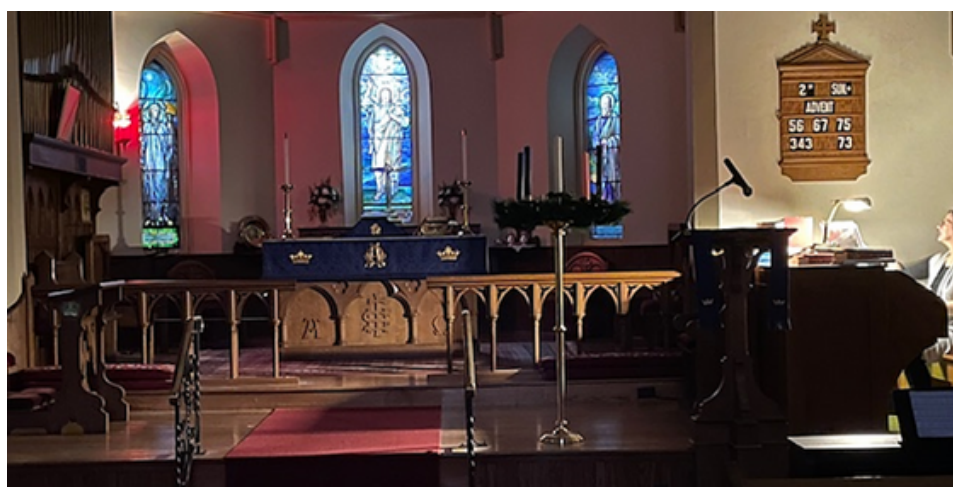


ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Weekly Update

December 17 - December 23



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.

Our Vestry Members

The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski

Lynne Graham, Sr. Warden

Vickie Calby, Jr. Warden

John Finlon, Treasurer

Sandy Seeger, Clerk

Tom Undercoffler

John Warriner

Vera Dunn

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:

“Repent and follow me!”

In this second week of Advent, it is worth contemplating the meaning of repentance. What are we repenting of, you may well ask? —It is well worth thinking about. My thought is that it is our failures that we most need to repent of. O I don’t mean the usual failures that life throws at us: failures of marriage, failing with our children; failing to achieve our dreams. No, our failures can be summed up in one word: ‘Baptism!’

“How can we fail at Baptism?” you ask. “Surely, you just must turn up, get splashed with water, say a prayer and get anointed with holy oil. “—True, but there is more to Baptism than that. You see, Baptism is not just a Rite of Passage, or even a singular event in our past. Baptism is an activity. It is a promise to live in a particular way and every day. Baptism calls us to live in a different way each and every day.

Everyday we are called to follow Christ. Every day we are mandated to know his teaching and to live it in our lives. O yes, we are told to reject, sin, the devil and evil, but that is only a minimum requirement. Baptism is supposed to be transforming. It is why we are dressed in a white gown. It is why a priest wears a white alb and a bride a white wedding dress. It states that we have been washed clean in the ‘blood of the Lamb’, Jesus Christ.

Baptism makes us disciples of Jesus Christ, called to be like him in all things. We witness and care about what he cared about: our fellow man, the poor, the sick, the addict, the lonely, the sinner, the marginalized, the rejected. On the trail of life there are many twists and turns and opportunities for tripping ourselves up. We all find distractions and dreams that are mere illusions.

Advent calls us to renew our Baptismal promises and to reset the GPS of our lives. Somehow, despite our circumstances, we must find a way of bringing Christ back into the center of our lives. All the readings of Advent from Isaiah in the Old Testament, to the Nativity Stories of Matthew and Luke, in the New Testament teach us the lessons we need. “Turn back to me” God begs the people of Israel. —Repent and Prepare the way of the Lord—Prepare your life for Christ to enter in “ says John the Baptist.

Advent reminds us that Jesus too began in humble circumstances. That he too faced the perils and dangers of life. Following his story, we too are asked to bend our will to the good and the purpose that God has for each one of us. We learn, almost too late in life, that ambition, wealth, fame, and power take us no where on the road that we must walk. Following Jesus, copying Jesus, living with the love and care he gave others, grows us in ways that survive that last journey. Christ is our everything. Advent says “Repent!”—It is an invitation we should take up with eagerness. Let us follow and live this Baptism each and every day. Amen.

Fr. Bill.

View from the Pew:



Ring in the Christmas Spirit

Admittedly, I take great pleasure in watching people. Dan would say that I'm more than a people watcher. He brings me up short by saying, "You're staring." I know it's rude, but somehow I'm drawn to the outward expression of other people's lives. This week, I had a real opportunity to indulge in my bad habit. For the first time ever, I volunteered to ring the Salvation Army bell for "red kettle" Christmas donations at Price Chopper for two hours. What a hoot!

At first, I thought I would be embarrassed to be "asking" for money, but instead, I saw myself as the entrance greeter. I looked each person in the eye and smiled and said "Good morning!" Very few people avoided making eye contact as if pretending that they didn't see me would excuse them from responding. What a slice of life—young mothers toting toddlers and lugging car seats in the other arm; residents from the Square dropped off by SWCT transportation then zipping around in the electric scooters with a basket; sons bringing their elderly mothers who walked with canes at a snail's pace; quarry workers grabbing lunch; young 20-somethings out together for errands; and delivery men to name a few.

Almost everyone put something in the red bucket. If they didn't on the way in, they would on the way out. The women would park their shopping carts and rummage through their purses. Many people had money in their hands when they left the cashier with the intent of donating. I thought people just dropped coins in those red kettles, but I was wrong. People donated \$5, \$10, and even \$20. Some dropped in coins saying, "Sorry, this is all I have." I was blown away by the generosity I encountered. It absolutely warmed my heart and I found myself wondering why we can't all be so caring and generous every day of the year.

If my legs weren't so tired from standing still for two hours, I could have people-watched for a lot longer. Those strangers renewed my faith in humanity. The good in people's hearts shines as we wait for the Light of Christmas.

- Lynne 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.

Sundays Service

Dec
17



Readings for this Week:

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm: Psalm 126

The Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Gospel: John 1:6-8,19-28

This Week's Ministers:

Celebrant: The Rev. Elizabeth Grohowski

Altar Guild: Sandy S. & Nancy D.

Announcements: Lynne Graham

Lector:

Hospitality:

This week's Hymns:

Hark! the glad sound! the Savior comes

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

O day of peace

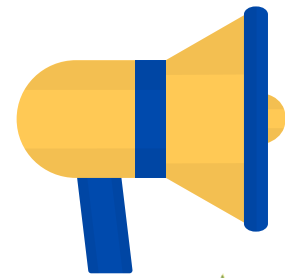


This week's Gospel according to: John

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.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Happenings and Announcements

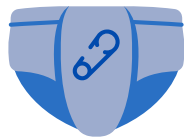


Greening of the Church



This Sunday December 17th, we will be “Greening the Church” or in other words, decorating for Christmas at 11:30.

We hope to see you there!



Diaper Drive

The church is still accepting diapers for the diaper drive! If you aren't planning on buying diapers or going to the store, you can make a donation to us so that we can buy them for you!

We thank you in advance for your donations.



For those who are ill or have requested our prayers:

Margaret Burgh, Naomi Bennett, Rita Leigh, Nancy Finlon, Carol Marker, Ellen Ely, Rev. Janet Watrous, Chris Moffett, Richard Van Auken, Bishop Michael Curry, Bob Dunn

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:

Dan Graham 12/4, Vera Dunn 12/13, John Warriner 12/31



This Months Anniversaries:

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.

Last Week's Service and Events

LAST SUNDAY - Second Sunday of Advent– December 10, 2023

There's a voice in the wilderness crying,
a call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway,
a highway for our God!

The live-streamed December 10th, 2023, 10:00 Holy Eucharist Service was officiated by Mother Liz. Lynne did announcements, Ben served as acolyte, Vickie read as lector and Jeanette Davis played the organ. As you know, our live-streamed services can be watched live or anytime on YouTube. Just go to our webpage and hit the red button.

The valleys shall be exalted,
the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places
where the Lord, our God, may go!



Sleeping Bags

Sleeping bags meet 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. They are gearing up for winter. As always, they could use some help. As they say, if you can tie a knot, you can help out. Here's David and Barb solving an issue, and John, Barb, and Carol laying one out.



Blizzard of 1993

Wow, that's a lot of snow! There should be a bunch of us around who remember the big snow of 1993. We were able to date the picture by the court house tower being repaired.



Ready for Christmas

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, everywhere you go. St. Paul's has our wreaths on our doors and the neighbors have Mr. Snowman out.



December Snow

On this Sunday one year ago, December 18, 2022, it was snowing pretty hard and the photographer caught a picture of John Warriner going to church. “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays...” St. Paul’s parishioners from going to church.” It snowed this year on December 11th.



Coffee Hour

“Did You Hear The One About ...” Good friends, good conversation, St. Paul’s coffee hour is always worth staying for. Come and join us or sign up for providing a light snack. The fireplace is calling you.



Soup Night

On Wednesday this week, our monthly soup night was such a hit that we had to put a “Sold Out” sign on the door. Pots of Minestrone and Chicken Gnocchi were served up with a salad, cookie, and roll. Our soups for next month, January 3rd, will be chili and split pea. We could always use a pot of your homemade soup. Come and join the fun.



EARLY DECEMBER IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

“On Jordan's bank, the Baptist's cry, Announces that the Lord is nigh; Awake, and hearken, for he brings, Glad tidings of the King of kings!” Orange sunsets before the snow. This Monday was a winter wonderland. The trees were drop dead gorgeous.

Great to walk in. Beavers have moved onto the pond and settled in for winter.

Christmas is still a week away, but winter starts next week.

