

Third Sunday of Advent
Service of Readings and Carols
Baptism and Joining Sunday
December 14, 2025

No matter who you are,
No matter where you are
On life's journey,
You are welcome here.

Please silence cell phones.

Bibles for use during worship are available at each entrance to the Sanctuary.

THOUGHT FOR PREPARATION

"Remembrance is sufficient of the beauty we have seen."

Caroline Sergeant

PRELUDE

Bethlehem Down
St. Pauls Brass

Peter Warlock

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE - The Candle of Joy

Geoff Gist and MHP Family

CHIMES

CHORAL INTROIT

Away in a Manger
Kinderchapel Singers
Tom Clancy, guitar

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;
the stars in the heavens looked down where He lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Kinderchapel Singers

Ruth Bryant
Willow Clancy

Eloise Fromm
Carson Honaker
Lucia Piazza

Catalina Smedley
Hattie Ward
Spencer Ward

WELCOME

Liz Nickerson

* WELCOMING EACH OTHER

* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Rejoice!

**All: Behold, I bring you good news of great joy
which shall be for all people.**

One: Good will visit us! Day will dawn upon us!

All: A child shall be born unto us!

One: Christ the Lord, the light of the world!

All: It is almost Christmas! The candle of joy has been lit!

** Please stand if you are able to do so.*

* HYMN

Once in Royal David's City
Charlie Coe, soloist

Solo 1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a
Choir 2. He came down to earth from heav - en, who is
All 3. Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern, dai - ly
All 4. And our eyes at last shall see him, through his
low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her
God and Lord of all, And his shel - ter was a
like us lived and grew, Je - sus, lit - tle, weak and
own re - deem - ing love; And that child so dear and
ba - by, in a man - ger for his bed: Mar - y
sta - ble, and his cra - dle was a stall; With the
help - less, tears and smiles and com - fort knew. Je - sus
gen - tle is our Lord in heav - en a - bove; And he
was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
poor and mean and low - ly, lived on earth this Sav - ior low - ly.
feels our pain and sad - ness, and the joy - ous lift of glad - ness.
leads his chil - dren on to the place where he has gone.

SCRIPTURE

Riley Occhipinti

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph 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. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And 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.

CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The musical score is written for a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time, featuring a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily composed of chords in the treble staff, with some eighth-note movement in the bass staff. The lyrics are printed below the treble staff.

O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, How still we see thee lie!

A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;

Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth The ev - er - last - ing Light;

The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee to - night.

ANTHEM

Children, Go Where I Send Thee African American Spiritual
Children's Choir arr. Ruth Elaine Schram
Breanna Coe, director
St. Arbucks Quartet

Children, go where I send thee.
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you one by one,
One for the itty bitty baby
Born, born, born in Bethlehem.

Children, go where I send thee.
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you two by two,
Two for Paul and Silas,
One for the itty bitty baby
Born, born, born in Bethlehem.

Children, go...
I'm gonna send you three by three,
Three for the Hebrew children...

I'm gonna send you four by four,
Four come a-knockin' at the door...

Children go...
Anyway I send you, better go, now.
Go and find that itty bitty baby
Born, born, born in Bethlehem.
Yes, he was born, born, born in Bethlehem.

Children's Choir

Sean Banjavcic
Charlie Coe

Juniper Fletcher

Nora Penniman
Josiah Smedley

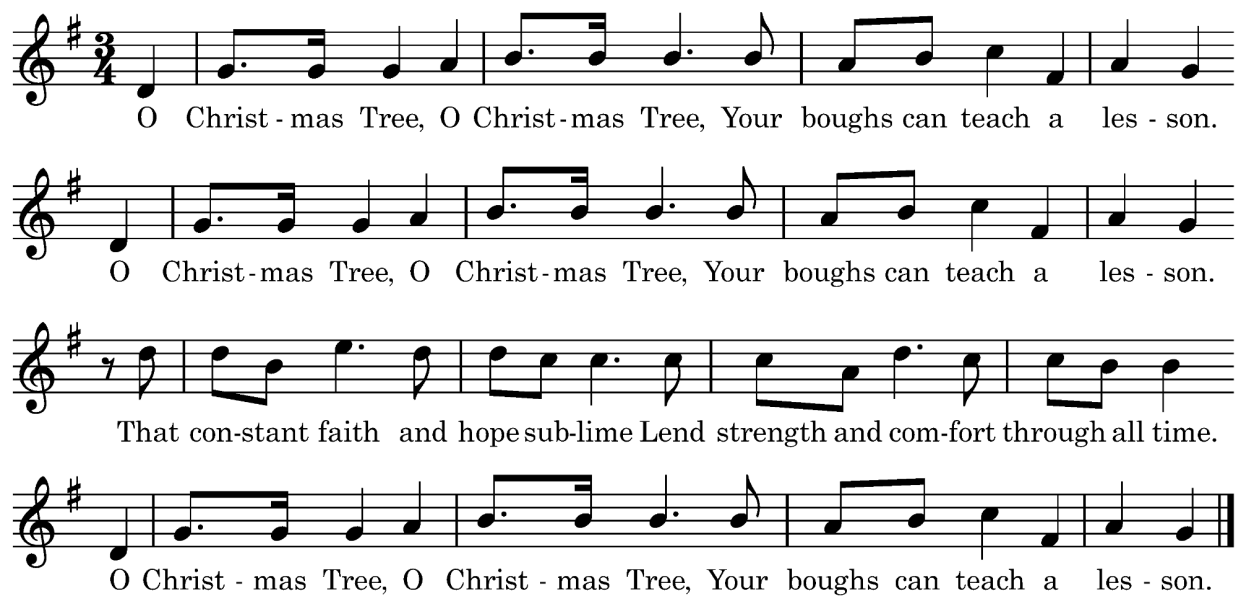
STORY

"The Prayer"
By Doris Ahlberg Carlson

Jeff Carlson

CAROL

O Christmas Tree



O Christ - mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree, Your boughs can teach a les - son.

O Christ - mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree, Your boughs can teach a les - son.

That con - stant faith and hope sub - lime Lend strength and com - fort through all time.

O Christ - mas Tree, O Christ - mas Tree, Your boughs can teach a les - son.

ANTHEM

Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child

Margaret Allison

Pauls People

arr. Mark Hayes

Kecia Waldschmidt, director

Jesus, Jesus
Oh, what a wonderful child
Jesus, Jesus
So lowly meek and mild
New life, new hope, new joy he brings
Won't you listen to the angels sing?
Glory, glory, glory
To the newborn King

He was herald by the angels
Born in a lowly manger
The Virgin Mary was his mother
And Joseph was his earthly father, oh
Three wise men came from afar
They were guided by a shining star
To see king Jesus where he lay
In a manger filled with hay, oh

Jesus, my, my, my Jesus
Oh, what a wonderful child
Jesus, sweet little Jesus
He's so lowly meek and mild
New life, new hope, new joy he brings
Won't you listen to the angels sing?
Glory, glory, glory
To the newborn King

Pauls People

Cece Chamberlain
Mabel Fletcher*
Aniston Hartanov
Deirdre McGrath

Brooke McGuire
James Mix
Thomas Mix
Thea Mack

Toby Smedley*
Clara Wahlstrom*
Lee Waldschmidt*
* soloists

SCRIPTURE

Drew Occhipinti

Luke 2:8-14

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

* CAROL

Angels We Have Heard on High

1. An - gels we have heard on high Sweet - ly sing - ing o'er the plains,
 2. Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro - long?
 3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;

And the moun - tains in re - ply Echo - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
 What the glad - some ti - dings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
 Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ, the Lord, the new - born King.

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

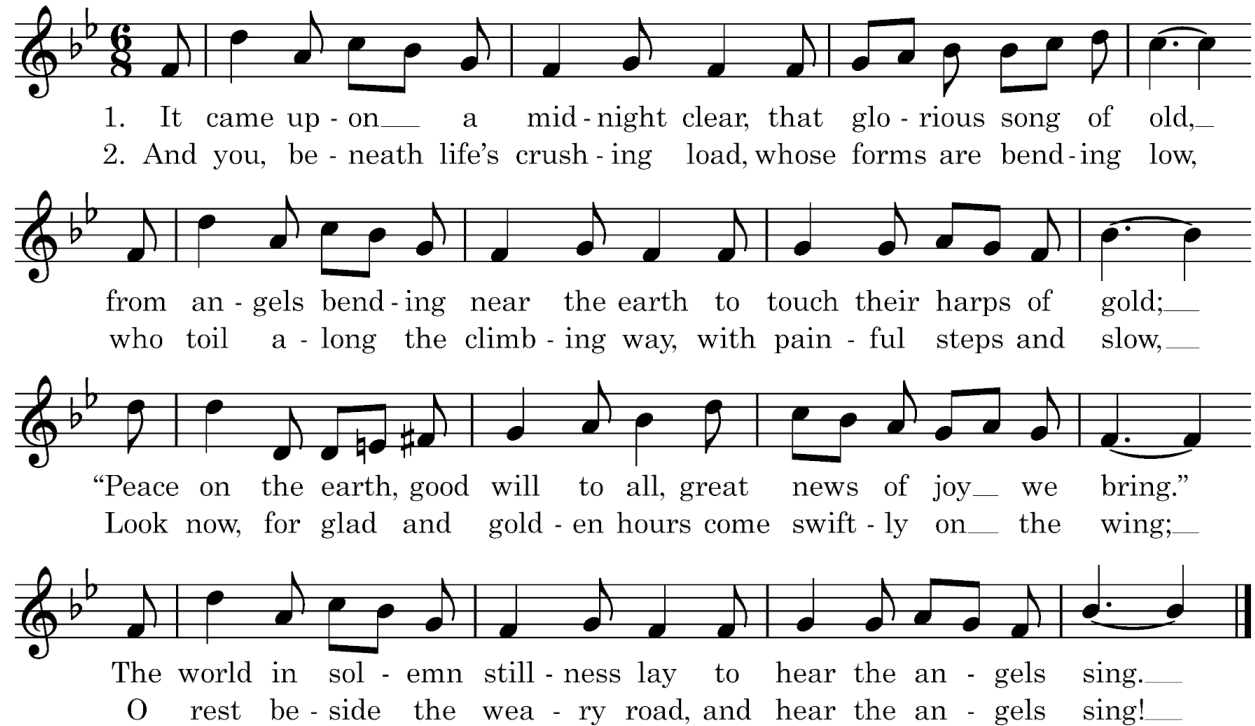
STORY

"Midnight, Lights Out"

Matt Fitzgerald

CAROL

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear



1. It came up - on___ a mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,___
 2. And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
 from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold;___
 who toil a - long the climb - ing way, with pain - ful steps and slow,___
 "Peace on the earth, good will to all, great news of joy___ we bring."
 Look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on___ the wing;___
 The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing. ___
 O rest be - side the wea - ry road, and hear the an - gels sing!___

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:15-20

Riley Occhipinti

When 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." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

CAROL

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

1. Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem has
2. I - sa - iah had fore - told it, the Rose I have in

sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as saints of old have
mind, With Mar - y we be - hold it, the Vir - gin Moth - er

sung. It came a flower - et bright, a - mid the cold of
kind. To show God's love a - right she bore to us a

win - ter, when half spent was the night.
Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.

The musical score is written for two voices (Soprano and Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in 3/2 time and B-flat major. The score consists of four systems of music. The first system contains the first two lines of the carol. The second system contains the next two lines. The third system contains the next two lines. The fourth system contains the final two lines. The piano accompaniment is written in the bass clef and provides harmonic support for the vocal lines. The vocal lines are written in the soprano and bass clefs. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines.

SCRIPTURE

Drew Occhipinti

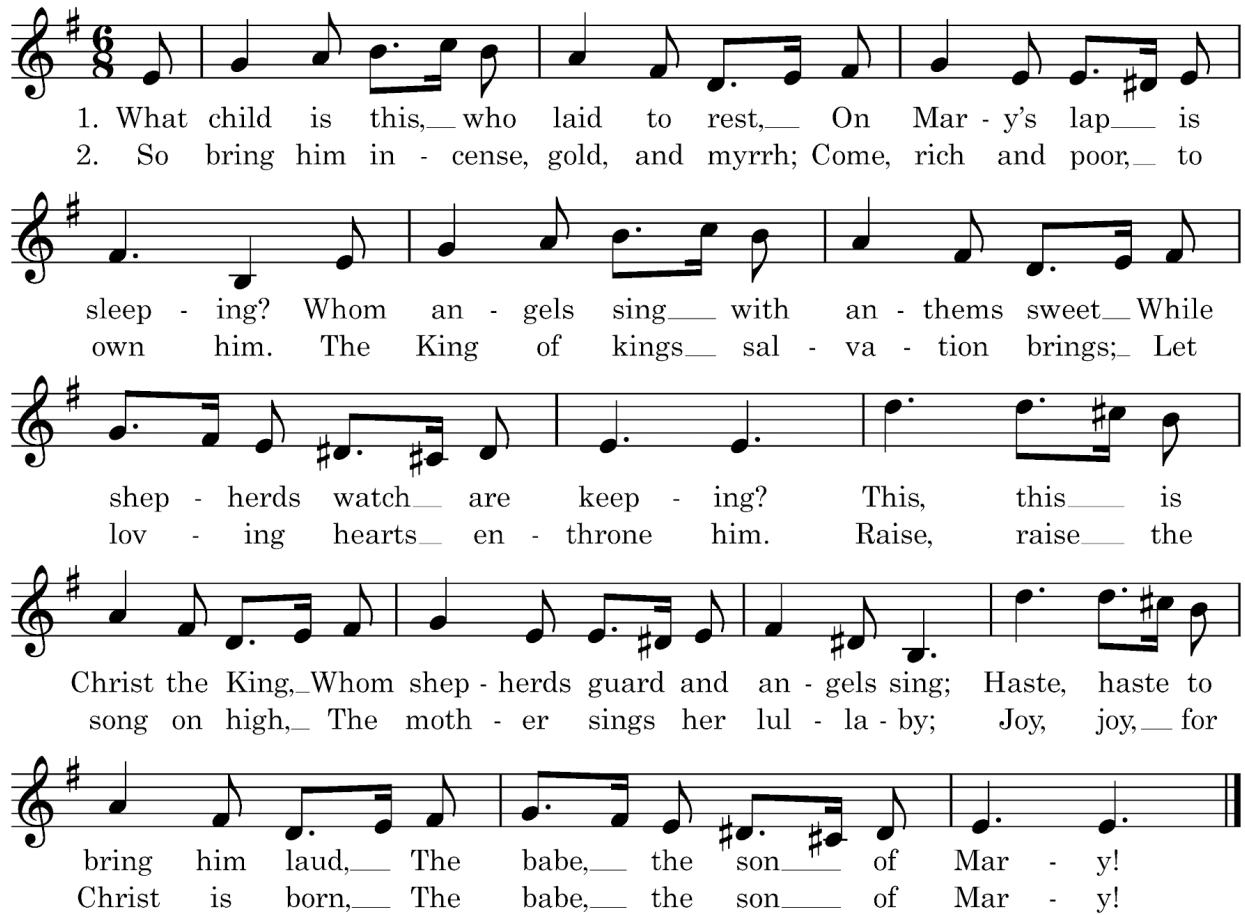
Matthew 2:1–12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’” Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.”

When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

CAROL

What Child Is This?



1. What child is this, who laid to rest, On Mar - y's lap is
 2. So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; Come, rich and poor, to
 sleep - ing? Whom an - gels sing with an - thems sweet While
 own him. The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let
 shep - herds watch are keep - ing? This, this is
 lov - ing hearts en - throne him. Raise, raise the
 Christ the King, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing; Haste, haste to
 song on high, The moth - er sings her lul - la - by; Joy, joy, for
 bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mar - y!
 Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mar - y!

STORY

"The Gift"

Liz Nickerson

CAROL

O Little Town of Bethlehem

v.4

O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem! De - scend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin and en - ter in; Be born in us to - day.

We hear the Christ - mas an - gels The great glad tid - ings tell;

O come to us, a - bide with us, Our Lord Em - man - u - el!

GIVING MOMENT: What More is Saint Pauls Building?

Kurt R. Hansen

OFFERTORY

Celebrate, Rejoice! John P. Kee & Richard Smallwood
Chancel Choir arr. Mike Speck & Tim Parton
St. Arbucks Quartet

Let us rejoice,
Let's celebrate;
For the Savior of the world is born today.

The Anointed One is to be praised.
Sing Hallelujah!
Let's celebrate

For unto you, this day,
In the city of Judah, is born a Savior
Which is Christ the Lord;
And the government shall be upon His shoulder,
And his name is
Wonderful,
Counselor.

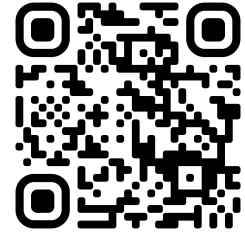
Let us rejoice, ...

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel has come to thee O Israel.

Let us rejoice, ...

ELECTRONIC OFFERING OPTIONS

*Scan this code with your cell phone camera,
Church Center at spucc.churchcenter.com/giving,
PayPal at spucc.org/paypal, or Zelle to giving@spucc.org.*



WELCOME CARD

*If you are a visitor, welcome! Thank you for
worshiping with us today!
If would like to learn more about the church, please
scan the QR code.*



** FESTIVAL DOXOLOGY*

A musical score for the Festival Doxology, written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff.

Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise God all crea-tures here be - low;
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! Praise God a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host:
Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Ho - ly Ghost; Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM OF BRANDON FLETCHER

A Dialogue on our Statement of Faith

Pastor Matt: Let us affirm together our faith as we receive these new members into our church.

Congregation: We believe in God who has created and is creating.

President: God has come to us in Jesus Christ to reconcile and make us new. God works in us and others by the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: We trust God. God calls us to be the church.

Pastor Liz: Will you promise to support this congregation with your time, talent and resources, participating regularly in the worship of Saint Pauls United Church of Christ and contributing to our life and ministry in the city?

New Members: We do promise. With you, we will celebrate God's presence, love and serve others, care for creation, seek justice and resist evil.

Pastor Jeff: With your love, God will love. With your hands, God will touch the city. With your lives, God will bring justice and compassion to the world.

Congregation: We promise you our love, support, and care.

All: Together we will proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
 Amen.**

* HYMN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1. Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice____ with heart and soul and voice;____
2. Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice____ with heart and soul and voice;____
3. Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice____ with heart and soul and voice;____



now give heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 now you know of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now you need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



Ox and ass be - fore him bow, a - sleep with - in the
 God has o - pened heav - en's door, and you are blessed for -
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er -



man - ger now. Christ is born to - day,____ Christ is born to - day!
 - ev - er - more. Christ was born for this,____ Christ was born for this!
 - last - ing hall. Christ was born to save,____ Christ was born to save!

* BENEDICTION

Jeff Carlson

* CHORAL BENEDICTION

Go Now in Peace

Natalie Sleeth

Combined Youth Choirs

Go now in peace.
May the love of God surround you
Everywhere you go.
Go now in peace.

POSTLUDE

Christmas Is Coming
St. Arbucks Quartet

Vince Guaraldi

ADVENT WREATH - Each week during Advent, we light a candle in our Advent wreath to anticipate the coming of Christ, the light of the world. These candles symbolize the gifts of hope, love, joy, and peace that Christ brings. Today, we light the candle of **love**. Each week, a different member of the Migrant Housing Project (MHP) Team will light a candle. There was no room at the inn for Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus, but at St. Pauls we have room for our Venezuelan migrant families. Some of our migrant families will accompany MHP members, as their schedules allow. Many of these families work on Sunday mornings. All of our families have achieved legal working status in the U.S. Our Christmas Eve offering will be dedicated to the MHP Legal Aid Fund.

PINK CANDLE, WHY? - This is *Gaudete* (Rejoice) Sunday. Both Advent and Lent are considered penitential seasons, but the early church leaders decided that each of those seasons need an uplifting break. That is why on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, the liturgical color changes from purple to pink or rose.

We are grateful for the generous gift of Jim Miller in memory of his beloved wife, Pattie O'Reilly Miller. His gift funded the poinsettias on our altar.

A donation has been made to the UCAN gift drive in honor of Lovely Carter.

TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Clergy: Liz Nickerson, Jeff Carlson, Matt Fitzgerald

Music Director: Kurt R. Hansen

Organist: Kevin Dzierzawski

St. Arbucks Quartet: Brendan Henry, piano; Alex Austin, bass; Matt Plaskota, drums; Kris Hansen, trumpet & vocals

Lay Liturgical Administrator: Kevin O'Brien

Scripture Readers: Riley Occhipinti, Drew Occhipinti

Advent Wreath Lighter: Geoff Gist and MHP family members

Head Usher: Beatrice Jaji

Ushers: David Baker, David Faulkner, Fred Pearson

Gatekeeper: Dodd Brown

Camera Operators: Nana Addadzi-Koom, Jim Alrutz, Marie Ankenman, Bob Ball, Brian Hafner, Trevor Hafner

Custodian: Ramiro Gonzalez

Would you like to donate altar flowers? Sign up here: tinyurl.com/4w6fu5js.

BORN THIS WEEK IN DECEMBER

We give thanks for your life at St. Pauls. A perfect way to celebrate is by giving one dollar for each year of your life to our Birthday Fund, which supports A Just Harvest.

Dec. 14 Candy Lohnes, David Baker, Ken Smith

Dec. 15 Kaley Simon

Dec. 16 Carrie Bruggers, Fausto Matos

Dec. 17 Addison Tegt, Bruce Inman, Tiscia Eicher

Dec. 18 Brooke McGuire, Clark Tavas, Susanne Baker

Dec. 19 Steven Reid, Warren Bettler

Dec. 20 Amber Watters

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Our names are **Drew** and **Riley Occhipinti**. We've lived in Ukrainian Village for four years and have been married for two. We have two pups, Gnocchi and Pepper. For fun, we love spending time outside, having a good meal and watching Da Bears every Sunday.



We are **Brian** and **Teri Odom** and we live with our 13-year-old son, **Bren**. Teri is a professor of chemistry and Brian is a professor of physics, both at Northwestern University.



Hi! We are **Cici Coquillette** and **Daniel Dutcher**. We first started attending St. Pauls in 2019. While work took us to the East Coast for the last few years, we never lost our connection to St. Pauls, regularly streaming Sunday services and celebrating our wedding here in the spring of 2024. We are now thrilled to be back in Lincoln Park and look forward to officially joining the St. Pauls community! Cici grew up in the northern suburbs of Chicago, while Daniel grew up in Arkansas and first moved to Chicago for graduate school. Cici works as a reproductive rights attorney and Daniel is an astrophysicist



My name is **Gwynne Noth**. I grew up in the Chicago suburbs and live in Lincoln Park with my husband **Geoff Massanek**, our sons **Ben** (4) and **Theo** (2), and our daughter **Nora** (3 months). I work remotely as a software engineer for Nordstrom and love spending time with my family.
(Joined October 2025)



Our names are **Brandon** and **Amber Fletcher**, and we grew up in the same small town (Staunton) in southern Illinois. We arrived in Chicago in 2010 'for just a few years' but quickly realized this was our forever home. We live in Lincoln Park with our daughters, **Mabel** (9-years-old) and **Juniper** (7-years-old), and our dog, Penny. Our family loves trying new foods, spending time outdoors, and any opportunity to adventure together. We were drawn to St. Pauls by its genuine acceptance of all and the way the church allows us to actively live our values. Anchoring each week in a Sunday service with opportunities for reflection, growth and joy is restorative, and we are so grateful to have found the St. Pauls community.



We are **Margaret England** and **Dick Simpson**. Margaret grew up in Minnesota and Dick grew up in Texas. Dick first moved to Lincoln Park in 1967 and Margaret followed much later. They now live together at 2650 N. Lakeview. Margaret is a retired nurse and Dick is a retired political science professor at UIC. Our son, daughter and two grandchildren live in Oak Lawn. Margaret makes quilts and knits sweaters, and enjoys her memoir writing class. Dick writes books, serves on occasion as a political commentator, and takes piano lessons at Old Town School. Dick is a retired UCC minister and we are joining from Wellington UCC where we were previous members. Margaret is a practitioner of centering prayer and Dick learned mediation from Yoga.



My name is **Hailey Ardell**. I grew up in the Chicago area and have lived in Pilsen for the past four years. In my spare time, I like to read, crochet and spend time outdoors (even in this winter snow). I also foster cats and kittens from animal shelters to help them find their forever homes. I am excited to join this welcoming community at St. Pauls!



My name is **Ben Baughman** and am a (relatively) new resident of Chicago. I grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, with stints in Ohio and North Carolina for college. I live in Andersonville and am an attorney. I'm really looking forward to becoming more involved with St. Pauls.



My name is **Joseph Grigoletti** and I'm a fourth-generation Chicagoan. I enjoy collecting vinyl records, books and exploring various coffee shops around Chicago. I work in Information Technology as a Data Officer in the public sector. I'm also a proud cat-dad of two rescue cats named Bilby and Bunny.



My name is **Sue Derison**. I came to Chicago from Atlanta, Georgia, to live near my son and his family. Originally, I am from Chattanooga, Tennessee. I retired from education after thirty years as a teacher, school administrator and technology director. I spent a couple of years working in the corporate sector after retiring. I am a huge fan of musical performance and Broadway theater in particular. I quilt and sew for myself and ALL my family. I was a member of Kirkwood United Church of Christ in Atlanta, serving on the congregational leadership committee. I'm looking forward to making new friends, new adventures, and new service opportunities at St. Pauls following Christ's teachings.



My name is **Mark Sancya**. My son, Jack, and I started attending St. Pauls when he began Sunday School in 2012. He was christened here and also confirmed. I coached him for eight years playing baseball at Oz Park. He graduated “Little Lincoln” across the street and then moved to Mt. Prospect for high school four years ago. I grew up in northwest Indiana, East Chicago and Crown Point, and then graduated from Purdue’s Flight Program. I have lived on the same block in Old Town since 1986 when I was hired as a pilot for United Airlines, my dream job, retiring in 2023. I enjoy playing golf and grilling with beautiful sunsets at my lakeside house in Beverly Shores. I am grateful to be a part of this church, reading scripture and feel blessed for my son’s religious upbringing by this congregation.



Hello - My name is **Jim Holcomb**. I grew up on a family farm near the small town of Cunningham, Kansas (population 450). After graduating from the University of Kansas, I made my way to Evanston for graduate school in 1992. I now reside in the Albany Park neighborhood. I have a 25-year-old son, Teddy, who also lives in Chicago. My dream job would be in business development, donor cultivation and relationship management for an organization that supports heart disease research, education and community health. I am an avid fan of film, live music and college basketball. I am joining St. Pauls United Church of Christ after reconnecting with Pastor Matt, who I met when he led Epiphany UCC in North Center.

ST. PAULS PRAYS

Please clip this page and pray for those who are named below. To have your prayer request included, simply ask a pastor in person, on the phone or by email.

You may also share your request at tinyurl.com/3j6sayku.

Our practice is to run each prayer request for four weeks and then remove it. If you would like to continue a prayer request after four weeks, let a pastor know.

- Angie, struggling to recover from multiple surgeries.
- Alicia Braun and her family on the death of her father, Joseph Kroenert.
- Kate and Angus Atkins-Trimnell, Pastor Liz's sister and brother-in-law, for the death of Angus's father, Ralph Trimnell.
- Families undergoing treatments for infertility.
- Barbara Benjamin's husband, Tom Coffield, recovering from surgery..
- Prayers for Rick Sensenbrenner's mother, Marie, as she navigates various health conditions.
- The Camp Mystic families who are suffering unimaginable loss from the July 4th floods.
- Peace for all of God's children.
- Jeffrey Whitridge and Greg Clemons at the death of Jeffrey's brother, Mark.
- Lorri Wirsum's daughter, Ruby, facing health concerns, and her daughter-in-law, Trish, on the death of Trish's mother, Sandy Henderson.
- A neighbor of St. Pauls struggling with fibromyalgia.
- Ally S., a college student with double vision and neurological problems.
- Donn Schimp and his family as Donn continues cancer treatment.
- Dianne Witkowski, as she deals with cancer chemotherapy.

Prayer, Support, Mental Health Resources

Even when you walk through the valley of shadows, God is with you. Help is available for every kind of issue. Contact one of the pastors today for support, referrals, and information that can help you and your loved ones.

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS AT ST. PAULS

- SUN, DEC 14 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, *LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF JOY*
10 a.m. - Worship, Readings & Carols with youth choirs and brass
Following Worship - Advent Market
- TUES, DEC 16 FOOD FOR THE SOUL
12 p.m. - Christmas Party with carol sing-a-long
- THURS, DEC 18 TAIZÉ WINTER SOLSTICE ♦
7 p.m. - Service, Labyrinth Walk, Gym
- SUN, DEC 21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, *LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF PEACE*
10 a.m. - Worship
- WED, DEC 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
5 p.m. - Family Service, Sanctuary
9 p.m. - Candlelight Service, Sanctuary
Christmas story, carols, candles, and choir

*Scan here for more
information about
Advent events*

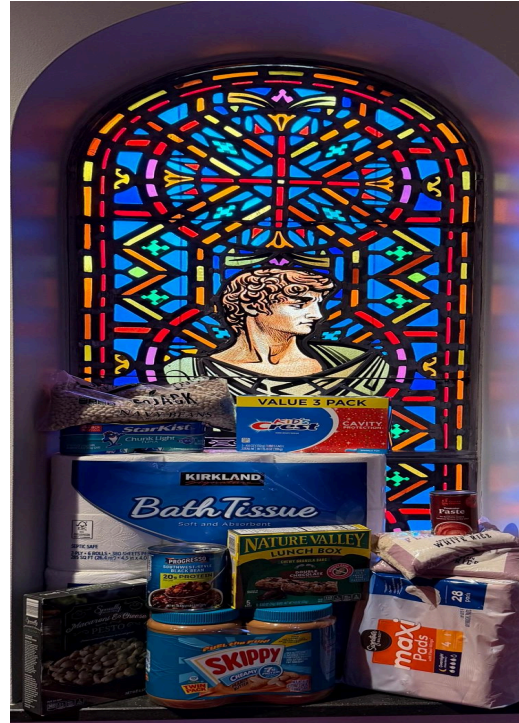
♦RSVP for childcare



CHRISTMAS GIVING

We are going to “Fill the Sills” throughout the holiday season. Common Pantry has requested:

- ✓ protein
- ✓ diapers (adult and child)
- ✓ wipes
- ✓ feminine hygiene products
- ✓ shopping bags with handles
- ✓ cooking oil
- ✓ dish soap
- ✓ bath soap
- ✓ coffee
- ✓ kids snacks
- ✓ spices & herbs
- ✓ salt and pepper



To donate directly to the Common Pantry, go to www.commonpantry.org/.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TODAY - COME SHOP THE ADVENT MARKET - 9-10 a.m & 11:15 a.m - 12:30 p.m., Oscar Mayer Room

Our Advent Market is today, and will help fund our outreach and benevolence to provide legal support for our migrant family friends and church members. Cash or credit cards are accepted. You set your price of what to give for our outreach (and your lovely purchases). Come browse and shop before and after church.

TODAY - LUNCH MAKING FOR LPCS - 11:15 a.m., Kitchen

Right after church, come to SPUCC's kitchen and help make sack lunches for the residents of Lincoln Park Community Services. We provide all the needed food, but volunteers are asked to contribute \$25 each to help cover food costs for the lunches. Donations can be made via cash, Venmo, or Zelle. We're typically done by 12:15 p.m.

If you're interested, please use Church Center to sign-up: tinyurl.com/e4m9v9zz

TODAY – DINNER MAKING FOR LPCS - 4 p.m., Kitchen

Join us in preparing and delivering dinner for residents of the Lincoln Park Community Shelter. We meet at SPUCC at 4 p.m. and deliver the meal to LPCS (600 W. Fullerton) around 6 p.m. We provide the needed food, but volunteers are asked to contribute \$25 each to help cover food costs for the dinner. Donations can be made via cash, Venmo, or Zelle.

If you're interested, please use Church Center to sign-up: tinyurl.com/5dmys5hc

DECEMBER 16 - FOOD FOR THE SOUL CHRISTMAS PARTY/SING-A-LONG- 12-1:30

p.m., Social Hall - Bring whatever food you would like to share. Dress in your Christmas gear if desired. Join the caroling with Pastor Jeff at the piano. Sponsored by St. Pauls Social. Adults of all ages are invited. Childcare provided.

DECEMBER 16 – JANE AUSTEN 250 READING GROUP - 7 p.m., Zoom

December 16, 2025 is the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth. We'll be discussing her last-published novel, *Persuasion*. Discussion over Zoom. Sign up to participate here: tinyurl.com/yez6ejw6. Contact: Pastor Jeff.

DECEMBER 16 – RETIREMENT GROUP MEETING – 10 a.m., Parlor

Please join us to discuss our transition paths, ways we found ourselves here, what's meaningful, and what's next with or without planned health, funds or companionship. For more information, contact Jana O'Brien at (708) 846-9415 or janaobrien1@gmail.com.

DECEMBER 18 – LABYRINTH WALK – 12-1 p.m., Gym

Come for a meditative walk on our labyrinth and take back the darkness and chaos as we anticipate the coming of the Light of Love into the world on Christmas!

DECEMBER 18 – TAIZE WINTER SOLSTICE SERVICE – 7 p.m., Gym

Come for a meditative service of candlelight, a labyrinth walk, scripture, and chant-like singing. Let the stress of this season melt away as you connect with the Holy Spirit!

DECEMBER 21 – YOUTH BAKE SALE TO SUPPORT LA TIENDITA AT SOCIAL HOUR

- 11 a.m., Social Hall

A St. Pauls high school student and her friends are volunteering at La Tiendita, a free store that supports immigrant families. Their bake sale will raise funds to create winter care packages for migrant families. So enjoy some homemade baked goods and help families in need!

DECEMBER 25 – INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS BRUNCH

Join us for a Christmas Day brunch potluck at St. Pauls. Sure to be included is a wassail cup, conviviality and fellowship! All ages welcome.

Time: 11-3 pm

Place: St. Pauls

Contact: Ninon Freeman for additional information, reservations and food/drink

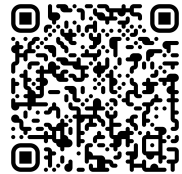
Suggestions: 312-447-1330 and nlanda05@yahoo.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW! OPT-IN TO TEXTING FROM ST. PAULS

Want to receive reminders and announcements via text?

Simply scan the QR code and fill out the form!



OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Have you been looking for an opportunity to become more involved in the St. Pauls community? The Nominating Committee is beginning to fill vacancies on the Church Council and our Standing Ministries. Every Ministry has vacancies to fill with terms beginning in March 2026. You can learn about the Council and Ministries at spucc.org/Governance. To be considered for a position, please reach out to Nominating Committee Chair Jan Bail at JanBail@me.com or (773) 472-5678.

LITTLE LIGHTS HOLIDAY FUNDRAISER

The holiday season is officially here - a time of excitement, gratitude and generosity. We are partnering with PaperPie, which offers a variety of curated packages including thank-you cards, notepads, celebration cards, tote bags and more. This fundraiser is live through December 15. Just click the link, choose any of the assorted options, and your items will be shipped directly to your home - simple as that! Please share the link with extended family, friends, neighbors or anyone who wants to support our wonderful Little Lights program. Order here: tinyurl.com/mry7dcmt and reach out to erin.fitzgerald@spucc.org with questions.

DECEMBER'S BLAST FROM THE PAST

For many years, "The Christmas Tree Ship" captained by St. Pauls member Herman Schuenemann, "Captain Santa", brought trees down from the north and docked at the southwest corner of the Clark Street bridge to sell his trees and also give them away to those in need. On November 23, 1912, Schuenemann's ship went down in a storm near Two Rivers, Wisconsin, and all aboard perished. Schuenemann's wife, Barbara, and daughters, Elsie, Hazel and Pearl, continued the business into the 1930s. A bronze plaque on the bridge, given by St. Pauls, commemorates the sinking.

NEW MEMBER CLASS – FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Join pastors, members and others curious about St. Pauls for our New Member Class. Together, we'll talk about faith and our community and we'd love for you to be part of the conversation! We'll meet after worship and childcare will be provided as needed. See upcoming dates here: spucc.org/new_member_classes.

CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION

Please register your K-6th Sunday School students, 7th and 8th grade Confirmation students, and High School class members by scanning this QR code.



PALESTINE STUDY GROUP

Join us as we discuss the new book *One Day, Everyone Will Always Have Been Against This* by Omar El Akkad. In this accessible and powerful work, a novelist examines the West's response to the destruction of Gaza. Contact David Burnett at burnett.db@gmail.com.

YOUTH CHOIRS

Does your child like to sing? Sign them up for one of our youth choirs! We rehearse Sunday mornings: Kinderchapel Singers (preschool) 9:50-10 a.m., Social Hall. Children's Choir (K-3rd) 9:30-9:55 a.m., Chapel. Paul's People (4-8th) 9:30-9:55 a.m., Parlor. Reach out to Tom Clancy (KS) tm.ferrin@gmail.com, Breanna Coe (CC) breannacoe@gmail.com, or Kecia Waldschmidt (PP) keciagerman@hotmail.com for more information. Come make a joyful sound in the city with us!

CHILDREN/YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

There are many ways you can serve as a volunteer with the children and youth ministry at events, with Sunday School, and in the nursery. If you love nurturing children, this is a fun way to make a difference! Volunteers complete a background check and always serve in pairs of two, following our child safety policy. Whether you can help for a few hours a month or on a regular basis, your time and kindness will make a meaningful impact. Sign up for a Sunday nursery childcare slot here: tinyurl.com/2j5dy6fp or contact Pastor Liz at lnickerson@spucc.org to learn more about other opportunities to help.

VOLUNTEER AS A SOCIAL HOUR HOST

Visiting a new church can feel intimidating—especially walking into Social Hour without knowing anyone. We're looking for volunteers to serve as Social Hour hosts. The role is simple: be on the lookout for people you don't know, greet them, and help them feel welcome. They might be new to St. Pauls or simply someone you haven't yet met. Either way, you'll brighten their day and make new friends. You can volunteer once a month, once a quarter, or whenever it works for you. Sign up to host on an upcoming Sunday here: tinyurl.com/3f384fcm.

ST. PAULS MIGRANT HOUSING PROJECT LEGAL FUND

St. Pauls housed five Venezuelan migrant families in our building over the past two years. Today, nearly every single member of these families has achieved legal status, helping to safeguard their presence in Chicago for the time being and allowing them to work. Such legal aid is costly and ongoing. In a time of wild anxiety and uncertainty for these new friends, you can help make a difference for our migrant families by supporting our legal aid fund. If you'd like to make a donation, please choose "Migrant Housing Project - Legal Fund" from the drop-down menu on our giving page: spucc.churchcenter.com/giving.

HAVE SOME ODD JOBS? WE'VE GOT SOME WILLING WORKERS!

As they continue to work at supporting themselves financially, members of our migrant family friends would love to work for you. They are available for such tasks as house cleaning, handyman repairs, moving items, painting, deck-staining, demolition & clean-up, and carpentry on things like deck and dry-wall. We have been assigning work at a rate of \$25/hour and ask that the jobs be a minimum of 3-4 hours. You can find out more by contacting our Migrant Housing Project Coordinator David Brown at dbrown@harrington-brown.com.

"HEALING HEARTS" PET SUPPORT GROUP: ST. PAULS PET LOSS COMMUNITY

Are you struggling with losing a beloved furry friend/companion/animal assistant? Losing a pet can be one of the most heart-wrenching experiences in life. At Saint Pauls, we understand the deep bond you shared with your beloved pet/family member and we're here to offer support, understanding and a virtual shoulder to lean on. To join, visit tinyurl.com/healing-hearts-support. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 7-8 p.m. Age 18+ only, 30 participants maximum.

LITTLE LIGHTS ENROLLMENT 2025-2026

Fall Incentive Rewards program: Register for 25-26 classes by December 2025 and receive \$500 off tuition! Flexible class options and days available. We model and facilitate problem-solving strategies, build empathy and develop self-regulation skills. Through hands-on learning and play, children will benefit from structured socialization and gain a greater sense of themselves within our St. Pauls community. If you are interested in learning more about early education classes for your child, visit our website at www.littlelightslp.org or contact Erin Fitzgerald at erin.fitzgerald@spucc.org.

LOSS AND GRIEVING DISCUSSION GROUP

We've all lost someone we loved. Whether you lost someone you loved last month, last year, or five years ago, you can still grieve that loss. Grief changes, but it never goes away. Would you be interested in sharing stories with others who are in similar situations? We're not therapists, just your friends and neighbors who are also grieving and would like to share our ideas and learn how others are coping. We're planning to start a grief support group at St. Pauls, but we need to make sure there's interest. Please contact Pam Woll at pamelawoll3333@gmail.com if you think this might benefit you.

CREATION CORNER- provided by Green Team

During the holidays we are faced with mounds of paper, packaging and organics. The following is a reminder of what to recycle:

DO NOT RECYCLE:

- Wrapping paper with color or glitter or with embedded plastic
- Ribbons and bows, as they tangle up recycling machines
- Christmas lights

RECYCLE in specialized facilities or special pick-ups:

- Foam packaging
- Christmas trees and wreaths
- Batteries and electronics

RECYCLE:

- Craft or wrapping paper with no embellishments
- Plastic shopping bags (at stores)
- Plain cards and gift tags with no embedded plastic or shiny metals

Finally, compost organics in Chicago city compost bins or through a compost service.

STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. PAULS

Our Stephen Ministers are here for you if you are going through a tough time. Extensively trained in compassionate Christian caregiving, Stephen Ministers are matched confidentially with someone in our congregation who is going through a crisis, such as the death of a loved one, a diagnosis, a divorce, a job loss, etc. They meet with you once a week for an hour to offer support through listening, companionship and prayer. If you wonder whether having a Stephen Minister might be helpful for you, please speak with Pastor Jeff, jcarlson@spucc.org. Every one of us could benefit from a Stephen Minister at some point in our lives.

St. Pauls UCC
Giving Campaign 2026
October 12, 2025 – January 11, 2026
Total: \$798,899.28
Total households pledged: 140

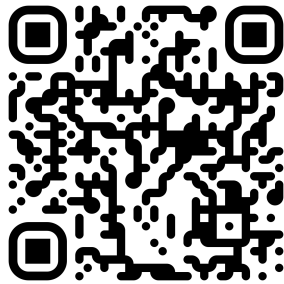
\$1,000,000
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\$100,000

What More Are We Building?

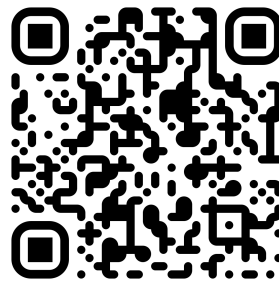
WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Scan the QR codes to discover ways to connect with others.

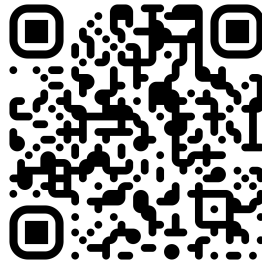
JOIN A GROUP



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



SUBMIT AN ANNOUNCEMENT



For St. Pauls sponsored events, please fill out the new form **by 10 a.m. on Wednesdays for publication in the Friday email and next Sunday bulletin.** Share personal announcements/events on our Facebook group page, St. Pauls Together. **Please limit announcements to 100 words.** Thank you!

TODAY'S MUSIC

We are happy to welcome the **St. Pauls Brass** to worship: Kris Hansen, Jim Brandt, trumpets; Jeanine Woodman, trumpet and flügelhorn; Tom Clancy, Rick Peterson, horns; Nancy Pifer, tenor horn; Mark Swanson, Lorne Frank, trombones.

Bethlehem Down is a Christmas carol originally composed in 1927 by Peter Warlock (1894-1930). Warlock was the pseudonym of Philip Heseltine, who was born and raised in the great Welsh vocal tradition. There is probably no story in music so strange as that of Peter Warlock. In addition to being a composer, in order to earn a living he was a music critic for a London newspaper. When he gave his first recital of compositions under his real name, Heseltine, he was not reviewed favorably by the press in general, and he subsequently decided to take the pseudonym of Peter Warlock. Sadly, his personality started to split and Heseltine the critic wrote very unfavorable reviews of Warlock the composer. Finally, Hesseltine could no longer stand Warlock and his music, announced and carried out his “assassination” of Warlock. If ever there was a plot for an opera, this is it. Although this morning’s setting is for brass, here are the words for the carol composed in 1922 by Warlock’s friend Bruce Blunt (1899-1957). In order to support himself, he was a journalist reporting on wine, gardening and the “turf”, i.e., horse racing and equestrian events.

When He is King, we will give him the King’s gifts,
Myrrh for its sweetness, and gold for a crown,
“Beautiful robes”, said the young girl to Joseph
Fair with her first-born on Bethlehem Down.

Bethlehem Down was full of the starlight
Winds for the spices, and stars for the gold,
Mary for sleep, and for lullaby music,
Songs of a shepherd by Bethlehem fold.

When He is King they will clothe Him in grave-sheets,
Myrrh for embalming, and wood for a crown,
He that lies now in the white arms of Mary
Sleeping so lightly on Bethlehem Down.

Here He has peace and a short time for dreaming,
Close-huddled oxen to keep Him from cold.
Mary for love and for lullaby music
Songs of a shepherd on Bethlehem fold.

The original text for ***Away in a Manger*** was written by Martin Luther (1483-1546) for his own children. The English text for the first stanza that is so familiar is unattributed. The tune, CRADLE SONG, was composed in 1895 by American William J. Kirkpatrick (1838-1905). He was a carpenter by trade and learned his musical skills from his father. In 1878, he left the furniture business to devote his life to music for the church.

Once in Royal David's City became popular as the traditional opening carol of the *Festival of Lessons and Carols* broadcast each year from King's College Chapel at Cambridge in England. The text was composed in 1848, not long after the founding of our St. Pauls UCC, by Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895), the wife of the bishop of Ireland. She wrote many hymn texts specifically for children. The tune, IRBY, was composed in 1849 by Henry J. Gauntlett (1805-1876). Gauntlett became the organist at his father's church and after beginning a career in law, gave it up to become a full-time church musician. He even held patents on organ mechanical parts

The poetry for ***O Little Town of Bethlehem*** has a wonderful story. Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), an American, took a trip to Israel in 1865 at the close of the Civil War. Reverend Brooks spent Christmas 1866 in Bethlehem and, as a result of that visit, this poem poured forth in 1868. ST. LOUIS, which is the tune most Americans know, was also composed in 1868 by Louis Redner (1831-1908), a Sunday School superintendent in Philadelphia. It was composed the night before it was sung at his church and it is the only one for which he is remembered.

Children, Go Where I Send Thee is another spiritual from the rich African American tradition. This arrangement was made in 1998 by Ruth Elaine Schramm (b. 1956). She composed her first song at age 12. After college, she taught elementary music in Pennsylvania for several years. In 1992, she devoted herself to composing full time. She has become a prolific composer, having produced more than 2,000 works, largely of Christian worship music.

O Christmas Tree is also known by its original German title, *O Tannenbaum*. It was translated into English in 1926 by H. Breuckner (1866-1942). Breuckner was born in Iowa and died in rural Nebraska. He was a pastor and also on the faculty of Hebron College in Nebraska. The text models the evergreen pine to never fading faith. The tune, EVERGREEN, is a German folk song of unknown origin.

The original version of ***Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child*** was composed in 1950 by Margaret Allison (1921-2008). She founded the Angelic Gospel Singers in 1944 in Philadelphia, and it survived and thrived even after her passing. They recorded numerous albums and singles. Mark Hayes (b.1953) arranged this song in 1999. His

primary compositions are choral works for Christian worship. In 1986, he was given the Dove Award for Praise and Worship Album of the Year. He also received the Award for Exemplary Leadership in Christian Music from the Baylor University Center for Christian Music Studies.

Angels We Have Heard on High is originally an 18th-century French Noël (carol) freely translated by James Chadwick (1813-1882), an Irish Catholic priest. GLORIA is from the text of the joyfully cascading Latin refrain, which we sing as a Benediction Response after Christmas and during Epiphany.

The words for ***It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*** were written in 1849 by Edmund H. Sears (1810-1876). He was born in this country and moved to England in 1838. Ill health forced him to retire to a quiet life of literature. The well-known music, CAROL, was composed in 1850 by Richard Storrs Willis (1819-1900). He was an American composer particularly drawn to creating hymn tunes.

Theodore Baker (1851-1934) translated the original German into the English we love, ***Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming***. He was born in New York City and immigrated to Germany, where he spent the rest of his life. He famously created Baker's *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, first published in 1900. ES IST EIN' ROS was first published in 1599 in the *Cöln Gesangbuch*.

The poetry for ***What Child Is This?*** was written by W. Chatterton Dix (1837-1898). He composed many hymn texts, but unlike most hymnodists, Dix was a businessman, not clergy. GREENSLEEVES is an English ballad of unknown origin from the 16th century.

Celebrate Rejoice! is a medley in a contemporary gospel style including *Celebrate* by John P. Kee (b. 1962), *Rejoice!* by Richard Smallwood (b. 1948), and the Advent hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. The arrangement was made by Mike Speck and Tim Parton (b. 1970). John P. Kee is an accomplished gospel singer, composer and pastor, whose career spans more than 35 years. Richard Smallwood is one of the most prominent of the current gospel composers and performers. The Richard Smallwood Singers have performed internationally since 1977. Mike Speck is, in addition to composing, a worship leader of Mike Speck Ministries, artist and producer. *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* is thought of as a Christmas carol, but its text definitely references the anticipation of Advent. The original Latin, VENI EMMANUEL, was translated in 1851 by J. M. Neale (1818-1866).

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice is a translation of the original Latin by John Mason Neale (1818-1886). He was born into an evangelical home, became an Anglican clergy, but had real sympathies for Catholicism. IN DULCI JUBILO, which means "in sweet rejoicing," is an early undated folk dance.

Go Now in Peace was composed in 1976 by Natalie Sleeth (1930-1992), who became one of the most performed and popular composers of church anthems especially for children's voices. One of her hymns, *In the Bulb There Is a Flower*, was chosen for our *New Century Hymnal*. She was born in Evanston, received her musical training at Wellesley College, and her husband was a professor of homiletics.

Christmas Is Coming was composed by Vince Guaraldi (1928-1976) and is a musical part of the made-for-TV movie, *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965). He also created music for other animated features, including *Linus and Lucy*. He won a Grammy in 1963 for Best Original Jazz Composition.

Special Music Theme 2025-2026

Joyful Sounds

Enjoy another year of special music during worship services.

Mark these dates in your calendar!

Sunday, March 15, 2026 - Lenten Cantata

***Jesu meine Freude* - Bach**

June 13, 2026 - 7 p.m.

***Gospel Mass* - Robert Ray**

A benefit for the National Gospel Music Museum with Pilgrim Baptist Church, UCAN and St. Sabina Church.

Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church

5141 South State Street

Chicago, IL

ABOUT ST. PAULS

Making a Joyful Sound in the City!

St. Pauls UCC has a vibrant history in the city of Chicago. Founded in 1843, we are one of the city's oldest churches. In 1989, we became one of America's first congregations to declare ourselves "Open and Affirming" of LGBTQ+ people.

From founding Chicago's largest provider of social services to at-risk children to starting a home for the elderly, from housing protestors at the 1968 Democratic Convention to hosting Lincoln Park's first MLK day march against violence on Chicago's streets, we are proud to make a joyful sound in the city.

Most important, during the past 180 years we are glad to have introduced thousands of children and adults to the amazing, inclusive, life changing, uplifting love of God. We do so in worship that is traditional, but far from conventional.

Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald, mfitzgerald@spucc.org

Associate Pastor Jeff Carlson, jcarlson@spucc.org

Associate Pastor Liz Nickerson, lnickerson@spucc.org

For a complete list of St. Pauls Staff, Governance, and Lay Leadership
Please visit www.spucc.org/contact

St. Pauls United Church of Christ
2335 N Orchard St. | Chicago, IL 60614
(773) 348-3829 www.spucc.org

Free Parking is available Sundays from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
at the Lincoln Common Parking Garage, 2316 N. Lincoln Ave.
Parking validation is available in the Narthex.



WELCOME TO SAINT PAULS UCC!

Welcome to those whose hearts are on fire with faith,
and to those who bring their doubt inside our doors.

Welcome to our first time guests and
our longtime members.

Welcome to single people, tiny children,
grandparents and families of all configurations.

Welcome to those who rejoice and to those who grieve.

Welcome to LGBTQ+ people.

Welcome to each and to everyone.

We are blessed by your presence and
we are glad you are here.