



**St. Paul's
United Methodist Church
December 3, 2023 - 10:30 AM Service
First Sunday of Advent - HOPE**



We welcome you, trusting that this time of worship will open our hearts to experience the Spirit's movement among us. Together, we seek peace, health, and wholeness as we gather in God's presence.

Permission to reprint, podcast, and/or stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license # A-728210. Movie and video permission with CVLI License #504298777.

**Indicates a standing portion of the service. Please stand as you are able.*

Gathering as The Beloved Community

Gathering Music

“Sunny Side of the Street”
by Jimmy McHugh/Dorothy Fields

Molly MacMillan, piano

Greeting & Welcome

Rev. Beckie Sweet, senior pastor

***Sharing Love and Peace with All**

Centering Music

“Prelude No. 17”
by Samuel Maykapar

Molly MacMillan, piano

Call to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candles

*Josephine Allen
Jami Breedlove-Crouch*

After a series of readings, the congregation will be invited to join in prayer:

**Thank you, God for the flame of HOPE. As we prepare for Christ's coming,
Help us to share our HOPE with others. Amen.**

***Singing Together**

“Lift up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

UMH # 213

Encountering God Through the Word

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:5-25 (NRSVue)

Alice Mehlman

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” ¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” ¹⁹The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the

presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

²¹ Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. ²² When he did come out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. ²³ When his time of service was ended, he returned to his home.

²⁴ After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, ²⁵ “This is what the Lord has done for me in this time, when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church!
Thanks be to God!

A Message for All God’s Children

Following this, children ages 4-11 will be escorted to Curious with Christ.”

Special Music

“Distant Land”
by John Rutter

Chancel Choir

Message

“Fear Not, Zechariah”

Rev. Beckie Sweet

Responding with Joy and Generosity

***Hymn of Response**

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

UMH # 206

Offering our Gifts to God

Offertory

“Arioso Alla JS Bach”
by Alexander Tansman

Molly MacMillan, piano

Sacrament of Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

God is with us!

We are not alone.

Christ is present here.

The Spirit moves within and among us.

Let us give thanks to God

In memory and in HOPE.



And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

O come, O come Emmanuel

And we lift our voices in union with the faithful who have gone before us,

To offer joyous praise:

Holy, holy, holy God! God of power! God of might!

Heaven and earth are full of your glory!

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you! Blessed are you!



And in our remembering we profess our faith:

Surely, on that day, Jesus gave his life for those he loved;

surely, on that morning, Jesus was raised to new life;

surely, in that time to come, Jesus will gather us to new life.



We pray in the name of Christ our HOPE, Christ our Peace,
Christ our Joy, Christ our Love. **AMEN.**

The Lord's Prayer

Invitation to Commune

Sharing the Bread and Cup

All are invited and welcome to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. The common bread is gluten free and vegan. The common cup contains no sugar added juice. If you are unable to come forward, the elements may be brought to you at your seat.

Going Forth to Serve and to Bless

***Closing Hymn**

“Hail to the Lord's Anointed”

UMH # 203

Announcements

Dismissal with Blessing

Postlude

“Pick Yourself Up”
by Jerome Kern/Dorothy Fields

Molly MacMillan, piano

-----PRAYERS-----

For **Prayer Chain Requests**, confidential concerns seen only by those who participate in the Prayer Chain, please contact Pastor Beckie at pastor@stpaulsithaca.org.

Prayer Requests: Mary Boardman; Matthew Boardman; Andrea Downing-Zheng; Jude Williams; Marilyn Sweet.

Pray for healing within the United Methodist Church, especially for those who are excluded because of sexual orientation and gender identification.

Prayer requests will be published in the bulletin for four weeks. If you would like someone to remain on the list, contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch at lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org or 607-269- 5509. Please remember that we also need permission from the person listed.

St. Paul's Ministries ~ Week of December 3, 2023

Sunday, December 3 – First Sunday of Advent

10:30am – Worship with Communion
11:30am – Coffee/Fellowship Time in Memorial Room

Monday, December 4

3:00pm – 4:00pm – Justice Seeker - ZOOM

Tuesday, December 5

10:00am – Fiber Arts Group – Memorial Room

Wednesday, December 6

10:00am – Staff Meeting - ZOOM
7:00pm – Staff Parish Relations Committee - ZOOM

Thursday, December 7

12:00pm – OAM Christmas Luncheon – Memorial Room
6:00pm – Festival Chimes Rehearsal – Bell Choir Room
7:15pm – Choir Rehearsal – Dining Room

Friday, December 8 – Church Offices Closed

Sunday, December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent

10:30am – Worship and “Curious with Christ”
11:30am – Coffee/Fellowship Time in Memorial Room
11:45am – Cookie Decorating – Memorial Room

Advent/Christmas Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 3, 2023 @ 10:30 am ~ First Sunday of Advent Holy Communion ~ Advent Wreath HOPE ~ “Fear Not, Zechariah”

Sunday, December 10, 2023 @ 10:30 am ~ Second Sunday of Advent Advent Wreath PEACE ~ “Fear Not, Mary”

Sunday, December 17, 2023 @ 10:30 am ~ Third Sunday of Advent Advent Wreath JOY ~ “Fear Not, Joseph”

Thursday, December 21, 2023 @ 7:00 pm ~ Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 24, 2023 @ 10:30 am ~ Fourth Sunday of Advent Advent Wreath LOVE ~ “Fear Not, Shepherds”

Sunday, December 24, 2023 @ 7:00 pm ~ Christmas Eve Advent Wreath CHRIST ~ “Fear Not, World” •

Sunday, December 31, 2023 @ 10:30 am ~ First Sunday after Christmas

Sunday, January 7, 2024 @ 10:30 am ~ EPIPHANY Holy Communion ~ “An Announcement of Stellar Proportions!”

Unto Us A Child is Born!

Join us at coffee hour this Sunday as we celebrate the impending arrival of Molly Dempsey and Natalie Mottl’s baby boy!

Local & World Mission Giving Tree

Our Local and World Mission “Giving Tree” in the Welcome Room is now adorned with tags for needed gifts to be distributed throughout our community. Gift tags for senior living centers, homeless shelters and refugees and their families are available. Gifts should be returned by Dec.15th. Your participation will warm the bodies and hearts of those who need it most.

Photos Needed for Tree in Welcome Room

We’re hoping to decorate one of the Christmas trees in the Welcome Room with pictures of family and friends. If you have some you wish to share, please do, and if you don’t, there will be a picture taking station right outside Jami’s office. Each photo will be turned into an ornament, and it would be great if we were able to get the whole St. Paul’s family up on the tree!

Children and Worship – Children are always welcome in worship! To help keep hands busy, we have books and toys on the black cart near the main sanctuary door. Children ages 4-11 are invited to attend “Curious with Christ.”

OAM Holiday Luncheon This Thursday, December 7

Our Older Adult Ministry is hosting a festive holiday luncheon in the Memorial Room at St. Paul’s this Thursday, December 7, 12-2pm. If you don’t receive an E-vite, contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch, lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org or 607-273-5971, by December 3. We’ll share holiday wishes, sing Christmas carols, and enjoy a variety of cookies for dessert. You can bring your favorite holiday cookies to share (with ingredients listed, please!) and a container to take some home with you. Contact Cheryl McGraw, crm54@cornell.edu, with questions about cookies.

Come to the Cookie Decorating Party Next Sunday*

SPUMC’s Children Ministry will be hosting a Holiday Cookie Decorating Party* next Sunday, December 10, from 12:15-1:30p in the Memorial Room. *Persons of all ages* are invited to add a bit of holiday artistry to the cookies destined for the Friendship Center lunches that St Paulians are preparing on Dec 12th. Artists can take cookies home with them and are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to join in the fun. There will be refreshments and an expanded Fellowship Time table of goodies to enjoy before we get down to decorating. But first—we need bakers! At least 15 dozen sugar or gingerbread cut-out cookies need to be ready for the party. If you can provide us with cookies, please contact Joellyn Tuttle jrwtuttle@gmail.com or 315-289-7187. Please email Dee at office@stpaulsithaca.org ASAP or call 607-273-5971 to reserve a decorating station for you and your friends and family. We want to make sure to have enough cookies for everyone at our Extended Welcome Table. *This is a “Curious with Christ” service (outreach) project.

***Flowers this week are presented in loving memory of Eugene Bartell
by his small group.***

Our Staff

Rev. Rebekah (Pastor Beckie) Sweet / Senior Pastor / pastor@stpaulsithaca.org
Jami Breedlove-Crouch / Loving Care Ministries Coordinator / lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org
Deirdre Levine / Church Administrative Assistant & Communications / office@stpaulsithaca.org
Michelle Eells / Business & Building Ministries Coordinator / business@stpaulsithaca.org
Maia Finkel / Choral and Ensembles Director / choirdirector@stpaulsithaca.org
Molly MacMillan / Pianist / pianist@stpaulsithaca.org
David Kingsley / Technical Director / dkingsley@stpaulsithaca.org
Dorothy Preston / Festival Chimes Director / dpreston@stpaulsithaca.org
Sue Orzel / Custodian

“St. Paul’s is a compassionate community led and transformed by the Spirit.”

St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, A Reconciling Congregation

402 North Aurora Street, Ithaca, NY

Find us at www.stpaulsithaca.org, Facebook and Instagram

Church Office Hours are 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Sunday – Thursday

Office Phone: 607-273-5971 Pastoral Care Phone: 607-269-5509