

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
December 26, 2021

WELCOME to worship on this First Sunday of Christmas. May you be filled with the joy, peace, and holy wonder of the Incarnation.

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/>.



LESSONS AND CAROLS FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

**Indicates congregation is to stand
Congregational responses are in **bold print***

PRELUDE

Nativity Suite

Wilbur Held

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine.

He did not wait till hearts were pure.
In joy he came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

"First Coming" by Madeline L'Engle

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Angels, from the Realms of Glory v. 1 and 2 ELW 275

*GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

FIRST LESSON

Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19

God announces in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve's punishment for their rebellion and that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

During that day's cool evening breeze, they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden; and the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God in the middle of the garden's trees. The Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

The man replied, "I heard your sound in the garden; I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself."

He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree, which I commanded you not to eat?"

The man said, "The woman you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."

The Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?!"

And the woman said, "The snake tricked me, and I ate."

The Lord God said to the snake, "Because you did this, you are the one cursed out of all the farm animals, out of all the wild animals. On your belly you will crawl, and dust you will eat every day of your life.

I will put contempt between you and the woman between your offspring and hers.
They will strike your head,
but you will strike at their heels.”

To the woman he said, I will make your pregnancy very painful; in pain you will bear children. You will desire your husband, but he will rule over you.”

To the man he said, “Because you listened to your wife’s voice and you ate from the tree that I commanded, ‘Don’t eat from it,’ cursed is the fertile land because of you; in pain you will eat from it every day of your life.

Weeds and thistles will grow for you, even as you eat the field’s plants; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread – until you return to the fertile land, since from it you were taken; you are soil, to the soil you will return.”

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

In the Bleak Midwinter v. 1 & 2

ELW 294

SECOND LESSON

Isaiah 11:1-9

Christ’s birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse;
a branch will sprout from his roots.

The Lord’s spirit will rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of planning and strength,
a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

He will delight in fearing the Lord.

He won’t judge by appearances, nor decide by hearsay.

He will judge the needy with righteousness,
and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land.

He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth;
by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.

Righteousness will be the belt around his hips,
and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the young goat;
the calf and the young lion will feed together, and a little child will lead them.

The cow and the bear will graze. Their young will lie down together,
and a lion will eat straw like an ox.

A nursing child will play over the snake's hole;
toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den.
They won't harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain.
The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,
just as the water covers the sea.

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

It Came upon the Midnight Clear v. 1 & 4 ELW 282

THIRD LESSON

Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah foretells the glory of little Bethlehem.

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, though you are the least significant of Judah's forces, one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you. His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.

Therefore, he will give them up until the time when she who is in labor gives birth. The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.
He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

They will dwell secure, because he will surely become great throughout the earth;
he will become one of peace.

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

O Little Town of Bethlehem v. 1 & 3 ELW 279

FOURTH LESSON

Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus.

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,
And they will call him, Emmanuel. (*Emmanuel* means “God with us.”)

When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife.

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming v. 1 & 2 ELW 272

FIFTH LESSON

Luke 2:8-16

The shepherds go to the manger.

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, “Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you – wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Away in a Manger v. 1 & 2

ELW 278

SIXTH LESSON

John 1:1-14

John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.
Everything came into being through the Word,
and without the Word nothing came into being.

What came into being through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness doesn't extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light.

The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world.
The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light,
but the world didn't recognize the light.

The light came to his own people, and his own people didn't welcome him.

But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name,
he authorized to become God's children,

born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God.

The Word became flesh and made his home among us.

We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

***CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Of the Father's Love Begotten v. 1 & 3 ELW 295

***RESPONSIVE PRAYER**

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

Blessed are you, Prince of peace. You rule the earth with truth and justice.
Send your gift of peace to all nations of the world.

Blessed are you, Son of Mary. You share our humanity.
Have mercy on the sick, the dying, and all who suffer this day.

Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.
Reveal yourself to us in word and sacrament that we may bear your light to all the world. Amen

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

***LORDS PRAYER**

We pray as Jesus taught us:

**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

CAROL DURING COMMUNION

The First Noel

ELW 300

***POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE**

**When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,**

**When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.**

“When the Song of the Angels is Stilled” by Howard Thurman

***BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***SENDING CAROL** *Go Tell It on the Mountain* v. 1 & 2 ELW 290

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve our Savior, Christ, and Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *From Heaven Above to Earth I come* J. S. Bach

ABOUT THE POETS WHOSE WORK IS USED IN TODAY’S SERVICE:

Madeleine L'Engle Camp (1918-2007) was an American writer of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and young adult fiction. Her works reflect both her Christian faith and her strong interest in modern science.

Howard Thurman (1889-1981) was an American author, philosopher, theologian, educator, and civil rights leader. As a prominent religious figure, he played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century. Thurman's theology of radical nonviolence influenced and shaped a generation of civil rights activists, and he was a key mentor to leaders within the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King Jr.

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:

Carol Gray
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
Martha and Don Johnson

In Memory or Honor of:

For her Mother, Mary E.
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
Norris Paul Johnson and other Loved Ones