



Glory to the Newborn King!

December 8, 2023

Greetings Beloved,

As a child, the Christmas season was announced with sweet aromas of fresh baked cookies of every variety wafting from our kitchen. When we moved to Illinois, the sign of Christmas was the sight of the UPS truck pulling up and delivering boxes sent from St. Louis that contained the results of my grandmother's Christmas shopping for us.

I've grown from those days, though I still have my eyes peeled for the UPS truck. The signs of Christmas are wonderfully hidden in the wrappings of Advent. The season is announced with the sight of the tree in the narthex filled with tags waiting to be plucked in support of our Holiday Giving Project; in worship we welcome the presence of Advent candles, and the hymns that we only sing at this time of year.

Throughout St. Paul's history Christmas Eve has been the jubilant celebration of the birth of Christ. This year we will gather in the Sanctuary on December 24 with organ music at 7:00 PM and worship beginning at 7:30 PM to hear the story of Christ's birth and sing the songs of the season that have journeyed with us through our lives.

Christmas Eve is not just a time of great gathering but has historically been a time of great giving. Each Christmas Eve, the St. Paul's Christmas offering has been dedicated to serve those in need in our local community and around the world.

This year we hold faithful to our commitment to support both the Hunger Ministry and UMCOR. The numbers of those in need continue to increase. Rising cost of living expenses, natural disasters, and war have wreaked havoc on the fabric of our existence.

The Hunger Ministry provides food staples to approximately 122 households within the 20895 zip code. Hunger has never taken a holiday and neither can we as we seek to feed those in need.

UMCOR, as it has in the past, continues to be the first "boots on the ground" in times of disaster. So whether it was the fires in Maui or the flooding in the Midwest or devastation in Ukraine, our giving allows UMCOR to respond in a timely manner, offering assistance in ways we cannot even imagine.

So, you are once again invited to give to these great causes. God has given to us exceedingly and abundantly above what we could have asked or imagined. Let us give in the spirit of Christmas joy, reminding the world and those who will receive as a result of your giving, that there is still good news!

Peace and Blessings, this season and always.

Rev. Dr. Patricia Allen, Senior Pastor

Rev. Joey Heath-Mason, Associate Pastor