

WELCOME!

Welcome in the Lord's name to St. Paul's Episcopal Church. No matter who you are and where you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome! You bless us with your presence. We are gathering in unique ways during this time of COVID, thus we are worshiping in our Outdoor Chapel. Please review all the posted instructions, found in the email confirming your registration and in the back of this bulletin. We all are following these guidelines to love and care for one another.

When you exit your car, please wear a mask until you return to your vehicle. Due to our safety guidelines, ushers will seat you based upon the size of your group or special needs. You may place your chair(s) in your assigned space; please remain there during worship. During worship, at various times we stand, sit, and kneel; these instructions are for those who are physically able. An ***** indicates the **people stand**. There will be no bulletin or handouts, processions, congregational singing, or offering plate. 'The Peace' will be passed without touch, using some distanced sign of peace. When our service concludes, please return to your vehicle with safe distancing and do not congregate. All these precautions are to protect each other's health. Thank you for your cooperation. We are delighted you are with us, and hope to see you again at future parish events.

REGARDING COMMUNION

All who seek Christ are welcome at God's Table. After the invitation to communion, Eucharist in one kind (bread only), wrapped in a plastic bag for safety, will be brought to you. In our Eucharistic Theology, receiving in one kind is efficacious as fully partaking of the Eucharistic feast. Please remain in your space. You may stand and hold your hands out to receive, but standing is not necessary. Take the bread out and consume reverently. Please retain your plastic bag and dispose of properly. If you do not wish to receive, cross your arms over your chest and you will receive a blessing.

. If you have a wheat allergy, notify a server and they will accommodate your request.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Christmas commemorates the Incarnation of the Word of God in the birth of Jesus Christ. It is also called The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas Day is one of our seven principal feasts. The Christmas season lasts twelve days, from Christmas Day until Jan. 5, the day before the Epiphany. The season includes Christmas Day, the First Sunday after Christmas Day, the Holy Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and may include the Second Sunday after Christmas Day. In many parishes, the main liturgical celebrations of Christmas take place on Christmas Eve.

COVER ART

"Singing Windows" Stained Glass Window (1932 AD)

by Katherine Lamb Tait

This window is located at the University Chapel in Tuskegee, Alabama, USA.

CHRISTMAS LESSONS & CAROLS

**indicates people stand | BCP is Book of Common Prayer | Hymnal 1982*

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” —John 1:14

Prelude

“Sing we now of Christmas”

arr. Catherine McMichael

***Opening Hymn**

“Good Christian Friends Rejoice”

Hymn 107

1. Good Christian friends, rejoice

with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say:

Jesus Christ is born today;

ox and ass before him bow,

and he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today!

Christ is born today!

2. Good Christian friends, rejoice

with heart and soul and voice;

now ye hear of endless bliss;

Jesus Christ was born for this!

He hath opened heaven's door,

and we are blest for evermore.

Christ was born for this!

Christ was born for this!

3. Good Christian friends, rejoice

with heart and soul and voice;

now ye need not fear the grave:

Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all

to gain his everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save!

Christ was born to save!

***Opening Acclamation**

Officiant: The people who walked in darkness

People: have seen a great light.

Officiant: For to us a child is born,

People: to us a Son is given.

Officiant: His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

People: the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Officiant: Glory to God in the highest,

People: and peace to God's people on earth.

***A Bidding Prayer**

Celebrant: Beloved in Christ, this day it is our duty and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the prophets and the angels, and to go in heart and mind to Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, the Christ Child, lying in the manger. Therefore let us hear again from Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God and the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child; and let us make this house of prayer glad with our carols of praise. But first, because this of all things would rejoice Jesus' heart, let us pray to God for the needs of the whole world, and all his people; for peace upon the earth Jesus came to save, for love and unity within the one Church he did build; for goodwill among all peoples. And particularly at this time, let us remember the poor, the cold, the hungry, the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all who know not our Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love. Lastly let us remember all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude who no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one. These prayers and praises let us humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words that Christ himself has taught us.

***All: 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.**

Celebrant: May the almighty God bless us with divine grace, may Christ give us the joy of everlasting life, and unto the fellowship of the citizens above, may the Spirit of Love bring us all.

People: Amen.

The First Lesson

Isaiah 9:2,6-7

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Carol**

"Once in Royal David's City"

Hymn 102 vs. 1-2,5-6

1. Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little child.

2. He came down to earth from heaven,
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor, the scorned, the lowly
lived on earth our Savior holy.

5. And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child who seemed so helpless
is our Lord in heaven above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

6. Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing round,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
where his saints his throne surround:
Christ, revealed to faithful eye,
set a God's right hand on high.

The Second Lesson

Isaiah 11:1-4,6-9

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

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. His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Carol**

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Hymn 81

1 Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

2 Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it,
the Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

The Third Lesson

Micah 5:2-4

The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem" arr. Catherine McMichael (piano & strings)
The Fourth Lesson **Luke 1:26-35,38**

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

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." 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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Carol** *"The Angel Gabriel"*

Hymn 265

1. The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady," Gloria!
2. "For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady," Gloria!
3. Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"my soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name."
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
4. Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,

and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say--
"Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

The Fifth Lesson

Luke 2:1-7

Luke tells of the birth of Jesus

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Carol

"What Child is this?"

Greensleeves (strings)

The Sixth Lesson

Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Carol**

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

Hymn 96

1 Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply

Echo back their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?

Why your joyous strains prolong?

What the gladsome tidings be

Which inspire your heav'nly song. [Refrain]

3 Come to Bethlehem and see

Him whose birth the angels sing;

Come, adore on bended knee

Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]

The Seventh Lesson

Matthew 2:1-12

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

***Carol**

"We Three Kings"

Hymn 128

1. We three kings of Orient are,
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain,
moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

Refrain:

O star of wonder, star of night,
star with royal beauty bright;
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light!

2. Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
gold I bring to crown him again,
King for ever,
ceasing never
over us all to reign. (Refrain)

3. Frankincense to offer have I:
incense owns a Deity nigh;
prayer and praising,
gladly raising,
worship him, God Most High. (Refrain)

4. Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume
breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing,
bleeding, dying,
sealed in the stone-cold tomb. (Refrain)

5. Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and Sacrifice;
heaven sings
alleluia:
alleluia the earth replies. (Refrain)

The Eighth Lesson

John 1:1-14

John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

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.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

***Carol**

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Hymn 324

1 Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded,
for with blessing in his hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
our full homage to demand.

2 King of kings, yet born of Mary,
as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
in the Body and the Blood
he will give to all the faithful
his own self for heavenly food.

3 Rank on rank the host of heaven
spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of Light descendeth
from the realms of endless day,
that the powers of hell may vanish
as the darkness clears away.

4 At his feet the six-winged seraph;
cherubim, with sleepless eye
veil their faces to the Presence,
as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

Prayers

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only son, Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him for our redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

People: Amen.

Concluding Collect

Celebrant: Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may 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.

People: Amen.

*The Christmas Blessing

Celebrant: May Almighty God who sent his Son to take our nature upon him, bless you in this holy season, scatter the darkness of sin, and brighten your heart with the light of his holiness.

People: Amen.

Celebrant: May God, who sent his angels to proclaim the glad news of the Savior's birth, fill you with joy, and make you heralds of the Gospel.

People: Amen.

Celebrant: May God, who in the Word made flesh joined heaven to earth and earth to heaven, give you his peace and favor.

People: Amen.

Celebrant: And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is upon you and will remain with you always.

People: Amen.

*Closing Hymn

"The First Noel"

Hymn 109

1. The first Nowell the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
in fields where they lay, keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
born is the King of Israel.

2. They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. (Refrain)

3. And by the light of that same star
three wise men came from country far;
to seek for a king was their intent,
and to follow the star wherever it went. (Refrain)

4. This star drew nigh to the northwest,
o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,
and there it did both stop and stay
right over the place where Jesus lay. (Refrain)

5. Then entered in those wise men three
full reverently upon their knee,
and offered there in his presence,
their gold, and myrrh, and frankincense. (Refrain)

6. Then let us all with one accord
sing praises to our heavenly Lord;
that hath made Heaven and earth of nought,
and with His blood our life hath bought. (Refrain)

Postlude

Toccata on "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Allan Mahnke



CLERGY

The Rt. Rev. Robert C. Wright, *Bishop*
The Rt. Rev. Don A. Wimberly, *Assisting Bishop*
The Rev. Bryan Hinson, *Priest-in-Charge*
The Rev. Dr. Gary Abbott, *Retired Priest-in-Residence*



STAFF

Nadine Cheek, *Organist/Choirmaster*
Dena Hobbs, *Campus Ministry*
Leah Lowndes, *Parish Administrator*
Akram Saymeh, *Bookkeeper*
Mary Patmon, *Custodian*

VESTRY MEMBERS

Class of 2020
Dustin Gilmore
Alex Mitchell
Tamika Sanders

Class of 2021
Charlie Bradshaw
Teri Kramer
Nancy Ogilvie

Class of 2022
Billie Abbott
Andrea Freeman
Sean McCrackin

Teri Kramer, *Treasurer* | Russell Lewis, *Interim Chancellor* | Tamika Sanders, *Clerk*

Thank you for joining us in worship.

We pray for those on our parish prayer list: Annelise, Betty, Bubber, Carol, Dawson, George, Jamie, Jim, Kaleb, Kay, Kimberly, Richard, Terri

We pray for those on our long term parish prayer list: Beatrice, Betty, Blair, the Broome family, Brother, the Coley family, Donna, Frank, George, the Gregory family, Jim, Mike,