
St. Paul's Episcopal Church



CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL *of* LESSONS AND CAROLS & HOLY COMMUNION

The First Sunday after Christmas
December 26, 2021

Welcome! Whatever your background and however you have come to be here, we are glad you are. It is our prayer that you will encounter God's peace this morning. If you're new to our community, or if you have questions or other needs, please ask. There's no such thing as a stupid question. We've all been "new" at some point.

About Our Worship: As Christians in the Episcopal (*episcopal=church with bishops*) tradition, our worship is rooted in Holy Scripture and the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP), which—for centuries—has united Christians all over the world in a common language of prayer and worship. The hope of finding ourselves in the midst of this ancient tradition is that we might both learn from those who have come before and add our own voices to the heavenly chorus. Our liturgy (the work of the people in worship) helps us when our words fail, ensures that we hear a thorough account of God's Word, and invites us to add our own voices and experience to God's story. You will find some people kneeling, bowing, and making the sign of the cross as expressions of devotion and blessing. This is neither requisite nor uniform, and we invite you to participate as you feel comfortable.

Worshipping with Children: We are delighted to have children in our midst no matter how squiggly they may be. Worship bulletins for children are located on the table in the rear lobby. Activity bags and a small library of books can be found right outside of the left door next to the piano. In order to reduce cross-contamination, each household has a designated bag. If you are new, we invite you to pick up a bag with a "New Friend" tag.

Restrooms: Restrooms are located at the end of the hallway behind the stairs. Exit through the front or rear doors and make a right at the double doors.
As an act of care for yourself and all those gathered, please maintain appropriate physical distance at all times.

Masks: Masks must be worn over **mouth and nose** by all those above the age of two.

The Festival of Lessons and Carols is a service of Scripture and song that dates to 1880 in Truro, England. Soon after, it was adapted by King's College in London, and "Once in David royal's city" was adopted as the customary opening hymn.

Except for the opening and closing hymns, the congregation is seated for the readings and hymns. Only the text of the lessons are read: the customary introduction and conclusion are omitted. It is customary that there be no sermon at Lessons and Carols, the Gospel being proclaimed by the lessons themselves.

PRELUDE

Sussex Carol

Fedak

OPENING HYMN

Once in David's royal city

Hymnal 102

vv. 1, 6

BIDDING

Officiant

Dear People of God: in this Christmas season, let it be our duty and delight to hear once more the message of the angels, to go to Bethlehem and see the son of god lying in a manger.

Let us enter into God's story—a story of our God's dream and our resistance; our longing and God's promise.

Let us make our home with God and all God's people—past and present.

Let us find a song for our weary throats.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world, for peace and justice on earth, for the unity and mission of the church for which he died, and especially for his church in our country and in this city.

God of Light,

In the beginning – you were.

In this moment – you are.

You are strength and weakness.

You are light and glory.

You are God and you welcome us: you listen for our prayers.

We pray today for peace, peace in Bethlehem, peace in the dark places of our world. We pray for leaders and negotiators, for peacemakers and peace-keepers, for fighters and prisoners, for all who are caught up in conflict, violence and fear. We pray for peace with integrity and with justice ... God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for children everywhere, for the newly born, for those growing up among us, for those growing up in places where there is poverty and danger. We pray that they may be loved and welcomed and that they may know smiles and hope ... God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who sit and eat with us today. We thank you for our families, for our friends, for those who love us, for those who share our laughter and pain. We pray for those who, by choice or by circumstance, eat alone. And we pray for justice for those who are hungry ... God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are sick and for those who care for them and pray for them. We pray for those who have died, for those we miss at our table. Tell them how much we love them, we miss them, we carry their stories in our lives ... God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves, for our needs, our concerns, our hopes and our dreams ... God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Celebrant

The Almighty God bless us with grace; Christ give us the joys of everlasting life; and to the fellowship of the citizens above, may the King of Angels bring us all. **Amen.**

THE FIRST LESSON

The prophet announces the reign of the Prince of Peace. Let us find everlasting hope in the promise that God is with us

THE WORD OF GOD

Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;
a branch will sprout from his roots.
The Lord's spirit will rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of planning and strength,
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.
He will delight in fearing the Lord.
He won't judge by appearances,
nor decide by hearsay.
He will judge the needy with righteousness,
and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land.
He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth;
by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.
Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;
the calf and the young lion will feed together,
and a little child will lead them.
The cow and the bear will graze.
Their young will lie down together,
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.
A nursing child will play over the snake's hole;
toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den.
They won't harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain.
The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,
just as the water covers the sea.

THE RESPONSE

"Incarnation"

Steve Garnaas-Holmes

The coming of Christ is no sentimental visit;
it is an incursion on our empire of cruelty,
insurrection against our apathy and injustice.

The babe in the manger upends our world,
and asks our hand in its upending,
to resist evil in small, fragile ways.

Some people deny suffering; some profit from it;
and some heal—not merely tending the wounded
but ending the battle.

The Incarnation of the Word is not history;
the Word of Love is made flesh whenever we love,
whenever we act for healing or justice.

The Spirit of God is upon us
to be a healing presence in a wounded world,
knowing the Emperor fears the child.

God comes, love made flesh, tender
but willing, with grace and love,
and occupies our trauma, and transforms it:

in the harsh winter a turning,
on a moonless night a welcoming manger,
at the foot of the empire a dangerous babe.

PRAYER

God of hope, look upon those who live with despair as their companion. Give them signs of your healing presence and of your eternal purpose of salvation. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**
Amen.

CAROL

Prepare the way, O Zion

Hymnal 65

THE SECOND LESSON

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Let us join with Mary, the favored handmaid, and offer ourselves in service to God's holy and saving purpose for the world.

THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 1:26-38, 46-55

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

RESPONSE

"What if God Had Waited?"

Lisle Gwynn Garrity

What if God had waited
For Mary to be wed,
For Herod to relent,
For a legitimate birthing bed?

What if God had waited
Until the powerful promoted
peace,
And the politicians agreed?

What if God had waited
For a plan with no risk of failure,
For a place that felt safe
and secure?

What if God had waited
For the anxious to find rest, For the cynic to know
hope, For the brokenhearted to
be whole?

For the wars to cease,
For the violence to end,

For the fears to pass,
For the weapons to be banned?

What if God had waited For the earth to heal, For
the laws to change, For every life to matter
the same,
For the addict to be freed
from shame,
For the refugees to not
be blamed?

What if God had waited
Until all was calm,
All was bright,
For a future that might Never come?

What if God had waited?

But God couldn't wait.
God couldn't wait to be love
known in flesh and bone—
And neither should we.

PRAYER

Almighty God, who looked with favor on your servant Mary, and called her to be the mother of your Son, nurture in us the humility and gentleness that found favor in your sight, that with her we may proclaim the greatness of your name and find the mercy you show to those who fear you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

CAROL

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

Piney Song Book 15

vv. 1,4

THE THIRD LESSON

Luke tells of Jesus' birth. Let us raise our voices with the messenger who announces good news of great joy to all people

THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 2:1-14

In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

RESPONSE

"Invitations"

Sarah Are Speed

I've been thinking about a universal truth—the way we all want to be invited in. We want the door to be opened with cheers of, "You're here!" We want the clerk at the store to ask how we're doing, and the waiter to wink at us and whisper, "Good choice." We want the barista to learn our names, which people call being "a regular," but it feels more like being known. We want the stranger to help us pick up our sodas when the case breaks, and the woman to put her bag in her lap on the subway, which is to mean, "Come, you can sit by me." We cherish every open palm wave from the child in the grocery store and every city church with open doors when the organist plays.

Jesus didn't receive much of an invitation.
No one moved their bag to their lap, or opened the door to the inn and said, "You're here!" Still, he came.

What a gift it is
to have a God
who does not wait on my invitation.

What a gift it is
to have a God
who can't imagine
being anywhere but here.

At the end of the day we are all just a collection of heart and bones walking through this world, exchanging invitations, saying to one another in a million little ways—come matter here. Come make a difference here. Come be you, here.

PRAYER

Tender God, you have shed upon us the new light of your incarnate Word. May this light, enkindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

CAROL

The first Nowell

Hymnal 109

vv. 1-2

THE FOURTH LESSON

Jesus is presented at the temple. Let us raise our voices with the messenger who announces good news of great joy to all people

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:21-32

When eight days had passed, Jesus' parents circumcised him and gave him the name Jesus. This was the name given to him by the angel before he was conceived. When the time came for their ritual cleansing, in accordance with the Law from Moses, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (It's written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord.") They offered a sacrifice in keeping with what's stated in the Law of the Lord, *A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*

A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem. He was righteous and devout. He eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he wouldn't die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple area. Meanwhile, Jesus' parents brought the child to the temple so that they could do what was customary under the Law. Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God. He said,

"Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word,
because my eyes have seen your salvation.

You prepared this salvation in the presence of all peoples.

It's a light for revelation to the Gentile, and a glory for your people Israel."

RESPONSE

"Praise Song for the Day"

Elizabeth Alexander

Each day we go about our business,
walking past each other, catching each other's
eyes or not, about to speak or speaking.

All about us is noise. All about us is
noise and bramble, thorn and din, each
one of our ancestors on our tongues.

Someone is stitching up a hem, darning
a hole in a uniform, patching a tire,
repairing the things in need of repair.

Someone is trying to make music somewhere,
with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum,
with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.

A woman and her son wait for the bus.
A farmer considers the changing sky.
A teacher says, Take out your pencils. Begin.

We encounter each other in words, words
spiny or smooth, whispered or declaimed,
words to consider, reconsider.

We cross dirt roads and highways that mark
the will of some one and then others, who said
I need to see what's on the other side.
I know there's something better down the road.

We need to find a place where we are safe.

We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.

Sing the names of the dead who brought us here,
who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges,

picked the cotton and the lettuce, built
brick by brick the glittering edifices
they would then keep clean and work inside of.

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the day.
Praise song for every hand-lettered sign,
the figuring-it-out at kitchen tables.

Some live by love thy neighbor as thyself,
others by first do no harm or take no more
than you need. What if the mightiest word is love?

Love beyond marital, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,
praise song for walking forward in that light.

PRAYER

Tender God, you have shed upon us the new light of your incarnate Word. May this light, enkindled in our hearts, shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

CAROL

God rest you merry, gentlemen

*Hymnal 105
vv.1-2,4*

THE FIFTH LESSON

Saint John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

Let us give thanks to the One whose light and love no despair, disease, or death can vanquish.

THE WORD OF GOD

John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

RESPONSE

"Go to the Limits of Your Longing"

Rainer Maria Rilke

God speaks to each of us as God makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself lose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.

Give me your hand.

PRAYER

Eternal Wisdom, creating, ordering, and saving, we give you thanks that we have seen you in the selfless love of Jesus Christ. Now reign within our minds and hearts, and mobilize our will, that by your power and through our hands this world may be re-made to be the garden and the city of your glory. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

CAROL

Joy to the world!

Hymnal 100

vv.1-2, 4

THE PEACE

Officiant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

THE OFFERTORY

You may place your offering in the trays as the ushers walk down the aisle; give via text message by texting

PINEY5000 to 73256; or, you may give online via our secure online portal:

<https://onrealm.org/stpaulswaldorf/give>. Thank you for your generosity.

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Elevation on a Noel

Guilmant

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

And now we give you thanks because, in the incarnation of the Word, a new light has dawned upon the world; you have become one with us that we might become one with you in your glorious kingdom. Therefore with all the angels of heaven we lift our voices to proclaim the glory of your name and sing our joyful hymn of praise:

Ho - ly, ho - ly,
ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant and People

We remember his death,

We proclaim his resurrection,

We await his coming in glory;

The Celebrant continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

People **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, for ever and ever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

A period of silence for reflection and adoration is kept.

Celebrant Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

People **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!**

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Celebrant As Mary's body was given for Jesus, so Jesus' body is given for us.

Here the Word made flesh comes to us, cradled in bread and wine. So, behold who you are.

People **May we become what we receive.**

THE COMMUNION

This is the table, not of the church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love God and for those who want to love God more. So come, you who have much faith and you who have little; you who have been here often and you who have not been here long; you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is Christ who bids you come. It is Christ who meets you here. You need not be an Episcopalian to feast here. In lieu of receiving communion, you may cross your arms on your chest, and the priest will give you a blessing.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Celebrant Let us pray.

People Faithful God, in baptism you have adopted us as your children, made us members of the body of Christ and chosen us as inheritors of your kingdom: we thank you that in this Eucharist you renew your promises within us, empower us by your Spirit to witness and to serve, and send us out as disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & BLESSINGS

PRAYER FOR A BIRTHDAY

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants *she/he/they* begin another year. Grant that *she/he/they* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *his/her/their* trust in your goodness all the days of *his/her/their* life(ves); through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR AN ANNIVERSARY

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

CLOSING HYMN

Go Tell It on The Mountain

Hymnal 99

DISMISSAL

Celebrant Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!

People Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

POSTLUDE

Love Came Down at Christmas

Williams

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

4535 Piney Church Road, Waldorf, MD 20602-3262

Office: (301) 645-5000 • Pastoral Emergencies: (301) 535-4567

www.stpaulswaldorf.org

The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, *Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church*

The Rt. Rev. Mariann E. Budde, *Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Washington*

The Rev. Dr. Maria A. Kane, Rector

mkane@stpaulswaldorf.org

The Rev. Deacon Steve Seely, Deacon

sseely@stpaulswaldorf.org

Dr. Holly Oberle, Minister of Music

oberle@ohio.edu

Diane Hess, Parish Administrator

office@stpaulswaldorf.org

Vicky Mumford, Sexton

vickymumford@verizon.net

PERMISSIONS

Cover Art: *Center Christ* by Lauren Wright Pittman | A Sanctified Art | www.sanctifiedart.org

The Scripture Lessons: *New Revised Standard Version Bible* © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Church of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved.

Post-Communion Prayer: Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light*

Music reprinted and streamed with One License #A-734675
