



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Seeking to see and serve Christ in all persons

**Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 24, 2023 • 10:30 AM
Holy Eucharist Rite I**

The service begins on page 323 of The Book of Common Prayer.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

First Reader: Jesus said to them, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

The candle is lit.

Second Reader: Loving God, your mercy and compassion endure forever. Open our hearts, that we may receive your love; and following the example of your Son, spread that love to a love-starved world. Through Jesus Christ, who loved us to the end. *Amen.*

The Liturgy of the Word

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The People say together

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

The Trisagion

People repeat three times

Holy God,
Holy and Mighty,
Holy Immortal One,
Have mercy upon us.

The Collect of the Day

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Officiant Let us pray.

A moment of silent prayer is observed.

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when thy Son our Lord cometh he may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Prayer In Times of Conflict

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* {BCP page 824}

The First Reading ~ 2 Samuel 7:1 - 11, 16

When the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before

you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Psalm ~ 89:1 - 4, 19 - 26

- 1 Your love, O LORD, for ever will I sing; *
 from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
- 2 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; *
 you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.
- 3 “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; *
 I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- 4 ‘I will establish your line for ever, *
 and preserve your throne for all generations.’”
- 19 You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: *
 “I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the
 people.
- 20 I have found David my servant; *
 with my holy oil have I anointed him.
- 21 My hand will hold him fast *
 and my arm will make him strong.
- 22 No enemy shall deceive him, *
 nor any wicked man bring him down.
- 23 I will crush his foes before him *
 and strike down those who hate him.
- 24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, *
 and he shall be victorious through my Name.
- 25 I shall make his dominion extend *
 from the Great Sea to the River.
- 26 He will say to me, ‘You are my Father, *
 my God, and the rock of my salvation.’”

The Second Reading ~ Romans 16:25 - 27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People *Thanks be to God.*

The Holy Gospel ~ Luke 1:26 - 38

Celebrant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

People *Glory be to thee, O Lord.*

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

Officiant The Gospel of the Lord.

People *Praise be to thee, O Christ.*

The Sermon

The Rev. Canon C. John Thompson-Quartey

A period of silent prayer.

The Nicene Creed

All say together

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church and the world.

Almighty and everliving God, who in thy holy Word hast taught us to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks for all men: Receive these our prayers which we offer unto thy divine Majesty, beseeching thee to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord; and grant that all those who do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and other ministers, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and especially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy Word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

We beseech thee also, so to rule the hearts of those who bear the authority of government in this and every land, that they may be led to wise decisions and right actions for the welfare and peace of the world.

Open, O Lord, the eyes of all people to behold thy gracious hand in all thy works, that, rejoicing in thy whole creation, they may honor thee with their substance, and be faithful stewards of thy bounty.

And we most humbly beseech thee, of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succor Courtney and all those who in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. We remember those on our prayer list.

We beseech thee to bless the members of our Nominating Committee, Philip, Lisa, Kasey, Brother, Katie, J.J., and Bill, that they may be guided by your Holy Spirit.

We give thanks for those who celebrate birthdays this week, especially Paula, Lily, Haley, Paul, Ramsey, Galen, Jon, Ivy, Justin, and Paul.

And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, especially Ivery, beseeching thee to grant them continual growth in thy love and service; and to grant us grace so to follow the good examples of blessed Paul and all thy saints, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.

A moment of silent prayer is observed.

Grant these our prayers, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

The Confession of Sin

Celebrant Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God.

Celebrant and People

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men: We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter

serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People And with thy spirit.

The Announcements

The Blessings and Thanksgivings

The Offertory Sentence

The Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer II

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People *And with thy spirit.*

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People *We lift them up unto the Lord.*

Celebrant Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

People *It is meet and right so to do.*

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Because thou didst send thy 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 with Angels and Archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name; evermore praising thee, and saying,

Celebrant and People

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts:
Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.
Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Celebrant continues

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory.

And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord;

By whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. *AMEN.*

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

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
People Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Holy Communion is offered via the common cup for sipping or intinction (dipping the wafer into the wine). Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. A mobility impaired individual can receive communion at your seat by raising your hand.

Celebrant The gifts of God for the People of God.

The Post Communion Prayer

Celebrant Let us pray.

The People may join in saying this prayer

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

Prayer for those Not Receiving the Blessed Sacrament

[Adapted from Saint Augustine's Prayer Book. For those not present in the Nave.]

Blessed Jesus, in union with the faithful of every place and people and nation, I join in offering the sacrifice of my praise and thanksgiving to you. I believe that you are truly present in the Bread that has been blessed, broken and given. Since I cannot now receive this holy sacrament, I pray that you will come spiritually into my heart. Abide with me, that I may embrace you entirely, and submit myself to your love and mercy. Let me never be separated from you, that in my waking and in my sleeping I may know the comfort of your presence. I ask this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

The Blessing

The Dismissal

Celebrant Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People Thanks be to God.

Remember in your prayers:

A Prayer for Vision (From The Daughters of the King): Grant Us, Lord God, the vision of your Kingdom, forgiveness and new life, and the stirring of your Spirit: so that we may share your vision, proclaim your love and change the world. In the Name of Christ. Amen.

We pray for those with timely concerns: Ronnie People, Roger Hines, Elisabeth Stubbs, Bo Warren, Annie McDorman, Patricia Ravenell, Tommy Gibbs, Anthony Marino, Gloria Crook, Ernie Williams, Courtney McCulley.

We pray for those with ongoing concerns: Greg Parsons, Annie Bulford, Kelsey Crow, Anne Murphy, Glenn L. Eaton, David Waldron, Larry Sams, Jim Myrick, Candy Waldron, Ashton Hughes, Lanie Mae Henderson, Lamar Toole, Elizabeth Briscoe, William 'Parker' Johnson, Christian Llosa.

We pray for the members of the Vestry: Marianne, Mark, Frankey, Marge, Mary Frances, Polly, Tony, Roy, Virginia and for the Staff: Canon John, Nicole, Rhett, Dawn, Geoff, Cole, Nicole, Kimberly.

We pray for members of the Rector Nominating Committee: Philip Hand, Lisa Beerman, Kasey Bulford, Brother Massenburg, Katie McBride-Newman, J.J. Thomasson, and Bill Tudor.

We pray for members of our armed services and their families: Phil Kearney,

Kevin Bradley, Joe Clay, Tom Choate, Linda Boyce, Dariel Johnson, Sean McGraw, Steven Puckett, Bill Tudor, Jr., Scott Woodward, Luke White, Tommy White, Zach Simkins, Jacob Britt, Morgen Davis, Luke Eason, Michael Rafferty, David Norwood, Arron Essex, Adam Harrison, Sam Vermilyea, Charles Mathews, Cameron Everett, Lanier Sealy, Beau Massenburg, Ryan Whitfield, Stephen Malcom, Victoria Eversoll, Trey Bland.

We give thanks for the lives of those celebrating birthdays this week: Paula Kress, Lily Hopkins, Haley Borders, Paul Graham Foster, Paul James Foster, Ramsey Hopkins, Galen Honea, Jon Macke, Ivy Roman, and Justin Nieto.

We pray for those who have died, especially Ivery Duhart. Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them. Amen.

Service Participants

Vestry Person of the Week	Mary Frances Honea
Vergers	Tony King
Eucharistic Ministers	Michele Mattera & Elizabeth Pape
Acolytes	Liam Bulford (1st); Mary Huskison (2nd); Pearl Borders & Jack Bulford (Torchbearers)
Reader(s)	April & J.R. Roberts and Anne Graner
Prayer Intercessors	Anne & Lou Graner
Ushers	Bill Tudor, John Crow, Dwight Ellison, Nick Eversoll, Christian Llosa, Tom Mathews, Linda Tudor, Frank West, & Ron Wilson
Altar Guild	Kathy Ellison & Dawn Harrison

Parish Notices

Christmas Ornaments: Looking for a special ornament for your tree or a unique gift this Christmas? Get your St. Paul's ornament designed by local artist [Sadie Young of the Inspired Dragonfly](#) and support the seminary fund for our seminarian, Nicole Walters. Ornaments will be available on Sunday mornings or by ordering from Nicole, seminarian@stpaulsnewnan.org, via cash, check, or venmo. If you want to use Venmo, scan the QR code. Ornaments are \$15 (buy 4, get the 5th free) and 100% of the funds go to Nicole's tuition at Candler School of Theology thanks to a donation from the Inspired Dragonfly.



2024 Stewardship Campaign: There are 2024 Stewardship Campaign brochures and response cards available in the Narthex. To make sure that we receive your pledge and contributions, please drop off your pledge and contributions in the offering plate or drop off at Nicole's office. There is the



QR code to go directly to the pledge campaign page in Realm.

Holiday Service Schedule: Join us this evening, December 24th, at **5 pm** for the Annual Christmas Eve Pageant with Holy Eucharist. Then, again at **10:30 pm** for The Christ Mass with Holy Eucharist. On Monday, December 25th at **10:30 am**, we will have Christmas Day service, including carols and Holy Eucharist. Sunday, December 31st, we will have one service at **10:30 am** where we will celebrate The Holy Name.

Administrative Offices: St. Paul's Offices will be closed from December 25th through January 1st.

Healing Services: There will be no healing services on Tuesday, December 26th.

Children and Youth: The nursery will not be open today, but will resume Sunday, **December 31st**. There will be no EYC programming. Programming will resume Sunday, **January 14th**.

2023 Giving: The last day to submit your 2023 giving in order for it to be counted for 2023 is **Wednesday, January 3, 2024**.

Epiphany: Join us on Saturday, January 6th for an Evening of Prayer service for Epiphany at 5:30 pm in the Nave. Afterward at 6:30 pm, please join us in the Parish Hall for an Epiphany celebration. All are welcome!

Blood Drive: The quarterly American Red Cross Blood Drive will be Monday, January 8th. You can schedule an appointment by using the QR code. Questions regarding the blood drive can be directed to Virginia Williams, vb_williams@yahoo.com.



The Daughters of the King: Information pamphlets are available on the bulletin board outside of the parish hall for anyone interested in learning more about The Daughters of the King. We welcome any prospective members!

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

576 Roscoe Road, Newnan, GA 30263 • Phone: (770) 253-4264 • www.stpaulsnewnan.org

CLERGY AND Staff

Rev. Canon C. John Thompson-Quartey, Interim Rector; **Nicole Walters**, Seminarian; **Rhett Barnwell**, Organist/Choirmaster; **Dawn Harrison**, Music Associate; **Geoff Mattera**, Communications Director; **Cole Hankins**, Multimedia Associate; **Nicole Edwards**, Parish Administrator; **Kimberly Stokes**, Financial Administrator.

VESTRY

Marianne Lawhead, Senior Warden; **Mark LeVan**, Junior Warden; **Marge Bass**, Outreach; **Frankey Henderson**, Parish Life; **Mary Frances Honea**, Health & Healing; **Polly Hopkins**, Formation; **Tony King**, Worship; **Roy Reynolds**, Communications; **Virginia Williams**, Stewardship.

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