

3rd Sunday of Advent December 15, 2024

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news —and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

GATHERING The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Please quietly reflect and prepare for worship during the music. Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (ELW 263) by J.S. Bach at 8:30am, Prelude in g by J.S. Bach at 11:00am with guest organist Dane Golembesky

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the \pm Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the \pm Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The prelude's purpose is to prepare your heart, your hands, and your mind for worship. The Lord is worthy of our preparation and the prelude provides us a time to do just that.

Washed in water and marked with the cross, the baptized children of God are united with Christ, and through him, with other believers, we confess our sins and return to our baptism. In forgiveness God raises us up again.

The paraments, which are the hangings on the altar, pulpit, and lectern, are pink for Advent. For Joy and for Love in Christ.

GATHERING HYMN

#263 Savior of the Nations, Come

The Hymns proclaim the Gospel in song. We sing a variety of hymns to help us tell God's story.



Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
 Won-drous birth—oh, won-drous child—from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path-way leads;



Mar - vel	now, O	heav'n and	earth:	God	has	cho - sen	such	a	birth.
was the	Word of	God made	e flesh,	fruit	of	wom - an,	blos -	som	fresh.
		Mar - y's							
out to	van - quish	death's com	- mand,	back	to	reign at	God's	right	hand.

- 5 Now your manger, shining bright, hallows night with newborn light. Night cannot this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.
- 6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word! To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally!

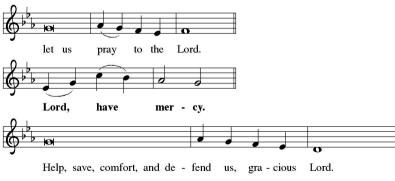
Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. hymnal version Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524 Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress

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GREETING *During this time, the presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.** The Apostolic Greeting is given by the Pastor using the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Cor 13:13. In this greeting the assembly is rooted in the Triune life of God.

KYRIE







CANTICLE OF PRAISE



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

God speaks to us in Scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Word of God, word of life: Thanks be to God.

The prayer of the day is typically a prayer focused around the scripture texts for the day.

The Word part of our liturgy, is where we hear 'the living voice of the Gospel.'' We experience this in the Biblical readings, a sermon based around these readings, and the hymn of the day.



In your midst is the Ho - ly One of Is - ra - el.

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not | be afraid,

for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become | my salvation.

- With joy you | will draw water
- from the wells | of salvation. R

And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call | on God's name; make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that this name | is exalted.

Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done | gloriously; let this be known in | all the earth.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, O | royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy | One of Israel. **R**

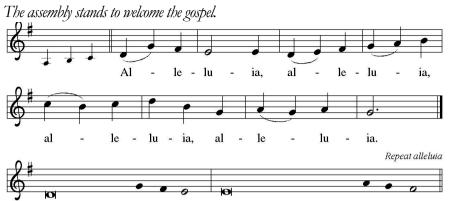
SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7

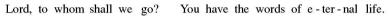
Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Word of God, word of life. Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION





GOSPEL Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

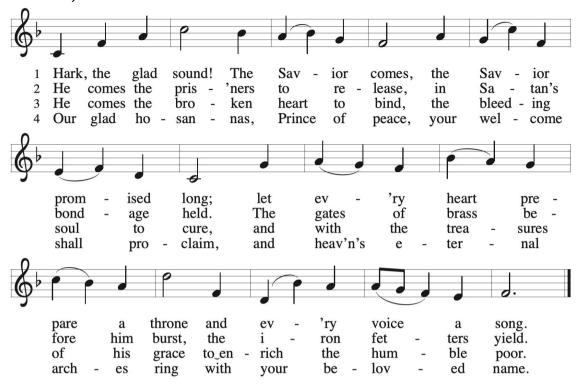
And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

The assembly is seated. CHILDREN SERMON SERMON HYMN OF THE DAY #239 Hark, the Glad Sound!



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

THE APOSTLES' CREED 8:30am

Living together in hope and trust, let us confess our faith together. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

As Lutheran Christians we have three creeds to articulate our faith. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. Through the Apostles' Creed we confess our faith in the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

PROFESSION OF FAITH 11am worship We are welcoming these people into our fellowship today: Please join with us as we profess our faith. Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God? Response: I renounce them. Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God? Response: I renounce them. Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God? Response: I renounce them. Do you believe in God the Father? I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God? I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit? 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.

You have made public profession of your faith. Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,

I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

The minister addresses the assembly.

People of God, do you promise to support these sisters and brothers and pray for them in their life in Christ?

We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give us new birth, cleanse us from sin, and raise us to eternal life.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

God who reforms, fill your church with courage to do your will. Empower your people in taking risks that bear fruit. Raise up leaders who will proclaim the good news. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God who creates, you hold in balance diverse ecosystems. Encourage efforts to protect wild lands from devastation. Care for animals and people in the path of destructive fires, storms, and other disasters especially those effected by Hurricane Helene. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God who leads, this world cries out for true justice. Guide legislatures, judges, and lawyers in actions steeped in love and restoration. Increase the desire to advocate for all who are confronted with discrimination and oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, class, or age. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God who embraces, help us notice the places where your people are hurting, ill, or sick. We pray especially for Greg, Jan, Janet, Joyce, Phyllis, Larry, Bob, Ellie, Mary, John, Pat, Anna, Pat, Susan, Wendy, and Charlie; all those we name aloud or quietly on our hearts. Show your compassion and remember your people in love. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God who abides, you dwell among the people of this congregation. Deepen our relationships with one another, and make us aware of the diverse talents and gifts present here at St. Paul's of Durham. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God who consoles, we thank you for the time we have had with loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of everlasting life in you. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

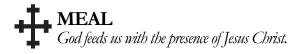
PEACE

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ. The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

The congregation is invited to share a sign of God's peace with one another The assembly sits.

The prayers of intercession are prepared in advance by writers from across the Church based around the scripture for a given week.

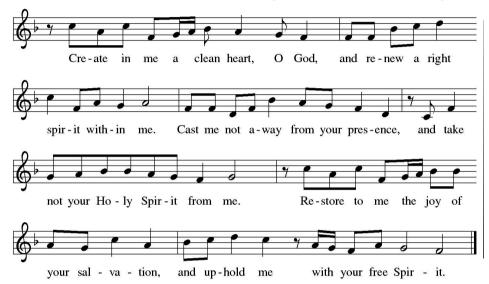
The passing of the peace is traditionally part of the liturgy, so that anyone in the gathered assembly may have a time to be reconciled to one another before sharing the meal.



OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

OFFERTORY There is No Rose of Such Virtue by Crawford Thoburn. Latin text The assembly stands. and translation: Res miranda- Wonderful thing, Pares forma- Equal **OFFERTORY HYMN** in form, Transeamus- We are transformed.



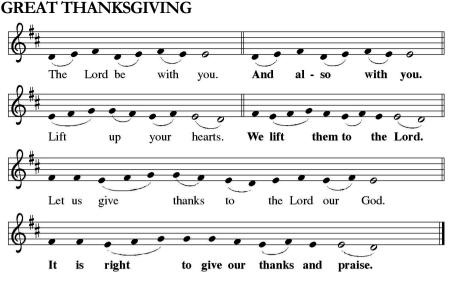
A musical offering is given to God in our worship as the gifts of the assembly are collected. This is a reminder of God's abundance. We offer back to God just a small portion of what God has given us, so that the mission of God can be realized.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

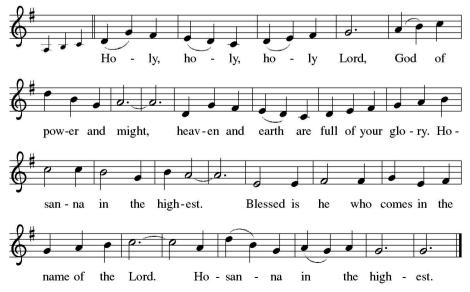


In the meal part of our liturgy we prepare to come to Christ's table. In the Great Thanksgiving we focus on being thankful for all God has done and for all God has given to us. In the Eucharistic Prayer, we ask God to send the Holy Spirit to this meal and we ask that Christ will fulfill his promise to be in the bread and wine.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; 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 all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, 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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

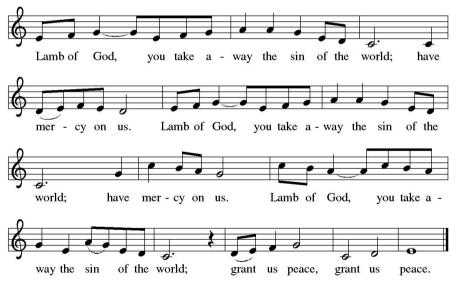
God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

COMMUNION

This is the Lord's table. Jesus is the host. We are Christ's guests. Jesus welcomes everyone to come, to eat and be nourished, fed and forgiven. Visitors and children are welcome to receive communion. Those who do not receive communion are welcomed forward to receive a blessing. Gluten-free wafers and grape juice are available. The pastor and communion assistant will come to the pews of those unable to come forward.

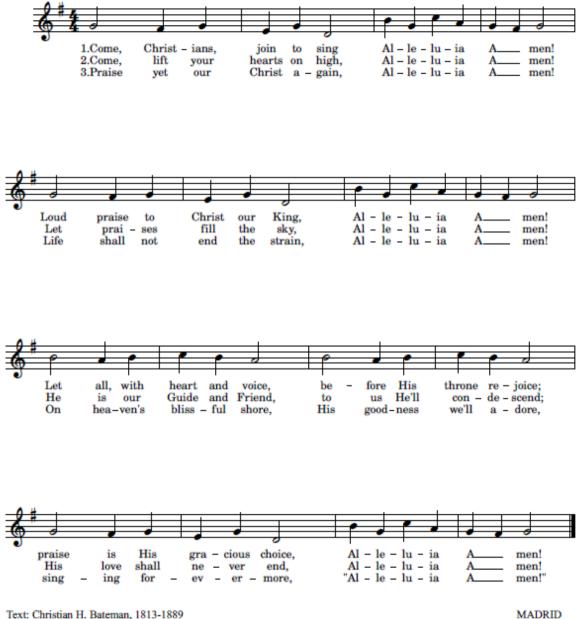
When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. Each person may respond: Amen. The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD



The Lamb of God is a title for Jesus that appears in John 1:29. It is here that we are reminded that our Lord is present and we are to behold his glory.

COMMUNION HYMN Come, Christians, Join to Sing

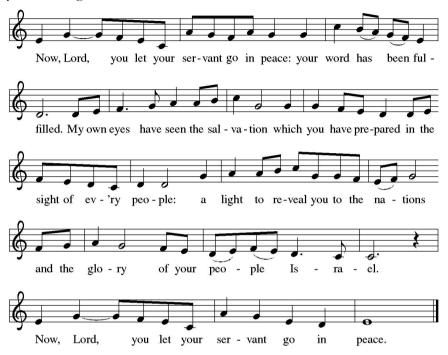


Music: Spanish traditional; arr. Benjamin Carr, 1768-1831

6. 6. 6. 6. D

The assembly stands. **TABLE BLESSING**

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



PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation.

We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace.

We thank you for showering us with mercy, ffor sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.** Our final part of our liturgy is the sending. We are sent out into the world reminded of God's mission and strengthened by the presence of Christ and one another through the power of the Holy Spirit.

SENDING HYMN #867 In Thee Is Gladness



Text: Johann Lindemann, 1549–1631; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt. Music: IN DIR IST FREUDE, Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, 1556–1622

DISMISSAL

The assembly is sent into mission.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland (ELW 263) by J.S. Bach

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"The Mission of St. Paul's Lutheran Church as a part of the family of God is to share God in Christ with the World by equipping one another through worship, learning, witness, service and support."

Congregation Council	
President	Joan Albright
Vice-President	Katie Benjamin
Secretary	Megan Cunningham
Co-Treasurers	Angela Maine, John Foreman
Co-Financial Secretaries	Rod Runestad, Phil Hart
Council Members	Joan Albright, Megan Cunningham, Mike Mauriello, Katie Benjamin, Jayce Getz, Emily
	Pauline, Ken Knudsen, Michelle Meadors, Steve Myzk

Welcome to St. Paul's

In celebrating God's beauty and strength created through diversity, we welcome, value, and include all of God's children regardless of race, culture, age, sexual orientation, gender expression, ability, appearance, or citizenship. St. Paul's is committed to racial equality.

Admission to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is by invitation of our Lord, presented through the Church to those who are baptized. If you are unable to receive Holy Communion at the altar, please notify an usher to receive communion at your seat. All are welcome at the table for a blessing. We use red wine and bread at communion, and offer grape juice and gluten-free wafers. Inform your server at the rail if you desire either.

Distribution of the Communion Elements take place as follows:

Exit the pew to the side aisles. Empty cups are obtained from the trays located by the front exit. Proceed to the altar. Persons on the right side (lectern side) proceed to the back of the altar rail and fill forward towards the front. The left side (pulpit side) proceed to the front of the altar rail and fill towards the back. After communing, depart down the center aisle to your seat. Please place your cup in one of the baskets.

St. Paul's Live Stream Policy

- 1.St. Paul's Lutheran Church live streams the 11:00 AM service every Sunday. The service is posted to Vimeo and Facebook. In addition, special services may be live streamed.
- 2. The 8:30 AM service is not live streamed and is available for attendance by those who do not wish to be recorded. For live streamed services there will be a "No Video Zone" designated in the Narthex.
- 3. It is recommended that all livestream services include a disclaimer about the service being recorded, posted on a visible location at the entrance of the sanctuary and written in the bulletin.
- 4. Children must have a signed waiver from their parent or guardian before being recorded.
- 5. We will not share personal or identifying information while a service is being live streamed, this includes during announcement, prayer requests, or the sermon.

Staff of St. Paul's					
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St. Paul's Lutheran Church

1200 W. Cornwallis Rd., Durham, NC https://www.stpaulsdurham.org/ (919) 489-3214 A member congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, North Carolina Synod