

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*We believe that God is healing and restoring the world,
and that we are recipients of and participants in that healing and restoration.*



Be vigilant at all times

LUKE 21:36

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT:
ADVENT LESSONS AND CAROLS

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The Holy Eucharist - Rite II

WELCOME to St. Paul's! We are grateful for your prayers and presence on this day in the life of the parish community. We hope that your worship with us will be both inspirational and spiritually nurturing. Please feel free to participate in the worship service as much or as little as you wish. Everyone is welcome to receive Holy Communion at the Lord's table. The majority of the liturgy is printed in the bulletin; however, you will find the hymns in the Blue 1982 Hymnals in the back of the pews. Hymns that start with "S" are found at the beginning of the hymnal.

Our worship service takes place here and online; it is also being recorded for later viewing. Feel free to greet one another as is your custom as you gather. When we are ready to start, our Angels Aloft will sound an opening bell. This signals those gathered that our service is now being recorded. Please maintain quiet and turn your attention to our opening activities at this time.

Opening Bell

Welcome

Celebrant

Announcements

Member of Vestry

Prelude

Land Acknowledgement

Celebrant

We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples who have reserve treaty rights to this land, especially the Skagit Tribe who has stewarded this land throughout the generations. We thank these caretakers of this land, who have lived, and continue to live, here since time immemorial.

Mission Statement

Presider and People:

1 We believe that God is healing and restoring the world, and that we are recipients of and participants in that healing and restoration.

Please stand as able.

Opening

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Hymn 83

The people are seated.

A Bidding Prayer

Dear People of God: In the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy to prepare ourselves 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 hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose from the time of our rebellion against him until the glorious redemption brought to us by this holy Child Jesus, and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the 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.

And because he particularly loves them, let us remember in his name the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry and the oppressed, the sick and those who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as all those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and that whole multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in Jesus, we are one for evermore.

And now, to gather all these petitions, let us pray in the words which Christ himself has taught us, saying:

Presider and People:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Presider:

The Almighty God bless us with his 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.**

All Sing

Once in David's Royal City

Hymn 102

God creates man and woman to live in obedience to him in the Garden of Eden.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’

Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,

‘This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.’

Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

Lesson 2

Genesis 22:15-18

Adam and Eve rebel against God and are cast out of the Garden of Eden.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die." ' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this,
 cursed are you among all animals
 and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
 and dust you shall eat
 all the days of your life.

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
 and you will strike his heel.'

Lesson 3

Isaiah 40:1-11

God comforts his people and calls on them to prepare for redemption.

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;

lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
'Here is your God!'
See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

All Sing

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light

Hymn 91

Lesson 4

Jeremiah 31:31-34

A new covenant is promised which will be written in our hearts.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

Lesson 5

Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet proclaims that God will come and save us.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

All Sing

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Hymn 78

Lesson 6

Isaiah 7:10-15

God promises that a child shall be conceived who will be known as "God with us".

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

Lesson 7

Micah 5:2-4

The one who is to rule Israel will be born in the village of Bethlehem.


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 labour 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;

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

All Sing


Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

G D G C/E G/B C D⁷




1. In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle
2. Flocks were sleep - ing, shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing

G D G C/E G/B C D⁷



stall; ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing, Christ the babe is Lord of
new saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, tid - ings of a gos - pel


G G/B C Am D Bm Em Am



all. Swift are wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, no - els ring - ing, tid - ings
true. Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing, greet the

Interlude, Ending

D Em C G/B C D⁷ Em C G/B C D⁷ G



bring - ing: Christ the babe is Lord of all.
mor - row: Christ the babe was born for you.

God promises a new heaven and a new earth.

For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;
the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice for ever
in what I am creating;
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,
and its people as a delight.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,
or the cry of distress.
No more shall there be in it
an infant that lives but a few days,
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.
They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
They shall not labour in vain,
or bear children for calamity;
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—
and their descendants as well.
Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain, says the Lord.

Please stand as you are able.

All Sing: Gradual

Angels We Have Heard on High

Hymn 96

Lesson 9

Luke 1:26-56

The Angel Gabriel announces to the Virgin Mary that she will bear the Son of the Most High.

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, favoured 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 favour 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 for ever, 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.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,
‘My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’

And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

Lector: Here ends the Lesson.

Meditation

“Unexpected Births”

Rev. Paul Moore

The Peace

Presider: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Presider: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Presider: Let us pray together.

Presider and People:

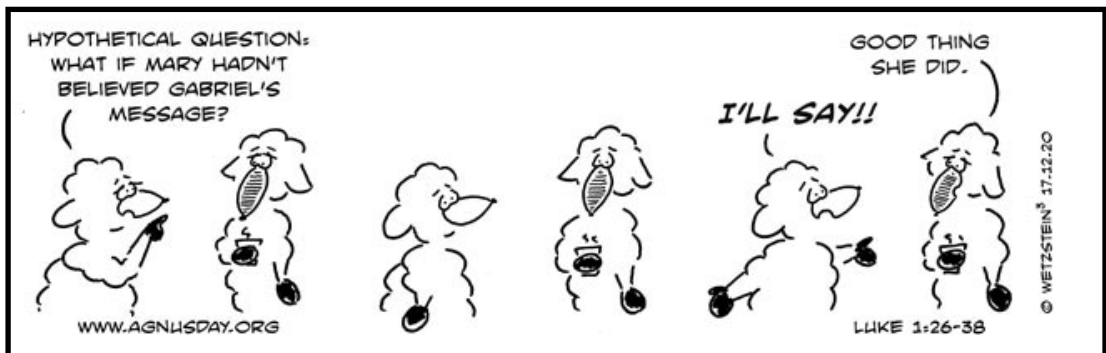
Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Advent Blessing

Dismissal

Presider: Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit. Alleluia!

People: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!



Offertory - Thank you for giving!

Please drop your offering in the church's mailbox or mail it to:

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

415 S. 18th Street

Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Serving Today: 9:30 a.m. Advent Lessons and Carols

Presider:	The Rev. Paul Moore
Deacon:	Rev. Dennis Taylor, Rev. Vicki Johnson
Greeters:	Paul & Beth Fuentes
Lector(s):	Jen McCabe
Eucharistic Visitors:	Dan/Acacia
Counters:	Carol Boss, Acacia Kimball

Your **Vestry** members request your prayers for this congregation and their leadership. They want to be in conversation with you. Speak with them so they know the needs of the congregation: Maggie Bird, Bonnie Schuh, Joe Thomas, Darcy Wells, Margie Lauer, Sue Shepherd.

St. Paul's Prayer Team prays daily for those on the prayer list.
Please email Penny Worrell at penny.worrell@gmail.com.

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Page 18 image: <https://www.agnusday.org/comics/802/luke-01-26-38-2017>

Cover image: https://diocesan.com/product/advent_6_1/

Announcements for December 24, 2023

Welcome to our guests: We are so glad that you are worshipping with us today! Please put your name and contact information in our guest book so that we may get to know you better.

Free COVID Tests - continue to be available and will be for some time. Like the previous batch, the expiration date on them has been extended and Nurse Barb Cheney is updating them. Feel free to take as many as you like; give them to friends and neighbors, etc. There are lots more coming. (Thank you to the anonymous donor!)

Women's Getaway Weekend (adult program) – January 12-15, 2024

I made an announcement about The women's retreat at Camp Huston (Episcopal church Camp and Conference Center) on Sunday. It is a wonderful weekend to de-stress after the holidays and it would be great fun if a whole group of us could go together this year. Mary Ann goes almost every year and I go many of those with her. We have taken whole groups of women from St. Paul's with us on a couple of occasions, and then we get a cabin all to ourselves. People do crafts, games, walks, hikes, read, visit, snack, etc. Pretty much whatever you want to do. Some people quilt, scrapbook, knit, work on fun computer projects etc. There are church services if you want to attend. There is usually a masseuse if you choose to make an appointment. The cabins have either a fireplace or wood stove in the living room and a table(s) for crafts and games. You may pick a roommate for your bedroom or ask for a private room. All your meals are in the main building. There is no pressure, no set agenda. Mary Ann and I go on Friday and come home Monday afternoon. Some people come up on Saturday instead. It is always held on Martin Luther King weekend. We bring our own linens and towels, which saves \$20. Here is the website info: <https://huston.org/hustonevents/>. Women's Getaway:

WG Three nights (shared room)	345.00
WG Two nights (shared room)	240.00
WG One night (shared room)	135.00
WG Three nights (single room)	450.00
WG Two nights (single room)	320.00
WG One night (single room)	165.0

When looking at the costs, keep in mind that if you rented a vacation cabin and meals were included, the cost would be a great deal more than this. I sincerely hope that several of you will join Mary Ann and I. -Sandy

Family Promise - Seasonal Shelter for homeless families: Gift certificates of \$25 or less are being collected now thru January 14th. Gift certificates from Target, Fred Meyer, Walmart and Safeway would be appreciated. Put them in an envelope, marking Family Promise, and leave in the collection plate. Also, if you wish to donate by check, write the check out to St. Paul's and note Family Promise and leave in the collection plate. Gift Certificates will purchased with this funding. Questions, please contact Sharon Johnson.

Welcome to Saint Paul's!

We hope that your worship with us will be both inspirational and spiritually nurturing. Please feel free to participate in the worship service as much or as little as you wish. The prayer book gives directions as to when we stand, sit, or occasionally kneel; these are guidelines. What is more important is that you bring your complete self to worship God.

Everyone is welcome to receive Holy Communion at the Lord's table. We use real wine in the cup. If you wish to receive only a blessing, simply cross your arms in front of you as the priest approaches. If you do not want to drink from the chalice, please cross your arms across your chest. Non-gluten bread is also available. Please inform us if this is your preference. We ask that those worshiping with us online reverently pray and meditate on God's grace and blessing whenever you observe the Eucharist being taken.



The Episcopal Diocese of Olympia	206-325-4200	https://ecww.org/
The Reverend Paul Moore <i>Rector</i>	254-368-6475	padrequitenogmail.com
The Reverend Dennis Taylor <i>Deacon / Faith Community Nurse</i>	360-661-1551	deacon2rn@comcast.net
Nancy Blaire Serrano <i>Organist and Music Director</i>		
St. Paul's Office <i>Parish Administrator</i> <i>Bookkeeper</i>	360-424-1822	stpaulmv@comcast.net spbookkeeper@comcast.net

If you would like to receive our e-news, please send a message to stpaulmv@comcast.net.