



St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School

- a Family to Whom You Belong -

Our Mission is to: **Make More & Better Disciples**

THE FIRST MIDWEEK OF ADVENT

(12:15 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025)

Servants of God's House

Vacancy Pastor: Rev. James Travis

Organist: Marcus Klassen **Usher:** Tim Draube

Missionaries: Rev. Tim & Lisa Beckendorf & the Siouxland Hispanic Ministry

Reader: Marlis Hilden

WELCOME! We are glad that you are here worshipping God with us. We pray for God's blessings to you and invite you to come back again soon.

AS WE GATHER "Prepare!" is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn't mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.



Today, we focus on evergreens. Perhaps the most innocuous decorations in the eyes of the world, their prickles remind us of the crown of thorns, and the berries of the holly evoke the blood-stained brow of our crucified Lord. Above all, the steadfastness of their green in the midst of death symbolizes life amid death—and the life eternal Jesus won for us on the cross.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church & School

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www.siuoxcitystpauls.org

WORSHIP

(The congregation is invited to respond with the words written in **bold**.)

The Ringing of the Bells

The Hand of Fellowship

Hymn of Invocation

“Prepare the Royal Highway”
(stand as you are able for the last verse)

LSB 343 vs. 1, 2

The Versicles and Gloria Patri

Isaiah 40:3b,c, 5; Psalm 118:26

P: Prepare the way of the LORD;

C: make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

P: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!

C: We bless you from the house of the LORD.

P: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

C: and all flesh shall see it together.

**C: 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.**

SALUTATION

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER

P: Let us pray.

Lord of all beauty, You made the heavens and the earth; the world and all its fullness are Yours. Thank You for giving us life and filling creation with signs that declare Your glory. As we behold beautiful evergreens this season, fix our eyes on their thorny leaves and red berries that we may give thanks for the crown Your Son wore and the cross He bore for us. Abide in us always, as we abide in Your Word and take heart in the promise of eternal life with Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

C: Amen.

The First Reading

Hosea 14:4–8

⁴I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for My anger has turned from them. ⁵I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; ⁶his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon.

⁷They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon. ⁸O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from Me comes your fruit.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Second Reading John 11:17–27

¹⁷Now when Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will

give You." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" ²⁷She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORY *Revelation 22:1–2; Psalm 92:12–15*

P: Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month.

C: The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

P: The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD, they flourish in the courts of our God.

C: The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

P: They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

C: The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY

English

English



- 1 The hol-ly and the i - vy, when they are both full grown,
 2 The hol-ly bears a blos-som as white as an - y flow'r,
 3 The hol-ly bears a ber - ry as red as an - y blood,
 4 The hol-ly bears a prick - le as sharp as an - y thorn,
 5 The hol-ly bears a bark as bitter as an - y gall,
 6 The hol-ly and the i - vy, when they are both full grown,



Of all the trees that are in the wood, the hol - ly bears the crown.
 And Mar-y bore sweet Je-sus Christ to be our sweet Sav - ior.
 And Mar-y bore sweet Je-sus Christ to do poor sin - ners good.
 And Mar-y bore sweet Je-sus Christ on Christ-mas Day in the morn.
 And Mar-y bore sweet Je-sus Christ for to re-deem us all.
 Of all the trees that are in the wood, the hol - ly bears the crown.

Refrain

Oh, the ris-ing of the sun and the run-ning of the deer.



The play-ing of the mer-ry or - gan, sweet sing-ing in the choir.

Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON – "Evergreens" Pastor James Travis

OFFERING

Offering of God's People to their Beloved Savior

We honor God with the gifts He has given to us.

St. Paul's members have pledged to support our ministry in their tithes and offerings.

Please place your offerings in the basket as it is passed by.

To our guest: Thank you for joining us today and please do not feel that you are obligated to participate. We invite you to come back again.

Please pass your **Welcome Card** to an usher or acolyte.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C: **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.**

Additional prayers may be offered here for the specific needs of the congregation and community.

ADVENT LITANY *Hebrews 10:25*

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that bring Christ to our eyes through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth and encourage one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our neighbor—both in word and in deed, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

P: That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

CLOSING PRAYER

P: Lord of life,

C: You sent Your Son to bring back to life all the children of Adam.

P: Grant that we may view the evergreens of this season through the eyes of faith

C: so that in a world still filled with death we may be of good courage, knowing that, just as the evergreen prevails over death in winter, we prevail over the winter of our sin and will rise to life eternal on the Last Day;

P: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

BENEDICTION *John 15:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17*

P: These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you,

C: and that your joy may be full.

P: Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.

C: Amen.

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (LSB 357:1, 4)

St. Paul's Lutheran Church Advent & Christmas Services

During Advent this year please enjoy the extra services.

We will have devotional services every Wednesday during December.

12:15 p.m. at St. Paul's and evening services at 7:00 p.m. at Calvary

(4400 Central St. in Leeds).

These special services are written by Dr. David Peter from Concordia Seminary and follow the pattern of past Advent services. We will do children's sermons and special messages that you have grown love. Sunday services we will continue with a rotation of Pastor Doellinger, Pastor Awe, Pastor Grabau, and concluding the year out with my Associate at Calvary, Pastor Alex Smith. I will be with you as normal on the first and third Saturdays of December with communion.

-Pastor James Travis

"Symbols of Christmas"

Date	Symbols of Christmas	Services at St. Paul's	Services at Calvary
Week 1 Dec. 3	The Ivy -Evergreens	12:15 p.m. with Pastor Travis	7:00 p.m. Calvary Pastor Travis
Week 2 Dec. 10	The Candles	12:15 p.m. with Pastor Alex 6:00 p.m. School Christmas Program (Dinner Following)	7:00 p.m. Calvary Pastor Alex
Week 3 Dec. 17	The Creshe-Nativity	12:15 p.m. with Pastor Alex	5:15 p.m. Caroling at Calvary 7:00 p.m. Calvary
Christmas Eve Dec. 24	Family Candle Light Service	6:30 p.m. with Pastor Travis	11:00 p.m. Pastor Alex (Communion) Calvary
Christmas Day Dec. 25	The Gifts	9:00 a.m. St. Paul's Pastor Travis	
New Year's Eve Dec. 31	Nothing Can Separate Us from God	6:00 p.m. St. Paul's Pastor Alex	



St. Paul's invites you to share a poinsettia plant with the congregation this Christmas. The cost will be \$17.00

Please include your payment with this form. Orders must be placed before **Monday, Dec. 8th**. Forms and money may be given to Marlene Mertens or the church office.

Make checks payable to Friends of Christ.

You may pick up your plant after the Christmas Day Service.

Name _____

Number of Plants _____

In Honor of _____

Or In Memory of _____

Cost: \$17.00 per Plant
Please place order by **December 8th**