

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Weekly Update

December 29- January 4



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.


Pastoral Emergency or Non-Emergency Contact:

You can call the parish office during office hours. After hours, call John Warriner at 570-278-2317.

Our Vestry Members

John Warriner, Sr. Warden	Vickie Calby, Jr. Warden
John Finlon, Treasurer	Wanda Peirce, Clerk
Jack Lasher	Dan Graham
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: Father Bill

Lost on the Road to Bethlehem

Christmas is a nostalgic time, when old faces return to memory. Maybe it is the timeless element that the season conveys. Time seems to stand still at Christmas, and all our Christmases blend as one.

One year I traveled far from home come Christmas time and found myself on Christmas Eve and the whole of Christmas Day, lost in France. I swore that I would never again leave home, at Christmas. Yet, there was something about being lost in a foreign country that forever stayed with me. It reminded me that Joseph and Mary traveled far from home, over one hundred miles, and found nowhere to stay.

Gone was the illusion of those romantic cozy pictures of starry nights, angels, a lamplight stable, and the glow of Shepherds and Wise Men, surrounding the Christ child. Instead, there was the stark reality of being lost and homeless on a dark road, in a foreign place. I remember the cold, the fear, and the desperation, and the longing for home, and its warm safety.

I wondered how far you can travel in any one day, with Joseph leading the donkey carrying Mary? Walking at 4 miles per hour, people can generally make 16 miles in one day. That is four hours of walking with at least two rest breaks. Long before dark, there must be a stop to find a place for the night, a water source, and some shelter. Building a fire, collecting firewood, for the night, cooking a hot meal, consumes the late afternoon, and early evening.

Thinking about this, I hoped Joseph and Mary traveled in a large group, as was the custom. A group provides protection and support, from thieves, wild animals, and the dangers of kidnap and ransom. Traveling alone in those days would be perilous. I felt that on that Christmas day hiking out across Brittany in the dark, along lonely roads, and through dense forest.

Maybe Joseph should have planned the trip better. Could they not have arranged to stay with Elizabeth and Zechariah, as Mary had done some many months earlier? —No matter how full of symbolism and grace the nativity story appears, in Luke and Matthew's Gospels, the reality must have been much bleaker.

It will be bleak this Christmas Night, in Gaza also. There may be no snow, but nights can be cold in the Mediterranean. There will be little comfort, nothing cozy, and probably limited shelter. There will be children without parents; wives without husbands; grandparents with no one, and little food to share. You can reach Bethlehem in one day from Northern Gaza. The same stars will shine this Christmas Night in the sky, that shone when Christ was born, 2000 years ago. There will be no shepherds, no Wise Men, and no cozy stable. There will be that sense of loss, loss of family, friends, and the loss of peace.

This Christmas please pray for Peace. Pray for the people of Gaza, the people of Ukraine, and the people of South Sudan. Cherish those around you this Christmas and allow your home to be that shelter of love so many needs. Amen.

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 Gimbel's 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 both loud and enthusiastically. He seemed to know the first verse of most of the songs, but after that it got a little shaky. But deterred he was not.

I, in my naiveté, found this very funny, and sang along, 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 Christmas 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 singing bus driver long ago who had 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.

Have a Merry Christmas.

Sundays Service

Dec
29



First Sunday After Christmas

Readings for this Week:

First Reading: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm: 147

The Epistle: Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7

Gospel: John 1:1-18

This Week's Ministers:

Celebrant: Vickie Calby

Altar Guild: Barb U. & Sandy S.

Announcements: John Warriner

Lector: Ellen Ely

Hospitality:

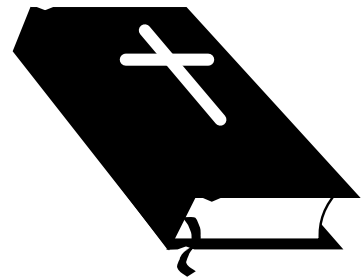
This week's Hymns:

Joy to the world! the Lord is come

All glory be to God on high

Of the Father's love begotten

Away in a manger



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. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Happenings and Announcements

Merry Christmas!



For those who are ill or have requested our prayers:

Margaret Burgh, Naomi Bennett, Rita Leigh, Nancy Finlon, Carol Marker, Harry Peirce, Linda Landis, Todd Davies



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

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22, 2024

Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding:
"Christ is nigh!" it seems to say,
"Cast away the dreams of darkness,
O ye children of the day!"

The December 22nd, 2024, live-streamed 10:00 Morning Prayer service was officiated by John Warriner who also read the announcements. Tom Undercoffler served as lector. Penny Jagers played a prelude, 3 hymns and a postlude on the piano. 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.



Greening the Church

It was the last Sunday of Advent, and we greened the church.



Remember our old Manger

Our old Wood Stable for Nativity Set on stand. Stable 45 inches wide, 22 inches deep, and 33 inches high; stand 34 inches high. Actually it was more of a hotel than a stable.



South Main Street

Here's an old picture of South Main Street with Holy Name of Mary on the left. The horse is coming out of Jackson Street. It snowed back then too.



Collections for Diapers

Once again, during Advent, we will sponsor a community diaper drive to help us focus on the birth of Jesus. Please bring in donations of any size diapers and put them on the chairs in the choir section. Thank you for your generosity.

Christmas' of Old at St. Paul's



MID- DECEMBER IN SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY

“I heard the bells on Christmas Day, Their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet, The words repeat, Of peace on earth, good-will to men!” The blues of winter have arrived. The weather turned snowy and cold, cold, cold. It was 8 degrees at Church this Sunday.

