



St. Paul's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The Rev. Sarah Phelps, Celebrant

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT
HOLY EUCHARIST
9:00 A.M SERVICE
DECEMBER 21, 2025

Prelude

Carol Yeargin, Organ

Please stand if able

Processional

Hark! The Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

Hymn 72

Liturgy of the Word

The Opening Acclamation

Book of Common Prayer (BCP) 355

Celebrant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

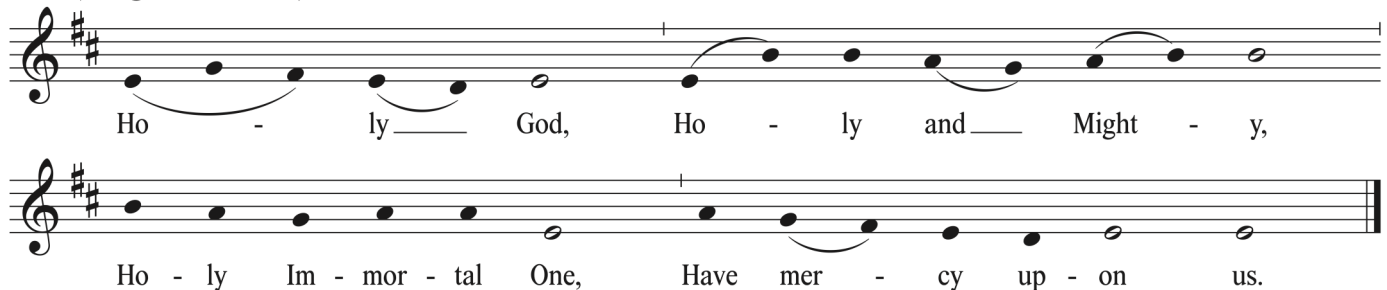
The following is sung.

Trisagion

Holy God

Hymnal S99

(Sung Three Times)



Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Celebrant Let us pray.

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.

Please be seated

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-16

A Reading from Isaiah.

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. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

The Psalm

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

- 1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; *
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- 2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, *
stir up your strength and come to help us.
- 3 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 4 O LORD God of hosts, *
how long will you be angered
despite the prayers of your people?
- 5 You have fed them with the bread of tears; *
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- 6 You have made us the derision of our neighbors, *
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- 7 Restore us, O God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.
- 16 Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, *
the son of man you have made so strong for yourself.
- 17 And so will we never turn away from you; *
give us life, that we may call upon your Name.
- 18 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; *
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

Second Reading

Romans 1:1-7

A Reading from the letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

Please stand if able

Gradual

Creator of the Stars of Night

Conditor alme siderum

The musical notation is written on two staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is a simple, ascending and then descending line, with a repeat sign at the end of the first staff and the second staff. The lyrics are written below the notes.

1. Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er - last - ing light,
2. When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in splen - dor bright,
3. To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spi - rit, Three in One,

O Christ, Re - deem - er of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.
not as a mon - arch, but the child of Ma - ry, blame - less mo - ther mild.
praise, hon - or, might and glo - ry be from age to age e - ter - nal - ly.

Remain standing

The Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

Now 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 with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

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

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

Please be seated

The Christmas Pageant

Presented by the Children & Youth of St. Paul's
Directed by Melanie and Steve Williams

Please stand if able

Prayers of the People

People's Response: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Confession and Absolution of Sin

BCP 360

The Deacon or Celebrant says

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

All who are able, kneel. Minister and People

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Celebrant says

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

Please stand if able

Peace

BCP 360

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People *And also with you.*

Please be seated

Welcome & Announcements

If you would like to donate online, follow the QR code found here or on the giving card in the back of the pews.

At the end of the announcements, you are also welcome to come forward to make a special donation to Heifer International, a non-profit organization whose mission is to end hunger and poverty, to mark an anniversary, blessing, or other event.



Liturgy of the Eucharist

Offertory

Christ is the Morning Star
St. Paul's Choir

John Rutter

*Christ is the morning star,
The light of God that shines from afar;
The Son of God in human form revealed,
The wound of Adam's sin for ever healed.*

*For God, who formed mankind of clay
Will bring forth our salvation that day
When he, who made all things since time began,
Will send his Son, to live on earth as man.*

*And when he comes, a child on earth,
The sun and stars will shine at his birth,
To light a world that long in darkness lay:
The light of God, the gift of Christmas Day.
Christ is the morning star.*

*And when he comes again as King,
Then heav'n and all creation shall sing;
With saints in glory seated round his throne
We'll see his face, and know as we are known.
Christ is the morning star.*

Please stand if able while the offering is presented

Offertory Response

All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer B

BCP 367

The People remain standing. The Celebrant proceeds

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you.*

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People *We lift them to the Lord.*

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People *It is right to give God thanks and praise.*

The Celebrant proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Because you sent your beloved Son to redeem us from sin and death, and to make us heirs in him of everlasting life; that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world, we may without shame or fear rejoice to behold his appearing. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Celebrant and People

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord

Hymn S130

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might, _____

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might, _____

hea - ven and earth are full, _____ full _____ of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless - ed is he who comes _____ in the name of the Lord. _____ Ho -

san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Please stand or kneel if able

The Celebrant continues

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

Memorial Acclamation

Celebrant and People

*We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;*

The Celebrant then continues

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray to you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. **AMEN.**

The Celebrant then continues

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Lord's Prayer

BCP 367

People and Celebrant

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Fraction Anthem

Jesus, Lamb of God

Hymn S164

Je - sus lamb of God: have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, bear - er
of our sins: have mer - cy on us. Je - sus, re - deem - er, re -
deem - er of the world: give us your peace, give us your peace.

Holy Communion

The Celebrant says

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All are welcome to come forward for communion, including children. Please follow the ushers' guidance as you come to the rail.

If you would like a gluten-free host, extend your hands palms down. If you would like to receive the wine by intinction (dipping the bread in the cup), keep the bread in your hands and wait for the communion server to come to you. If you would like to receive from the common cup (drinking from the cup directly), please consume the bread first and then make your way to the steps at the end of the rail. A communion server will be there with the common cup. If it is not your custom to receive communion, you are still welcome to come forward for a blessing. Simply cross your arms across your chest and the minister will offer a prayer.

A priest is available to provide prayers for healing in the back southwest corner of the church. Simply head to the back during communion distribution and wait for your turn.

Spiritual Communion Prayer

For those worshipping with us online

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar of your Church, I desire to offer to you praise and thanksgiving. I remember your death, Lord Christ; I proclaim your resurrection; I await your coming in glory. Since I cannot receive you today in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, I beseech you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. Amen.

The Communion Music

Savior of the Nations Come
The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Hymn 54
Hymn 265

Please stand or kneel if able

Postcommunion Prayer

EOW 69

Celebrant and People

God of abundance, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of salvation; you have united us with Christ and one another; and you have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue for ever in the risen life of Christ our Savior. Amen.

Blessing

Please stand if able

Recessional

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (vv. 1, 5-8)

Hymn 56

Dismissal

BCP 366

Deacon Let us bless the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Carol Yeargin, Organ

GENERAL INFORMATION

New to St. Paul's? Welcome! Please let us know you are here by filling out a visitor card in the pew. Stop by our Connecting Station in the narthex (lobby) to chat and find materials that might help if you are new to St. Paul's or The Episcopal Church. Join a tour of our campus in January on the third Sunday of the month at 10:15 a.m. to learn more and meet others. Contact Mary Kintz, our Community Connector, at mary.kintz@stpaulscary.org to find out more about us!

Please wear your nametags when you're here at church! And if you don't yet have a nametag, please complete an order form in the narthex (lobby) so we can get you one!

Accessibility: St. Paul's strives to make our services and programs comfortable and accessible to all. Ushers and Greeters are available to help. Please let us know how we can work together to improve your experience here.

Kids in Worship at St. Paul's: Children are always welcome in our worship services without exception, but if parents should wish for a space where your kids have more room to move around during the service, you are welcome to make use of the Comfort Room (glassed-in room at the rear of the worship space from which you can still hear and see the service). Ask an usher if you need help finding it. Also, our Kids' Club (free nursery care) is available during the 9 a.m. service, and infants/toddlers through 36 months (3 years old) are welcome to attend.

HAPPENING TODAY – DECEMBER 21, 2025

Christmas Pageant: Thank you to all who contributed time and talents to making our Christmas Pageant so special during our 9 a.m. service today! We are so grateful for the many hands working to make this happen every year.

Children's Chapel: Children will stay in worship with us today for the Christmas Pageant.

Coffee Hour (Parish Hall): Join us for refreshments after the 9 a.m. service as we celebrate the Pageant participants!

Adult Forum (Chapel, 10:15-11 a.m.): Forums will resume in January.

Children's Sunday School - 5th grade and under (Education Building): Classes will resume on January 4.

Youth Sunday School - 6th thru 12th grade (Youth Wing): Classes will resume on January 4.

Episcopal Youth Community (EYC): Regular programming resumes January 11.

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alternate Gift Giving Supporting Heifer International This Christmas: During this giving season, you are invited to honor family and friends by giving a gift in the form of a donation to Heifer International, supporting Heifer's mission to end world hunger and poverty. Donations can be placed in the Heifer Ark during the offertory on Sunday mornings, mailed to the church office, or completed online through the St. Paul's Heifer donation webpage. Please make donation checks to St. Paul's with Heifer International written on the memo line. After donating, pick up a Heifer International card (located in the narthex/lobby) to send to those in whose name you have given your gift, or you can send an eCard. Thank you for your generosity this holiday season, and thank you for helping St. Paul's reach its annual goal of donating \$5000 to "Give a Gift Ark of Animals." Questions can be directed to Alison Arnold at alisonarnold@gmail.com.

Will You Invite Someone to Join Us? Consider what you LOVE about St. Paul's Christmas Eve services ... is there someone in your life who might find comfort or joy here too? This is a wonderful time to reach out to friends who may be seeking a place to celebrate Christmas. A personal invitation is truly the best way to make this happen, and only you can do that! We created a flyer to help with what you might say, to make the invitation easier. Don't just leave it on a desk - use it to start a conversation! Pick flyers up in the narthex. Contact Mary Kintz for more ideas, or to share your suggestions!

Advent and Christmas Giving Envelopes: You are invited to contribute extra funds this season in support of our parish during this time of transition. Expenses are growing as we care for our surroundings and prepare for bringing in a new rector. You will find giving envelopes in the pews; we also have a giving card with a QR code for online giving. Please indicate Advent/Christmas Offering in the memo. Your generosity is most appreciated.

"Reverse Advent" Food Donations: If you or your family have been collecting food for our "Reverse Advent" Calendar, please bring your donations to church and place them in the gray rolling bin in the narthex by Sunday, Jan. 11. We'll be taking them to the food pantry at NeighborUp (formerly known as Dorcas). Thank you for your generosity!

Special Offering for Our Music Ministries: The music in our liturgies this season has added so much to our worship experiences; if you were unable to attend the Advent Lessons and Carols service on Dec. 7, it is worth experiencing on our YouTube channel. To recognize and support all the talent and work of our parish musicians, please consider making a gift of gratitude during our Christmas Lessons and Carols service on Dec. 28. This offering will support special needs within our music program. You can support this fund at any time, with a check or online donations, by noting "music ministry" for your donation.

Young Adults at St. Paul's: A group of St. Paul's folks in the 20s/30s age range has recently been gathering for social events, and we hope to start a Bible study in the new year. If you're interested in learning more or joining our GroupMe, contact Erica Ridderman at erica@stpaulscary.org.

Volunteer with Us at the Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC: Join us for a family-friendly volunteer day, sponsored by our Pre-EYC (4th and 5th grade) at the Raleigh Food Bank, 1924 Capital Blvd, from 1-3 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 10. This special Kids' Day event is designed for children from 5-11 years old; older siblings are welcome to join the fun. Guardians must attend with their children. Please register online with the Food Bank by Dec. 31 to reserve your family's spot. For more information, please contact Jacob Nelson at jacobnelson77@hotmail.com.

Winter Online Book Study on "How We Learn to Be Brave," by Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde: Start reading and plan to join us on Wednesdays, Jan. 7 through Feb. 11, from 7-8 p.m. on Zoom, for our winter book study. "How We Learn to Be Brave" is not only readable but prompts us to examine our own history and find unrecognized situations where we acted bravely and with surprising strength. Space is limited to 12 participants; to register, email Gerri Batchelor at gerrikairos@gmail.com.

Deepening and Renewal – Formation and Confirmation in the New Year: Plan to join us from Epiphany through Lent (Jan.-Mar.) as we focus our formation programs on deepening our grasp of what it means to be in the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement and committed to our baptismal vows. More information about programs, including confirmation and reception for adults and youth, can be found on the parish website. Bishop Sam Rodman will visit St. Paul's on April 19, 2026 to celebrate the Rite of Confirmation and enjoy time among us. Contact the church office if you have questions.

Prayer List: We pray for Lori, Guy, Noah, Sally, Regina, Parrish, Jackie, Matias, Yosy, Carter, Mary, Sue, Nancy, Susan, Clarence, Ben, Patrick, Sarah, Dave, Chuck, Kay, Ron, Jack, Gary, Max, May, Bryan, Ariell, Josh, Becky, Allison, Jan, Bertha, Herman, Joyce, Carl, Martha, Farley, Jeff, Sandy, Clarence, Susan, Debbi, Ron, Carolyn, Rick, Elizabeth, Myrna, Laura, Ken, Christine, Steve, Craig, Lana, Claudia, Steve, Karen, Jack, Joyce, Wanda, Carter, Anne, Ethan, Sid, Mary Jo, and Rebecca.

In the prayers for the deceased, we pray for Brandon Bullard, cousin of Randall (Shannon) Robinson; Sandra (Sandy) Grant, sister of Avis (Steve) East; and Clarence Matthai, brother of Olivia (Martin) Delahaye.

If you have a name you would like to include on the prayer list, or a ministry event that you would like to announce in this printed bulletin, please send information to announcements@stpaulscary.org. Names included in the prayer list will remain for a month, and we are happy to extend at your request. Please note that there is a 2-week lead time on printed announcements.



St. Paul's Website

Christmas Eve Services (December 24)

4 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Children's Homily

7 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

10:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Christmas Day (December 25)

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

First Sunday after Christmas (December 28)

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I

10 a.m. Christmas Lessons and Carols (no Eucharist)

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Worship. Serve. Grow.

Church Phone: 919-467-1477 Website: www.stpaulscary.org

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The Rev. Robert Fruehwirth, Interim Associate Rector
Dr. Erica Ridderman, Minister for Children, Youth, and Family Formation
The Rev. Candy Snively, Deacon
Russell McKinney, Director of Music Ministries
Carol Yeargin, Organist

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