol Sutek
Counters: Carol Sutek and Kelli Green

Announcements

December Birthdays

Richard Oloya, Dec. 4
William Kendrick, Dec. 5
Deborah Husted, Dec. 6
Margaret Moore-Neidig, Dec. 18
Dan Lewton, Dec. 23
John Titmas, Dec. 24

Join us after service today for a visit with Canon Audra

Today the Rev. Audra Abt, Canon for Innovation and Congregational Development for the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio, is our celebrant, preacher and – after the service – our guest at a special parish-wide meeting as we discern the future of St. Paul's. This meeting will be followed by a gathering with the Discernment Committee and Vestry.

Among the things Canon Audra will be exploring with us are:

- How we think about the family of St. Paul's -- Sunday worship and beyond.
- A model for faith development in community as we build more bridges.
- Ways God is working in all our lives no matter what the model.
- The role of the Fr. Joe and Mother Kay into 2026.
- Update on the discernment process.
- The importance of Lay leadership.
- Whatever else is on your mind and in your heart.

A bit more about Canon Audra:

The Rev. Abt, was vicar of Holy Spirit, Greensboro, and mission developer and pastor of Abundant Life Health and Healing in Greensboro before coming to the Diocese of Ohio in early 2024.

As a multi-lingual priest in North Carolina, she served congregations with members from Latin America, West Africa, the Caribbean, and Black and White members hailing from around the U.S.
Since she came to the Diocese, Canon Audra has begun hosting monthly "innovation community calls" to get a sense of new ways churches throughout our diocese are approaching their vocations.

Next week: The greening of St. Paul's

St. Paul's always gives Advent her due, but will be fully preparing for Christmas after service next Sunday, Dec. 21. And this year, we'll have a party to celebrate the greening of the church for everyone who helps transform our sanctuary into its Christmas finery. There's friendship, joyful preparation and plenty more to share, so please plan to stay.

Special upcoming services

- Tuesday, Dec. 16, 4 p.m., Advent Evensong via Zoom. https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87952459454?pwd=bN49jT7NwFayBmTNTevxOngEIddGAA.1
- Sunday, Dec. 21: Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve; music begins at 7:30, service at 8 p.m.

- Sunday, Dec. 28: First Sunday of Christmas, Liturgy of the Word with joint ecumenical service of downtown churches, Christ Presbyterian, 530 Tuscarawas St. W, 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday, Jan. 4: Epiphany Sunday St. Paul's service; joint lessons and carols with St. Mark's and St. Timothy's at St. Timothy's, 3 p.m.

Courageous Conversations year-end gathering

We hope you will join Courageous Conversations on Race Relations (CCORR) this Tuesday, December 16th! We will be reflecting on this past year and looking ahead to next year. Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. in the St. Paul's Guild Hall and the conversation will follow. We want to hear feedback and thoughts from each person who attends!

Social Justice Book Club

The Social Justice Book Club will not meet this month due to the holidays, but will start back up in January! Mark your 2026 calendar for the 4th Tuesday of every month @ 6:30 pm. If you have not done so already, please help us plan for next year by taking a few minutes to answer some simple questions: Social Justice Book Club Survey. Thank you!

Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival Invitation

All are invited to attend the presentations of the 63rd Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival on **Dec. 28**, at 2 and 4:30 p.m. at Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland. Performances are open to the public, and there is no ticketing. The Festival, a volunteer production, is a multi-sensory Elizabethan Christmas experience with pageantry and music that celebrates the light of Christ coming into the world. To learn more, visit the website or call 216.774.0436. For questions, email boarsheadfestival@hotmail.com.

To place your order for Christmas poinsettias, please complete this form and return it to Peggy in the Parish Office. Make checks for the entire order payable to St. Paul's. Thank you for making our Sanctuary special this Christmastide!

Name: _____ **Total Enclosed:** $_____

In loving memory of: _____

In honor of: _____

To the Glory of God for: _____

Type	Quantity	(# Needed)	Price	Donate *	Purchase **
6.5" Poinsettia	____R	(18) ____ W	(14) $10.00 ea.	_____	_____
8.5" Red Poinsettia	_____	(4)	$18.00 ea.	_____	_____
14" White Poinsettia	_____	(2)	$40.00 ea.	_____	_____
28" Pine wreaths	_____	(2)	$24.00 ea.	_____	xxxxxxxx
Pine Roping (25' rolls)	_____	(4)	$25.00 ea.	_____	xxxxxxxx

____ I wish to make a general donation to be used where needed in the amount of _____.

*Poinsettias **donated** will be distributed to shut-ins following Epiphany, and are tax-deductible.
Poinsettias **purchased will be labeled with the buyer's name for pick-up in the Narthex when notified (non- deductible).

DEADLINE TO ORDER POINSETTIAS IS MONDAY, DECEMBER 15