

ORDER OF SERVICE
December 5, 2021 - Advent 2

INTRODUCTION

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; -and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Good morning everyone. This is Fr. Dean Mercer and I welcome you as the parish of St. Paul's gathers to mark the first Sunday of Advent. Separated physically, we join in spirit, sharing in the joy of the resurrection of our Lord.

Reading the lessons is Dr. Rob Knetsch. The reflection is offered by Fr. Ajit John. The anthem is performed by Jocelyn Belfer, accompanied by David McCartney. And the litany is led by Sandra Johnson.

So let us hear Holy Scripture, reflect and pray together, and open our hearts to the Living Word, Jesus Christ - our risen Saviour and Lord.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
AMEN.

LESSONS

First Reading

Dr. Rob Knetsch
PHILIPPIANS 1:3-11

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

I thank my God every time I remember you, -constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, -because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. -I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. -It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. -For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight -to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, -having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God. -

THE PSALM

LUKE 1:68-79

Reader: The Song of Zechariah

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

GOSPEL READING

LUKE 3:1-6

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO LUKE

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, -as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; -and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

HOMILY

Fr. Ajit John

ANTHEM

Jocelyn Belfer, soprano; David McCartney, piano

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sandra Johnson

THE LORD'S PRAYER & BLESSING

Help us through the 4th Quarter - St. Paul's is a strong parish and remains strong due to everyone's faithful support. *Through three quarters of the year, support has been outstanding* at a time when never has it been more important. The 4th quarter is always our largest challenge each year. Your faithful and regular gifts are important.

Gifts can be dropped off at the church or sent by mail. Kindly ensure that your name and envelope number is included. Or, members may wish to sign up for the Pre-Authorized Giving Program (contact the office). Members who use online banking can now make E-transfers (instructions here: www.stpl.ca/give.html). Gifts can also be made at our website through CanadaHelps: www.stpl.ca/give.html.

NOTE: Of the various means for online giving, we recommend *The Pre-Authorized Giving Program*. It is regular, matching the regular responsibilities of the parish, and once initiated all it takes is a phone call or e-mail to increase, decrease, or cancel the donation. The monthly amount is withdrawn on the 20th of each month, and the cost to the church is 50 cents per transaction, irrespective of the amount of the gift. This makes the PAG the most economical of all the online and electronic methods.

The Annual Stewardship Letter and 2022 Pledge Card is now available - from the church office or online: <https://stpl.ca/give.html>

Christmas Steel Concert - with the steel bands and the musicians of St. Paul's, Saturday, December 18, at 7.00 p.m.. Tickets: \$20. Available from steel pan band members or through the church office. Safety guidelines in place, and a limit of 80 tickets available. Recordings of parish musicians and selections from the live concert will be available.

The 180th Anniversary of the Parish of St. Paul, L'Amoreaux

Dedicated - November 18, 1841, by Bishop John Strachan, 1st Bishop of Toronto
Recorded musical mementoes can now be found on the homepage of the church website:
www.stpl.ca

All are encouraged to donate to the Outreach Program of St. Paul's.

Good News - Safety Guidelines Update

Changes have been made to the safety guidelines:

*The College of Bishops have relaxed their COVID-19 restrictions as of November 24th to allow for congregational singing with masks and appropriate distancing. St. Paul's will proceed in measured fashion.

*Readers, preachers and intercessors may remove their masks while speaking.

*The Bishops now permit as many people in the church who can maintain "physical distancing of 2 metres." Attendance at church services at St. Paul's has now increased to 100.

Advent and Christmas Schedule

Sundays of Advent - the ordinary schedule

Christmas Steel Concert - Saturday, December 18, 7 pm

Christmas Eve - 6 pm and 11 pm.

Christmas Day - 8 am (Tamil); 10 am (English)

First Sunday of Christmas (December 26) - the ordinary schedule

Watchnight Service - 11 pm (December 31)

Each service is limited to 100 people. Seat reservations can be made here:

<https://stpl.ca/services.html>

The Sacrament by Christmas - A note from Fr. Dean

With the signs pointing in the right direction, Christmas this year should be a lot more like what we expect than what we experienced last year. For that reason, by Christmas this year I would urge everyone to make plans to receive the sacrament - *at least once* - whether it be by attendance at one of the in-person services or by a request for home communion. Even with the remaining guidelines, that should be more than possible.

The ordinary and grateful obligation of a Christian is to gather on Sundays, to unite in prayer and praise, and to be nourished by both Word and Sacrament. The season of Covid was an exception, not a new normal, and we will work diligently to re-establish the ordinary habits of our Christian life - which is precisely what we are doing now as opportunity permits.

The 2021 Angel Tree Program - St. Paul's L'Amoreaux will be partnering for an eighth year with Prison Fellowship Canada to provide Christmas gifts for children with a parent that is incarcerated. This year, St. Paul's will be serving 20 children. Due to the generosity of the parish, we had a surplus of donations from last year that will cover the cost of gifts for this year. A team of volunteers has also signed up to deliver the gifts. Those who ordinarily give to the Angel Tree Program are asked to consider the parish Christmas Hamper Program this year. Thank you St. Paul's for all your support!!

Christmas Hampers are being prepared this Advent to be distributed to families in need. Monetary donations are being sought to fund this ministry and your generosity is greatly appreciated and much needed during these challenging times. Simply indicate that you would like your gift to go towards Christmas hampers.

Tamil Congregation Service of Carols - Sunday, December 19th at 3:15pm.

The Spiritual Companions Program - is a companionship program to encourage spiritual growth. Open to those who are 22 years or older, companions are placed in groups of two, committing themselves to meet weekly for reflection and prayer. Those couples may include married and dating couples. The materials for reflection are agreed on by the pair and may be a reading or Collect from Morning Prayer, from Our Daily Bread, or from another devotional source. Guided by respect, honesty and confidentiality, pairs will agree to a convenient date and time and may meet in person, over the phone, or on Zoom. For a copy of the manual and

application, call the office (416-499-1545) or check online:

<https://stpl.ca/spiritual-companions-program.html>

Questions - contact Carol Shih (Wycliffe student) - carol.shih@mail.utoronto.ca

Church Calendars 2022

Church calendars have arrived. Four orders remain to be picked up at the Sunday sign-in table or from the office.

St. Paul's Youth Music Program Now On - Pans and Strings

Our parish and community youth music program has re-opened with pan practice on Saturdays at 12.30 pm, and string practice at 4.30. A great group. Our largest string group ever. Registration at practice.

Introduction to Christianity & Simple ESL Class for Adults - Saturdays, 4.30 pm, in the church.

Morning Prayer on Zoom - Password Added

Morning Prayer is said Monday to Saturday at 7.30 a.m.. Tuesday to Friday mornings, it is live-streamed from the church. For that reason there is now a password for those attending Morning Prayer on Zoom. Join us for prayer, Monday to Saturday morning at 7.30 a.m.:

Computer Access Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/397231088?wd=ekhBRm9XcDRmWXo5Z0Via2dyY2tpUT09>

Telephone Access - (647) 374 4685, or (647) 558 0588

Meeting ID: 397 231 088; Password: 549300

Schedule

The full schedule of in-person and online services and programs can be found on the online church calendar - www.stpl.ca/calendar.html - or here: www.stpl.ca/services.html. This is the quickest and easiest way to get service and program information.

Sunday Services by Phone on Zoom

The weekly Sunday recording can be heard by phone on Zoom. (It can also be viewed on Zoom, but the quality is diminished.)

Zoom Invitation: *By Phone:* 647 374 4685; 647 558 0588;

Meeting ID: 854 0290 8277; Passcode: 970844

Computer link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85402908277?pwd=Q1RldkxCZXJNTFJJek5tYWpOTzlfUT09>

Ontario COVID-19 Vaccine Booking - You can currently book an appointment at a mass vaccination clinic through the provincial online vaccine booking system (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>) If you prefer to schedule an appointment by phone, call the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900 (TTY 1-866-797-0007). This line is available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week. Information is available in more than 300 languages. *If St. Paul's can be of any help to you in this process, please let our office know.*

IMARA Generation Project Taibu Community Health Centre is conducting a consultation for parents and other concerned adults regarding Black youth and their mental health. For more information or to participate, please contact coladehinde@taibuchc.ca

New Honorary Priest at St. Paul's

Effective December, 2021, The Rev'd Canon Kim Beard has been appointed by Bishop Robertson as honorary priest at St. Paul's, L'Amoreaux. Canon Beard is the recently retired priest of St. Paul on the Hill, Pickering. We welcome Canon Beard on Sunday, December 19, when he will be the preacher of the day.

Mission Trip to Tanzania Rescheduled: July 2023.

Our incoming honorary assistant Rev. Canon Kim Beard will be leading a work mission trip to Tanzania, now re-scheduled for 2023. Look for an information session this coming March.

Sunday School Every Sunday at 10.00 on Zoom

Check the church calendar for links and information: www.stpl.ca/calendar.html

S.P.Y. - St. Paul's Youth - Friday nights at 7 pm.

Contact Sarah for more information: splcyouthministry@gmail.com.

Friday Night Bible Study - join us *at the church or online* for a study of the Letters of Peter and Jude following the Bible study guide by Bishop Tom Wright. Study guides are available online (www.amazon.ca or www.parasource.com or www.christianbook.com) or may be ordered through Fr. Dean. The study on Friday, December 10 will be Lesson 8: Jude 3. We will take a Christmas break, resuming Friday, January 14, and beginning a study of Ephesians, following the study guide of Bishop Tom Wright.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/830877703>

Telephone: 647-374 4685, or 647-558 0588; Meeting ID: 830 877 703

Contact - The clergy of St. Paul's are all in the vicinity and visiting in homes again, abiding by diocesan safety guidelines. Don't hesitate to call or write. Website: www.stpl.ca; Church phone: 416-499-1545; Email: stpl@stpl.ca; Fr. Dean Mercer: deanmercercer@hotmail.com; Rectory phone: 416-497-6352.