

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD
JANUARY 7, 2024

SAINT PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

4660 West 94th Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453

(708) 423-1040
Pastor John Moeller

www.stpauloaklawn.org
Director of Music Ruth Sievers

As We Gather

Today we consider the mysteries highlighted by the Readings for the Feast of the Epiphany. The Wise Men, or Magi are guided by a star to Jerusalem, and these strangers are looking for the King of the Jews. This King of the Jews is an infant, born to a humble family in Bethlehem, not to royalty in Jerusalem. And this King of the Jews invites all people from all nations into His kingdom. All of these mysteries, hidden for the ages, are now revealed in Jesus, the Light of the world.

Prelude

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

H. Markworth

Opening Hymn

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

#397

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led by Thee. | 4 Holy Jesus, ev'ry day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds Thy glory hide. |
| 2 As with joyful steps they sped,
Savior, to Thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before
Thee, whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek Thy mercy seat. | 5 In the heav'nly country bright
Need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
Thou its sun which goes not down;
There forever may we sing
Alleluias to our King. |
| 3 As they offered gifts most rare
At Thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy, | |

*Text: William C. Dix, 1837–98, alt.
Text: Public domain*

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Arise, shine, for your light has come!

C Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.

P All the nations shall come to the light of Christ.

C Kings shall bring Him gifts.

P For Christ reveals the mystery hidden through the ages,

C that all nations are partakers of the promise in Jesus Christ.

Confession and Absolution

P Through the Gospel, all people are fellow heirs of salvation and members of the same Body. Yet there have been times when we have failed to live in unity, when we have failed to treat our brothers and sisters in Christ with respect and honor. Our heavenly Father invites us to return to Him and ask for His forgiveness.

Silence for reflection.

P Heavenly Father,

C **we confess that we have not loved You with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have created division and discord. We have hidden the light of Christ from others. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us with the light of Christ, that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways. Amen.**

P Almighty God in His mercy sent His Son, Jesus, into our world to shine as a light for all people, including You. Jesus has died for your sins and is risen for your righteousness. Therefore, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen. We are partakers of the promise. We are forgiven in Christ.**

✠ WORD ✠

Introit

Psalm 45:6–8a; antiphon: v. 17

P I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore, nations will praise you forever and ever.

C **Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.**

P Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions;
your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations;

C **therefore, nations will praise you forever and ever.**

Prayer of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

O God, You led the Magi to see in the star the news of Christ's birth. We give thanks that You have enabled us to see Him as our Savior.

C **Grant us strength of faith to follow where He leads and to worship Him with all that we are and have;**

P through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

✠ The Future Glory of Israel ✠

Isaiah 60:1-6

¹Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. ³And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. ⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. ⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Choir Anthem

“Jesus Comes”

M. Bringle and S. Morris

Epistle

✠ The Mystery of the Gospel Revealed ✠

Ephesians 3:1-12

¹For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles— ²assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, ³how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ⁷Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, ⁹and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, ¹⁰so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel

✠ The Visit of the Wise Men ✠

Matthew 2:1-12

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the second chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶““And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”” ⁷Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. ⁸And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” ⁹After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. ¹²And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

✠ Confession of Faith ✠

The Apostles' Creed

P God has made us His people through our Baptism into Christ. Living as brothers and sisters in trust and hope, we confess our faith together.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the
right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence 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.

Sermon Hymn

“O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright”

#395

1 O Morning Star, how fair and bright!
You shine with God's own truth and light,
Aglow with grace and mercy!
Of Jacob's race, King David's son,
Our Lord and master, You have won
Our hearts to serve You only!
Lowly, holy!
Great and glorious,
All victorious,
Rich in blessing!
Rule and might o'er all possessing!

3 Lord, when You look on us in love,
At once there falls from God above
A ray of purest pleasure.
Your Word and Spirit, flesh and blood
Refresh our souls with heav'nly food.
You are our dearest treasure!
Let Your mercy

Warm and cheer us!
O draw near us!
For You teach us
God's own love through You has reached
us.

5 O let the harps break forth in sound!
Our joy be all with music crowned,
Our voices gladly blending!
For Christ goes with us all the way—
Today, tomorrow, ev'ry day!
His love is never ending!
Sing out! Ring out!
Jubilation!
Exultation!
Tell the story!
Great is He, the King of Glory!

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Sermon

Announcements

Installation of Officers and Board Members

The names and offices of those serving are listed on the back of your bulletin – please take it home with you as a reference if you want to talk with someone about a particular area of our ministry here at St. Paul.

Offering—may be left in the offering plates near the doors as you leave. Those worshipping at home may continue to mail or drop off offerings at the church office, and on-line giving is available to everyone on our website at www.stpauloaklawn.org. For information about regular electronic giving, please contact the church office.

A word about the Sacrament of the Altar...

We believe Jesus' own words that the bread and wine we receive in Holy Communion is indeed His true Body and Blood and not just a representation of it. We also acknowledge St. Paul's instruction to the Church at Corinth that it is harmful for anyone to receive the Sacrament without recognizing the real presence of His Body and Blood. Because of this, in Christian love we ask anyone who does not understand these truths to please refrain from receiving the Sacrament until you've spoken with the pastor. (*Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:23-30*)

Choir Anthem

"Sing Noel"

N. Sleeth

✠ SERVICE of the SACRAMENT ✠

Preface

- P** The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**
P Lift up your hearts.
C **We lift them to the Lord.**
P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**
P It is truly good, right, and salutary...

Words of Our Lord

Proclamation of Christ

- P** As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.
C **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

The Lord's Prayer

- P** We pray together as our Lord taught us,
C **Our Father, who art in Heaven...**

Pax Domini

- P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C **Amen.**

✠ DISTRIBUTION of the SACRAMENT ✠

Hymn

"Arise and Shine in Splendor"

#396 sts. 1-4

- 1 Arise and shine in splendor;
Let night to day surrender.
Your light is drawing near.
- Above, the day is beaming,
In matchless beauty gleaming;
The glory of the Lord is here.

2 See earth in darkness lying,
The heathen nations dying
In hopeless gloom and night.
To you the Lord of heaven—
Your life, your hope—has given
Great glory, honor, and delight.

3 The world's remotest races,
Upon whose weary faces
The sun looks from the sky,
Shall run with zeal untiring,

With joy Your light desiring
That breaks upon them from on high.

4 Lift up your eyes in wonder—
See, nations gather yonder
From sin to be set free.
The world has heard Your story;
Her sons come to Your glory;
Her daughters haste Your light to see.

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Hymn

“Brightest and Best of the Stars of the Morning”

#400 sts. 1-4

1 Brightest and best of the stars of the
morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine
aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

2 Cold on His cradle the dewdrops are
shining;
Low lies His head with the beasts of the
stall;
Angels adore Him in slumber reclining,
Maker and Monarch and Savior of all.

3 Shall we not yield Him, in costly devotion,
Fragrance of Edom and off'rings divine,
Gems of the mountain and pearls of the
ocean,
Myrrh from the forest and gold from the
mine?

4 Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favor secure.
Richer by far is the heart's adoration;
Dearer to God are the prayers of the
poor.

Text: Public domain

Hymn

“Hail, O Source of Every Blessing”

#409

1 Hail, O Source of ev'ry blessing,
Father of our human race!
Gentiles now, Your grace possessing,
In Your courts obtain a place.
Grateful now, we fall before You,
In Your Church rejoice to live,
See Your glory and adore You,
Thankful for the grace You give.

2 Once far off but now invited,
We approach Your sacred throne,
In Your covenant united,
Reconciled, redeemed, made one.
Now revealed to eastern sages,

See the Star of Mercy shine,
Myst'ry hid in former ages,
Myst'ry great of love divine.

3 Hail, O all-inviting Savior!
Gentiles now their off'rings bring,
In Your temples seek Your favor,
Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.
May we, body, soul, and spirit,
Live devoted to Your praise,
Glorious realms of bliss inherit,
Grateful anthems ever raise.

Text: Public domain

Communion Blessing

P The true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

Closing Prayer

P Let us pray. In Your light, O Lord, do we see light. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may see clearly Jesus Christ and trust in Him only. Bring us with those of every generation and tongue away from the world's darkness into the light of Christ, that in common confession we may walk together as the children of the light; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.

P Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

C Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn

“The Star Proclaims the King is Here”

#399 sts. 1-2 & 5

1 The star proclaims the King is here;
But, Herod, why this senseless fear?
For He who offers heav'nly birth
Seeks not the kingdoms of this earth.

And, led by light, to light they trod
And by their gifts confessed their God.

2 The eastern sages saw from far
And followed on His guiding star;

△5 For this Thy glad epiphany
All glory, Jesus, be to Thee,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit evermore.

Text: Public domain

Postlude

“The Star Proclaims the King Is Here”

J. C. Bach (J. S. Bach's Son)





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

Organist: Ruth Sievers

St. Paul Adult Choir under the direction of Ruth Sievers

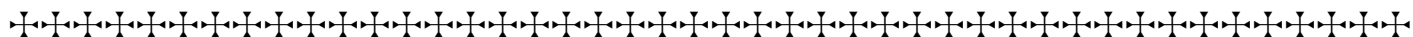
Lector: Sunday: Sandy Barry

Altar Care: Sunday: Sue Lilja; Wednesday: Sandy Barry

Elders: Sunday: John Lilja, Rich Przybycien, Keith Vanselow; Wednesday: David Witkosky

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Announcements & Notes:

The Installation of this year's elected officers and board members will take place today right after the announcements.

Wednesday Evening Communion Services have resumed in the sanctuary at 6pm.

Our Bible Study on Martin Luther continues Sunday Mornings in the Timothy Room after our worship service. Grab a cup of coffee and something to eat in the hall way and join us!

Please pick up your offering envelopes for 2024 in the narthex under the "Holy Trinity" mural.

Be sure to pick up a 2024 calendar – they're out on the counters and in the wings and are provided by our member, Linda Kosary of Kosary Funeral Home.

If you would like one or more poinsettias from the altar, please help yourself. There are bags in the sacristy to protect them from the cold.

Ladies Guild Members and anyone else, come THIS TUESDAY, January 9th at 11 am to help undecorate the church's Christmas trees and wrap up all the Chrismoms and ornaments.

Holy Communion: After hearing requests from a number of people, it was decided at Tuesday evening's Elder's meeting that we will be returning to the communion rail for most of our Sunday services, although we may still sometimes use continuous communion as we have been doing. That's going to begin just before Ash Wednesday on February 11. If you have any thoughts, questions, or concerns, please speak with Pastor John, especially if this decision may prevent you from communing. It is your choice whether you wish to kneel at the altar or not.

Congregational Surveys have been turned in to our Northern Illinois District Office and collated, and that data will be very important moving ahead with the call process – thank you!

NID President Alan Buss will be with us as our guest preacher on Sunday, January 21! After the service he'll stay for a Q & A with everyone who would like to attend, so please plan to be with us for the service and stay for the Q & A if you are able.

MEN of the congregation, you're invited to sing with the Men's Choir on Sunday, January 28th. Rehearsals will be Wednesday, January 24th, at 7 pm (immediately following the 6 pm church service) and at 8:30 am on Sunday, January 28th. The hymns by the choir will be sung as a memorial to Stan Wirtschoreck, a faithful member of St. Paul's choirs for many years.

**Please pray for these
members of our St.
Paul family**

Vic & Marty Both
George Oberg
Rich & Jan Przybycien
Rev. Paul and Judy Anderson
Bill Volk
Arthur Gerth
Ingrid Lesko
Jan Briede
Roy Hodgeman
Katherine Hice
Kurt Seehofer
Flora Jones
Graham Jackson
Kevin Hickey
Gloria Meyer
Elaine Lebron
Melva Smith
Delores Stegemann
Carol Small
Mike Degidio
Norma Silinski
Beverly Sellers
Betty Beegle
Warren Miller
Delphine Cherry
Ron Klingensmith
Louis Frank
Betty Kruckow
Herta Iversen
Loretta Frank
George Dodaro, Sr.

Barbara Prendergast
Nancy Bundley
Rosa Richardson
Carl Hoppe

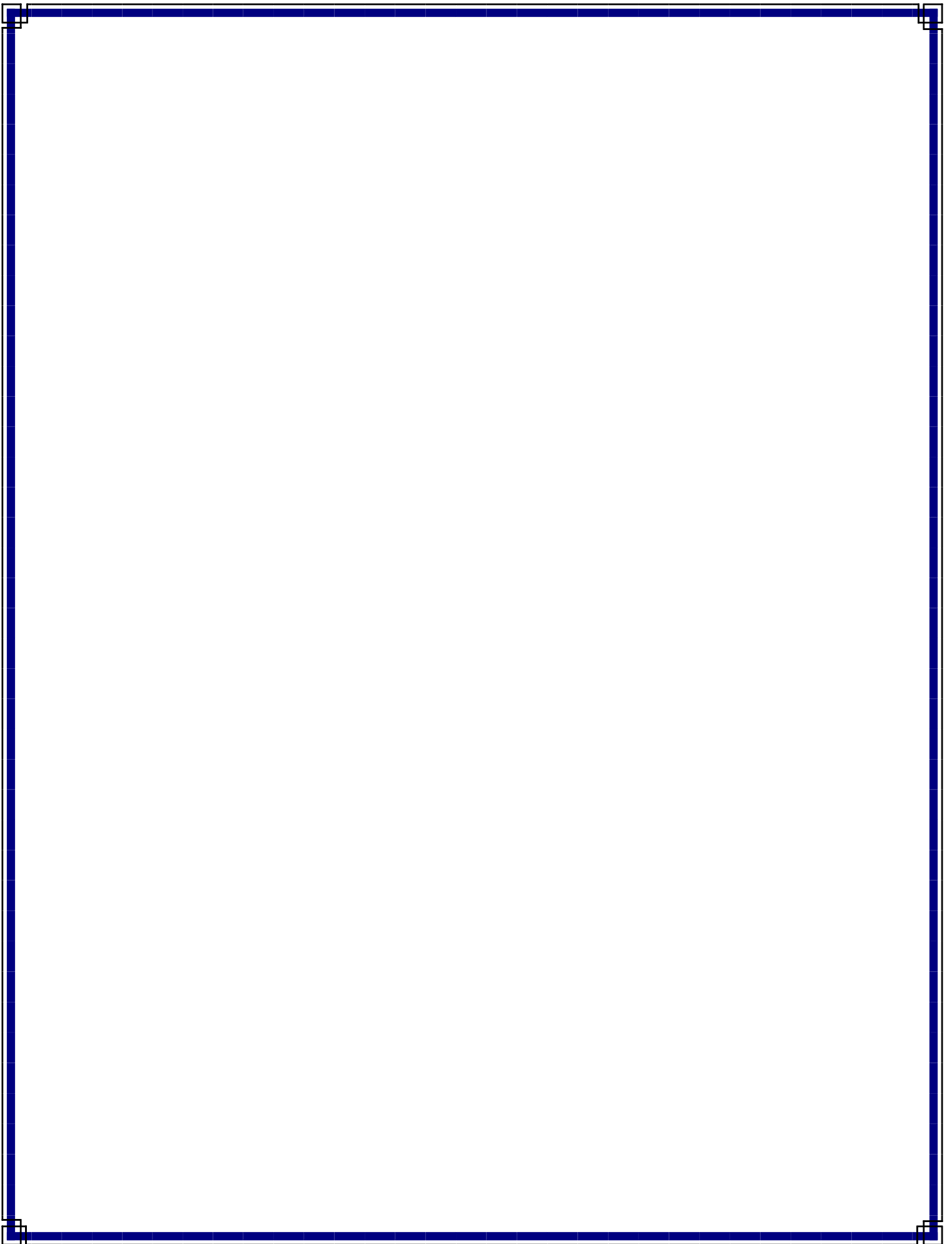
**Please pray for these
friends and family of
our members:**

Roberta & Carlos Owens
Roy Strassner
Dorothy Kroll
Emily Feehan
LeRoy Bitner
Georgiana Easton
Jackie Plichta
Patricia Paulsen
Ken Kruckow
Janet Trierweiler
Vicki Warren
Rhonda Scott
Michelle Mitchell
Al Silinski
Pam Palhegyi
Carol Milazzo
Rich Huscher
The Lamberth Family
Jerry Gross
Louise Hrynkow
Gloria Folsom
Mary Beth Pasqua
Shirley Fairchild
Simeon Hoppe
Ron Lunt
Christopher Kosary
Sandy Plath

Iris McCoy
Shirley Demyres
Raquel Rameriz
Nick & Bridget DeAngelo
Henry Bonder
Kim & Shawn Skelton, Sr.
Kyle Hughes
Elaine Hoffstetter
Fred Raddatz
Allyson Seehofer
Selma Carmichael
Bernadette & Rich Trusk
Dana Kahn
Donald Hakanson
Guillermo Ramirez
Paul Noffke
Vern Howe
Shawn Harland
Ann Herold
Barb Potter
Wayne Volk
Lance Barrientos
Linda Shuman
Doris Potts
Doreen Holford
Judy Collins
Luke Pajowski
Phyllis Hicks
Jimmy Kennedy, Jr.
Monica Iversen
Cathy Becker
Ken Matz
Jean & Al Zirbel
Carol Loecherbach
Charley Heitz

Sophia Salus
Justin & Ashley Fasel
Frank Cogliase
Gene Wawrzynkowski
Kimberly Rooney
Helena Hoffman
Evelyn & Ron Konieski
Audrey Metes
Richard DeSaga
Ken Went
Margaret Lundgreen
Julie King
Sharon Bryant
Anika Seger
Monica Kato
Herb Kleeman
Debra Kleeman
Sarah Skelton
Barbara Apt
Bob & Gloria Freeman
Carrie Aspan
Lisa Anglin
Devon Apt
Tristan Ferry
LaNell Mauler Koenig
Todd, Sofia & Grace Lynam
Hillary Pittelko
Sue Berg
Carol Jean & Tim McPhillips
Donna Santi
Evelyn & Ron Konieczki
Katherine Zeleny
Elmo Schultz
Jose Urena

**Please let the church office know when your need for our congregational prayers is over.
(708) 423-1040**



OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS AS OF JANUARY 1, 2024

President: Bill Leise
Vice President: Mike Will
Secretary: Denise Murray
Treasurer: Mark Landstrom
Contributions Secretary: David Purdy

Board of Elders:

Dave Kandel, Bill Leise, Kevin Kenealy, John Lilja, Rich Przybycien, Curtis Simonson, Keith Vanselow, David Witkosky

Board of Parish Education/Evangelism:

Glenn Bitner, Barbara Herring, Cheryl Horan, Sue Marcinkowski, Linda Miller, Sharon Rochlitz, Betty Shamasko

Board of Social Ministry / Faith in Action:

June Hagberg, Cathy Kumke, Martha Moeller, Sue Lilja, Debra Will

Board of Stewardship:

Sue Browne, Lori Safstrom, Jean Racek, Lorrie Ragland, Ruth Sievers

Board of Trustees:

Jerry Aspan, Marty Fasel, Glen Hicks, George Oberg, Ed Raff, Mike Will

Endowment Committee:

Joe Berlinski, Dave Kandel, Karen Nordstrom, David Witkosky

Acting Sunday School Superintendent:

Barbara Herring

Anniversary Committee:

Barb Puder, Lorrie Ragland

Nominating Committee:

Sandy Barry, Ruth Sievers

Scholarship Committee:

Karen Bidus, Kylee Murray