

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

1123 Washington St. Gloucester, MA 01930

www.stpaulcapeann.org 978-283-6550

Rev. LaDonna E. Thomas, Pastor

Ted Stoddard, Music Director

Christmas Eve, 2021 7:00 p.m.

WELCOME to Christmas Eve Worship! May the joy, peace and holy wonder of the Incarnation be yours. We also gather every Sunday at 10:00 a.m. for worship. We invite you to join us!

THANK YOU for joining us in our efforts to gather safely by wearing a mask, maintaining social distance, and sanitizing hands.

HOLY COMMUNION is celebrated in this worship service. All who desire to receive God's gifts of love, forgiveness, and grace through the presence of Jesus in bread and wine are welcome to participate. At the direction of an usher, proceed with an open hand to receive the bread and continue to the tray of cups filled with wine (red) or grape juice (white). You may remove your mask to eat and drink the elements as you receive them. Please replace your mask then place the empty cup in the available basket as you return to your seat by the side aisle.

OFFERINGS to support the mission and ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church may be placed in the offering plate at the back of the church as you leave. Electronic giving is also available. Use our email address of office@stpaulcapeann.org to find us on PayPal or you can use our donation page on our website, <https://www.stpaulcapeann.org/donations/>.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Indicates congregation is to stand*
Bold Print = Congregational Responses

PRELUDE

Still, Still, Still

Paul Manz

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

John David Peterson

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Austin Lovelace

What Child Is This

Philip Gehring

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Flor Peeters

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN** *O Come All Ye Faithful"*

The congregation turns to face the cross as it enters from the back of the church. Turn to face the front as the cross passes by.

Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him born the king of angels:

Refrain

Oh, come, let us adore him, oh, come, let us adore him,
oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to
God in the highest: *Refrain*

***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.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

Angles We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plain and the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo; gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn king.

Refrain

***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.**

SOLO

Lullaby

John Ness Beck
Carolyn Stowell, soprano

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on 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 yoke 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 of David and his kingdom. He will 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

GOSPEL READING*Luke 2:1-20**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, second chapter.

Glory to you O Lord.

In 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 he 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

SERMON

The Reverend LaDonna Thomas

*CAROL

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

1 Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king;
peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all you nations, rise;
join the triumph of the skies;
with angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn king!"

2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come,
offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, incarnate deity!
Pleased as man with us to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel! *Refrain*

NICENE CREED

We are God's people through our baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope we confess our faith:

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**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,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Love proclaims that a Savior has been born to us! Inspire your church throughout the world to proclaim the good news of Jesus' birth to all who seek salvation, hope, and new life. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Love whispers to a weary world that the time for rest and restoration has come. Maintain healthy cycles of wake and sleep for all creatures. Where light pollution disrupts natural rhythms, encourage new practices. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.** Love cries to a warring world that the time for peace is at hand. Direct those in power who make decisions on behalf of others, that they nurture and sustain all that is healthy, good, and holy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Love sings through the wails of a newborn baby. Respond to all who cry out in pain, despair, or need this night. Bring comfort to those for whom separation, grief, or loss makes the Christmas season especially difficult. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Love murmurs words of comfort to a newborn child and exhausted parents. Bless new and expectant parents or caregivers, especially those who are alone or afraid this night. Pour out your love upon families of every kind. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God's ever-present love is proclaimed through the faithful who came before us. We give you thanks for Mary, John the baptizer, Elizabeth his mother, Joseph the dreamer, and all who point toward your love. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

*SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

(Worshippers may share a sign of peace with one another. Please refrain from touching those not in your household or moving about in the sanctuary)

***OFFERING SONG**

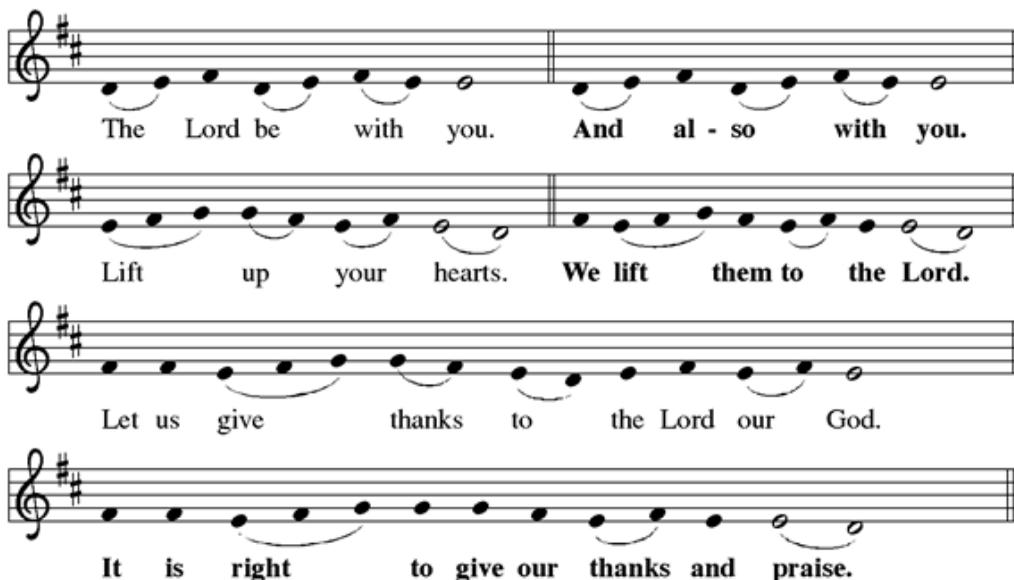
Before the Marvel of This Night

Carl Schalk
Sung by the Choir

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Merciful God, it would have been enough for you to give us the fruit of the earth by which we live. But in this meal, by your promise, you also give us yourself. Use what we have gathered here in feeding the hungry world with your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

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:

Holy, Holy, Holy Great Thanksgiving



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en 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.

Music: *Deutsche Messe*, Franz Schubert, 1797–1828; adapt. Richard Proulx, b. 1937
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Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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 for the 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 for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection, we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you, we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.
- 4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,
and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

What Child Is This

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest,
on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king,
whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate
where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,
the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh,
the babe, the son of Mary!

(In preparation for singing "Silent Night", individual candles are light and the sanctuary lights will be turned off. Please hold lit candles upright, tipping unlit candles into the flame for lighting)

***Silent Night**

- 1 Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
- 3 Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849; tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885

POST COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

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

Let us pray. **Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

*BLESSING

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the everlasting peace of Jesus who is Savior, Christ, and Lord. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

(Carefully extinguish candles)

*SENDING HYMN *Joy to the World* v. 1&2

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Rejoice in Christ our Savior.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

In dulci jubilo

J. S. Bach

PRAYER LISTS

Please keep these people in your prayers for healing throughout the week: Daneen R., Sonny M., Tasha R., Willy G., Brian D., Judith O., Ron F., for a Family in need of prayers, Miles, Kathryn, Bill P., Bob S., Liana W., Bruce G., Jim S., Judy M., John B., Judy R., Roger K., Ellen R., Barbara U., Doug G., Judy K., Dan W., Josh M., Dan W., John M., Mark R.

Armed services: Josh Coakley, Stephanie Norberg, Brian Misuraca, Christian DiGregorio, John Korpi III, Danny Hill, Rachel Misuraca Lewin, Zach Hafey, and Tony Favalora

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POINSETTIAS

Thank you to all who donated toward or supplied poinsettias during this holiday season.

Given by:

Mary Jane Morrill

Marion Phipps

Sharon Brynes Kishida

The Carlo Family

Carol, Mark, and Matthew Babson

Laura Stephanio Kerr

Laura, Ellie, and Carol

The VanAuken Family

Pat Tanson

Sylvia Knowles

Barbara and Greg Olson

Judith Oleson

Fred and Joanne Peterson

Dave and Ginny Morey

Nancy McKay

Carl and Miranda Johnson

Norman Seppala

Carol Gray

In Memory or Honor of:

Loved Ones and Family

Loved Ones

Loved Ones and Victims of Gun Violence

Nanny, Popsy, Gay, Dan, Jane, Joe, Suzan and Stacy

Dick Babson

John "Chip" McRae

Parents and Sisters, Ed, Anne Stephanio, Mary and Diana

Parents and Grandparents, Ann VanAuken, Kevin Blouin, and Robin VonEsch

Loved Ones

Elizabeth Jackson and Donald Knowles

Brook Faulkner

Bill & Priscilla Oleson

Loved Ones

Liisa Maria Robertson and Tripp Abbott

Loved Ones

Rebecca and Loved One

Uno and Louise Seppala

Her mother, Mary E