

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Weekly Update

December 25 - December 31



276 Church Street, Montrose, PA 18801


Office 570-278-2954, Monday-Thursday 8:15am-3:00pm

Click on link to email St. Paul's: stpaulsmontrose@epix.net

Click on link to go to our Website: <http://stpaulschurchmontrose.org>

Click on link to go to our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsmontrose>

To proclaim God's love by word and example and to seek Christ in one another.

In person worship or you can watch live streamed on YouTube. Go to St. Paul's website <http://stpaulschurchmontrose.org> and click this red button  on the front page, which takes you to our YouTube page.



Donations You can scan the QR Code. Or go to St. Paul's Website and click the Donate Button for online giving. You can mail your tithes & pledges to the church office at 276 Church St., Montrose, PA 18801

Church Closures

Please turn your radio dial to WPEL 96.5 FM. We will announce any closure of our church service on that station.

View from the Pulpit: Mother Liz

Today we celebrate the arrival of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. Mary and Joseph, having been giving shelter from the cold in what we have traditionally been told is a stable (actually, it was a grotto in a cave), are resting from a long night during which Mary gave birth to the Christ. Happy yet exhausted, they marvel at his beauty. And today, we too marvel at the beauty of the Word made flesh, Jesus, God incarnate. As he was born of Mary some two thousand years ago, may he be born anew in our hearts this day.

For those of you so blessed, may your holidays be filled with love and laughter as you gather with family and friends. For anyone who finds this time of year lonely, challenging, or difficult, know that my prayers are with you. If you need to sit and talk, please, do not hesitate to call. And finally, may peace prevail around the world as this year ends and the next one begins. (my cell number is 212-222-8109)

Christmas Prayer*

Gift giving God,
of angels and stars,
magi and shepherds,
promise and hope,
journeys and longing;

God who calls and sends,
blesses and guards,
hides and reveals,
asks and waits,
ancient love,
that is always new;

God of Christmas,
God of our hearts;
may we bear the Christ
to all who need him,
and allow his birth in us again.

Amen.

*Susan K. Bock, *Liturgy for the Whole Church* (New York: Church Publishing, Inc. 2008),

View from the Pew: Dan Graham

Christmas Eve Bus Ride

I grew up in Crafton, Pennsylvania, a small borough outside of Pittsburgh. It was a lot like Montrose in racial and economic makeup and size. My Dad was the night manager of a high-end restaurant and bar downtown and worked from 4 p.m. to closing time. We had an Episcopal church in our town but our family attended Trinity Cathedral in downtown Pittsburgh. On Christmas Eve, we always attended the 11:00 pm service there. My mother, brother, and I would take the 10:00 streetcar and meet my father at his workplace. Dad would close early and we would walk to church getting to see the lighted store windows at Kauffman's and Gimbels along the way. After the service, he would drive us home. It was our Christmas tradition.

In the summer of 1960, our streetcars were replaced by buses and that Christmas Eve we took our first bus ride to church. Because of the day and the lateness of our trip, we were the only passengers on it. This was its last run for the night and when done, it went to the car barn. When the bus door opened, we were greeted by loud singing of Christmas carols. We took our seats in the middle of the bus and off we went. The bus driver sang the entire time we were on the bus – mostly off key and loud but enthusiastically. He didn't seem to know all the words of even the first verses to most of the songs, but that didn't deter him.

I, in my naiveté, found this very funny, and I joined in, but I noticed that my mother was less than amused. When we got to Steuben Street Hill, which was the final hill to town (it was about the same steepness, curvedness, and length as Summit Hill when going to New Milford), the real fun began! Going too fast, he weaved all over the road and we were thrown about in our seats with my mother screeching. This is better than a ride at Kennywood Amusement Park, I thought! Luckily, he didn't hit anything on the way down or overturn, and we made it safely to town. He let us off at our stop and drove away still singing.

Obviously, our bus driver had been nipping some Christmas cheer and we were very fortunate no one was hurt. Drinking aside, I have come to appreciate that like the bus driver, everyone doesn't get time off for a holiday. Our military, nurses, police, firemen, etc. may have to work Christmas Eve or Christmas day. They may have to celebrate Christ's birth while sitting on the DMZ in Korea or taking care of patients in a hospital. So take a moment and give those folks a thought when you are at St. Paul's this year on Christmas Eve, and say thanks for being on duty. I'll be thinking of a sing-ing bus driver long ago who had to give up his to drive a family to a mid-night church service.

By the way, although a memorable one, that was my one and only Christmas Eve bus ride. After that, my Dad "volunteered" to take the bus to town for work that day and my brother, who turned 16, was drafted to drive us to church and meet him there. Merry Christmas.

- Dan Graham

We would love for you to be included!

Article submissions (photos, community news items, or a personal or faith story) are due every Wednesday. This is YOUR newsletter, and all congregants are invited to share their stories and photos. Please email your items to Kate at stpaulsmontrose@epix.net or John Warriner at jdwarri@me.com; post an item to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 276 Church St. Montrose, PA 18801 on Facebook; or drop a note in the offering plate.



Saturday's Service

DEC
24

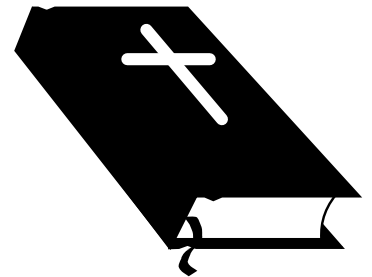
Readings for this Week: This Week's Ministers:

First Reading: Old Testament:
Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm: 80:1-7, 16-18
The Epistle: Romans 1:1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Celebrant: The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski
Altar Guild: Barb U., Carol L. & Carol M.
Announcements: Lynne Graham
Lector: Tom Undercoffler
Organist: Joyce Printz

This week's Hymns:

O' come all ye faithful
Away in a manger
O' little town of Bethlehem
Silent night, holy night
Joy to the world! the lord is come



This week's Gospel according to Matthew:

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.

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!"

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.



Sundays Service

DEC
25



Readings for this Week: This Week's Ministers:

First Reading: Old Testament:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalms: 80:1-7, 16-18

The Epistle: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

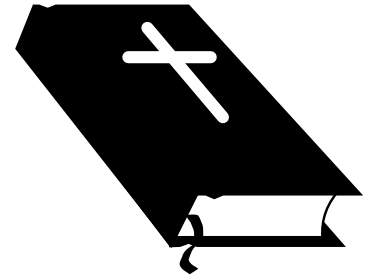
Celebrant: The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski

Altar Guild: Barb U., Carol L. & Carol M.

Lector: Lynne Graham

This week's Hymns:

There will be no music for Christmas Day Service!



This week's Gospel according to John:

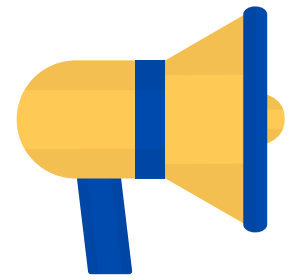
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines 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.

Happenings and Announcements



For those who are ill or have requested our prayers:

Margaret Burgh, Naomi Bennett, Rita Leigh, Charlotte Eckert, Nancy Finlon, Jeannine Ball, Sandy Nagy, Addie Evans, Carol Marker, Ellen Ely, Rev. Janet Watrous, Vanessa Smith.

Pastoral Emergency or Non-Emergency Contact:

You can call the parish office during office hours. After hours, call Mother Liz 212-222-8109.



This Months Birthdays:

Daniel Graham 12/4, James Cain 12/9, Vera Dunn 12/13, John Warriner 12/31



This Months Anniversaries:

No Anniversaries this month; If you would like your Anniversary or your Birthday added to this list, please call Kate in the office.

Our thanksgivings:

We give thanks for those who celebrate their birthdays this week. O God, our times are in your hand: look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives. Amen.

We give thanks for those celebrating wedding anniversaries this week. Grant o God, in your compassion, that those celebrating wedding anniversaries this week may live out the covenant they have made. May they grow in forgiveness, loyalty and love, and come at last to the eternal joys, which you have promised through Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with them this day and forever. Amen.

Are you Safe Church compliant?

Maintaining your required trainings and clearances is vital because it helps us to keep all the people in our congregations safe. Episcopal Church canons require all people who have contact with children in an Episcopal Church to take online trainings to learn best practices, appropriate boundaries, and who to contact if they need help or suspect child abuse. Both Episcopal Church canons and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania laws require everyone who has contact with children and those with any sort of leadership position in the church to obtain background checks.

If you are a clergy person, lay employee, vestry member, volunteer who works with children, or a keyholder in the church, there are steps you need to take to be in compliance with Pennsylvania law and the Episcopal Church Canons.

The learning modules and Safe Church Training site have been recently updated. Learn more about what you need to do in order to be compliant and to keep your church safe. Contact Kate Aukema in the office if you have any questions or concerns about Safe Church compliancy.

Kate will be contacting those whose compliancy status is about to expire to remind them that they must complete the modules to renew their status. It only takes about an hour to complete the modules for renewal.

Please, help us to keep our congregation safe.

Thank you

Mother Liz

Last Week's Service and Events

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT- DECEMBER 18

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
and ev'ry voice a song.

The December 18th live-streamed 10:00 Holy Eucharist Service was led by Mother Liz. Lynne Graham did the announcements and Vickie Calby read as lector. Joyce Printz played the organ and Tom Undercoffler lighted the Advent candles. The service included four hymns along with the Prelude and Postlude. Because of Coats for the Community, Coffee Hour was held in the Guild Room. As you know, our live-streamed services can be watched live or any time on YouTube. Just go to our webpage and hit the red button.

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.



Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.



Greening the Church

On Sunday after church and on Wednesday during the day, the altar guild folks and others greened the church and set the creche up. It looks beautiful. Thanks to all the parishioners who contributed for Christmas flowers. Big thank yous also go to Carol Lasher, Betty Smith, Carol Marker, Nancy Dooling, Barb and Tom Undercoffler, Vickie Calby, Mary Zalewski, Wanda Peirce, Lynne Graham and Vera Dunn.



Coats for the Community

Coats for Our Community is having its final distribution for the year at St. Paul's this week. Always coinciding with Interfaith's food and toy distribution days, this year it was December 21st and 22nd. We don't yet have a final count of how many coats were distributed, but it will be about 1,300. Thanks to everyone who donated a coat or helped with distribution. We made our neighbors a little warmer this year.



Ready for Christmas Service



MID-DECEMBER IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas.” On Sunday we begin 12 days of Christmas. There’s snow, and the stores are crowded. It’s hard to find parking at Price Chopper. We got about eight inches of snow on Saturday last and it hung around. It was wet and heavy and isn’t helping our hedges. We have a new shoveler/plower whose name is Justin Peake. If you see him, say hello. See everybody on Christmas Eve at 7:00.

