

The Word of God

PRELUDE | *Pastorale*

Domenico Zipoli

ENTRANCE HYMN / *O come, all ye faithful (Adeste fideles)*

The people stand. Text provided as version sung by choir does not exactly match the 1982 Hymnal (H. 83).

O come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

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

BCP p. 355

The Celebrant continues

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.*

GLORIA | Angels we have heard on high (Gloria)

Hymnal 96

The organ only plays the first verse, “Angels we have heard on high singing sweetly through the night, and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.”

The Congregation joins with the refrain. Sing the second “Gloria in excelsis Deo” softly. You are the mountains echoing in reply

Refrain

Glo - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o. Glo - ri - a

ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Celebrant Let us pray.

The Celebrant prays the Collect

Almighty God, you have poured upon us the new light of your incarnate Word: Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts, may shine forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

The people sit.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 147:13-21

All are invited to join with the antiphon.

Antiphon



Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion;
For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; he has blessed your children within you. *Antiphon*

He has established peace on your borders; he satisfies you with the finest wheat.
He sends out his command to the earth, and his word runs very swiftly. *Antiphon*

He gives snow like wool; he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.
He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; who can stand against his cold? *Antiphon*

He sends forth his word and melts them; he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.
He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel.
He has not done so to any other nation; to them he has not revealed his judgments. Hallelujah! *Antiphon*

SECOND READING

Galations 3:23-25; 4:4-7

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

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

SEQUENCE HYMN | *O little town of Bethlehem (Forest Green)*

The people stand and sing verses 1 & 2 before the Gospel; verses 3 & 4 after the Gospel.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight. | 3 How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive Him still,
the dear Christ enters in. |
| 2 For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth. | 4 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel |

GOSPEL

John 1:1-18

Deacon The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People Glory to you, O Lord.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And 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. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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

THE SERMON

The people sit.

THE NICENE CREED

BCP p. 358

The people stand

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

BCP p. 359

The people kneel or stand.

Father, we pray for your holy catholic Church;
That we all may be one.

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
That your Name may be glorified by all people.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
That there may be justice and peace on the earth.

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
That our works may find favor in your sight.

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
That they may be delivered from their distress.

Give to the departed eternal rest;
Let light perpetual shine upon them.

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.
Silence. The People may add their own petitions.
The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.

CONFESSION OF SIN

BCP p. 359

The people kneel or stand as able.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant 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 Priest stands and 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.*

THE PEACE

BCP p. 360

The people stand.

<i>Celebrant</i>	The peace of the Lord be always with you.
<i>People</i>	And also with you.

The Holy Communion

OFFERTORY

The people sit.

In the Bleak Midwinter

Harold Darke

Haylee Casper & Cameron Roberts, *soloists*

In the bleak midwinter frosty winds made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter long ago.

Our God, Heav'n cannot hold him nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed.
The Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.

Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day,

A breast full of milk and a manger full of hay:
Enough for him, whom angels fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

What can I give him poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

[Christina Rossetti (c.1872)]

DOXOLOGY

The people stand.

Hymnal 380 v.3

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

BCP p. 367

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 him thanks and praise.

Celebrant God of all power, Ruler of the Universe, you are worthy of glory and praise.

People Glory to you for ever and ever.

Celebrant At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home.

People By your will they were created and have their being.

Celebrant From the primal elements you brought forth the human race, and blessed us with memory, reason, and skill. You made us the rulers of creation. But we turned against you, and betrayed your trust; and we turned against one another.

People Have mercy, Lord, for we are sinners in your sight.

Celebrant Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.

People By his blood, he reconciled us. By his wounds, we are healed.

The Celebrant continues

And therefore we praise you, joining with the heavenly chorus, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all those in every generation who have looked to you in hope, to proclaim with them your glory, in their unending hymn:

SANCTUS (*Proulx*)

S 125

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

The people kneel or stand. The Celebrant continues

And so, Father, we who have been redeemed by him, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. On the night he was betrayed he took bread, said the blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to his friends, 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, gave thanks, 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."

Remembering now his work of redemption, and offering to you this sacrifice of thanksgiving,

People We celebrate his death and resurrection, as we await the day of his coming.

The Celebrant continues

Lord God of our Fathers; God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this Table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name.

People Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

The Celebrant concludes

Accept these prayers and praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our great High Priest, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, your Church gives honor, glory, and worship, from generation to generation. *AMEN.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BCP p. 364

The Celebrant continues

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

Celebrant and People

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, forever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

NOTE ON RECEIVING COMMUNION: *All baptized Christians are invited to receive the sacrament regardless of age or denomination. Those who have not been baptized are welcome to receive a blessing – indicate your desire for a blessing by crossing your arms over your chest. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. Intercessory prayer teams are available to pray with you on either side of the nave.*

CONGREGATION CAROL

The first Nowell (The First Nowell)

Hymnal 109

CHOIR CAROL

In the bleak midwinter

Gustav Holst

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

BCP p. 365

The people stand

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Priest gives the blessing.

POST-COMMUNION HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory (Regent Square)

Hymnal 93

The people stand.

The Deacon, or the Celebrant, dismisses the People with these words

Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Al post offertorio

Domenico Zipoli

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The Rev. Dr. Kristine Blaess, Rector
The Rev. Michael Whitnah, Associate Rector
The Rev. Funmi Odidi, Volunteer Priest Associate
The Rev. Deacon Josh Wilson, Pastoral Resident
Dr. Sean Vogt, Director of Music
Lectors: Tom Neff, Jennifer Groth
Intercessor: Jeanmarie Hill
Chalice Bearer: Marta Van Hoose
Prayer Team: Joyce Atkins, Lisa Hennis, Alice Gibson, Janet Arning
Acolytes: John Gamble, Peter Heren, Harper Marsh, Jennifer Handy
Ushers: David Fowler, Sandy Gleaves, Lance Ikard, Debbie Harris
Altar Guild: Ione Smith, Rose Wright, Jenny Fayter, Melissa Hamby
Technical Team: Alex Hollis, Ben Bartsch

DEDICATIONS

The flowers on the altar are given to the Glory of God in thanksgiving for the family and community of St. Paul's
and
in celebration of our 37th Anniversary, by Kim Baumann.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Resumes Sunday, January 11, 2026

Catechesis: Atrium I (Age 3-Kindergarten), Atrium II (Grades 1-3), & Atrium III (Grades 4-5) | Parish Hall, 2nd floor

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Open House: All ages | January 11, 2026 | 10:00 a.m. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is our children's formation and invites them into a deeper relationship with God as they wonder and reflect each week. All are invited to attend the open house during the Christian Education hours.

Youth Christian Education

- **Youth Sunday School**
 - **Who:** Youth grades 6-12
 - **What:** Exploring God's Saving plan through the Old Testament using the book: *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament*.
 - **Where:** Sewanee Room, Parish Hall, 2nd floor
 - **When:** Sunday Mornings, 10:00 a.m.-10:45 a.m. during the Christian Education hour
 - **Why:** The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation (Articles of Religion VI). Let's explore together the story of God's redeeming grace from the Garden to the New Jerusalem, for Christ was crucified, died, buried, and raised *in accordance with the Scriptures* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), that is, the Old Testament.
- **Sunday Night Live (Youth Group)**
 - **Who:** Youth grades 6-12
 - **What:** Exploring the Christian faith through the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Apostle's Creed
 - **Where:** 2nd Floor, St. Margaret's Hall
 - **When:** Sunday Evenings, 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
 - **Why:** To grow into the Body of Christ through fellowship, prayer, and study of our faith.

CONTINUED FROM BACK OF BULLETIN ...

• Youth Confirmation Preparation

- **Who:** Youth grades 9-12 who have not been confirmed and would like to be when the Bishop visits at Pentecost (May 24, 2026)
 - **What:** Preparing for Confirmation by rehearsing the articles of the Faith
 - **Where:** Wise Room, Parish Hall, 2nd floor. Join us for Evening Prayer at 5:30 p.m. dinner with the St. Paul's Community, followed by Confirmation instruction.
 - **When:** Wednesday evenings, beginning January 28, 2026, and running through April 1, 2026
 - **Why:** To prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation with the Bishop
-

PRAYER CONCERNS

For those with cancer: Bud, Bryan Dennis, Earl, Jeff, Kathy, Katarina, Leigh, Lois, Margaret, Mark, Marsha, Mary Beth, Matt, Maxine, Molly, Pat, Sage, Sherry, Tim, and Trevor.

For those in cancer remission: Andie, Jim, and Mandy.

For those healing from surgery: James and Linda.

For those with disabilities, their families, and their caregivers.

For those experiencing mental health issues.

For those with other needs: Alyssa, Beverly, Bernice, Bill, Bobby, Caroline, Catherine Ann, Dan, Elsie, Forrest, Jane, Emily, Erika, Hannah, Harry, Henry, Jack, Juanita, Kathy, Kim, Kristin, Linda, Lisa, Marcie, Miranda, Nicole, Pamela, Traister/Cozart family, Vanessa, Yates Family and Zach.

For those imprisoned including: Abu-Ali, Charlie, Corinio, Gregory, Joe, and Michael.

For those experiencing homelessness including: Adrienne, Andrea, Carol, Cindy, Connie, Deborah, Donna, Jacki, Jeri, Jessica, Joe, Kaneshia, Kelsey, Kimberley, Kristi, Laura, Leanna, Lori, Melissa, Renada, Sharon, Tiffany, and Trista.

For all veterans and those in military service and their families, including: Benjamin, Brianna, Chris, Evan, Jeffrey, Josh, Kaitlin, Topher, Trevor, and Sean.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORSHIP:

Rite II Holy Eucharist | Wednesday, December 31 | 7:00 a.m. | St. Andrew's Chapel

St. Paul's Returns to Three Sunday Services in 2026, beginning January 11, 2026 | 7:30 a.m. Rite I with Gospel Piano; 8:45 a.m. Rite II with blended music; and children's church, and 11:00 a.m. Rite II with choir, organ, and livestream

Baptism Sunday | January 11, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.

If you or a loved one wish to be baptized and/or if you have any questions about the baptism process, please contact our Baptismal Shepherds at baptism@stpaulsmurfreesboro.org or Josh Wilson at josh.wilson@stpaulsmurfreesboro.org. Key Dates/Times/Locations:

- Baptism Preparation Session 1: January 4 | 9:00 a.m. | Christian Education Rm 1 (Parish Hall, 1st floor).
- Baptism Rehearsal: January 4 | following the 10 a.m. service | Nave
- Baptism: January 11 | during 11 a.m. service.
- Baptism Preparation Session 2: January 18 | 10 a.m. | Christian Education Rm 1.

Additional needs for service in Worship:

- Serve as an **Acolyte**: contact George Carlson at VistanTN@BenLomand.net or 931-307-9094 (voice or text).
- Serve as an **Usher**: contact us at ushers@stpaulsmurfreesboro.org, or call/text Mary Probert at 615-743-5693.
- Serve on the **Altar Guild**: contact Gina Garner at altar.guild@stpaulsmurfreesboro.org for questions.
- Join the **Flower Guild**: contact Sudi Luboniecki at sudi624@gmail.com, or speak with her on Sunday mornings.
- Serve on the **Tech Team**: contact Dixie Grouett at dgrouett@gmail.com.
- **Children's Choir**: contact Amanda O'Connor at amandalee444@gmail.com if you have any questions.

FELLOWSHIP:

Ladies' Night | Thursday, January 8 | 5:30 p.m.

Join us for an evening of fun, food and fellowship. Bring an item to share. Contact Libby (615-545-0220) with questions.

Men's Club | Thursday, January 8 | 5:30 p.m. fellowship, 6:00 p.m. dinner

Please note date change! Contact: Lance Ikard (615-308-6715).

PRAYER:

Evening Prayer | Wednesdays | 5:00 p.m. | St. Andrew's Chapel

In Evening Prayer, we proclaim the glorious works of God in history and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as we respond with praise, penitence, prayer, and obedience. Please join us. **Please note that there will be no Evening Prayer on Wednesday, December 31, 2025.** We will resume on January, 7, 2026.

OUTREACH:

The **Outreach Committee** would like to thank you for your generous support of Nourish Food Bank this month! For the fifth food drive of 2025, we collected 753 food items and a record amount of \$6115 donated by parishioners to support Nourish. In addition, St. Paul's was awarded a \$2000 Dandridge Trust Grant to benefit Nourish! Thank you to Girl Scout Troop 303 for counting and loading the food items, and a special thank you to Heather Studenberg for submitting the Dandridge Trust Grant application!

STEWARDSHIP:

Offering

To make an offering online with your debit/credit card, scan the QR code with your smart phone camera. A link will appear, click on it to open our website's giving page. You can select the fund you want to give to (i.e. pledge fulfillment, general offering, CONNECT, etc.) and even leave a note in the memo line. If desired, you can text GIVESTPAULS to 73256, followed by their gift amount (*ex. GIVESTPAULS \$100*), to give online through text. Message and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help; STOP to 73256 to cancel.



HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSINGS

Monday, December 29 - Wednesday, December 31 | Office Closes at noon
Thursday, January 1 - Friday, January 2 | Office Closed