

**SAINT PAUL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

4517 Rufe Snow Dr. North Richland Hills, TX 76180

817-281-3175

***1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent***

***December 3, 2023***

**PRELUDE**

**Barbara Compher**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Rev. Ken Ehrke**

**CHORAL INTROIT**

**GRACE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Liturgist**

**Leader:** Tear open the heavens and bring forth your presence. We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

**People:** We gather with hope, remembering your mercy. Lead us in love; shine from above.

**Leader:** Awaken the earth, enflame and en flesh, as we watch and wait for what's birthing ahead.

**People:** We gather with hope, remembering your justice. Revive us, restore us; shine from above.

**Leader:** Make us your love wave to broaden your reach, We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

**People:** We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork. Make us, mold us; shine from above.

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

**UNISON:** El Shaddai – God of the mountains who quake at your presence, You meet us in our memory of you. We'd invite you to come down and dwell among us, yet we know that you are already and always with us—Emmanuel, in our collective memory from ages past—God beside us, God before us, God behind us, and God within us. Let your face shine so that we might remember you more clearly. Give us life and we will call on your name. As we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

**HYMN #664 P**

***Morning Has Broken***

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING**

**“The Angels Speak”**

**Chris Turner**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**Liturgist**

We gather together in this season of Advent anticipating hope, praying for peace, attempting to cultivate joy and share love amidst commotion, grief, despair and uncertainty. What is giving you hope, today? It can be something we often take for granted, such as “the sun in the sky is giving me hope.” It can be something that surprises you. What is giving you hope? Please join me in prayer:

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Liturgist**

**Unison:** We come singing songs of hope, this morning. Though we may not be inspired much right now, we still sing. Though it may take us time to sit with our hampered thoughts and sift through the growing pile of despair, we still sing. In spite of everything ridiculous and sad— though we may be beyond belief, depressed, confused, and mad— some of us got dressed, and some of us made it out of bed or out the door and we still sing of hope. God, we turn to you. We leave our burdens at your feet. You are our hope.

**HYMN # 61 W**

***Change My Heart, O God***

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**Rev. Ehrke**

God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we didn't think we could— that you have not left us nor forsaken us— That our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in the valleys of death. And so, we still sing, too. Embolden us as we try to show the world that we can find hope even when it seems impossible to bear. Hope must be there. Fear never wins. The work begins in us. Amen.

## **\*GLORIA PATRI # 581 P**

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**Liturgist**

Almighty God, give us ears to hear your story in these words of Scripture; give us eyes to see your story in the faces of those that surround us; and give us faith enough, that by your grace, we might serve you until the end of our days. Amen.

### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

**Isaiah 64:1-9**

**Liturgist**

<sup>1</sup> O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence — as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil; to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence

<sup>3</sup> When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

<sup>4</sup> From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

<sup>5</sup> You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

<sup>6</sup> We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

<sup>7</sup> There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity

<sup>8</sup> Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

<sup>9</sup> Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

**Liturgist:** The Word of the Lord      **People:** Thanks be to God

### **ANTHEM**

### **TIME WITH THE CHILDREN**

**Rev. Ehrke**

### **GOSPEL READING**

**Mark 13:24-37**

**Rev. Ehrke**

<sup>24</sup> ‘But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, <sup>25</sup> and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup> Then they will see “the Son of Man coming in clouds” with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup> Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup> ‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup> So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he<sup>[a]</sup> is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup> Truly I tell you; this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken

place. <sup>31</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup> ‘But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Christ, but only

God. <sup>33</sup> Beware, keep alert;<sup>[b]</sup> for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup> It is like a man going on a

journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup> Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup> or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup> And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

**Pastor:** The Word of the Lord

**People:** Thanks be to God

## **SERMON**

**Rev. Ehrke**

### **GRATITUDE**

## **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

### **The Apostles Creed**

**Rev. Ehrke**

**UNISON: I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **HYMN #126 W**

*Come, Share the Lord*

## **OFFERTORY INVITATION**

**Rev. Ehrke**

As recipients of the generous deeds of God, let us share our generosity with each other and the community.

## **\*DOXOLOGY #607**

## **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Rev. Ehrke**

For the wondrous ways this offering will breathe hope into community; We dedicate these gifts. For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission; We dedicate these gifts. Let these gifts strengthen our call to carry out God's justice and mercy.

## **INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Rev. Ehrke**

(call for names from the congregation for those to include in prayer)

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: and also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, who taught us to pray not only for ourselves but for people everywhere, hear us as we pray for others, in the name of Jesus Christ. Inspire the whole church with your power, unity and peace. Grant that all who trust you may obey your word, and live together in love. Lead all nations in the way of justice and

goodwill. Direct those who govern, that they may rule fairly, maintain order, uphold those in need, and defend oppressed people; that this world may claim your rule and know true peace.

**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.**

Comfort and relieve, O Lord, all who are in trouble ... sorrow... poverty... sickness... grief... especially those known to us, whom we name before you (**speak the names from the congregation**) as well as those who remain silent in our hearts... Heal them in body, mind, and circumstance, working in them, by your grace, wonders beyond all they may dream or hope.

**People: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Bring to remembrance all those, who having served you on earth, now sing your praises eternally. May their endurance give us courage and their faithfulness give us hope; we pray all these things through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray, saying:

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND SHARING THE MEAL**

**Rev. Ehrke**

The Lord Jesus on the night of his arrest, took bread and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and gave it to his disciples saying: take, eat, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup saying: this is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

Every time we eat his bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord, until He comes again. The gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

**(Serve Communion to the People)**

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**Rev. Ehrke**

**UNISON: Lord God, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal and these people, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people, because we shared the living bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us, encourage many through us. So Lord, may we live to your glory. Amen.**

## **HYMN #106 P**

*Prepare the Way, O Zion*

Go forth with the gift of hope. Remembering God's deeds. Trusting God's presence. And Becoming God's handiwork. May God's face shine on us now and forever. Amen

## **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**GO OUT INTO THE WORLD GRATEFULLY**

*\*\*The Advent readings are “produced by special arrangement with Contemporary Drama Service” by Galen R. Hackman*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Assisting in Worship today is Mike Griffin, Liturgist.

Thank you to Mike & Robin Hicks for refreshments following Worship today.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:** Howard Barlow, Steve & Louise Wilson, Leslie Roden, Chris Turner

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS:** Trevor Newell 2, Norma Russell 8, Sandra Turner 10, Rosalee Fleming 16, Ellen Blume 27, Macklyn Hill 29, Arlene Schneider 31

**DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:** Chris & Sandra Turner 29

**DECEMBER PRESBYTERIAN NIGHT SHELTER – items of the month**

If you'd like to help support the Presbyterian Night Shelter, please bring the following items and place in the PNS bins located in the Fellowship Hall: gloves, knitted caps, hand warmers

**12/03** – Congregational meeting to hear a report on the budget and elect Class of 2026 Elders and Trustee. The meeting will be held at the conclusion of the worship service, approx. 12:00 p.m.

Bring your Preemie-3 Mos. baby clothing items to Pat Lates.

**12/05** - Presbyterian Women's meeting/luncheon. To be held at the Lone Star Antique Mall Tea Room at 12:00 p.m.. If attending meeting, you can bring Preemie-3 mos baby clothing at this time.

**12/10** – Worship service to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Paul, Presbyterian Women's Christmas Luncheon after worship with potluck side dishes, Embrace to join us for our 11:00 service celebration and luncheon.

**\*Tamales are being provided as the main entree. Please bring a side dish or dessert as a potluck item to share.**

**12/24** – St. Paul & Embrace combined 11:00 a.m. worship service.

**12/24** – St. Paul & Embrace combined Christmas Eve service, 6:00 p.m.

**01/07** – Epiphany Sunday.

**01/13** – Take down Christmas Decorations, 9:00 a.m.

### **Mission statement of St. Paul Presbyterian Church**

As joyful believers in Jesus Christ, we are called to worship God, educate disciples, remain steadfast in our faith, and do Christ's work through ministry, missions and fellowship. We are led by the Holy Spirit to be a nurturing congregation that maintains a connection with the larger church as well as local community, being open to the needs and concerns of others.