



St. Paul's

United Methodist Church



Christmas
Eve

December 24, 2025

8:00 p.m. Worship



CHRISTMAS EVE

CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP

DECEMBER 24, 2025

Thank you for worshiping with us tonight.

We warmly welcome you to this celebration of the birth of the Christ Child at St. Paul's UMC, a Reconciling congregation of the United Methodist Church. All are celebrated here and all are safe. This bulletin will guide our worship service this evening. Additional helpful information can be found following the order of worship.

Organ Prelude – 7:30 PM

Tonight's organ prelude is offered as an opportunity to reflect, contemplate, and meditate on the wonder of this special Christmas moment.

Alexandre Guilmant
(1837-1911)

Marche Religieuse (on a theme of Handel), Op. 15, No. 2

Craig Phillips
(b. 1961)

Prelude on PICARDY

W.S. Lloyd Webber
(1914-1982)

Interlude on the Coventry Carol

David Schelat
(b. 1955)

Pastorale on ADESTE FIDELES

Emma Lou Diemer
(1927-2024)

Stille Nacht (Silent Night)

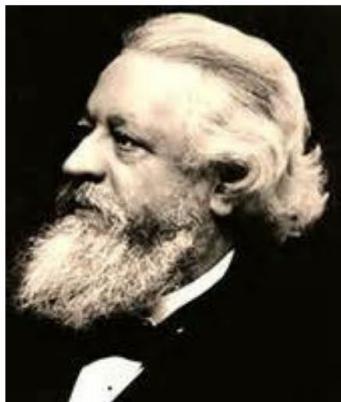
Denis Bédard
(b. 1950)

Postlude sur un Noël (Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella)

George Baker
(b. 1951)

Berceuse Paraphrase (Away in a Manger / Cradle Song)





Alexandre Guilmant



Craig Phillips



W. S. Lloyd Webber



David Schelat



Emma Lou Diemer



Denis Bédard



George Baker

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

8:00 PM

DECEMBER 24, 2025

Gathering for Worship

(* - *please stand in body or spirit*)

Words of Welcome

Rev. Joey Heath-Mason

*Call to Worship

Lay Reader

Leader: Beloved, will you come? Fix your mind's eye on a far-away field. Can you see the deepness of the night?

All: We can see the stars spread across that endless sky.

Leader: See that unfamiliar star? The one that burns more brightly – the one whose light seems to reach down to the horizon over Bethlehem.

All: Shall we fix our eyes on that star? On the horizon? Shall we look to Bethlehem?

Leader: Not yet. For now, look again at the night sky. Do you see how it is now filled with holy messengers? They are singing!

All: Fear not, the angel says. Good news, the angel proclaims!

Leader: Now, tonight: in that far away village and in our hearts right here, a child is born. A child who is God among us, a child who is good news for all people.

All: Let us not be afraid. Let us sing and rejoice.

*Hymn #238

Angels We Have Heard on High

Lighting the Christ Candle

The Bazawada Family

First Reader: Tonight we gather to remember with the prophet Isaiah:

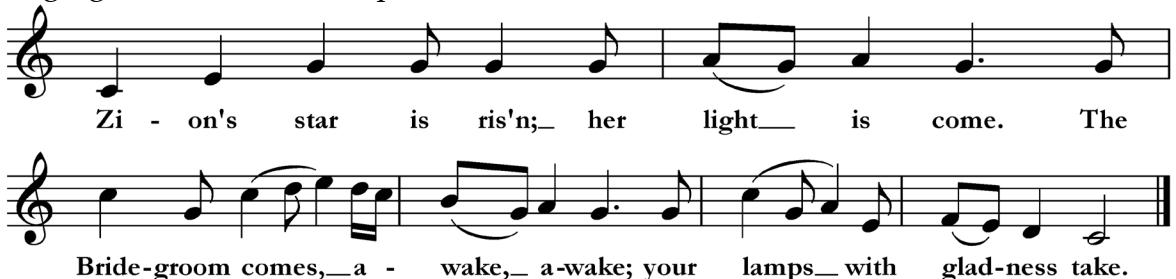
“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)

All: We gather to once again bask in the glory that visited a stable and a manger, shepherds watching their flocks, and a young couple cradling the newborn Messiah.

Second Reader: We light the Christ candle as a sign of the glory that came among us in unexpected places and to unexpected people, that we may be people who seek and follow the glory of the Christ child here and now.

Lighting the center candle of the Advent wreath.

Congregational Advent Response



Zi - on's star is ris'n; her light is come. The
Bride-groom comes, a - wake, a-wake; your lamps with glad-ness take.

Anthem

See Him Born The Divine Christ-Child
Sanctuary Choir

Ian Higginson

Refrain: See him born, the divine Christ-child,
Sound forth the pipe and clash the cymbal.
See him born, the divine Christ-child,
Sing to welcome the Savior mild.

Prophets o'er four thousand years told us of this time of glory;
Prophets o'er four thousand years told us of this happy hour. (*Refrain*)

In a stable, laid in straw, lowly comes the Lord of Heaven,
In a stable, laid in straw, comes to us the King of Kings (*Refrain*)

Jesus, Lord of heav'n most high, Child so tiny in a manger,
Jesus, Lord of heav'n most high, enter in our hearts and reign. (*Refrain*)

Opening Prayer

**Emmanuel, God with us, we come today to hear your story, of ancient things
that happened long ago, and of a light that shone so bright, it shines even
here and now.**

**You were there in the beginning; through you, all things came into being. You
are in the future, making all things new. And you are here and now, calling
us into your love and light.**

**Help us to be unafraid, as we hear today the eternal invitation of Christ our
Lord, who calls us to wonder, glory, mercy, newness, grace, vision, and
belonging. Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Joey Heath-Mason

Anthem

Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella
Sanctuary Choir

Peter Latona

Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella! Bring a torch to the cradle, run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village; Christ is born and Mary's calling.
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the mother! Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the child.

It is wrong, while the Child is sleeping, it is wrong to talk so loud;
Silence, all, as you gather around, lest your noise should waken Jesus:
Hush, hush! See how fast he slumbers! Hush, hush! See how fast he sleeps.

Through the doorway softly filing to his manger bed we come,
Torches glowing the Babe discloses fair as snow, with cheeks like roses.
Soft, soft! See how the Infant slumbers! Soft, soft, watch the Infant sleep!

Skies are glowing, the heavens are cloudless, bright the path to the manger bed!
Hasten all who would see the Child Jesus, shining bright as yonder star!
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the mother! Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the child.

Proclamation of the Word

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSVUE) *Pew Bible: Old Testament p. 638*

Lay Reader

² 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.

³ You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴ For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Great will be his authority,
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.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Response to the Word

*Hymn #216

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

Sermon

Rev. Sheridan Allmond

Invitation to Discipleship and Giving

Rev. Sheridan Allmond

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." (Any other contributions, such as pledges or general offerings, should be made using a different envelope.) As is our tradition, St. Paul's Christmas Special Offering goes to serve those in need outside our walls.

This year St. Paul's church leadership designated that the Christmas Special Offering will go to UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief. When a natural disaster or humanitarian crisis occurs, UMCOR works with local partners on the ground to offer immediate emergency relief, and remains in the community to assist with rebuilding efforts long after the initial crisis. 100% of tonight's Special Offering funds will go directly to emergency response and community rebuilding work. From wildfires in California to war in Ukraine, from hurricane clean-up in North Carolina to refugee shelters in eastern Congo, UMCOR teams bring resources and relief to people in their hour of greatest need. You can read more about UMCOR at <https://umcmission.org/work/humanitarian-relief>

For all of St. Paul's giving options, visit stpaulsk.org/giving or scan the QR code. Thank you for supporting St. Paul's efforts to engage in meaningful worship and vibrant ministry in our community and the world.



Offertory

*Sleeps Judea Fair
Sanctuary Choir*

Hugh A. MacKinnon

Sleeps Judea fair, bides the Christ Child there.
Shepherds, haste ye! Flocks forsaking, swift your way to him be taking,
Babe of Israel's prayer, babe of Israel's prayer.

Christ from God is come, choosing earthly home.
Royal pomp and splendor never, but with love that naught can sever,
He will heal the dumb, Christ from God is come.

Lowly bend the knee, thou from sin set free.
Let the Christ Child, meekly smiling, infant-wise all woe beguiling,
Grant his grace to thee, grant his grace to thee.

The Great Thanksgiving and Communion

The Invitation, Confession & Pardon

UM Hymnal p. 12

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Passing the Peace

The Great Thanksgiving

UM Hymnal p. 13-14

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

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

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

The pastor gives thanks, remembering God's acts of salvation and concludes:

L: And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

P: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

The pastor continues the thanksgiving and concludes:

L: And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

P: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

The pastor continues and concludes:

L: All honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever.

P: **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

UM Hymnal, #895

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

hy 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

All 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

*Hymn #234

O Come, All Ye Faithful

*Benediction

Rev. Sheridan Allmond

Sharing the Light

As we pass the light, please remember lighted candles should be held upright at all times. Those receiving the light should tip the unlit candles toward the flame. Glow-sticks are available for those who prefer a flame-free option.

**Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

**Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;
Radiant beams from thy holy face with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.**

**Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

The people are invited to depart in the spirit of quiet praise and wonder.



COMING UP

Sunday, December 28, 2025
First Sunday in Christmastide
10:30 AM –Worship

There will be no 9:00 service this day.

*All children will be in worship. Nursery care is not available on Dec. 28.
Office staff are on Winter Break, December 25 - January 4.*



SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Poinsettias are given by members and friends of St. Paul's, in honor and memory of loved ones. Please find individual dedications in the Poinsettia Bulletin.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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



Welcome! – **Restrooms** including a family restroom with changing table can be found past the church office, near the water fountain. **Children** will be in worship with their families this evening. Busy bags with quiet children's activities can be borrowed from the Welcome Desk. Those who need a break are welcome to use the Octagon room or the Library near the restrooms; an adult must stay with the child as there are no caregivers on duty tonight. **Large-print Bibles and Hymnals** are available from our ushers. **T-coil hearing aids** work in our Sanctuary. **Sign in!** Please use the attendance pads in the pews to share your name and note your attendance with us today. Please read more about worshiping at St. Paul's at stpaulsk.org/worship.

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.

Christmas Break – Many activities and groups take a break during the time between Christmas and New Year's. Staff and clergy availability will vary. Please contact leaders directly for details about schedules and activities. St. Paul's offices will return to regular drop-in hours on Monday, January 5, 2025. If you have a pastoral emergency when the office is closed, please dial the emergency line for Rev. Sheridan Allmond at 410-205-5568 and she will be notified of your call.

Regular Events, Activities, and Information

- **Grocery Donations** – Every month, year-round, St. Paul's provides grocery resources for hungry neighbors. Nonperishable items in good condition may be placed in the bins in the Narthex any time. Financial donations marked "Hunger Ministry" help us order bulk groceries through our food bank partners and provide grocery store gift cards enabling recipients to buy fresh or frozen foods or hygiene products. More information, our "most needed items" list, and volunteer opportunities can be found at stpaulsk.org/service/hunger-ministry.
- **St. Paul's Activities** – *Please contact group leaders directly to confirm meeting times!*
 - **Sanctuary Choir** – *Most Sundays.* Open to grade 7 and up and adult singers. We rehearse each week at 9:30 AM on Sundays in Room 211 and sing for the

10:30 service. We welcome new singers year-round! Contact Tom Pedersen (tpedersen@stpaulsk.org).

- **Children's Choir** – *Most Sundays, 11:45-12:30.* Children in grades K-6 will meet in the MPR to prepare music to share in worship. Email Ms. Christina Griffin, director, at childrenschoir@stpaulsk.org.
- **St. Paul's Youth** – Regular meetings are Sundays, 7:00-8:30 PM. All youth in grades 6-12 are invited to join SPY for faith, friendship, and fun in the Multi-Purpose Room! Full schedule and contact info at stpaulsk.org/community/youth.
- **Prayerwaves** – *Wednesdays, 10:00-10:30 AM.* To pray together by phone, dial 425-436-6326 then enter access code 774042 followed by the # sign. To receive the prayer list by email, please contact Erin at stpaulsunitied@stpaulsk.org.
- **Sermon Safari** – *Wednesdays, 4:00-5:00 PM.* In this drop-in Zoom study, we watch a video of a sermon by a notable speaker, and then discuss it. Contact Dr. Meg Baker at megbaker@verizon.net for the Zoom link.
- **Joyful Ringers** – *Wednesdays, 7:00 PM.* A handbell choir for adults that promises fun and fellowship! Contact Tom Pedersen: tpedersen@stpaulsk.org
- **Still Wednesday** – *Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 PM. (Please note we will not meet on Christmas Eve, December 24, or New Year's Eve, December 31.)* Still Wednesday gathers in either the Sanctuary or the Octagon for a guided time of poetry, scripture, music, or art, with about 20 minutes of silent prayer. For questions, text/call Marty Bartley at 301-873-6630.
- **Yarn Ministry** – *Mondays twice a month, 7:00-8:30 PM.* Bring your knitting, crochet, or other craft project and craft alongside friends in the church library. Contact Karen Codner for up-to-date meeting info: KDC811@gmail.com.
- **Bible & Brews** – *Saturday or Sunday once a month, 5:00-6:00 PM.* All are welcome at this family-friendly gathering for interfaith conversations with members of Temple Emanuel. Meeting location varies! Contact joeyhm@stpaulsk.org.
- **Lydia Circle Sisters** – *Wednesdays once a month, 2:30-4:00 PM.* All ladies are welcome at Lydia Circle gatherings, usually on the first Wednesday of the month. Contact Susan Schwarz at 301-339-8242 or susan10748@aol.com.
- **Taste & Sing** – *Third Tuesday monthly, 12:00-1:30 PM.* With Tom Pedersen on piano and Erin Steele leading the singing, we enjoy a hymn sing in the Octagon – feel free to request your favorites! Stay for a tasty lunch prepared by Ginny Hagberg (\$5 donation).
- **Stephen Ministers** – Move through difficult seasons of life with a Stephen Minister by your side. Contact Martha Lipscomb (301-518-1642) to be

connected to a trained Stephen Minister who can offer confidential care and a listening ear.

- **Sanctuary Flower Sponsors** – The flower chart for 2026 is now available in the church office! Please add your name to the chart to reserve a date, then fill out a yellow form with dedication information. The cost is \$45.
- **Sipping Ministry** – This fellowship time with coffee and snacks happens after Sunday worship whenever a family, group, or individual wishes to sponsor it. To host a Sipping Ministry, sign up on the office bulletin board and take a “how to” sheet.



SOURCES AND LICENSING

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

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LEADING AND SERVING

Senior Pastor: Rev. Sheridan Allmond, sallmond@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

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

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

A/V Team: John & Biljana Regan

Children's Choir Director: Ms. Christina Griffin

Lay Leader: Anne Dean

Usher Coordinator: Nathan Bazawada

Lay Reader: Cathy Knepper

Advent Readers: Nathan & Reena Bazawada and Family

Acolytes: Aiden Bazawada & Aaron Bazawada

Crucifer: John Stephens



We, the community of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Kensington, welcome you in love. Jesus Christ accepts all, excluding none. So we welcome and affirm you who are gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer. We welcome you without regard to your sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, culture, race, ethnicity, ability, education, or age. We welcome you no matter your immigration, marital, or economic status. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, we welcome and affirm you as one of God's children into our community of God's unbounded love. All are celebrated here and all are safe.

