

St. Paul Lutheran Church

9:30a Service of Worship
Pastor ~ Reverend Ashley Nicolls

Second Sunday of Advent | December 7, 2025

May God's grace continue to overflow to and through you.



Assisting Minister
Sue Scherr

Reader Carolyn Masters

Acolyte
Isabel Waterman

Sound

Rick Barry Mike Scherr

Camera Operator Kim Lariviere

Screen Operator Kendall Riley

Ushers

Judy Roberts & Kathie Snyder

Greeter Hank Roberts

Church Security TBD



Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church!

We hope you will use this bulletin during the week to have a song to sing, prayers to pray and give comfort, whether you are worshipping in person or from home on your electronic devices.

Although not all of us are physically together to worship, our Lord is still with us. We give thanks for those who attend in-person and the technology that allows us to share the bulletin and the worship service on the website.

St. Paul has a Community Prayer Cross located outside near the road. You are welcome to leave a prayer request there or in the box when you enter, and it will be placed on the cross.

Important community ministries of St. Paul include the Tuesday Community Meal, Saturday Food Pantry, and the Early Childhood Learning Center. Your financial gift makes a difference for Christ and His kingdom and enables St. Paul to be the community church that cares. It can be made by online giving, on Sunday morning, mailed to the church, or dropped off during normal office hours - Monday-Friday • 9a-12noon.

May God bless you and give you peace!

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

"Echo Noel" - Louis Claude D'Aquin - Fonda Davies

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Prayer

Pastor: Let us pray,

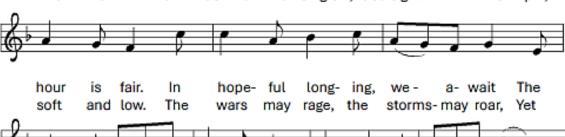
Response: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way for the kingdom of heaven is near. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Baptize us with the fire of your spirit, that we may be a light shining in the darkness welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath song \sim

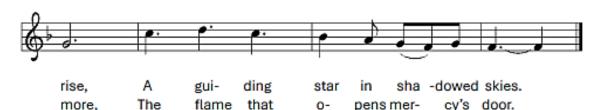
Advent Candle Lighting Song



- 1. Come, light the flame, our hearts- pre -pare, For Christ is near-, the
- 2. Peace fills the air as can- dles glow, God's gen- tle whis- per,



Pro- mised dawn- through hea-ven's gate. A spark of faith- be- gins to-Christ will calm- the trou-bled shore. In qui- et trust-, we light- once



Words by Kathleen Nygaard © 2025 Music: English traditional. Tune: Sussex Carol. In the Public Domain.

Confession and Forgiveness

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

Response: Amen.

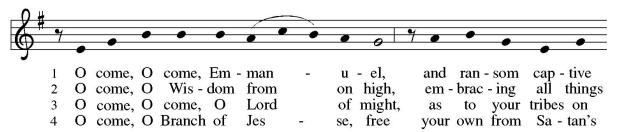
Pastor: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

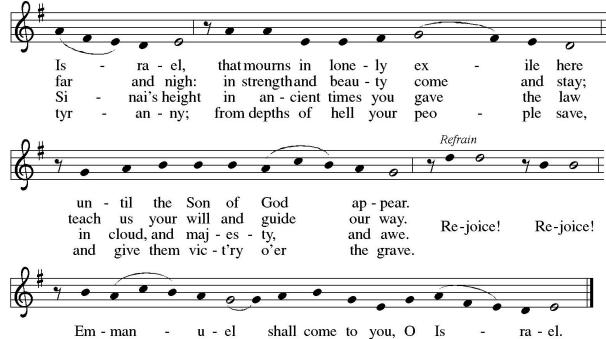
Silence is kept for reflection. Pastor: Long-expected God.

Response: we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

Pastor: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. + You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. *Response:* Amen.

Gathering Hymn ~ O Come, O Come, Emmanuel verses 1, 2, 6, 7





- O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home; make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. *Refrain*
- 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight. Refrain

Text: Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent. Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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- O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one: refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new. Refrain
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Prayer of the Day

Pastor: Let us pray, *Response:* Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Ministry in Music

"Prepare!" - Allen Pote - St. Paul Singers

Children's Message

Scripture ~ Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious. Word of God. Word of Life. *Response:* Thanks be to God.

Scripture ~ Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king's son;
- ² that he may rule your people righteously and the poor with justice;
- ³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.

- ⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.
- ⁶ Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.
- ⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish; and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- ¹⁸ Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel; you alone do wondrous deeds!
- ¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever, and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

Scripture ~ Romans 15:4-13

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name" ¹⁰ and again he says, "Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people"; ¹¹ and again, "Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; ¹² and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope. ¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Word of God. Word of Life. *Response:* Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation





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60SPel ~ Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 3rd chapter.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." 3 This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.' " 4 Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, 6 and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, 9 and do not presume 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. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord. Response: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon ~ Pastor Ashley Nicolls

Hymn of the Day – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Verses 3, 4, 5 and 8 See Pages 3 and 4

Prayers of the Church

Assisting Minister: As we wait for you, O loving God, we place before you our prayers for

the church, the world, and all of creation. (pause for silence)

Assisting Minister: Peace comes from you, O Lord.

Response: As we face times of uncertainty, show us your path of peace. Enable the church to build bridges of peace. We especially pray for our partners in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Central African Republic.

Assisting Minister: God of promise, Response: Receive our prayer.

Assisting Minister: Peace comes from you, O Lord.

Response: We marvel at the diversity of your creation, from sheep and wolves to coyotes and calves. Your hand of mercy is on all creation as we navigate life together.

Assisting Minister: God of promise, *Response:* Receive our prayer.

Assisting Minister: Peace comes from you, O Lord.

Response: Enable world leaders to see that peace is possible. We pray for local, state, national, and international governments. Open their hearts and fill them with peace, hope, joy, and love in abundance.

Assisting Minister: God of promise, *Response*: Receive our prayer.

Assisting Minister: Peace comes from you, O Lord.

Response: In times of depression and anxiety, walk beside us as only you can.

Assisting Minister: Be especially with those we name now aloud or in our hearts. (pause)

Assisting Minister: God of promise, *Response*: Receive our prayer.

Assisting Minister: Peace comes from you, O Lord.

Response: We pray for the leadership of the church: especially SAMs, deacons, pastors, and bishops. We pray for each person connected to our congregation. Sustain and fill us with your peace that surpasses human understanding.

Assisting Minister: God of promise, *Response*: Receive our prayer.

Assisting Minister: Peace comes from you, O Lord.

Response: Guided by your peace, our ancestors in the faith followed your path. Lead us in that same way so that we might join in their songs of praise.

Assisting Minister: God of promise, Response: Receive our prayer.

Assisting Minister: Placing our hope in you, we offer these prayers, trusting your pure goodness. *Response:* Amen.

offering

(The collection plates will be brought forward at this time. Offering plates can still be found at the back of the sanctuary if you did not place your offering in the plates when you entered. Online giving at www.stpaulsarasota.org is also available.)

Offering Prayer

Assisting Minister: Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Response:** Amen.

Spiritual Communion Prayer

Pastor: My Jesus, I believe that You are present in this most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Holy Communion

(Those who want to partake of Christ's body and blood in their in their seats may lift up their elements at this time).

Pastor: 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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Response: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Lord's Prayer

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your love and teach us to pray.

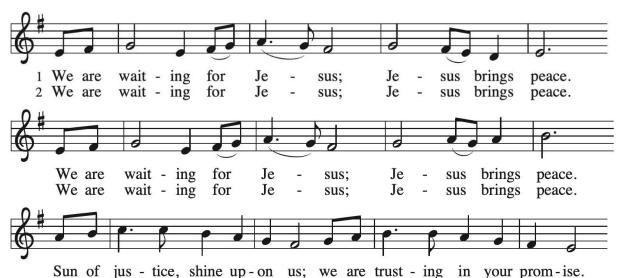
Response: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Pastor: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Response: Thanks be to God. Pastor: Those who wish to remain at their seats to partake of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine/grape juice may do so now. The body and blood of Christ is given and shed for you. Take and eat. Take and drink. If you wish to come to the altar, you may do so at the ushers' direction.

COMMUNION MUSIC ~ We are Waiting for Jesus



Lov-ing Shep-herd, walk be-side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



Text: John Helgen, b. 1957

Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen

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Post Communion Blessing

Pastor: Now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace now and forever.

Response: Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Assisting Minister: God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Response: Amen.

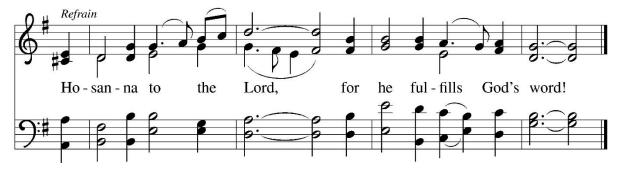
Blessing

Pastor: May God who comes among us, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

Response: Amen.

Sending Hymn ~ Prepare the Royal Highway





Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship Music: BEREDEN NÁG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent. Text ♥ 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Keep awake. Response: Thanks be to God.

Children: And all God's children say, Response: Amen. Yes!

Postlude

"Glory to God in the Highest" - Giovanni Pergolesi - Fonda Davies

Coffee 4 Social Hour is held in the Fellowship Hall after worship.

Flowers this week are given by: Judy Carnal in loving memory of Bob Carnal.

Bulletins this month are given by: Helen Miller

Eternal Candle is given this month by: Helen Miller.

Attendance for last Sunday: 61 in-person; 179 views on line. (12/2/25)

St. Paul Mission Statement

As a Holy Spirit-led family of God, we are called through baptism to proclaim and bear witness to God's reconciling grace in Jesus Christ to all so that by joyfully sharing God's Word and encouraging each other to service for the sake of others, our lives together make a difference for Christ and His kingdom.

Announcements

Special Congregational Meeting - December 7 after worship to approve 2026 spending elect council and nominating team members, and approve constitution changes. After the meeting, please join us to put together the bags that will be handed out at The Visit with Santa.

Visit with Santa! December 13, 1-3p - volunteers needed to help with set-up, the event, and clean up. Sign up in the narthex and fellowship hall.

Longest Night Worship – Sunday, December 21 at 7p. We gather to mark the longest night of the year and to reflect on the hope found through faith in Christ, the Light of the World.

Christmas Eve Worship – Wednesday, December 24 at 7p. A traditional Christmas Eve worship with Holy Communion, Choirs, Candlelighting, and Children's Message.

Epiphany Gathering – On Tuesday, January 6 at 1p, meet in the Circle Drive for an adult version of the school's Trike-A-Thon. Adults with walkers, canes, any mobility device, and those without devices will walk around the circle drive and then go watch "Amahl and the Night Visitors" opera (it is in English) from DVD in the sanctuary. It tells the story of the Wisemen who go to find Jesus and their stop on their way to a poor mom and son's home. Bring your own drinks and movie snacks.

Four Weeks of Favorites! Sunday, January 18-February 8, we'll sing favorite songs and bring your favorite food for coffee hour after.

Symphony Salvage Blue Bin! Keep cleaning out your closets. If items don't fit in the bir bring items to the Fellowship Hall on Sundays or to the office during the week. Everything accepted except large furniture and large appliances.

Prayer Zoom – Talking with God! Join the prayer ministry. Thursdays at 4p. Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81662784525?pwd=QSt4TGNSR2F3L0ovUDJ3SVdWbjRYUT

Please remember in your prayers...

All those serving in the U.S. Military, especially Gage Fournier. The homeless in our neighborhood, our city, our nation and the world. The Florida-Bahamas Synod Office of the Bishop Staff: Bishop Pedro, Assisting Ministers to the Bishop Pastors Carlos, Derek, Nicole, and Rob, Specialists Kim, Bill, & Brittney, Support Staff Tina, Yuliet, & Ileana.

SURE – Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity. Community Meal and Food Pantry guests. Prayers upon the HOPE Community Prayer Cross. The Arlington Park Neighborhood.

St. Paul members, especially, Gage Fournier, Ellen Gaulke, Sue Goddard & Rick Barry, Brian, Harper, & Suzanne Gregalot St. Paul Early Childhood Learning Center families and teachers, especially Waylon, Celia, Charlie, Ms. Erica and Ms. Mariah

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Manny Acevedo

Earleen Ashbrook

Beetle/O'Hara/Miller Family

Dorothy Boller

Susan Burmaster

Judy Carnal

Missy Craig

Sue Fisher

Joann Flanigan

Bob Fong

JoAnn Jordan

Valerie Nicolls

Nancy Parmakian

James Paulsson

Colleen Ryan

Frank Scianni

Betty Smowton

Homebound Members

Donna Casala

Evelyn Gulliksen

Lindy Lindemann

Virginia McQuaig

Michael Reiter

Carole Wilson

Friends and Family

Alice – friend of JoAnn Jordan

Brad – brother of Cindy Paxton

Debbie - friend of Scherrs

Donnie – community meal guest

Ed – friend of Sandy Choquette

Oir - friend of Sallay Shoque

Gina – friend of Jan Kruse

Jeff – community meal guest

Mark – friend of M & D Hillerich

MJ – friend of Ron Zimmerman

Rick – nephew of Linda Knight

Ryan – community meal quest

Sharon – friend of Jane Schubert

Sharon – menu or sane schuber

Susan - friend of Cindy Paxton

T.J. – community meal guest Sandi Acevedo – sister-in-law of

Acayada

Jesus Alegria – niece-in-law of Sandy

Tu

Reyna Alegria – niece-in-law of Sandy

Tull

Kareem Ali – friend of Fred Melton

Clinton Allen – friend of Jim Paulsson Laura Anderson – niece of Roberts

Sheryl Brandes – sister-in-law of Sue

Scherr

Buete and Pearson family- family of

Brian McCulley

Caroline Burmaster – sister-in-law of

Susan Burmaster

Todd Couch – son of Sandy Choquette

Mike Cunningham- friend of H. Roberts David Eller – friend of Carolyn Mele

John and Joy Emanuelli – friends of

Roberts

Gladys Faraone – friend of H. Roberts

Bill & Vickie Hall – family of Fonda

Davies

Clair and Karen Hawver -cousins of

Keith Hildreth

Niklaus Heisler – great-grandson of

Irene Felicetti

Katy Hernandev – *niece of M. Acevedo*

Pr. John Hilficker – friend of Conrad

Hellwege, Jr.

Nicole Ketler – friend of Susan

Burmaster

Kate Kretschmann- family of Lindy

Lindemann

Karen Kugler – friend of Marty Hillerich

David McCall - brother of J. Roberts

Marsha McKinney- former member Becky Nobles – friend of Lindy Lindemann

Linda and Jim Norris – family of

Doris Schlotterback

Karen Paulsson – sister of J. Paulsson

Manny Ribas – friend of Cindy

Schlotterback

Brian and Ken Schlotterback—sons of

Doris Schlotterback

 ${\it Haley Schlotterback-grand daughter-}$

in-law of Doris Schlotterback.
Bill Schroeder – friend of Conrad

Hellwege, Jr.

Bethany Smith - daughter of B&B

Smith

Joyce Swartzbaugh – Former Member Natalie Smowton Boxx – great-

granddaughter of Betty Smowton Noel Scott Studenwalt – nephew of

B&B Smith

Bill Sweeney – grandson of Marilyn and

George Hutfilz

Dan Torrence – friend of K. Snyder David Van Ness – brother of Missy

Craia

Elaine & Mark Vanderweight- friends of

Jim Paulsson

Curtis Weckwerth – cousin of Rich

Weckwerth

John and Janet Welther – family of

Ethel Hamilton

Pr. Pete Zieg – former pastor of JoAnn

Jordan

St. Paul Lutheran Church

and Early Childhood Learning Center

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Florida-Bahamas Synod, established 1955 2256 Bahia Vista Street, Sarasota, Florida 34239 Phone: 941.955.6479 Fax: 941.955.8600 ECLC Phone: 941.955.6480 Website: www.StPaulSarasota.org

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Tracy Bateman, Parish Administrator – stpaul-admin@verizon.net
Fonda Davies, Director of Music Ministries—fondadavies6@gmail.com
Lisa McLean, ECLC Director--StPaul-eclc@verizon.net
Iven Ayad - ECLC Assistant Director--StPaul-eclc@verizon.net
The Rev. Don Hillerich, D.D. - Pastor Emeritus – djhillerich@yahoo.com

Executive Committee

JoAnn Jordan, President Judy Roberts, Vice President
George Hutfilz, Treasurer Irene Felicetti, Secretary

Congregation Council

Irene Felicetti Lori Fountain-Guillaume Amy Hildreth JoAnn Jordan Bob Lariviere Pr. Ashley Nicolls Nancy Parmakian Judy Roberts Mike Scherr Esther Smith Alexandra Brewer







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