

*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

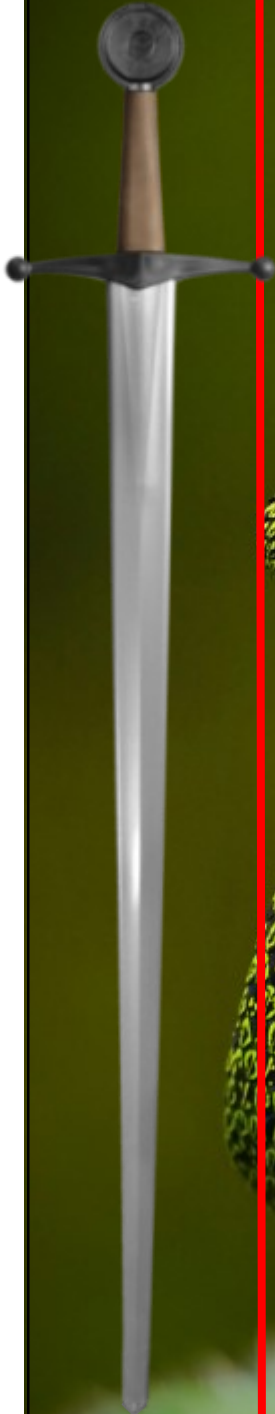
SWORD POINTS

December 12, 2024

www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587

✠ **HAPPY ADVENT,
YOU BROOD OF VIPERS!**



† John the Baptizer

These middle two Sundays of Advent our gospel readings have focused on the ministry of John the Baptist. Who is he and what does he represent?

Our principal sources of information about John the Baptist are (1) references to his birth in the first chapter of Luke, (2) references to his preaching and his martyrdom in the Gospels, with a few references in Acts, and (3) references in Josephus to his preaching and martyrdom, references which are consistent with the New Testament ones, but sufficiently different in the details to make direct borrowing unlikely.



According to the Jewish historian Josephus (who wrote after 70 AD), John the Baptist was a Jewish preacher in the time of Pontius Pilate (AD 26-36). He called the people to repentance and to a renewal of their covenant relation with God. He was imprisoned and eventually put to death by Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great, who was king when Jesus was born) for denouncing Herod's marriage to Herodias, the wife of his still-living brother Philip. In order to marry

Herodias, Herod divorced his first wife, the daughter of King Aretas of Damascus, who subsequently made war on Herod, a war which, Josephus tells us, was regarded by devout Jews as a punishment for Herod's murder of the prophet John.

Symbolically, John represents the climax of the long tradition of Jewish prophets looking forward to the promised deliverance, but that the deliverance itself is a greater thing. John is the climax of the Law. He lives in the wilderness, a life with no frills where food and clothing are concerned. He has renounced the joys of family life, and dedicated himself completely to his mission of preaching, of calling people to an observance of the law, to ordinary standards of virtue. In terms of natural goodness, no one is better than John. But he represents Law, not Grace. Among men born of woman, among the once-born, he has no superior. But anyone who has been born anew in the kingdom of God has something better than what John symbolizes. (Note that to say that John symbolizes something short of the Kingdom is not to say that John is himself excluded from the Kingdom.)

John is the last voice of the Old Covenant, the close of the Age of Law. Jesus is the first voice of the New Covenant, the beginning of the Age of Grace. Accordingly, John is born to an elderly, barren woman, born when it is really too late for her to be having a child, while Jesus is born to a young virgin, born when it is really too early for her to be having a child. John is announced (and conceived) at the autumnal equinox, when the leaves are dying and falling from the trees. Jesus is announced (and conceived) at the vernal equinox, when the green buds are bursting forth on the trees and there are signs of new life everywhere. John is born when the days are longest, and from his birth on they grow steadily shorter. Jesus is born when the days are shortest, and from his birth on they grow steadily longer. John speaks truly when he says of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

by James Keifer



Zephaniah describes God’s love and joy in us. “He will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.” God yearns for us to respond to him in the same glorious and enthusiastic way he models for us. Caring stewards use the holy habits of prayer, study, worship in community, and generous giving to respond to the Lord’s overwhelming, freely-given gifts.



Year End Donations - Donors must deliver checks on or by Sunday, December 29th in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2024. Checks that are placed in the church offering on the first or subsequent Sundays in 2025 will not qualify for a charitable contribution for 2024, even if the check is predated to 2024 or actually written in 2024.



† *This Week at St. Paul's*

- Thu, Dec 12 - 8:00 am - PraiseBarre (*Zoom*)
- 9:30 am - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room
- 7:00 pm - Lessons & Carols Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- Sat, Dec 14 - 7:30 am - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford
- 8:00 am - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall
- 9:00 am - PraiseMoves (*Zoom*)
- 10:00 am - Greening of the Church, Sanctuary
- Sun, Dec 15 - The Third Sunday of Advent
- 8:00 am - **Traditional Holy Communion** (*YouTube Live*)
- 9:30 am - Adult Class, Guild Room
- 10:30 am - **Christmas Pageant & Contemporary Holy Communion** (*YouTube Live*)
- 5:00 am - **Lessons & Carols** (*YouTube Live*)
- 7:00 pm - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (*Zoom*)
- Mon, Dec 16 - 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall (*YouTube Live*)
- Tues Dec 17 - 9:30 am - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room
- 7:00 pm - Scout Troop #5
- Wed, Dec 18 - 8:00 am - PraiseMoves (*Zoom*)
- 10:00 am - **Holy Communion & Healing** (*YouTube Live*)
- Thu, Dec 19 - 8:00 am - PraiseBarre (*Zoom*)
- 9:30 am - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room
- 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- Sat, Dec 21 - 7:30 am - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford
- 8:00 am - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall
- 9:00 am - PraiseMoves (*Zoom*)
- Sun, Dec 22 - The Fourth Sunday of Advent
- 8:00 am - **Traditional Holy Communion** (*YouTube Live*)
- 9:30 am - Adult Class, Guild Room
- 10:30 am - Sunday School, Classrooms
- 10:30 am - **Contemporary Holy Communion** (*YouTube Live*)
- 7:00 pm - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (*Zoom*)

Check our website daily for schedule updates.



Christmas Pageant



Lessons and Carols



The Priest-in-Charge **WEEKLY**

Fr. Nate, our Priest-in-Charge is distributing a weekly e-mail to communicate things directly from his desk to yours. **Connection, communication, and care** are among the highest priorities of his new ministry, and he wants to make sure there are regular touch points between us. If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **already receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, you don't have to do anything - you're already included on the list! If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **DO NOT receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, or if you want to opt out, write Fr. Nate at priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com and let him know.



† Rejoice Always

Some people think that religion must always be very serious and even somber. "It's not supposed to be fun!" But, Sunday's readings are a reminder that true religion should be joyful. In the New American Bible the single word "joy" appears 219 times; while the words "sad," "sadden," "saddens," "sadly," and "sadness" occur only a total of 24 times.

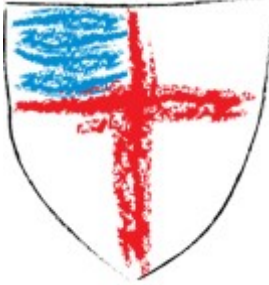
We celebrate two "Joy" Sundays: the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete, Latin for "Rejoice") and the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare, another Latin word for "Rejoice"). We are supposed to be somewhat sad during Advent, but we cannot help but be filled with joy because we know how the story ends, with the Nativity.



† Quilt Drawing

Tickets are being sold each Sunday during coffee hour for these beautiful Christmas quilts. All the proceeds will benefit Father Nate's discretionary fund. The tickets will be available after each service and the drawing will be held on Sunday, December 22nd. Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20.





† Ih-pis-kuh-puh I / Dik-shuh-ner-ee

(Episcopal Dictionary)



† **Worship**

/ wur-ship /

Worship - The term, from the Anglo Saxon, means to pay someone what is their due. It was used in the sixteenth century relative to God and human beings. In the Sarum and English Prayer Book marriage rites, the groom said to the bride, ". . . with my body I thee worship." Certain British magistrates are still addressed as "Your Worship." Today, it refers to the paying of divine honor to God. It is both a verb and a noun, used to translate the Latin verb *adorare* and the noun *cultus* and their equivalents in other languages. It was defined by Evelyn Underhill as "the response of the creature to the Eternal." It is a very broad term concerning acts of adoration, which may be as diverse as private prayer and meditation, public corporate liturgies, prayer services, or cultic sacrifices. Christian worship, both individual and corporate, is offered through and in the name of Jesus Christ.



Potential Tax Savings - If you meet the following requirements, your normal donation to Saint Paul's can result in a tax savings for you. This program is called "A Qualified Charitable Distribution." The two requirements are: 1) The contributor must be 70 years and 6 months old. 2) A retirement account must already be in place. This can be an IRA or a 401K account. For further information contact Jim Miller at (203) 426-4022 or Chuck Allen at stpaulstreasurer@charter.net.

HOW DO PEOPLE START ATTENDING CHURCH?

- A Friend Invited Me - 86%
- Organized Visitation - 6%
- Invited by the Pastor - 6%
- Advertising - 2%

REJOICE!
In God's blessings in your life.

GIVE to your EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH

† **The Silver Lining**

[Zephaniah 3:14-20](#); [Canticle 9](#); [Philippians 4:4-7](#); [Luke 3:7-18](#)

There is no better place to observe the majesty of nature than from a place with an unrestricted horizon. Sitting on the beach and looking out over the ocean reminds us that we are not the center of the universe - even if we live as if we are the center of our lives. Other than watching the various ocean vessels, shrimp boats, airplanes, birds, and dolphins, we can plot the direction and track of the clouds. Some clouds appear on the horizon and then disappear. Other clouds are spread thin by the winds and give texture to the sky. Still others begin as tiny specks on the horizon and then grow into dark and angry storms.

These developments are visible to everyone, but wise beach-walkers keep their eyes on the sky. When clouds begin to build, they can anticipate that change is in the wind. The feeling of urgency and anxiety increases with the clouds as the storm grows and approaches the area of the beach on which they stand. Prudence dictates that they take heed of the danger and find safe shelter.

Alternatively, if we watch the same scenario through the window of our beachfront condo, we will observe the same things and share the same feeling of awe as the storm approaches. What will be different, however, is the absence of a feeling of fear and danger when a storm is witnessed from the protection of a secure dwelling. The event is the same, but the experience is different because of our circumstances. In both cases, the observer anticipates the storm, but in the case of the beach-walker it is a source of a healthy fear, while the condo-dweller is free to experience the beauty and power of nature.

In Advent, we watch the gathering clouds on the horizon. Something is coming. As John announced, Someone is coming. The Son has come into the world - onto our beach - but the clouds are still gathering on the horizon. So we, as the Church, are to watch and wait because there is something more to come. The future holds something more than the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As the shadow of the cross is cast across the crèche, and the empty grave yawns beyond the cross, the Second Coming appears as a small cloud in the sunny skies of Easter morning.

In this life all of us fall into one of three groups. The first is that subpopulation of people who ignore all that is going on around them. They continue to swim, play, and

read, totally self-absorbed in their activities until they are suddenly whipped by the wind and soaked by the rain, or endangered by lightning. The beach-walkers represent the second category. They watch and worry, but will execute their plan for escape as best they can when, and if, the storm hits. The third group is populated by the condo-dwellers - those who experience the storm from the vantage point of a secure dwelling.

The Word of God through the prophet Zephaniah is for all of us in the Church - the blissfully unaware, the fearfully ill-prepared, and the faithfully secure. The silver lining in the storm clouds of the Last Day is the Lord's salvation. With the consummation of the kingdom at Jesus' return, those who have made their dwelling place with God through faith will realize his promise of eternal life.

Those who ignore the clouds on the horizon due to their self-absorption, and those who attempt to experience the storm relying on their own power, will never see the silver lining in the storm clouds. Only those who watch the storm from the secure vantage point of their faith in God will experience the fulfillment of God's promise - a life lived in the presence of the light of the eternal Son.

Look It Up:

[1 John 4:15-17](#)

Think About It:

What role does the return of Jesus play in your life?

- by Chuck Alley, *The Living Church*, 2024

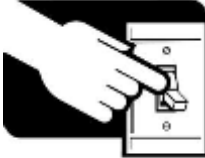


*Sandy Sunrise |
John Spade/
Flickr*



† Lessons and Carols: Save the Date!

Our annual Festival of Lessons and Carols will be held on Sunday, December 15 at 5:00 pm. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this beautiful Advent service which consists of Scripture readings about the birth of Jesus interspersed with the singing of traditional carols led by our choir. What a truly wonderful way to prepare your heart, mind, and voice for Christmas! Bring a friend.



TURN IT OFF

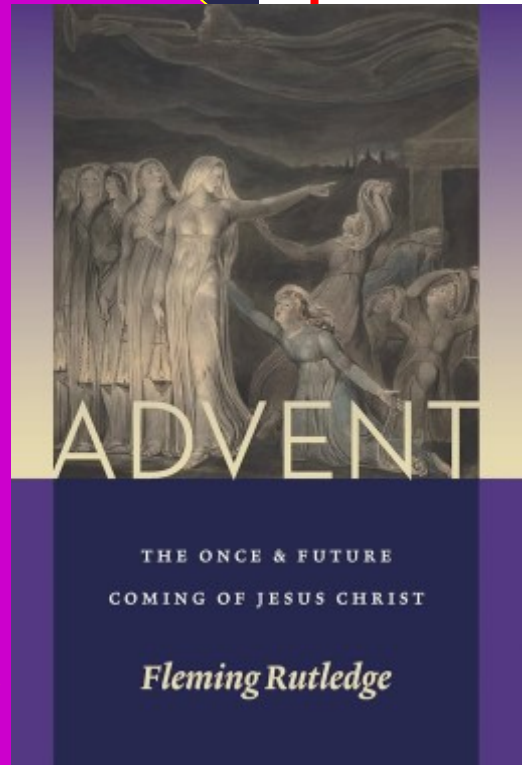
† Good Stewardship Begins At Home: *Our Home*

Please remind all who use our home to be good stewards by turning off lights, closing curtains, turning down thermostats, cleaning up after themselves and locking doors when they are leaving, especially as cold weather and temperatures consume more energy.

† Advent Thought for Reflection

from Fr. John Morrison

Vaclav Havel, the poet-playwright and former president of the Czech Republic, said that the role of the theater is to remind people that "the time is getting late, that the situation is grave." To this Fleming Rutledge added, "that's very similar to the mood of [Advent]. The entire thrust of this season is designed to bring us face-to-face with reality - reality about sin and death, reality about the human race, reality about God. Something ultimate has entered our world, something or Someone that calls us to attention, calls us out of our daily preoccupations and our routine points of view. That is what this season with its special biblical readings is designed to reveal."



Fleming Rutledge, Sermon preached at Trinity Episcopal Church, Columbus, Georgia 2003, collected in *Advent: The Once and Future Coming of Jesus Christ*, pp. 238-239



† Helping Our Neighbors

Here is an update about St. Paul's ongoing food-related ministries serving our community:

Drive Thru Food Collection - occurs every other Wednesday from 11 am - noon. We have now held 122 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time our trucks delivered to Bethel Community Food Pantry and the Jericho Partnership in Danbury.

Our next food collection, will be Thursday, December 26th and will support the Bethel Community Food Pantry, and the Jericho Food Pantry in Danbury.

Thank you all for your ongoing generosity and to the many volunteers who have helped to load the trucks and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection Thursday December 26th



*Help us,
Help others
have a Merry
Christmas*

11 am to Noon

If you would like to request Altar flowers for a particular Sunday in Memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out an envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to dszen@yahoo.com or contact David Szen.



† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist in the Desert,

Painted by Massimo Stanzione (1585-1656),
Oil on canvas, painted ca. 1635,
© Museo del Prado-Pintura, Madrid, Spain



This painting shows John the Baptist among a crowd as he thunders his message of repentance. It is one of a series of four canvases on the life of John the Baptist by Massimo Stanzione: “*The Birth of John the Baptist*” announced to Zacharias, “*The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist*,” “*The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*,” and “*Saint John the Baptist leaving his Father’s House*.”

The history of the painting is fascinating. It was commissioned by the Order of Discalced Carmelites for their church in Naples, Italy that was completed in 1634. The work represents the moment when Saint John the Baptist preaches in the desert, preparing the way for the arrival of Jesus. Stanzione manages to capture the intensity and importance of this Biblical moment through his detailed and moving depiction.

A great rival of Jusepe de Ribera, Massimo Stanzione ranks among the leading painters in Naples in the first half of the 17th century.

Regarding the artistic style, Stanzione was a leading painter of the Italian Baroque and this work is a clear example of his mastery of this style. The Baroque is characterized by its drama and emotion, and Stanzione manages to convey this through his depiction of the biblical scene. The realism of the characters and the attention to detail in their facial expressions and gestures demonstrate the technical skill of the artist.

St. John holds a cross in his left hand and, in a gesture, his right-hand points towards heaven. This may signify that salvation is gained through prayer and the sacrament of baptism.

St. John tells us in our reading Sunday that all that gets in the way of love for God and neighbor must go. His message is very straightforward showing that St. John was a no nonsense preacher and didn’t water down his message. There is not much time left, repent now! He is calling for real conversion. He doesn’t just want us to make some small adjustments or tweaks to our lives, no, John wants us to change the entire direction of our life. He called for a change of heart, for a radical transformation.

Advent is the time for transformation!

† Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible Study

The Women's Tuesday morning Bible Study meets every Tuesday from 9:30 to 11 am in the Guild Room. They are currently studying Proverbs to discuss and uncover the foundation of wisdom, mark out the paths that make us wise, and points us to the ultimate source of all true understanding: Jesus Christ

All are welcome to join in person or through Zoom. The link is available on our website, or contact Mary Beth Durkin durkin.mb@gmail.com for the Zoom link and further information.



† Wednesday Service Growing in Popularity

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer has been growing consistently. With live music and a brief homily, this service is just what you need to sustain you through the week. Come join us and check it out or watch on YouTube Live.



† Praying for the 1/3 of our world that are still unreached with the Gospel.

Chaungtha

Country: Myanmar | Population: 186,000 | Language: Rakhine | Main Religion: Buddhism | Evangelical: 0.07%

The Chaungtha are historically and ethnolinguistically related to the Burmese. Because of this, in recent decades their identity has been eroded as an increasing number of Chaungtha choose to identify themselves as Burmese, hoping to benefit from being aligned with the majority ruling people in Myanmar. Unfortunately, no missions agencies are currently working among the Chaungtha, and no part of the Bible has been translated into their language. The reason is probably because they use the Burmese script, and their language is so close to Burmese, that it didn't warrant its own translation. In the future, it is possible that the Chaungtha may cease to exist as a distinct ethnicity, as they are already well on the path to being assimilated by the Burmese. Pray that they would maintain their cultural uniqueness. Pray that the few Christian Chaungtha in Myanmar would be a witness to their people.



† **Transforming Saints of God**
Thursday, December 12th

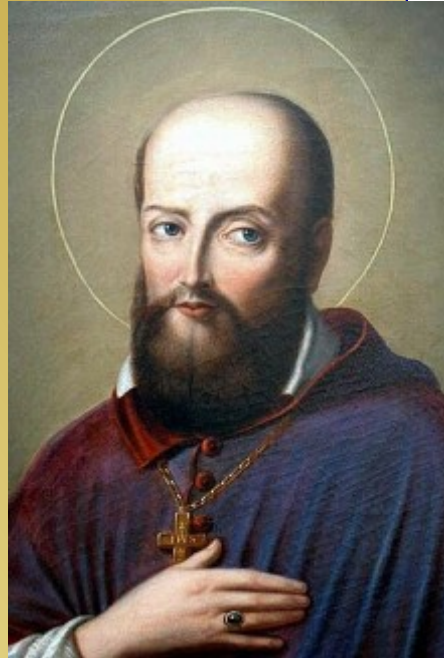
Francis de Sales
Bishop, 1622

and Jane de Chantal
Vowed Religious, 1641

Francis de Sales served as the Roman Catholic bishop of Geneva from 1567 to 1622, but today he is primarily known for his writings on prayer and spiritual direction, particularly his work *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

As a young man, Francis studied for a political career, but he was deeply anxious for his salvation, prone to melancholy and despair, and was convinced that he has been predestined for damnation. In 1587, however, while a visitor at a church in Paris, he had a profound experience of the love of God. This sense of God's love and mercy would mark his writings on the spiritual life from that time forward. In response to this overwhelming sense of God's love, Francis changed his trajectory and resolved to become a priest.

In 1602 he became bishop of Geneva, although he was forced to remain in the parts of his diocese that were outside of the city, since Geneva itself was under Calvinist control. He wrote a number of books on the spiritual life which stressed the importance of love for God and neighbor rather than focusing on sin and penance, and which were notable in being directed toward laypeople. The influence of his *Introduction to the Devout Life* was not limited to Roman Catholic circles, but informed Protestant spiritual writers as well, including many Anglicans. In addition to his writing, Francis worked with Jane de Chantal in her foundation of a new religious order for women, the Congregation of the Visitation.



Jane de Chantal was a wealthy young widow with four small children. In her grief, she resolved never to remarry. She devoted herself instead to caring for the poor and the sick, to raising her children, and to managing her late husband's estates. Francis de Sales would become her spiritual director in 1604.

In 1610, Francis and Jane established the Congregation of the Visitation. Initially devoted to serving the poor and the sick, the order gradually evolved in a more contemplative direction. During Jane's 31 years in the community, she gave spiritual direction to a number of women and men in the form of letters, many of which have been preserved. Unusually, her order actively welcomed women as sisters who would not be considered by other orders because of their poor health or advanced age. When others questioned the wisdom of this decision, Jane merely replied, "What would you have me do? I rather like sick people myself. I'm on their side." By the time she died in 1641, the order had already grown to include 34 houses.



† **Transforming Stewardship**

“Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

St. Paul reminds us that our God is an abundant God, the ultimate giver of gifts. He promises to give us all that we need. When we trust that God will take care of us, it is easier for us to share what we have been given.



HOME ALONE

Don't Be Left Home Alone for Christmas!

Joanne Siergiej would like to invite anyone who will be alone or couples that will miss not sharing the holiday with a loved one or one who lives far from church and needs a warm house between services -- to my house Christmas Eve from 3 pm^{ish} to 8 pm. Come what ever time suits you in that time frame. A simple supper will be served at 6^{ish}. Please bring a favorite Christmas dish to share.

RSVP by text or call at 203-241-4223.



† **Advent Adult Series**

What are you doing this Advent to prepare for Christ's coming? Consider joining us for a challenging and informative video based series entitled "John the Baptist: Prepare the Way for the Lord." For two thousand years Christians have turned to the story and message of John the Baptist in leading up to Christmas. In this video series, Adam Hamilton explores the Advent themes of John's life and ministry, and how John calls all followers of Jesus to prepare our hearts and lives for his coming. The class starts at 9:30 am in the Guild Room.

Watch in coming weeks for the complete listing of our 12 Days of Christmas events!



THE GOSPEL OF
LUKE

1M any have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled[a] among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully

Our Men meet weekly study on Monday nights. This time they're dissecting the Gospel of Luke. Join them each Monday night at 7 pm in Crocker Hall. All the studies are available live on YouTube.

† **Pharisees & Tax Collectors**

Jesus strongly condemned religious hypocrisy. He illustrates this with a story that has lost much of its impact over the centuries. Partially because of the Gospels the name "Pharisee" has taken on a negative aspect. Actually, the Pharisees were the "good guys." They were a political group organized to defend the rights of migrant farm workers. Modern Judaism can be traced to the better ideals of the Pharisee movement.

In the first century tax collectors were not merely civil servants, they were mercenaries who actually bid for the right to extort from their fellow Jews. Jesus turned the tables by showing that the supposed "sinner" had more humility than the self-proclaimed "holy man."

Christmas Calendar

- Sun, Dec. 15 - **Third Sunday of Advent**
 - 10:30 am - Christmas Pageant
 - 5:00 pm - Lessons & Carols
- Tue., Dec. 24 - **Christmas Eve**
 - 5:00 pm - Family Service
 - 9:00 pm - Traditional Service
- Wed, Dec. 25 - **Christmas Day**
 - 10:00 am - Holy Communion Service



Name Tags - Remember how awkward you felt when you first came to St. Paul's because you didn't know anyone or when you visit a different church? Name tags help. So, please be courteous to your fellow parishioners, to newcomers, Fr. Nate and guests by extending a warm welcome to them and by wearing your name tag. And remember to wear them to coffee hour as well.

† **Socks & Toiletries for the Homeless**

As the temperature drops and the seasons change remember homeless people are on their feet all day, and the only pair of socks they own are very likely to be threadbare. Once again, this year we are collecting socks and toiletries for the men's homeless shelter throughout the winter months. Place donations in the bins in the back of the church or Crocker Hall.

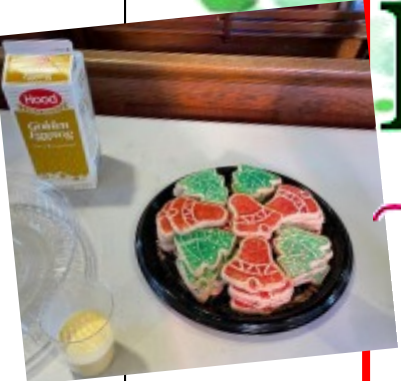




Hanging *of the* Greens

† Greening of the Church

Please join us for the "Greening of the Church" this Saturday, December 14, at 10 am. Everyone is welcome to come enjoy Christmas cookies, egg nog and fellowship as we listen to Christmas music and share in this traditional time of decorating the church. Thank you.



† Christmas Memorial Flowers

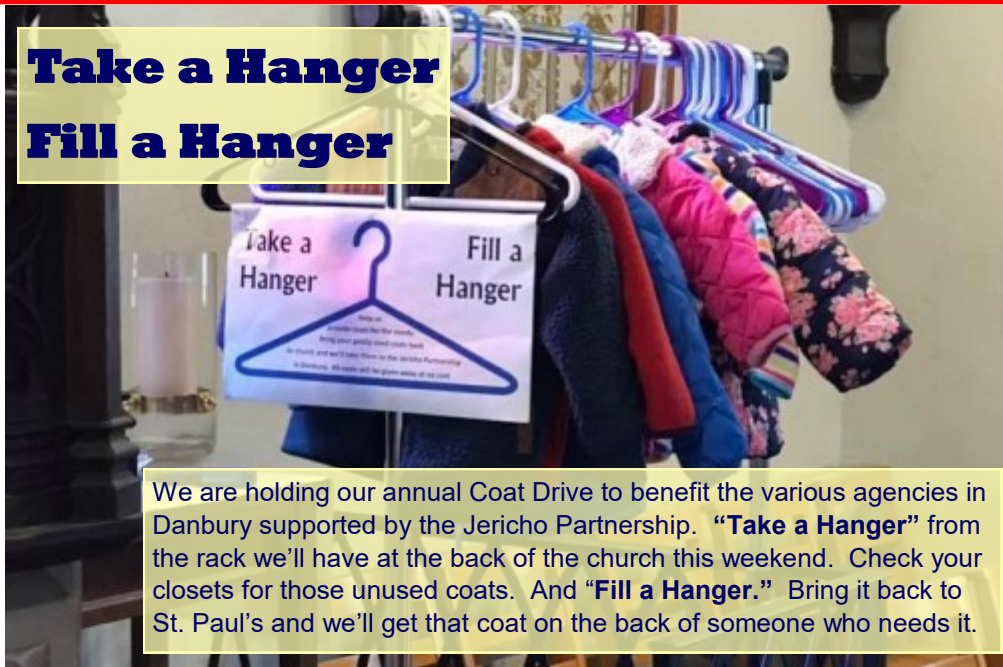
Anyone wishing to remember loved ones and friends with a beautiful poinsettia plant that will be decorating the church for the Christmas services, please use an envelope found on the back table for this purpose. All memorials are due Sunday, December 18 in order to be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. If you have any questions, please contact David Szen, 917-226-9136 or dszen@yahoo.com



John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."
Luke 3:11



Take a Hanger Fill a Hanger



We are holding our annual Coat Drive to benefit the various agencies in Danbury supported by the Jericho Partnership. **“Take a Hanger”** from the rack we’ll have at the back of the church this weekend. Check your closets for those unused coats. And **“Fill a Hanger.”** Bring it back to St. Paul’s and we’ll get that coat on the back of someone who needs it.

Psalm 122:6

Pray
for the
peace
of
Jerusalem;

May they prosper that love you.



Website Links - Usher, acolyte, lector, intercessor, and lay reader schedules are published monthly on our website at [saintpaulbrookfield.com / parish ministries / acolytes-lay-readers-lectors-intercessors / downloads](http://saintpaulbrookfield.com/parish-ministries/acolytes-lay-readers-lectors-intercessors/downloads). Our parish member directory is posted on our website at [saintpaulbrookfield.com / about / member directory / downloads](http://saintpaulbrookfield.com/about/member-directory/downloads).

† **Sunday School Info!**

ATTN: PARENTS OF ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Bring your Sunday School students to the classrooms by 10:30. Children will be returned to the sanctuary in time for Communion.



† **“Open Table” Coffee Hour**

We are adding something new to our Coffee Hour Ministry! Occasionally, you will see OPEN TABLE written in one of the Coffee Hour slots. This means that anyone from Saint Paul's is invited to feel free to leave a food item on the table in Crocker Hall as a donation to that particular Coffee Hour. That's it!! Just something different occasionally and nothing else to do! We look forward to your participation and donation on that particular designated Sunday. Thanks all!
Mary Allen, Coffee Hour Coordinator, 203-775-6633 or chamla@charter.net.



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Dec 15th 8 am - J Miller / N Rekart 10:30 am - Pageant Parents
Dec 22nd 8 am - Thomas's 10:30 am - P Koniecki / G Hiltz
Dec 30th 8 am - Sorrentino / Bennett 10:30 am - Open Table



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS NEEDED

Contact Mary Allen at 203-775-6633 or chamla@charter.net.





JESS RAY

Thurs., Feb. 6, 2025 | 7:00 P.M.

Tickets \$20

www.communitycoffeehouse.org



Community Coffeehouse | 7 Madison Ave. | Danbury, CT 06810 | (203) 748-4972

✠ Mark Your Calendars

We invite you all to mark your calendar for this year's Christmas Pageant at the 10:30 am service this Sunday, December 15th.

Come join us and bring a friend!




✠ Salvation Army Kettles Here on Sunday

St. Paul's Parish has been an ardent participant with the Salvation Army for over 25 years. Each December for a couple of weeks, St. Paul's hosts a "Kettle & Bell" to collect donations for the Army. The Human Services Department in our Town, vets those who have "critical and urgent needs" that cannot be met through their regular funding. All funds administered are clearly identified as coming from the Christian Salvation Army.

St. Paul's can be proud of our contributions and mission to meet the worldwide and local needs of the Salvation Army.

MISSION STATEMENT

"The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination."

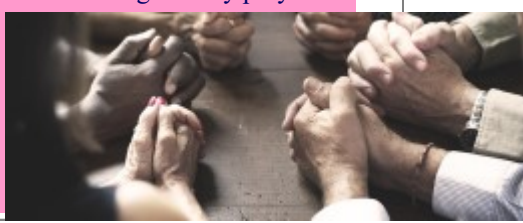
✠ Our Daily Bread

The "Our Daily Bread" booklets for December, January & February are now available at the back of the church. Our Daily Bread contains a scripture verse and meditation for each day.



After-Service Prayer Teams - We now have prayer ministers available after each service to meet with people in the first pew. This is in addition to the Wednesday prayer offered at the altar and Healing Sunday prayers at the altar.

Please feel free to come forward to ask for prayer for yourself or others.



THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



December 15, 2024 – Advent 3 (C)
Third Week of Advent: Journeying with Community

As we continue our Advent walk, we invite you to see the Way of Love as a journey that includes the community. The witness of Zechariah and Elizabeth who bring infant John to the Temple to be circumcised reminds us of the importance of our faith community to sustaining the Way of Love. Just as the community did for John's family, communities provide a place for discernment, sometimes challenging us and other times affirming us. Communities celebrate and mark important moments along the journey.

For more Advent resources related to the Way of Love, visit episcopalchurch.org/wayoflove. There, you'll find links to the full Advent curriculum *Journeying the Way of Love*, as well as *Living the Way of Love in Community*, a nine-session curriculum for use anytime.

Sunday, December 15
WORSHIP

Imagine the faces you'd like to see at church — an all-star list of folks you want to worship with. This could be people you know from summer camp when you were a kid, people who might have already died, people you work with — all your favorites. Commit to pray for those folks this week. And make a commitment to ask one of your all-stars to come to church with you in the next month.

Monday, December 16
PRAY

Pray along with the Collect for Advent 3, found on page 212 in The Book of Common Prayer. How will prayer guide you through the rest of the week? Set aside special time today to focus your intentions on stirring up peace and spreading joy.

Tuesday, December 17
TURN

Turn away from the busyness of the world right now. Turn your heart and mind toward giving thanks for this time of reflection, refreshment, and renewal.

Wednesday, December 18
BLESS

Spend a significant amount of time today discerning if there is a special blessing or gift you can share with your church, a local ministry, or with your community.

Ask God to inspire and equip you with the fortitude and tools to make this gift something truly memorable and heartfelt.

Thursday, December 19
REST

Spend at least 45 minutes outside today, without doing yard work or fixing lights or redoing bows on the garland. Take some time to just sit outside and let the air wash over you, taking away the stress and worry of the moment. Read Psalm 100 before and after your outside time. See how this psalm may help you rest and recharge your spirit.



Friday, December 20
GO

Read or watch your local news. Ask God to open your heart and eyes to ways you can promote reconciliation and healing in your community.

Saturday, December 21
LEARN

Read Matthew 4:18-22. How do these verses from Matthew inspire you to read Scripture with new eyes? Try reading several different translations of this passage. See how the language might change your reading of it.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Lori O'Hara & Giustino Capodilupo opens presents today. Diane Simone & Barbara Hock celebrates on Friday (the 13th!). Ela Cutting blows out candles on Sunday. Bake a cake for Marilyn Roginski & Norma Schofield next Tuesday. Have a blessed day everyone!



RFB 

Presents

COFFEE WITH JESUS

That Line



Frosty the Snowman was a jolly happy soul.



Frosty the Snowman was no such thing. He was made of snow, Lisa. Then he melted.



NO, Jesus! He was alive as he could be! And the children say he could laugh and play just the same as you and me!



But he waved goodbye saying, "Don't you cry, I'll be back again some day," right, Lisa? Wow ... wonder where he got *that* line.



Facebook.com/RadioFreeBabylon

† This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

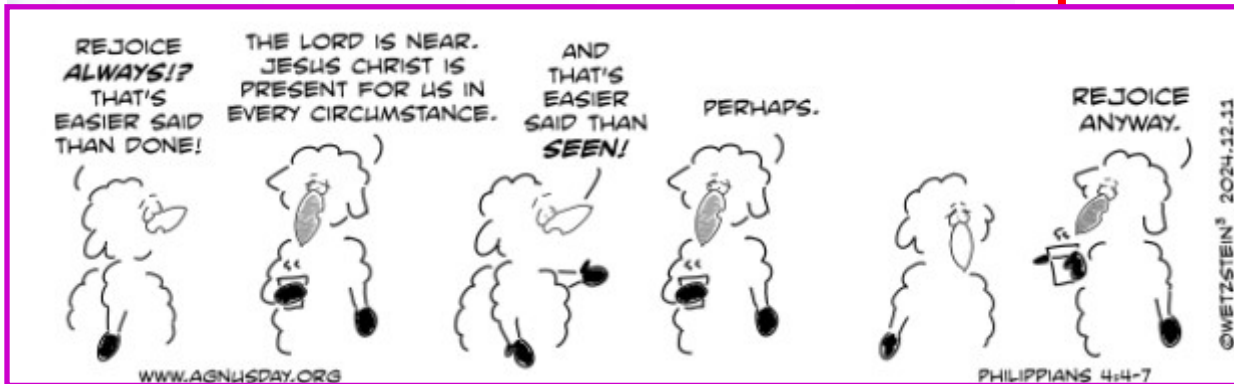
Prepare for the Holy One

Zephaniah 3:14-20

In the reading from the Hebrew Bible the prophet foretells a time when the judgment of Israel will be ended and the mighty Lord will bring victory and renewal to God's people. The city of Jerusalem and its holy Mount Zion may rejoice and sing. All enemies will be defeated and the crippled healed. The fortunes of Israel will be restored, and the nation will be praised by all peoples.

Canticle 9

A song of confidence and hope in God the Savior, for the Holy One is in the midst of the people who joyfully proclaim the Lord's deeds.



Philippians 4:4-7

In this New Testament lesson Paul invited the new disciples at Philippi to exult in the Lord, who is near at hand. In prayer and thanksgiving they need have no anxiety. God's peace, which is beyond human understanding, will keep their hearts and thoughts in Jesus. Even though Paul was experiencing his own troubles and may at this time have been in prison, this letter is often called "the epistle of joy."

Luke 3:7-18

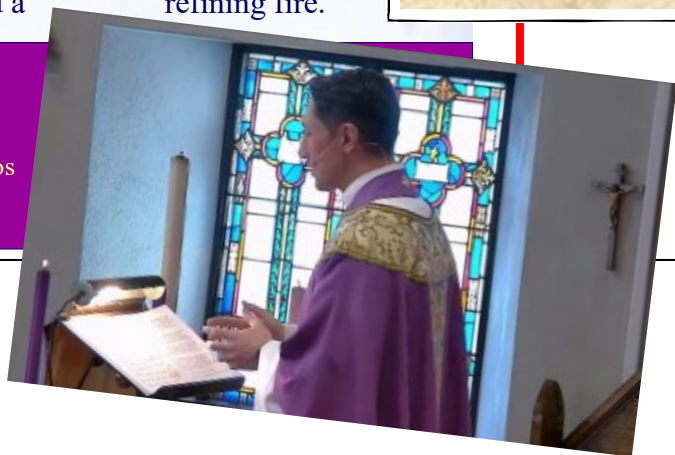
In our gospel John the Baptist preaches repentance to all those who hear his call to baptism, and he tells them of the mighty one to come. It is not sufficient to claim to be children of Abraham. All who are to escape judgment must learn to share with others and to be just in their daily work. John himself is not the Christ but the servant of the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and a refining fire.

Luke 3:7-18

Indeed by going further with his image of the axe cutting at the **ROOTS** of the tree - as compared with cutting at the trunk of the tree - John is deepening the meaning of repentance to be **RE-ROOTING**

† Sermon Shorts

"The Gospel of John the Baptist." To replay all our sermons, audio and videos follow this link for the [Sunday Sermons](#). Check out our [Sermon Archives](#) as well.



† Your Prayers Are Requested For...

It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord, kindle within us the assurance that you are our strength and our sure defense; that we might be ready for your coming, as we pray for:

.....Harlan Jessup, Jan Brochu, Ed Licence, Gail Winkley, and other parishioners convalescing in extended care facilities.
.....[St. Stephen's](#), Bloomfield; [St. George's](#), Bolton; [Trinity](#), Branford; and [Calvary St. George's](#), Bridgeport.

.....Revival at St. Paul's and the greater Danbury area.

.....Those who advocate at the local, state, national, or global level for the poor, the lonely & the oppressed.

.....For the Peace of Jerusalem. - *Psalm 122:6*

.....Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Sr., Peter Scalzo, Jr., Doris, Karen, Beverly Hall, Robert, Roger, Fred, Cynthia, Valerie, Heidi Pinheiro, Dale Mitchell, Larry, Ruth, Rob Duckett, Blake, Nick Marcalus, Bill Bennett, Lenore, Susan Morrison, David Simone, Pam Altemus, Elana and Veronika continued healing.

.....the people of [Ukraine](#); the people of the [Republic of Sierra Leone](#); the people of [Denmark](#); the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Kollam - Kottarakkara - The Church of South India (United); and our sister and brother members of the [United Congregational Church of Southern Africa](#).

.....For the Church: that we may experience joy through recognizing God with us each day and be instruments in helping others become aware of God's work in their lives.

.....St. Thomas, Bethel and the [Bethel Community Food Pantry](#), which is the recipient of our food basket collections for the month of December.

.....[Jericho Partnership Food Pantry](#) and the families they serve.

.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; and for all missionaries: that God will inspire the message that they offer, help them to recognize how they can best serve their communities, and sustain them in times of loneliness.

.....[The Unity of the Church](#).

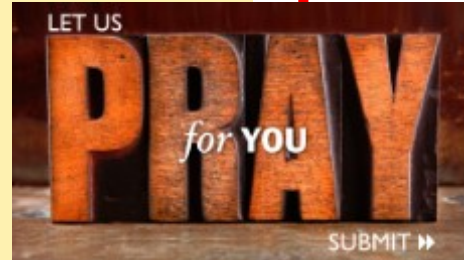
.....For students as they finish the semester: that God will give them strength to complete their tasks and help them to express all that they have learned over these months clearly.

.....For the one third of humanity that does not have access to the gospel, for zealous preachers of the word, that by the Holy Spirit, they that they would become strong in their faith, grow in numbers and be a light to those around them.

.....That we may resist the lure of holiday advertising and instead concentrate on the message of simplicity and trust that is found.

.....For all pregnant women: that God will keep them healthy, help their babies to grow strong, and give them safe deliveries.

.....[Peace Among the Nations](#).



The Christmas Story Told By Kids

The kids of the Believers Center of Albuquerque retell the story of Jesus's birth! .



Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)

Random Fact of the Week!

Did you know ... that the first ever Christmas pageant is thought to have been held in 1223 by St. Francis of Assisi because there was no room in the chapel?



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Watch us on YouTube

Ecclesiasticus 43:27 - We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: 'He is the all.' - 30 -

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or a