



St. Paul's

United Methodist Church



Christmas Eve Day

Dec. 24, 2023

10:30 AM

ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS EVE DAY
10:30 A.M. WORSHIPDECEMBER 24, 2023

Thank you for worshiping with us today.

Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, we welcome you to St. Paul's, a Reconciling congregation of the United Methodist Church. All are celebrated here and all are safe. This bulletin will guide our service today. More helpful information can be found following the order of worship.

Gathering for Worship

(* - please stand in body or spirit)

Announcements

Lay Leader

Prelude

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Johnny Marks/Luke Duane

Mollie Weikert, solo

*I heard the bells on Christmas day, their old familiar carols play;
And wild and sweet the words repeat; of peace on earth, good will to men.
I thought as now this day had come, the belfries of all Christendom
Had run so long the unbroken song of peace on earth, good will to men.
And in despair, I bowed my head. "There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men."
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep, "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep.
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good will to men."*

*Call to Worship (based on Isaiah 11 & 40)

Lay Reader

Leader: 'Prepare the way,' the prophets call,
'make ready the highways for God.'

ALL: How we long to walk down the sidewalks in God's kingdom of peace!

Leader: Prepare your hearts, for God's realm opens up a new day.

**ALL: We yearn for the time
when the wolf and lamb will live together in harmony.**

Leader: Prepare the way,
God promises a new day when adversaries will lay down their arms.

ALL: We dream of a world transformed by God's love.

Leader: May the God of hope fill your hearts with all joy and peace.

ALL: We rejoice for God's Spirit is in our midst!

*Hymn #234

O Come, All Ye Faithful
Verses 1-3

Opening Prayer

Lay Reader

ALL: Blessed God, we praise you on this holy day for the mystery of your Incarnation. We bless you for the birth of Jesus, and for the gift of your salvation. We thank you that you dwell with us in love.

In the name of the infant Jesus we pray for all children, and their families.

We pray for peace. We pray for those for whom Christ came: those who suffer, those who are lost or lonely, the sick, the powerless and the rejected, those who struggle in life; and those who do not know you. Blessed are the poor, and those who mourn. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are those who are persecuted: for among them is Emmanuel.

Holy Spirit, make of our hearts an open manger, that Christ may be born in us anew and live in us always. By your grace help us to receive the gifts of this holy season, to share them with all the world, and to live always in the light of Jesus' presence. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Dr. Patricia Allen

Lessons and Carols

First Reading, Isaiah 35:1-10 NRSVUE

Pew Bible: Old Testament p. 663

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
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.

³Strengthen the weak hands

and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say 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.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶then 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;

⁷the 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.

⁸A 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 traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No 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.

¹⁰And 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.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He 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. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then 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.

Hymn #230

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Third Reading, Matthew 1:18-25 NRSVUE

Pew Bible: New Testament p. 1

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Hymn #217

Away in a Manger

Fourth Reading, Luke 2: 8–16 NRSVUE

Pew Bible: New Testament p. 58

⁸Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

¹⁵When 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.” ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

Hymn #238

Angels We Have Heard on High

Fifth Reading, John 1: 1–14 NRSVUE

Pew Bible: New Testament p. 91-92

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And 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.

Hymn #240

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Response to the Word

Invitation to Giving

Rev. Joey Heath-Mason

To contribute to today's Christmas Special Offering, please use the Christmas envelope in today's bulletin or mark the memo of your checks with "Christmas Special Offering." (Please note that other contributions, such as pledges or general offerings, should be made using a different envelope.)

As is our tradition, 100% of St. Paul's Christmas Special Offering goes to serve those in need outside our walls. This year's donations will be divided evenly between the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), serving globally those suffering from natural disasters or war, and the Hunger Ministry of St. Paul's, providing groceries for the food insecure throughout the 20895 ZIP code.

Offerings by check may be made out to St. Paul's UMC. Scan the QR code here to see online giving options at stpaulsk.org/giving. Thank you for supporting all of St. Paul's efforts to engage in meaningful worship and vibrant ministry in our community.



Offertory

I Wonder as I Wander

arr. John Jacob Niles

Mollie Weikert, soprano

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor on'ry people like you and like I. I wonder as I wander out under the sky.
When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall with wise men & farmers & shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall and the promise of ages it then did recall.
If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing, a star in the sky or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing, He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.*

*Doxology #95

OLD 100TH

*Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Dr. Patricia Allen

The Invitation

Confession & Pardon (*UM Hymnal* p. 12)

Passing the Peace

The Great Thanksgiving (*UM Hymnal* p. 13-14)

The Lord's Prayer (*UM Hymnal* #895)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Breaking the Bread and Giving the Bread & Cup

(Communion bread is gluten-free.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sending Forth

Blessing of Sabbath Renewal

Rev. Dr. Patricia Allen and Lay Leadership

ALL: Pastor Joey, we send you out in the power of the Spirit. We send you out in love – our love and the love of Christ. We send you out in faith with a God who is faithful forever. Stay still for a time, and rest in the peace of Christ.

Pastor: Go in peace. May God's table be spread before you waiting for you to embrace and enjoy. May Christ be your host, tending to your every need. May the Spirit lead you into a new way of being that comes only from the calming and renewing of the soul.

ALL: Amen.

*Hymn #251

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

*Benediction and Dismissal

Rev. Joey Heath-Mason

Postlude

Toccata on God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen

Alfred V. Fedak



ALTAR FLOWERS

The flower on the altar today is given to celebrate the birth of

Kelsey Josephine Allen

daughter of Stephen & Kristen Allen, granddaughter of David & Karen Codner.

COMING UP

Christmas Eve candlelight worship

Sunday, December 24, 2023

7:00 PM organ prelude

7:30 PM worship

Offices closed for winter break December 25-January 1.

New Year's Eve morning worship

Sunday, December 31, 2023

10:30 AM



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Weekly News – Visit stpaulsk.org/community/epistle-weekly-news or scan the QR code to find all the announcements and event details shared in our Weekly News. For questions about announcements, please contact Erin Steele in the church office (stpaulsunited@stpaulsk.org).



Featured Events and Upcoming Activities

- **Poinsettia Dedications** – Thank you to all who sponsored the beautiful poinsettia (cuetlaxochitl) plants that grace our Sanctuary and lovely door wreaths, given in honor or memory of loved ones. Please find the dedications in the special Poinsettia Bulletin.

- **Pastor Joey Renewal Leave** – Please be in prayer for Pastor Joey as he takes Renewal Leave beginning December 25, and will rejoin us on Easter Sunday. Full announcement at stpaulsk.org/we-are-all-about/the-pastors-page
- **Parking Lot Door Hours** – Beginning Sunday January 7, 2024, the parking lot entrance to the building will be locked on Sunday mornings at 11:00 AM as part of an effort to increase building security and keep all who worship here safe. After 11:00 AM, please enter the building through the front doors on Armory Avenue or use the Mitchell Street entrance by the church office. (You may still exit through any door.) If you have questions, please contact Pastor Pat.
- **Offices Closed for Christmas Break** – Through January 1, 2024, staff will be off for Christmas Break and the building will be closed (except for Sunday worship on Dec. 31 at 10:30 AM). We will not share a Daily Breath or the Weekly News email during the break. St. Paul's returns to regular hours on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.
- **Year-End Giving Deadlines** – Offerings dated December 31, 2023 or earlier, and received in the office or through online/bank transactions by January 2, may be counted toward 2023 giving goals and should appear on Year-End Giving Statements for 2023, which will be mailed at the end of January.

Welcome! – **Restrooms** including a family restroom with changing table can be found past the church office, near the water fountain. **Children** in grades K-5 will be in worship with their families this Sunday. Busy bags with quiet children's activities are available at the Welcome Desk, and those who need a break may use the Octagon room across from the main Sanctuary door or the Library near the restrooms. Families with infants and preschoolers may make use of the Nursery on the second floor. Sunday School classes for children in Grades K-5 will resume on January 14. To receive Sunday School updates by email, contact Meg Baker at mbaker@stpaulsk.org. **Large print Bibles and Hymnals** are available from our ushers. **T-coil hearing aids** work in our Sanctuary. **Say Hello!** Please use the attendance pads in the pews to share your name and note your attendance with us today. **Masks** are optional in St. Paul's spaces. Please read more at stpaulsk.org/worship.



SOURCES AND LICENSING

Livestreaming each week at 10:30 AM at stpaulsk.org/worship/worship-at-home.

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Call to Worship: Rev. Nancy Gowler, “Wonderings, Writings, and Scribbles,”

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Doxology: *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* (OLD 100TH). Words: Thomas Ken (1674). Music: Attr. to Louis Bourgeois (1551). Public domain.

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LEADING AND SERVING

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Patricia Allen, pallen@stpaulsk.org

Associate Pastor: Rev. Joey Heath-Mason, joeyhm@stpaulsk.org

Music Director: Mr. N. Thomas Pedersen, tpedersen@stpaulsk.org

Organist: Mr. Marvin Mills, mmills@stpaulsk.org

Facilities: Ms. Tracey Furman, tfurman@stpaulsk.org

Minister of Spiritual Care & Formation: Dr. Meg Baker, mbaker@stpaulsk.org

Communications & Administration: Dr. Erin Bone Steele, stpaulsunity@stpaulsk.org

A/V Team: John & Biljana Regan; John Stephens

Children's Choir Director: Christina Griffin

Lay Leader: Marge Higgins

Usher Coordinator: Nathan Bazawada

Lay Readers: Gail Broadhurst, Jeff Broadhurst, George Molander, Gregg Molander,
and Frank A. Walker, Jr.

Soloist: Mollie Weikert

