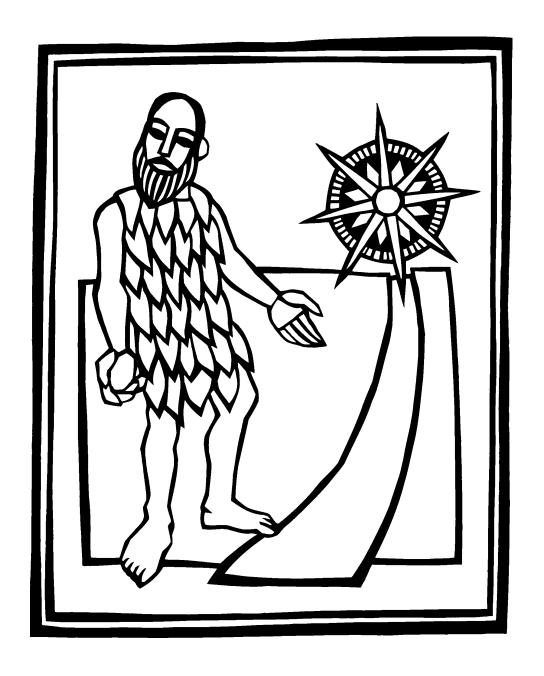
Third Saturday of Advent



December 13, 2025 5:00 pm St. Paul's Amherst Campus Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Church Amherst Campus Third Saturday of Advent December 13, 2025

Musician: Adam Schmidt



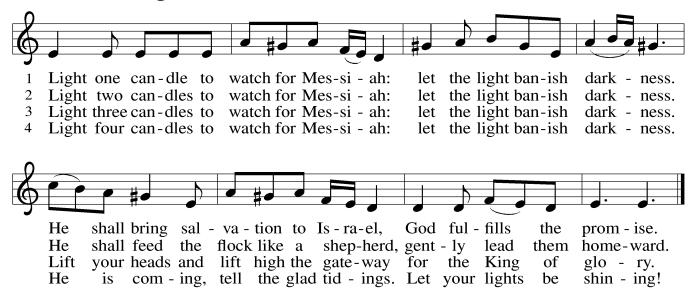


Opening Prayer

P And so, we begin the story all over again, days away from a foretold birth. And waiting. Hoping. Longing. But as we wait, moments of darkness draw closer too. Worries. Doubts. Wondering.

As Christ followers who live on this side of God breaking in, we are given a gift to battle the hardest of times. The light of the world. "A light that shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it." In this Advent season, may we allow that light to grow once more. Every week. Every day. Every moment. To see God's longing for us even more clearly. And to watch for the Messiah.

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954 Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune

Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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Confession and Forgiveness

(Please stand if you are able.)

- P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.
- C Amen.
- P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. Long-expected God,
- We confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.
- P God judges us not as we deserve, but instead with surprise, love and forgiveness. Church, you are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, so get ready to welcome the Savior; + in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.

Gathering Hymn: LBW 25

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



- 1 Re joice, re joice, be liev ers, and let your lights ap pear;
- 2 The watch-ers on the moun-tain pro-claim the bride-groom near;
- The saints, who here in pa tience their cross and suf f'rings bore,
- 4 Our hope and ex pec ta tion, O Je sus, now ap pear;



the eve-ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near. ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias forth as he clear. go live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more. longed for, o'er rise, O Sun so this be - night-ed sphere.



The bride-groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw-ing nigh. The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand. glo - ry the round the throne of Lamb they shall be - hold; hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride-groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907 Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

Apostolic Greeting

- P The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C And also with you.

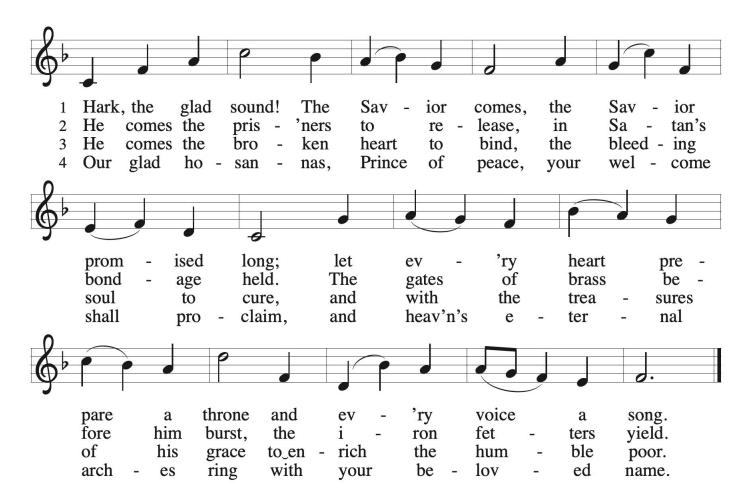
Prayer of the Day

P 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.

C Amen

Praise Hymn: LBW 35

Hark, the Glad Sound!



Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–1751 Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. 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.]]

Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. 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."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; 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; 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.

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. 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. 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.

- A This is the Word of the Lord
- C Thanks be to God.

Psalm 146:5-10 (read responsively)

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)

- A Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God;
- C who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;
- A who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.
- C The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

- A The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- C The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!
- A This is the Word of the Lord
- C Thanks be to God.

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

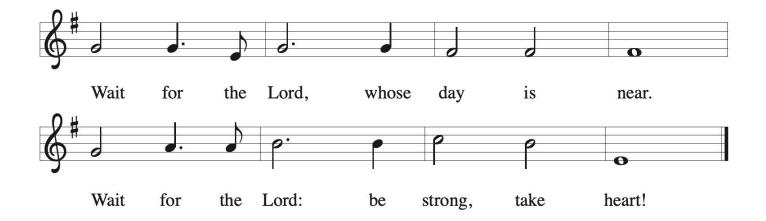
In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, 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. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

- A This is the Word of the Lord
- C Thanks be to God.

Gospel Hymn: ELW 262

Wait for the Lord



Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

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- P The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 11th Chapter.
- C Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

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

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? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 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.' "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."

- P This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon



In Thee Is Gladness



Apostle's Creed

- P With the whole church, let us confess our faith together:
- C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 the Church

P In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. (Please be seated.)

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,

- C hear our prayer.
- P When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,
- C hear our prayer.
- P When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,
- C hear our prayer.
- P When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. We pray especially for the people on our Prayer Lists and Prayer Chain, and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,
- C hear our prayer.

- P When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace,
- C hear our prayer.
- P As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,
- C hear our prayer.
- P Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
- C Amen.

Offering Hymn: ELW 253

He Came Down



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he can
- 2 He came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy;
- he came down that we may have love;
- he came down that we may have light;
- he came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;

he came down that we may have light;

he came down that we may have peace;

he came down that we may have joy;

hal-le-lu-jah for-ev-er-more.

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

Ways to Give to St. Paul's:

Options you can use to continue tithing to St. Paul's:

- In-Person Worship: Continue to put your envelopes and cash in the plate
- Giving by Mail: Please mail your donations payable to St. Paul's, 4007 Main Street, Eggertsville, NY 14226
- Online: The St. Paul's website contains a link to Online Giving. The website is: https://stpaulseggertsville.com/online-giving/



- P Let us pray.
- C God of life, you have blessed us with every good gift. Through our offerings today and in our planned giving, open us to share all that we have been given and to love the world in Jesus' name. Amen

Dialogue and Preface

- P The Lord be with you.
- C And also with you.
- P Lift up your hearts.
- C We lift them to the Lord.
- P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C It is right to give God thanks and praise.
- P It is indeed right and proper that we should at all times and in all places, offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, through Christ our Lord; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and speak their unending hymn:

Sanctus (spoken)

C 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.

Words of Institution

P In the night in which he was handed over, 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

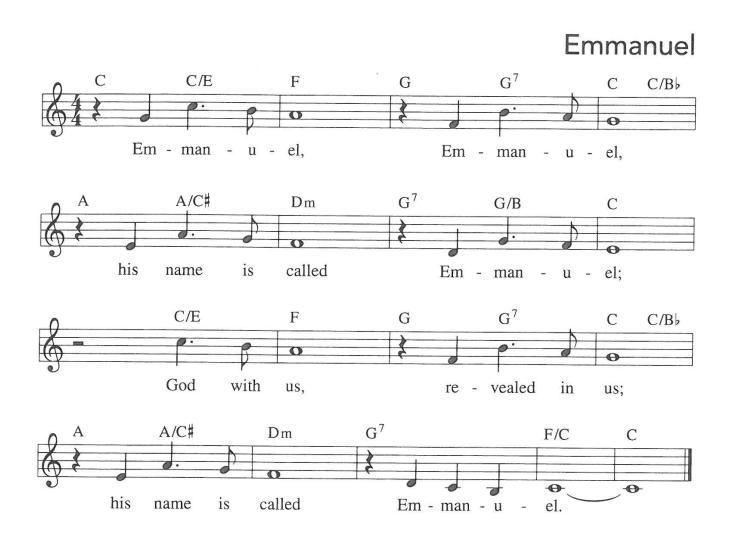
- P Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:
- Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; 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



Holy Communion at St. Paul's: celebrated every time we gather, and is open to all. Please approach by the center aisle, receive the bread and the wine, and return to your seat via the side aisle. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available. Simply request it from the Assisting Minister holding the wine. Children are welcome! Those who receive elsewhere may receive here. Children who do not yet receive may come for a blessing. If you have difficulty walking, communion will be brought to you at your seat.



Communion Hymn: W&P 36



Text and music: Bob McGee Text and music © 1976 C. A. Music

Distribution Hymn: ELW 843

Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness



- 1 Praise the One who breaks the dark-ness with a lib er at-ing light;
- 2 Praise the One who blessed the chil-dren with a strong yet gen-tle word;
- 3 Praise the one true love in car nate: Christ, who suf fered in our place;



praise the One who frees the pris-'ners, turn-ing blind-ness in - to sight. praise the One who drove out de-mons with a pierc-ing, two-edged sword. Je - sus died and rose for man - y that we may know God by grace.



Praise the One who preached the gos - pel, heal-ing ev - 'ry dread dis - ease, Praise the One who brings cool wa - ter to the des - ert's burn-ing sand; Let us sing for joy and glad-ness, see-ing what our God has done.



calm-ing storms and feed - ing thou-sands with the ver - y bread of peace. from this well comes liv - ing wa - ter quench-ing thirst in ev - 'ry land. Praise the one re - deem - ing glo - ry; praise the One who makes us one.

Text: Rusty Edwards, b. 1955

Music: NETTLETON, J. Wyeth, Repository of Sacred Music, Part II, 1813

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Communion Blessing

- P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
- C Amen.

Prayer After Communion

- P God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.
- C Amen.

Benediction

- P And now as you go on your way, may our Lord Jesus go with you. May he go before you to show you the way, behind you to encourage you, beside you to be your friend, above you to watch over you, and within you to give you peace. Go today celebrating in the name of the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, and all God's children said...
- C Amen

Closing Hymn: LBW 26 (on the following page)

Dismissal

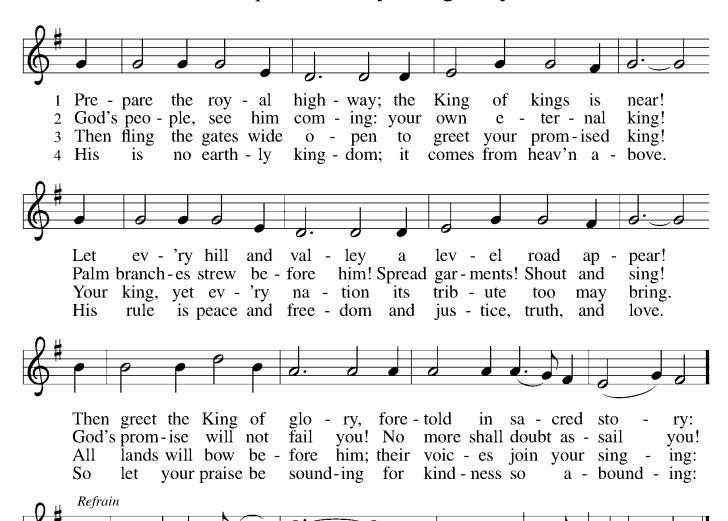
- P Go in peace to serve the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.



All Donations for the Angel Tree must be turned in by tomorrow, Sunday, December 14. Unwrapped please. Thanks to all who participated this year. You're all Angels!

Thx - Cheryl

Prepare the Royal Highway



Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship* Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent. Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

the

Ho - san - na to

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Lord,

for

he

ful - fills

God's word!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

What's Happening This Week at St. Paul's: December 14-21, 2025

Unless otherwise noted, all activities will take place at the Eggertsville Campus

Sunday: 9:30 am-1:30 pm: Western New York Church at AC

10:00 am: Church Unleashed: YouTube, Facebook, and MeTV

10:00 am: Sunday School Christmas Pageant, Worship, and Communion

1:00 pm: Ray of Hope at AC

Monday: 4:15 pm: Daily Bread Food Truck Meal Share

5:30-9:00 pm: Straight Pepper Diet Meeting at AC

7:00-8:30 pm: Waiting in Hope

Tuesday: 10:00 am: Bible Study

5:00-6:30 pm: We Can No Longer Blame Others (NA)

6:00 pm: Burrito Project

Wednesday: 12:00 pm: New Beginnings for Single Ladies

6:30-8:30 pm: Ray of Hope Prayer Group at AC

8:00 pm: AA Meeting

Thursday: 3:00-6:30 pm: Tiger's Den Food Pantry Open

Friday: No Events Planned

Saturday: 9:00 am-3:00 pm: Peniel Haitian Church at AC

5:00 pm: Early Christmas Eve Service and Communion at AC

5:00-8:00 pm: Youth Night Christmas Party

Sunday: 9:30 am-1:30 pm: Western New York Church at AC

10:00 am: Church Unleashed: YouTube, Facebook, and MeTV

10:00 am: Worship, Communion, Baptism of Hayes Siefert, Sunday School and

Middle School Sunday School

1:00 pm: Ray of Hope at AC

Prayer List: In our congregational and extended family: Eileen Knauth; Tammy Thomas; David Wieczorek; Joyce Chace; Elaine Masman; Lavon Amos; Cindy Milazzo Schwartz; David Schunak; Sylvia McLaughlin; Sue Epstein

Prayer List: Shut-Ins (* indicates new names or changes added this week)

Joyce Chace: Brookdale, 6076 Main Street, Williamsville, NY 14221

Neal DeLeo: Greenfield Manor, #D127, 5958 Broadway, Lancaster, NY 14086

John Hornung: Brothers of Mercy, 10570 Bergtold Road, Clarence, NY 14031

Jan Isaacs: 6 Bush Gardens, Three Rod Road, Alden, NY 14004

Joan Maefs: Solstice, 6363 Transit Road, #136, East Amherst, NY 14051

Elaine Masman: Heathwood Assisted Living, 815 Hopkins, Room 251, Williamsville, NY 14221

Wilma Nantka: Fredonia Place, 201 Reist Street, #238, Williamsville, NY 14221

Charles Scofield: Fredonia Place, 201 Reist Street, #228, Williamsville, NY 14221

Ira Striejewske: 48 Cornell Avenue, Eggertsville, NY 14226

David Wolf: Solstice, 6363 Transit Road, #244, East Amherst, NY 14051

PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

In-Person Worship: St. Paul's has two in-person worship services: Saturday evening at 5:00 pm at the Amherst Campus, 5125 Main Street, Williamsville, 14221, and Sunday morning at 10:00 am at the Eggertsville Campus, 4007 Main Street, Eggertsville, 14226. The Sunday 10:00 am worship service is also livestreamed on St. Paul's YouTube page.

Church Unleashed: If you cannot join us for in-person worship, please continue to worship with us as Church Unleashed on Sunday mornings at 10:00 am on WBBZ, YouTube, or Facebook.

Prayer Team Ministry: Once a week you will receive an email with a list of people to pray for and specific requests for that person. We ask that you commit to praying for the names on the email. If you'd like to join us, please contact Cody at: Cody@stpaulseggertsville.com

Daily Bread Food Truck: The 2025 Monday Meal Share is underway each Monday from 4:15-5:15 pm. If you are interested in volunteering or donating, contact the office at 716-835-0407 or dailybread 4007@gmail.com.

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tigers Den Food Pantry: The Food Pantry is open to anyone in need in zip code 14226, is associated with St. Paul's Amherst Campus, or by referral. The remaining pantry hours for December are: Thursday 12/18 from 3:00-6:30 pm, and Saturday 12/27 from 9:00 am-12:30 pm. Donations for December: spaghetti sauce, crackers, and granola bars.



All Christmas Services will end in candlelight

*Saturday, December 20, 5:00 pm

Early Christmas Eve Service at the Amherst Campus featuring special music and liturgical dance

*Wednesday, December 24 at 10:00 am

Family Christmas Eve Service featuring special music and extended Children's Time

*Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 pm Traditional Christmas Eve Service



Joyeux Noel

featuring
"Messe de Minuit pour Noel"
By Marc-Antoine Charpentier
and other Christmas selections
from French composers

Sunday, December 21, 2025 3:00 p.m. First Trinity Lutheran Church 1570 Niagara Falls Blvd. Tonawanda, New York

Tickets: \$15 Adults

Call 716-741-4573 for more information

or visit our website: www.thelutheranchoraleoftheniagarafrontier.com



+ St. Paul's Mission + To empower others with the Good News of Jesus Christ. We do that by: Seeking Connections, Enriching Faith, Nourishing Lives, and Demonstrating Love in God's Name.

St. Paul's Congregation Council

President: Robert Simpson Vice-President: Tim Johnson Treasurer: William Niblock Secretary: Janet Schmidt

Bob Brown David Dahlberg Susan Epstein Sara Hannon Vanessa Solomon Scott Vahue Barbara Walter

Pastors

Steve Biegner (716-868-1232 - cell); Email: steve@stpaulseggertsville.com Kristen Arends: Email: kristen@stpaulseggertsville.com

<u>Directors of Music</u>: Paul H. Storfer (SPEC) and Adam Schmidt (AC)

<u>Christian Education Coordinator</u>: June Piette: scs@stpaulseggertsvlle.com

<u>Youth Ministry</u>: Jordan Dywan: youth@stpaulseggrtsville.com

<u>Digital Ministry</u>: Andrew Gruszka

<u>Facilities Manager</u>: Jeff Stein

Church Office Staff

Cody Almeter and Adrienne Leary E-mail: office@stpaulseggertsville.com Telephone: (716) 835-0407 Website: www.stpaulseggertsville.com

St. Paul's Eggertsville Campus 4007 Main Street Eggertsville, NY 14226

Worship Service: Sundays at 10:00 am

St. Paul's Amherst Campus 5125 Main Street Williamsville, NY 14221

Worship Service: Saturdays at 5:00 pm