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## THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

### UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

November 30 and December 1, 2019

#### PRESERVICE HYMN SING

#### BELLS AND WELCOME

#### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

M We light one Advent candle, remembering Jesus, who came in history. He came into a world of sin and death.

C **We remember Jesus, who came as the promised Messiah. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord.**

M We hear his call to repent.

C **We light one Advent candle as a sign of our repentance and desire for renewal.**

M Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C **Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.**

*One Advent candle is lit.*

#### OPENING HYMN 1, vv. 1-5

#### The Advent of Our King

M The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C **And also with you.**

#### CONFESSION OF SINS

M Brothers and sisters in Christ, for centuries the faithful Old Testament believers waited longingly for the promise of a Savior to be fulfilled.

C **We can imagine the faith-struggle they went through, wondering if God really was going to keep his promise.**

M Faith-struggle is a reality in our lives, too. We wonder if God really will show up, if he will keep his promises to help and rescue us. In times of weakness we find ourselves filled with doubts and misgivings. But God longs to heal us. So we bring our lack of faith, along with all our sins, and lay them at the foot of Jesus' cross.

**All** O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear. I am bowed down and brought very low; I groan in anguish of heart. I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin. O Lord, do not forsake me; be not far from me. Come quickly to help me, O Lord, my Savior (*Psalm 38:1,4,6*).

**M** Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. In Jesus you have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace (*Ephesians 2:4-5 and 1:7*).

**C** We have been brought from death to life. Sin shall not be our master, because we are not under law, but under grace (*Romans 6:13-14*).

**RESPONSE HYMN 1, v. 6**

**The Advent of Our King**

All glory to the Son,  
Who comes to set us free,  
With Father, Spirit, ever one  
Through all eternity.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**M** Let us pray.  
Father God, time and again you showed up in the lives of your people at just the right time.

**C** You brought rescue, help, forgiveness, and hope.

**M** Give us faith to believe your Word and promises,  
**C** so that we live in confident expectation that you will do all that you have said you will do.

**M** We pray through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



**FIRST LESSON**

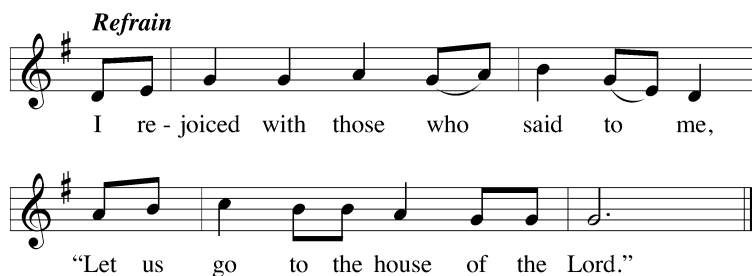
**Isaiah 2:1-5, Bible page 680**

*When our dreams are shattered, God invites us up onto the mountain of his temple where he teaches us his ways.*

**PSALM OF THE DAY**

**Psalm 122**

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord."*





**He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### OFFERING

#### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

C **We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.**

M As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.

C **Move us to take to heart the words of John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."**

M You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

C **Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.**

M Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.

C **Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.**

*Special prayers and intercessions.*

M Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

M Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.

C **Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

## CLOSING PRAYER

M Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



## BLESSING

M The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.



AWAKE AND ALIVE VIDEO *2-Day Conference ~ January 10 & 11*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRESIDING MINISTER *(Sunday) Pastor David Kuehl*

ORGANIST *Darik Mischke*



Our vision is that by every possible means we bring every person in our area of influence closer to Christ through regular worship, small groups, and serving together.

# WEEKLY CALENDAR

For the week of December 2, 2019

<b>MON</b>	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
<b>TUE</b>	9:00 am	Ladies Bible Study (Faith Room)
	9:30 am	Ministerial Growth Team Meeting
	10:00 am	Walking Group (Trinity Gym)
	10:30 am	Ministerial Team Meeting
	1:30 pm	Blood Drive hosted by Muskego Women's Club (Grace Room)
	6:00 pm	Divorce Care (School Classroom 8)
	6:30 pm	Handbell Rehearsal (Church Balcony)
	6:30 pm	Volleyball League (Trinity Gym)
	7:00 pm	<i>Following the Promise</i> (Faith Room)
<b>WED</b>	9:30 am	Mommy & Me (Faith Room)
	9:45 am	Reading Buddies (Trinity Café)
	12:00 pm	Ladies Afternoon Fellowship Christmas Party (Grace Room)
	3:30 pm	Advent Worship Service
	4:30 pm	Public School 6-8 Grade Confirmation Instruction Classes
	7:00 pm	Advent Worship Service
	8:00 pm	Ministry Board Call Meeting for 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher
	8:00 pm	Brass Ensemble Rehearsal
<b>THURS</b>	6:30 am	Sunrise Bible Study (Faith Room)
	10:00 am	Walking Club (Trinity Gym)
	7:00 pm	The Bridge and Contemporary Band Practice
<b>FRI</b>	8:15 am	Lutheran School Chapel Service (Main Church)
	12:00 pm	Quilting Fellowship Christmas Party (Hickory Sticks, Waukesha)
	7:00 pm	Card Players' Group – Sheepshead (Faith Room)
<b>SAT</b>	8:00 am	Men's Breakfast Bible Study (Grace Room)
	5:00 pm	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
<b>SUN</b>	7:45 am	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
	8:00 am	<i>Following the Promise</i> (School Classroom #8)
	9:15 am	Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion
	9:15 am	Grace Room Bible Study
	9:45 am	The Bridge Communion
	10:15 am	The Bridge
	10:45 am	Contemporary Worship Service with Holy Communion

## MALAWI MISSION PARTNER NEWSLETTER AT THE WELCOME CENTER

The November issue of the newsletter from our mission partner in Malawi, Africa is available today at the Welcome Center in the lobby. Read about how your generous offerings toward this mission are making a difference. If you would like to give toward this ministry, designate your offering as "Malawi Mission."

# ST. PAUL'S NEWS

## **SUNDAY MORNING NURSERY**

We have a staffed nursery during the 9:15 and 10:45 am services in the east wing of the church. A silent pager system allows childcare providers to alert you of any need your child has. Our ushers are happy to assist.

## **BAPTISM**

Hallie Grace Eschenbach, daughter of Robert and Cassandra (nee Stack) Eschenbach, was born September 10, 2019, and will be baptized in a private ceremony after the 10:45 am worship service on Sunday, December 1. We give thanks for the gift of saving faith given to Hallie. May God continue to bless and strengthen Hallie's faith throughout her life.

## **PRAYERS REQUESTED**

Please pray for the following individuals in their time of need: Carol Beyer, David Burkowitz, Steve Drobka, Carol Gosseck, Janelle Gray, Lois Guhr, Connie Hikade, Josh Nagel, Carol Smith, Jeanne Steinbrecher, and Dick and Jane Sternberg.

## **HOSPITALIZED**

Marilyn Miller is in hospice care at Elder Care Cottages in Tichigan, and Sharon Dreyer in hospice care at Elizabeth Residence. Dorrette Probst is at West Allis and Donald Oakes at Froedtert.

## **ATTENDANCE**

1189 were in attendance for last weekend's services.

## **CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR RANDY FINK CALL RECEIVED**

Please keep Church Administrator Randy Fink in your prayers as he deliberates a call to serve as director of mission advancement at Manitowoc Lutheran High School in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. May the Holy Spirit guide him through the good counsel that you and others give to him so that he knows how he can best use his gifts in service to God's saving plan.

## **THE DORCAS SOCIETY THANKS YOU**

It is with great joy that St. Paul's Dorcas Society ladies extend their gratitude to all who supported the Dorcas Society Bake Sale on November 17, by donating or purchasing baked goods. \$1,800 will be evenly distributed among St. Paul's Tuition Assistance Fund; the Malawi, Africa, mission with Missionary John Holtz; and the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society. Plus, an additional \$200 will be given to WELS Lutherans for Life. A big thank you to all!

## **FOLLOWING THE PROMISE BIBLE STUDY**

Join this Bible basics class that you are sure to grow in your appreciation for what the Bible teaches. Reinforce the reason for the hope that you have and increase your ability to share it with others. This also serves as an avenue to membership at St. Paul's, if you so choose. The study is led by Pastor Nate Strobel on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm and Sundays at 8:00 am. Contact Pastor Nate at [nstrobel@stpaulmuskego.org](mailto:nstrobel@stpaulmuskego.org) or mark the back of your Connection Card to register.

## **DECEMBER GRACE ROOM SERIES**

Using the first two chapters of Luke, *Important Arrivals: Jesus and John* will focus on how God prepared the ancient world for the arrival of his Son. Join Mr. Mark Ricke, director of enrollment for Wisconsin Lutheran High School and a veteran high school history and religion instructor, Sundays in December in the Grace Room, 9:15-10:15 am.

# ST. PAUL'S NEWS

## **GIFT TREE FOR OUR MUSKEGO HEALTH CARE CENTER**

Thank you once again for your wonderful generosity towards our Muskego community. All the resident tags have been taken from the tree or funded. Just a friendly reminder to have your wrapped gifts to church by December 8. Be sure to register your tag! Contact Sally Wallner at (414) 218-5197 for more information.

## **TOY DRIVE FOR KIDS IN NEED**

Provide a toy for a child in need along with sharing the good news of Jesus with each gift. Simply purchase a gift of \$15.00 or more in value, wrap it, and attach the provided tag available on the table in the Trinity Café.

## **A CHRISTMAS MEAL FOR THOSE IN NEED**

St. Paul's Food Pantry is planning to provide food boxes for Christmas as we did for Thanksgiving. If you know of someone who would appreciate a box this Christmas, please submit the name(s) with contact information to Pastor Kuehl at (414) 422-0320, ext. 121, or [dkuehl@stpaulmuskego.org](mailto:dkuehl@stpaulmuskego.org).

## **BE A LIGHT TO OUR COMMUNITY – HELP HANG CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ON CAMPUS**

This year St. Paul's will be hanging Christmas lights on a few evergreen trees along Janesville Road near the main entrances to our campus. If you or your friends would like to help in this outreach effort, please contact Outreach Coordinator Sally Wallner at 414.422.0320, ext. 294, or Worship Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Schuh at [hschuh@stpmuskego.org](mailto:hschuh@stpmuskego.org).

## **HELP KEEP LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH CENTER SHINING AT GARDEN HOMES**

The Lighthouse Youth Center on the campus of our mission partner, Garden Homes Lutheran Church, needs the following supplies for the 50-60 urban youth it serves each day. If you could assist with obtaining any of the following, contact Dr. Nelson at [jnelson@stpaulmuskego.org](mailto:jnelson@stpaulmuskego.org).

- 8 oz. cups, paper plates, napkins, paper towels, dish soap, dish scrubbers and sponges
- disinfectant cleaner, toilet cleaner, toilet brushes, dust mops, paper towels

## **REMEMBERING ST. PAUL'S HOMEBOUND**

A list of our homebound members has been placed at the Welcome Center for you to remember the homebound of our congregation during the holiday season.

## **AWAKE AND ALIVE 2020**

Awake and Alive: A national Christian event ministry for the 18-25 generation and leaders of this generation. Awake and Alive was founded and currently led by Mike Westendorf, St. Paul's new Artist in Residence and Director of Video Production. Make plans to attend the 2020 Winter Conference on January 10 and 11 at the Best Western on Howell Avenue in Milwaukee. Talk to Mike or visit [awakealive.com](http://awakealive.com) to learn more!



## **CHURCH NURSERY STAFF OPENING**

One of our current church nursery staff members is moving out of the area and will no longer be able to fill the position. This is a paid position with hours of every other Sunday, 9:00 am -12:00 pm. Contact Community Outreach Coordinator Sally Wallner at [swallner@stpaulmuskego.org](mailto:swallner@stpaulmuskego.org) or (414) 218-5197 to apply.



# YEAR END GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

## A CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

Often the Lord moves his people to want to give a special gift around Christmas. Here are some ideas:

- **New signage** for the church lobby and Trinity Café. Check out the display in the lobby.
- **Updating the Family Room** (formerly Mother's Room) just off the church lobby. The display board in the lobby includes pictures of the furniture.
- **Secondary Christian Education Tuition Assistance (SCETA):** This past week Nate Hintze, a senior at Luther Prep who received SCETA Funds, was accepted at Martin Luther College. Your generosity is making it possible for him to prepare for the pastoral ministry.
- **Lutheran Elementary School Tuition Assistance (LESTA):** This past week tuition assistance was awarded to a member family who thought Christian education would not be possible. Our participation in the Parental Choice programs and generous contributions to the LESTA Fund enable us to make Christian education accessible to a member family, no matter what their income level.
- **Cool Million:** Over the last few weeks, some of our school parents have been leading the way to fully fund this capital fund drive. The total received is now \$775,000 with thousands more committed.
- **Mortgage Fund:** We continue to reduce our mortgage debt on our 2010 addition. Debt payments are all made through special gifts.
- **Mission and Ministry Fund:** Special gifts at Christmas time are so much appreciated to keep all of our ministry funded so that together we can accomplish our mission: *By every possible means we bring every person within our area of influence closer to Christ.*

Clearly mark your gift with your chosen designation or make a one-time or recurring gift to any of these funds at [StPaulMuskego.org/give](http://StPaulMuskego.org/give). Contributions to the Mission and Ministry Fund can also be made by texting a dollar amount (example \$25) to 414-316-6733 (Think John 3:16; and 6733 coincides with My Savior For Ever on your key pad). Once you register your account, you can make a one-time or recurring gift.

## Giving Reminders...

- The safest and most cost-effective way for St. Paul's to receive your weekly or monthly gift is through a recurring online donation. Nearly 30% of our gifts are received in this way. Set up your online giving at [www.stpaulmuskego.org/give](http://www.stpaulmuskego.org/give).
- If you are 70 ½ or older, giving a gift from your IRA could reduce your tax payment.
- Giving a gift of appreciated stock can also provide tax advantages.
- Our Gift Trust Fund and Legacy Funds have been established to receive estate gifts.

For help with any of the above, contact our Church Administrator Randy Fink at [rfink@stpaulmuskego.org](mailto:rfink@stpaulmuskego.org) or (414) 422-0320, ext. 120.

# THE ADVENT MESSAGE

## THE CHRIST CHILD SILENCES THE GHOSTS OF CHRISTMAS PAST

For many, “the most wonderful time of the year” isn’t so wonderful. A painful past, personal failings, and unfulfilled expectations can overshadow the joy of the Christmas season. What if this year could be different? Let’s see how Jesus can exorcize the “Ghosts of Christmas Past” so that we can truly have a merry Christmas.



**December 8**      **Jesus Silences the Ghost of the Pressure to Perform**

**December 15**      **Jesus Silences the Ghost of a Painful Past**

**December 22**      **Jesus Silences the Ghost of My Personal Failures**

## WEDNESDAY ADVENT SERVICES 3:30 and 7:00 pm

*"And the glory of the LORD will be revealed."*

Each service will begin with a Christmas carol hymn-sing 15 minutes prior.

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**-JESUS-**



Prophet.



Priest.



King.

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**December 4**      **God's Glory in His Prophet**

**Feast of Pentecost**

**December 11**      **God's Glory in His Priest**

**Passover /  
Great Day of Atonement**

**December 18**      **God's Glory in His King**

**Feast of Tabernacles**

## CHRISTMAS FOR KIDS—SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 9:00-11:45 AM

This event for ages 3-12 will feature *A Tree-rific Christmas* puppet show, *The First Christmas* movie, a special service-project craft, games led by Luther Prep High School students, singing, and snacks. Register on the back of your Connection Card or at [www.stpaulmuskego.org](http://www.stpaulmuskego.org).



## LUTHERAN SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Friday, December 20; 5:00 and 7:00 pm

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

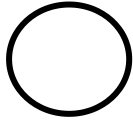
The Bridge Christmas Eve Worship Service Noon

Traditional Christmas Eve Worship Services 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm, and 10:00 pm

## CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION 10:00 am

## NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE WITH HOLY COMMUNION

Tuesday, December 31; 5:00 pm (*Please note the time change from previous years.*)



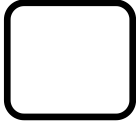
## GroupWork

Bible Study Discussion Starters

*Life application materials for use in Connector Groups, home devotions, and other small groups.*

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1. What kind of Advent or Christmas countdown traditions do you practice during the month of December?
2. This week's theme is about how the Christchild silences the "ghosts of Christmas past." What kinds of ghosts do you think most people wrestle with at this time of year?
3. Read Matthew 21:1-11 and, as a group, use your super sleuth abilities (aka: Google/commentaries/text-a-pastor) to see if you can figure out where the prophecy referenced in v. 4-5 originates from. For bonus points, can you estimate how long ago that prophecy was made?
4. As Jesus rode into town, the people shouted "Hosanna!" (Matthew 21:9) Why was that word choice ironic?
5. God certainly fulfills promises, but what about expectations? What evidence do you see in scripture from long ago and in our world today that mankind often confuses those two things?
6. Break into small groups of 2-3 and share what expectations you might have this season that are joy-robbers. Pray for each other that Jesus can instead be your joy-bringer!



# NoteSheet

Sermon Outline

Take notes during the sermon to help you remember the main points

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## LET US ARRIVE WITH A MESSAGE THAT MATTERS

Matthew 21:1-11

Where is your focus as you approach the holidays? It can be \_\_\_\_\_!

### 1. The Purpose of God Brings the Blessings

**A. O, There Was Talk of a \_\_\_\_\_!** (Expectations)

Power? Position? A \_\_\_\_\_!

**B. But the \_\_\_\_\_ Would Have None of It!** (The Unexpected)

Humility...Humor...and \_\_\_\_\_!

**APPLICATION** Identify the “ghosts,” the broken dreams, that rob the joy.

### 2. The Heart of God Creates a “Heavenly Stir”

**A. “My Prophet Shall Be Heard”**

For the first time, Jesus accepted the title of \_\_\_\_\_.

For the first time, Jesus desired the \_\_\_\_\_ of people.

**B. “My Prophet Shall Be the Talk of the Town”**

“Hosanna!” – such \_\_\_\_\_ praise!

“Nazareth?!” – the \_\_\_\_\_ had them stumped!

**APPLICATION** We’re on our way to Bethlehem! That will create a stir!

**CONCLUSION** Don’t you love it when a plan comes together? Focus...focus...focus. ☺

### Next Steps

- **Ponder** your personal “ghosts” of Christmas past. How can God’s purposes in Christmas heal the hurt of *unfulfilled expectations*?
- **Read** Gabriel’s words in Luke 1:26-38. How did **God’s plan** through Mary give her the faith to say, “May your word to me be fulfilled”? (Would YOU have felt worthy?)
- **Actively Pray** for God to shape your focus this Christmas. Pray boldly for a plan to “arrive” at Christmas with a **“message that matters.”**