ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH 701 S. College Avenue, Newark, Delaware 19713

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Growing in faith. Growing in community. Welcoming all in Jesus' name.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD Christmas Eve, December 24, 2023

7:00 PM Service of Holy Communion

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

Catch the excitement! Witness the joy! Shape the vision! ST. PAUL'S VISION STATEMENT (adopted 02/25/2018)

- To worship as a diverse community of all ages
- To engage in faith formation as a community grounded in God's word
- To maintain with depth and integrity the work of feeding the hungry and housing the homeless
- To nurture a strong foundation of generosity, giving, and caring for creation
- To provide a music ministry that encompasses congregation and surrounding communities

Worship at Home

While some of us still cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. Therefore, we offer the 7:00 PM service through simultaneous live streaming to St. Paul's Facebook page. The service is then posted to the website, <u>www.stpaulsnewarkde.org</u> and can be found in the upper right-hand corner of the home page, along with a digital copy of the worship folder, as well as a copy of the sermon.

Large print worship resources—worship folders and printed sermons—as well as children's activity boxes are available. A Prayground is provided for young children.



★ GATHERING ★

Worship begins with God who takes the initiative and calls us into being. We gather at the Holy Spirit's invitation and assemble as the community of faith around the means of grace—the saving Word of God and the sacraments.

Upon entering the sanctuary, the people pray silently or engage in quiet meditation allowing the music to focus their attention on God and God's kingdom.

PRELUDES

Beginning at 6:30 PM

"Christmas Joy" - arr. Dobrinski Handbell Ensemble

"A Joyful, Jubilant Song" – Martin from Journey to Joy Sanctuary Choir and Chamber Orchestra

"Gesu Bambino" – Yon; arr. Goldsworthy Harp and Organ

"A Palace in Bethlehem" - Martin from Journey to Joy Sanctuary Choir and Chamber Orchestra Lori Davis, soloist

"Angels We Have Heard on High" – arr. Krug Handbell Ensemble

"Christmas Day in the Morning" – arr. Shackley Sanctuary Choir and Chamber Orchestra

When you hear the choir sing, "Come, let us adore him," please stand, as you are able, and sing:

ENTRANCE CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ELW 283*

* If you wish to sing harmony this evening, please use the corresponding hymn numbers.

Interlude between Verses 3 & 4



Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2 Music: ADESTE FIDELES, attr. John Francis Wade

CHRISTMAS DIALOG

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world! He is the Light no darkness can overcome. At darkest night we gather to celebrate the great light of our salvation. With the heavenly host we sing, "Glory to God in the highest heaven." In Christ, God's Word is made flesh and lives among us. With the shepherds, we will tell of the wonders we have seen and heard.

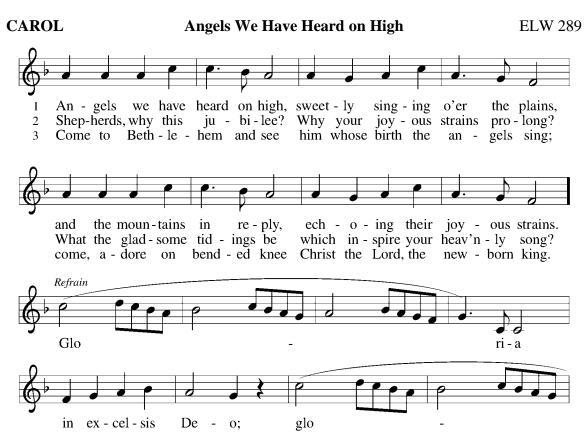
GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

May the grace and truth of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**





Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, *The Crown of Jesus Music*, 1864 Music: GLORIA, French carol

Be seated.

₩ WORD ₩

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

THE READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

Light shines: a child is born for us

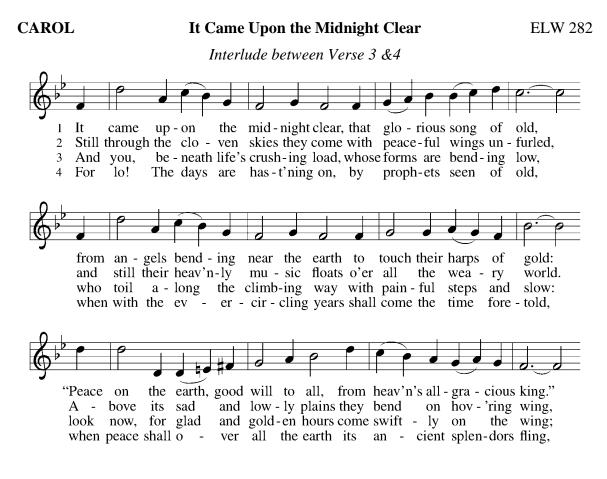
A reading from Isaiah:

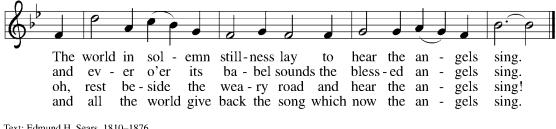
²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darknesson them light has shined. ³You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. ⁴For the voke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders. the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶For 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. ⁷His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne and dominion of David, to 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.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand, as you are able.





Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876 Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

God with us

The holy gospel according to Luke. Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph 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. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And 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.

⁸In that 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 God 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. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Barbara Melosh

Please stand.

RESPONSIVE PRAYER

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

Blessed are you, Prince of Peace. You rule the earth with truth and justice.

Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.

Blessed are you, Wonderful Counselor. You enlighten the heart with steadfast love. Enliven your church that it might bear good tidings of great joy to all people. Blessed are you, Emmanuel. You promise to be with us even to the end of the age. Open our eyes to see your presence in all who are hungry, lonely, or homeless. Blessed are you, Son of Mary. You share our humanity. Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this day.

Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.

Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament that we may bear your light to all the world. Amen.

Be seated.

At this time, please sign the Fellowship Pad (the black folder) found at the end of your pew and pass it to your neighbor. We ask visitors to provide us with contact information so we can thank you for enriching our worship experience. We ask members to update any changes to their contact information so our records can be maintained.

Peare

₩ MEAL ₩

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GATHERING OF GIFTS

In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, we offer our gifts for service and mission.

OFFERTORY

"Child of Promise" – Martin from *Journey to Joy* Sanctuary Choir and Chamber Orchestra

Please stand, as you are able.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Let us pray.

God of abundance, receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels, and gather us at your table of celebration. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

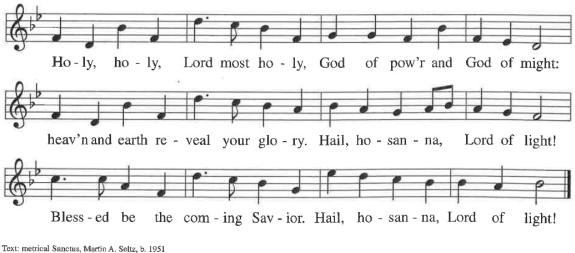
The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

Tune: ELW 275 REGENT SQUARE



Text: metrical Sanctus, Martin A. Seltz, b. 1951 Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879 Text © 1998 Augsburg Fortress

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have had mercy on us and given us your only-begotten Son. We give you thanks for the salvation you have granted to us through Jesus, the Word made flesh, the child of Mary; the Light of the world, our Immanuel. Send the Spirit of your Son into our hearts that as your beloved children we may welcome our Savior who comes in his body and blood.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,

and gave it for all to drink saying:

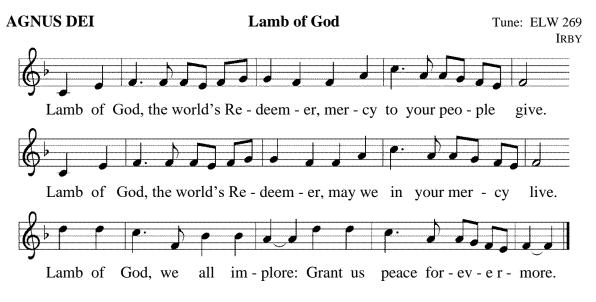
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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 forever. Amen.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

All are invited to come to the table of peace. We come to behold and receive our God.



Be seated.

HOLY COMMUNION

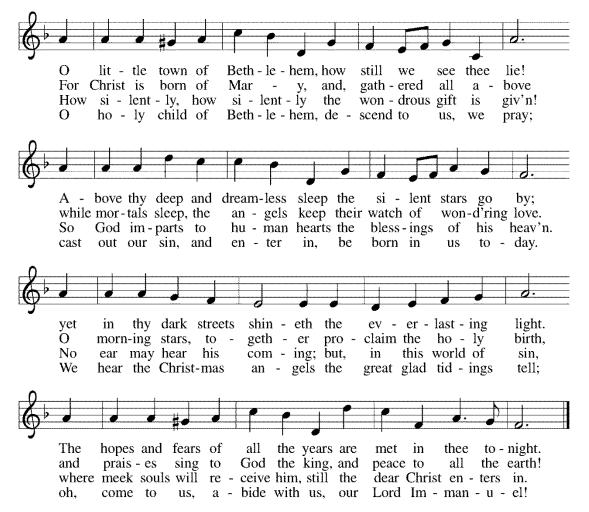
Christ's body and blood nourishes faith, forgives sin, and forms us as living witnesses to God's promise of unity, justice, and peace.

All are welcome at the Lord's Table. Children not yet communing are welcome to come forward for a blessing, indicated by crossed arms. If you would like to receive communion in your pew, please notify an usher. Non-alcoholic grape juice and gluten-free communion wafers are available upon request.

CAROLS DURING	O Little Town of Bethlehem	ELW 279
THE DISTRIBUTION		p. 12

The First Noel

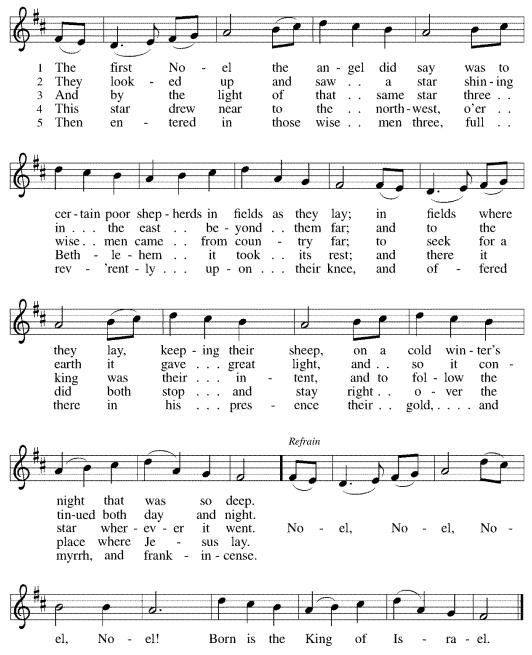
O Little Town of Bethlehem





ELW 300

The First Noel



Text: English traditional Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

BLESSING AND PRAYER

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

Let us pray.

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

ANTHEM

"Wonderful Peace" - Norqvist Sanctuary Choir, Harp and Piano

✤ CANDLELIGHTING ✤

The assembly stands as the lights are dimmed. During the reading, the individual candles are lit. Always tilt the unlit candle to receive the light.

THE PROLOGUE

John 1:1-5, 10-14

The Word became flesh

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

¹⁰The light 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 a 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.

The lights are turned off and the carol is sung by candlelight.



Please extinguish your candle and hold it upright until the wax is set before laying it down on the pew.

The lights are turned on.

✤ SENDING ✤

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

God the Creator who delights in you, Jesus the Savior who is born for you, and the life giving Spirit who shines on you, + bless you and keep you in hope and peace. **Amen.**

SENDING CAROL

Joy to the World

ELW 267

Interlude between Verses 3 & 4



Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748 Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

"A Flourish of Carols" – arr. Martin from *Journey to Joy* Chamber Orchestra and Organ

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP THIS AFTERNOON

Assisting Minister: Lector: Bread Provider: Altar Guild: Jeanine Heath Eric Mease Judy Runkle Janet Mease



Come to worship next Sunday, December 31 for a Service of Lessons and Carols with Koly Communion Ten o'clock in the morning

Join us on Sunday, January 7 as we celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord with a Service of Koly Communion Ten o'clock in the morning





All are invited to attend our annual Sounds of the Season concert also on Sunday, January 7 Four o'clock in the afternoon

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Christmas 2023 Poinsettia Dedications



Given to the glory and praise of God by:

In thanksgiving for:

My unsung hero, James Fitzpatrick Our parents, Michael, Susan, Don and Carole, our grandchildren, Aiden, Gabe, and Lucy Bishop Bill Gohl and Pastor Barbara Melosh Family and friends Family and friends Family and friends Our family

In memory of:

My parents, Eleanor and Edward Baldwin My parents, Ken and Shirley, and my Aunt Jean The Reverend Linda Gunderson and my parents, Russell and Mildred Kaufman Louise and Harry Bergstrom Mary and Fredric Liegois Carol Baker, Jim Sapp and Brad Beam The Reverend Linda Gunderson

and Tammy Cassar Ruth Ann Chisholm Keith and Kaye Tyson

Given by:

Mike Bareham Christine and Teresa Therriault-Merkel Heidi Burch Brenda Hagelstein Jeanine and Geoff Heath Gale and Don Paul Dean and AvaJo Shippy

Given by:

Janice Baldwin Mike Bareham

Brenda Baxter Mary Beth and Jay Bergstrom Mary Beth and Jay Bergstrom Heidi Burch

Kris and Rick Cassar Henry Chisholm

In memory of:

Walter Hagelstein Bill Ferguson Our parents and Margie Garrison My parents Loved ones Loved ones Our grandparents Mark Miller and Jean Mease Our loved ones Margaret Angus Family and friends Our son, Randy, our parents and other loved ones

Given by:

Henry Chisholm Laura Ferguson Bob and Ellen Garrison Ginny Littley Greene Brenda Hagelstein Jeanine and Geoff Heath Greg and Cheryl Johnson Janet and Eric Mease Tom and Susie Olson Linda and Rich Radwick Cheri and Troy Simons Dean and AvaJo Shippy



May you filled with the wonder of Mary. the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels. the eagerness of the shepherds, the determination of the magi, and the peace of the Christ child.



St. Paul's Lutheran Church Welcomes All in Jesus' Name Phone/Fax: 302-368-0064 Website: <u>www.stpaulsnewarkde.org</u>

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year from the Staff of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School!

Kakakakakakakakakakaka

The Reverend Barbara Melosh Interim Pastor 302-354-5512 (cell) bmelosh@gmu.edu

Ministers Members of St. Paul's

Church Council Winnie Hull, *President* Barb Rhodes, *Vice President* Mary Beth Bergstrom, *Secretary* Mary Collins, *Treasurer* Kristine Cassar, David Grund, Greg Johnson, Emily Pierce, Anne Sullivan

St. Paul's Online Prayer Ministry

Send prayer requests to: prayonstpauls@gmail.com or contact Pastor Barbara Melosh Michael Bareham Director for Music and Worship 302-368-0064 ext. 123 splcmusmin@gmail.com

> Terri Fulwider Business Administrator 302-368-0064 ext. 102 stpaulsoffice@comcast.net

Stephanie Saienni Early Childhood Administrator St. Paul's Lutheran School 302-368-0064 ext.118 stpaulschool@comcast.net

Weekly Epistle/E-mail Blast Articles due by Wednesday <u>splcmusmin@gmail.com</u>

Church Office Email: splcstaff@gmail.com

WISH TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES OF ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH? THEN SCAN THIS QR CODE

