St Paul
Pine Grove Mills

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Epiphany of our Lord

January 5, 2025

Whenever you see an asterisk (*), you are invited to stand as you are able.
You are invited to speak sans serif **Bolded type** with the congregation.

Introduction to the Day

The feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

Prelude: *"Noel for Flutes"* *(Louis Claude D'Aquin)*

Gathering

Epiphany Blessing Of the Church Building (see insert)

*Confession and forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the ☩Son, and of the Holy Spirit. A: Amen.

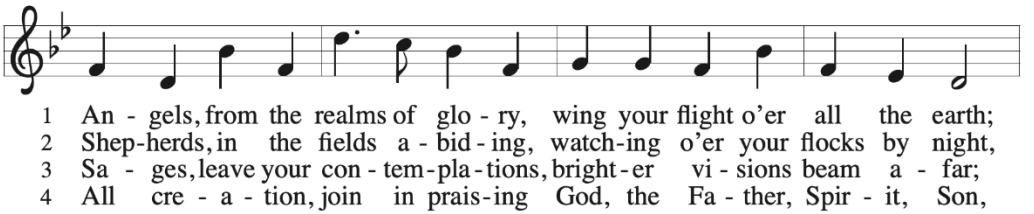
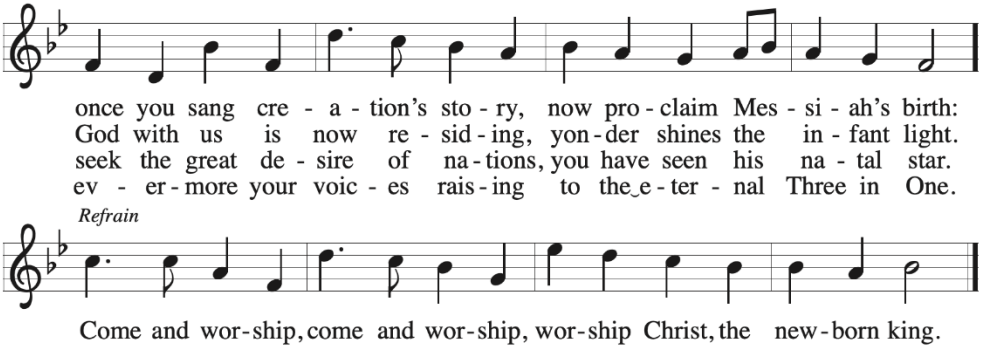
P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P: Let us confess our sin, in the presence of God and of one another.

P: God-with-us,

A: we confess that we have turned away those seeking shelter, claiming there is no room when we have plenty. We have made power and wealth our idols, while you show us true glory: a baby in a manger. We have overlooked the shepherds, expecting good news in prettier packaging. Too often, we have valued violence instead of your peace. Turn us from our ways to your ways. Grant us the grace to begin again. Free us from all that keeps us bound, and forgive our sin, through Jesus Christ, who gives himself for us. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

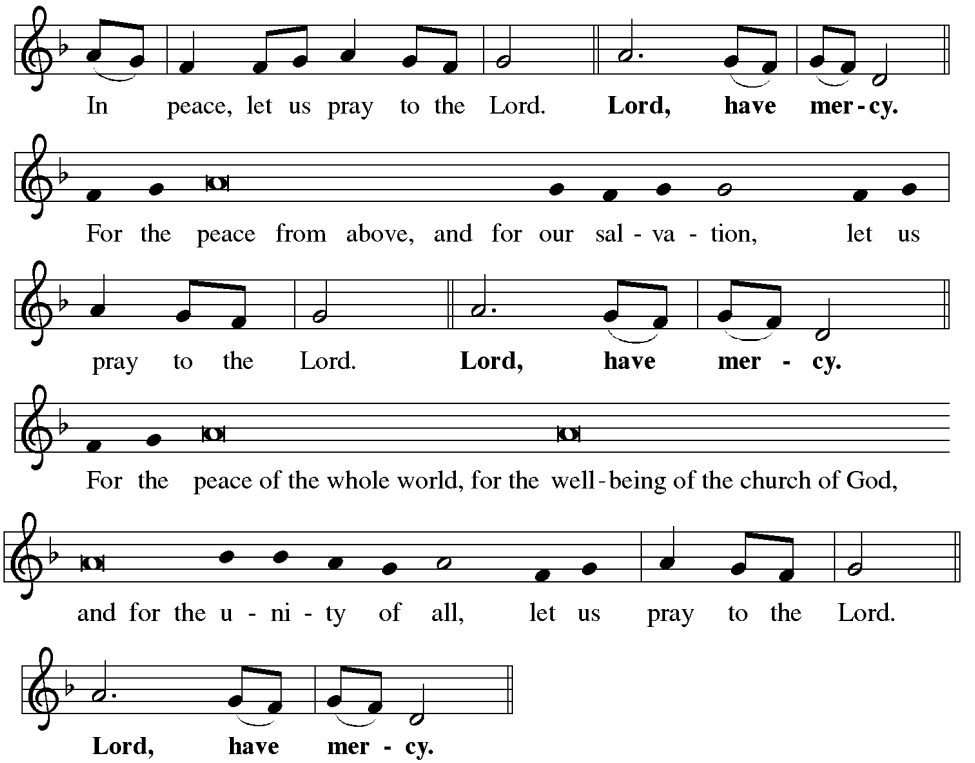
*Gathering Hymn *"Angels, from the Realms of Glory"* *(ELW 275)*



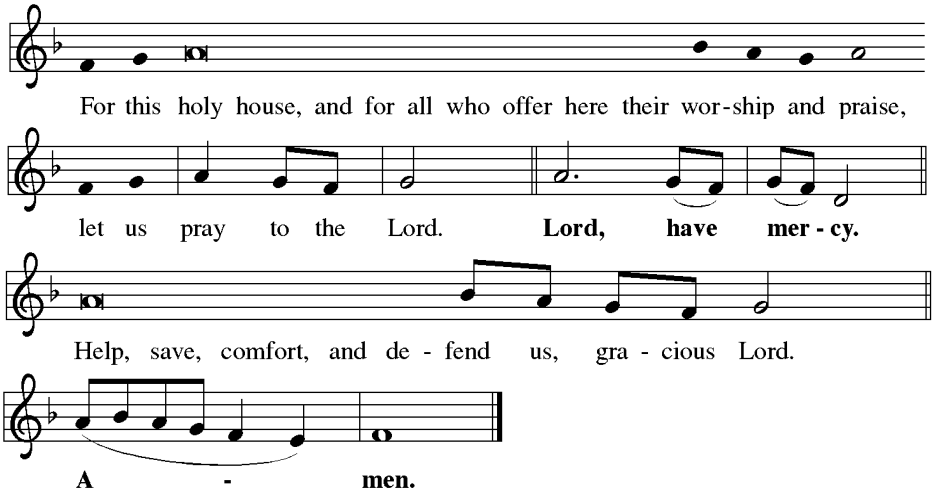
Text: James Montgomery, 1771–1854, alt., sts. 1–3; *Salisbury Hymn Book*, 1857, st. 4
Music: REGENT SQUARE, Henry T. Smart, 1813–1879

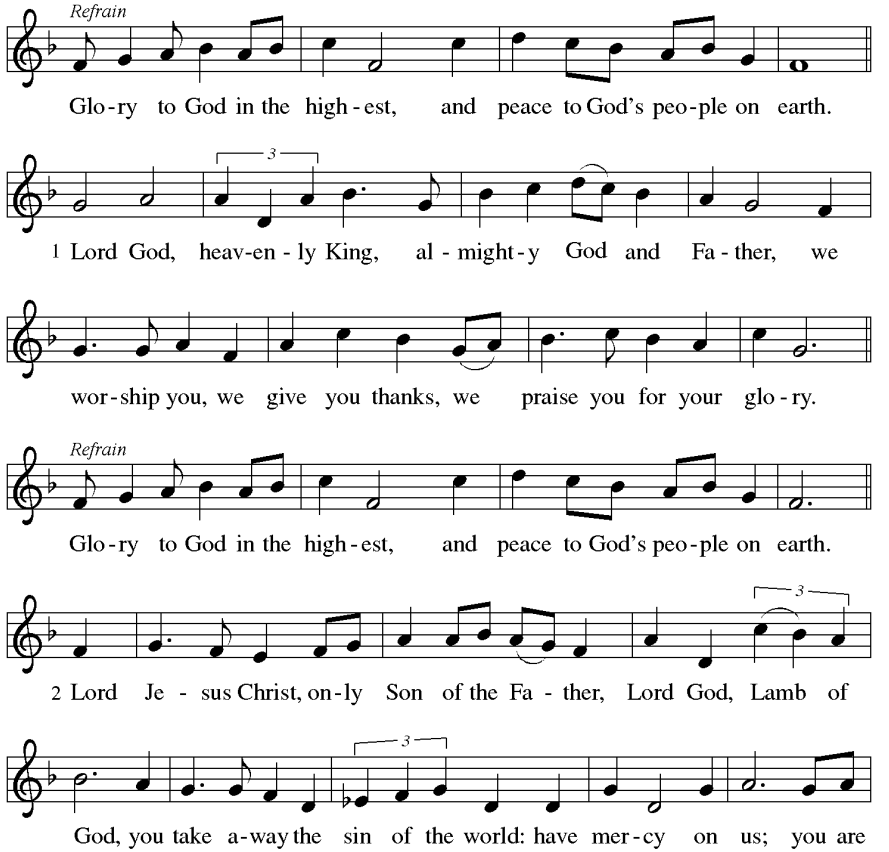
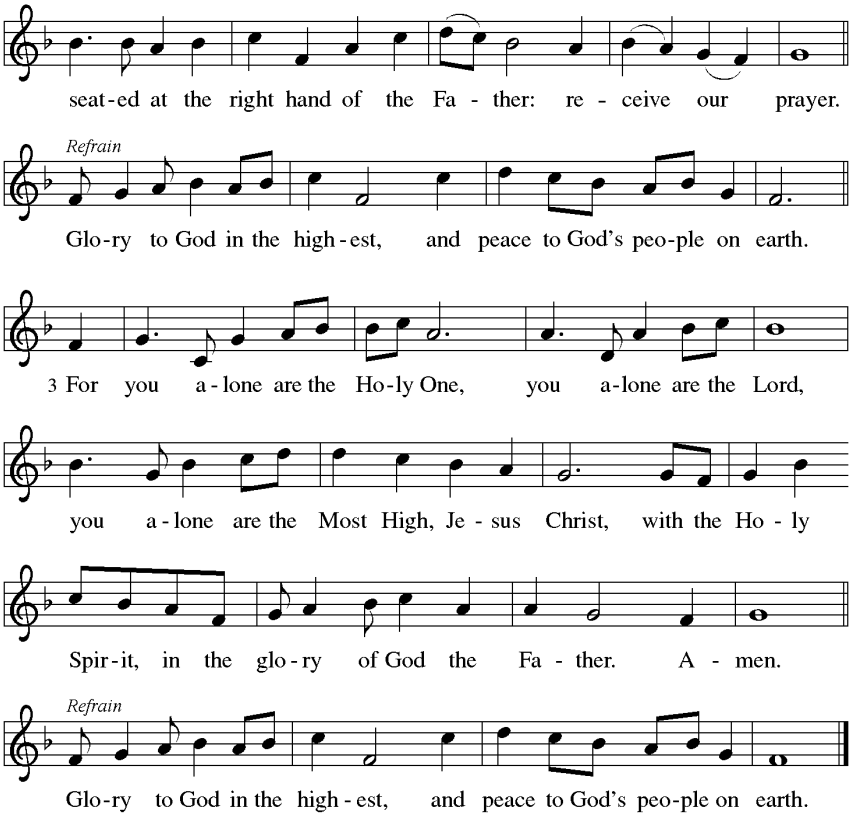
*GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **A: And also, with you.**

*KYRIE





*Hymn of Praise

*Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you. **A: And also, with you.**

P: Let us pray. O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

Word

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

As Jeremiah and Ezekiel had promised, God brought the Israelites back home to Jerusalem from their exile in Jerusalem. This rescue, unlikely and unexpected, was itself an Epiphany: an awe-inspiring appearance of God within human affairs to rescue and redeem.

1 Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
2 For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,

but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
3 Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

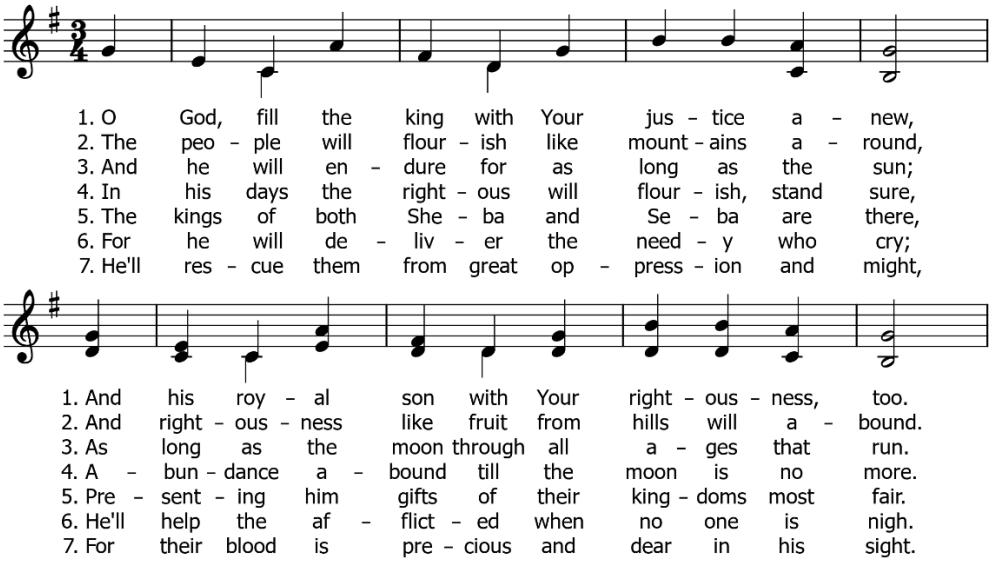
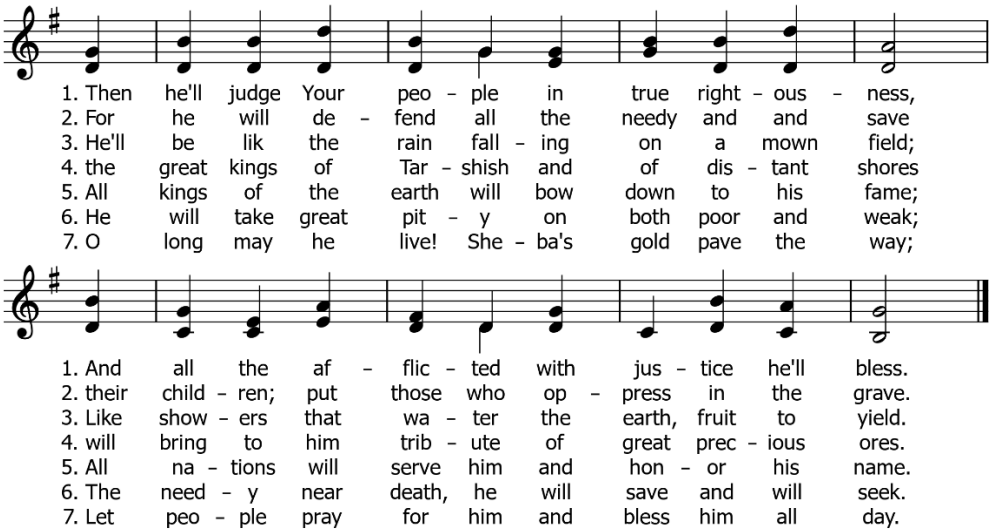
4 Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
5 Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
6 A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God**.

PSALM: 72:1-7, 19-14

(*sung to the tune* St. Denio ELW 834)

Like Isaiah the psalmist presents God's blessing (here of the king at his coronation) as a matter of international significance.



Second Reading: Ephesians 3:1-12

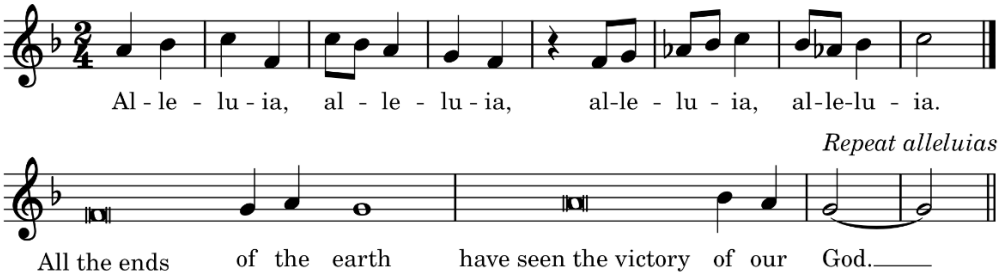
It was easy in the early church to consider Gentile Christians to be less legitimate than their Jewish siblings. Many of the New Testament writers preached against this, including the author of Ephesians in this passage. Indeed, today's Gospel reading, of Gentiles adoring Christ, may be told for exactly the same purpose.

[1] This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you
gentiles, [2] for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given
me for you [3] and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in
a few words, [4] a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the
mystery of Christ. [5] In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind,
as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: [6] that is, the
gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise
in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

[7] Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was
given me by the working of his power. [8] Although I am the very least of all the saints, this
grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of
Christ [9] and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God,
who created all things, [10] so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety
might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. [11] This was in
accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12] in
whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

L: The word of the Lord. **A: Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation



*Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

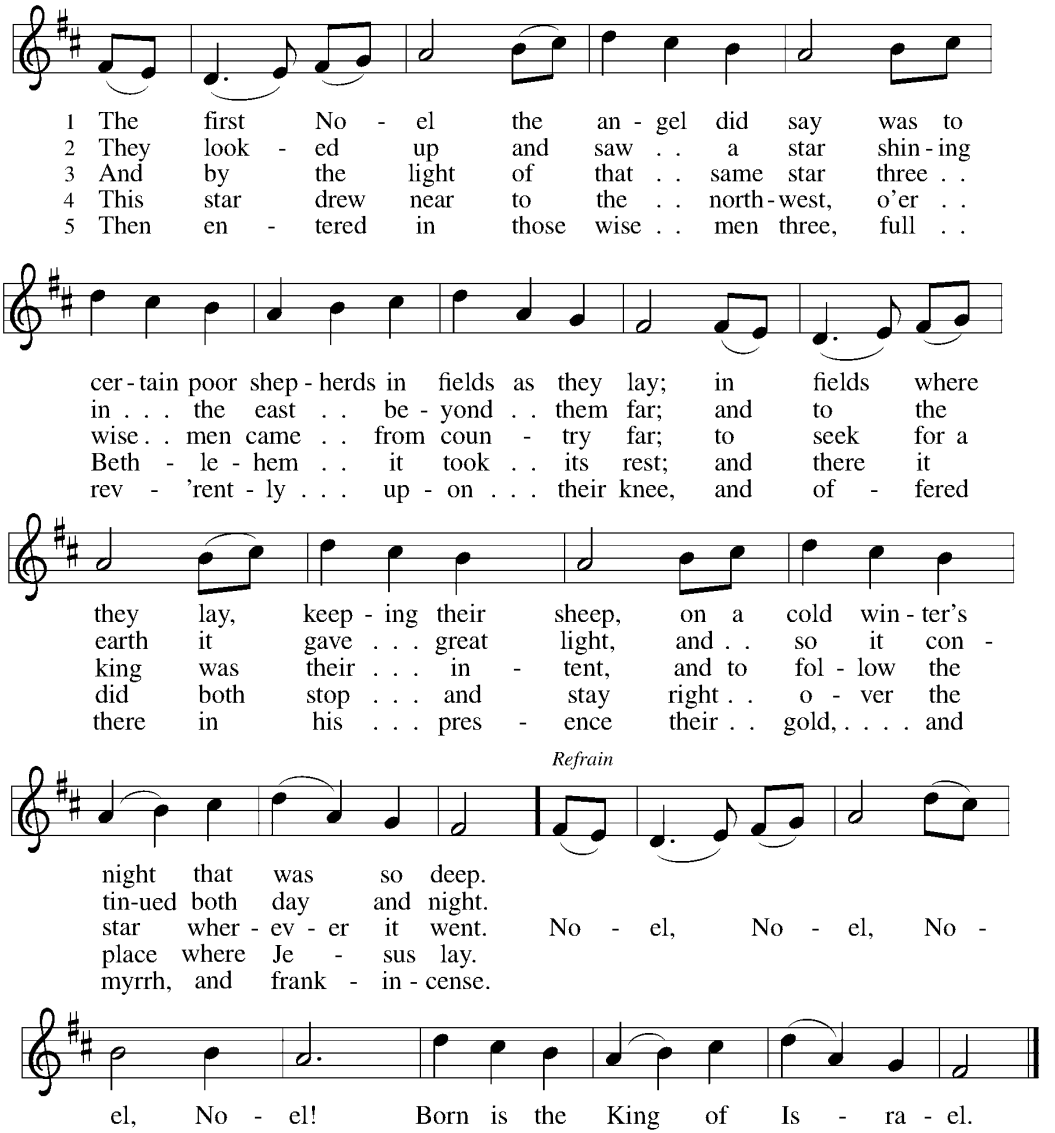
"Wise men from the East" may mean Zoroastrian astrologers from the Parthian Empire – not only Gentiles, but Gentiles outside the Roman Empire, citizens of the ancient foe of Greeks and Romans. The Magi "worshipped" the child – the same word that will be used when the disciples "worship" the Resurrected Christ, immediately before he commissions them to make disciples of all nations – not simply Israel or the Roman Empire.

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the second chapter.
A: Glory to you, O Lord.

1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east
came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we
observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." 3 When King Herod heard
this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, 4 and calling together all the chief priests
and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They
told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:
6 '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.' "
7 Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the
star had appeared. 8 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." 9 When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the
star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child
was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 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. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they
left for their own country by another road.

P: The gospel of the Lord. **A: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

*Hymn of the Day: *"The First Noel"* (ELW 300)

Text: English traditional
Music: THE FIRST NOWELL, English traditional

*Invitation to Baptism

*Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Prayers of Intercession

Filled with good news of great joy, let us offer our prayers for the church, the earth, and all people.

A brief silence.

L: Your glory fills the earth. Bless the work of all who engage in dialogue with people of other traditions and faiths, especially Interfaith Human Services. Bridge our differences with a shared mission of revealing your boundless love to the world. God of grace,
A: receive our prayer.

L: Restore the glory of creation. Send rain to water-parched lands. Revive ecosystems and habitats threatened by a changing climate, and protect the peoples and creatures who live in them. God of grace,
A: receive our prayer.

L: Give the rulers your justice and reveal your righteousness to those who govern. Frustrate the plans of tyrants and oppressors. Encourage the work of community organizers and activists who speak out against injustice (*local organizations may be named*). God of grace,
A: receive our prayer.

L: Help those who have no helper. Draw near to those who have no one to advocate for them or those who feel forgotten. Deliver those who call to you (*especially*). Precious are they in your sight. God of grace,
A: receive our prayer.

L: Liberate this congregation from a yearning for the past that forgets the future. Fuel in us a passion for discovery. Give us the boldness to dream and to imagine our ministries in new and different ways. God of grace,
A: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: We give thanks for Royal Kline Junior, and all your holy ones who now rest in your radiant glory. Make us, with them, sharers in the boundless riches of Christ, our hope and promise. God of grace,
A: receive our prayer.

L: We commend these prayers to you, O God, trusting your grace made known to all, through the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
A: Amen.

*Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **A: And also with you.**

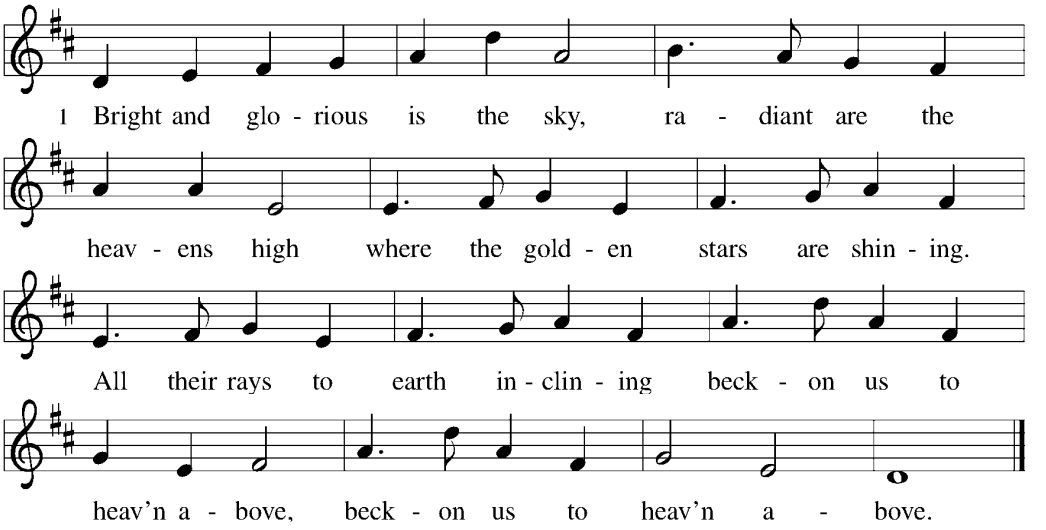
Meal

Offering

Offerings can be made online at ***stpaulpgm.org/give,*** *mailed to St. Paul Lutheran Church, PO Box 200, Pine Grove Mills, PA 16868, placed in the mail slot (outside door to Pastor Paul's office), or in the offering plate located in the lobby/narthex near the entrance of the sanctuary.*

Musical Offering: *"Sing We Now. Now Rejoice"* *(J. S. Bach)*

OFFERTORY: *"Bright and Glorious Is the Sky (vs.1)"* *(ELW 301)*



Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783–1872; tr. Jens Christian Aaberg, 1877–1970, alt.
Music: DEJLIG ER DEN HIMMEL BLÅ, Danish, 19th cent.
Text © 1958 Service Book and Hymnal, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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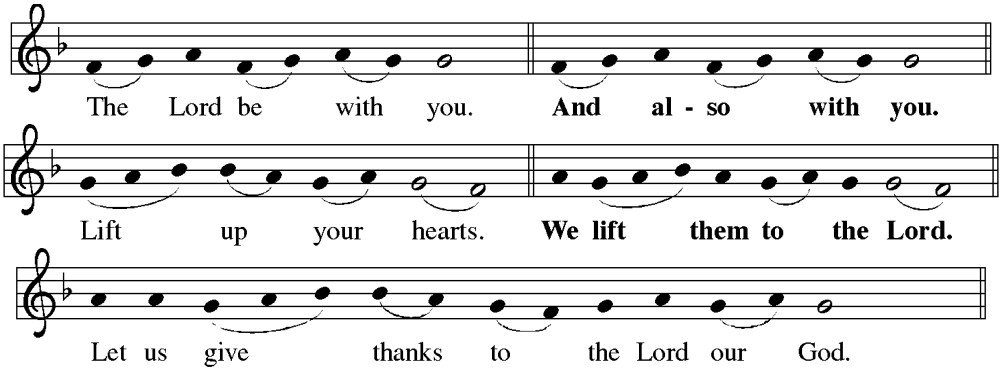
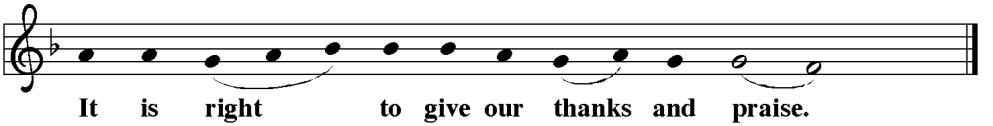
*Offering Prayer

L: Let us pray: God of heaven and earth, from the beginning, you have called forth life, in which you take delight. The trees, the fields, and the seas sing for joy. Bless now these gifts, received from your bounty, that we may join the chorus of creation to tell of your salvation from day to day. **A: Amen.**

*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

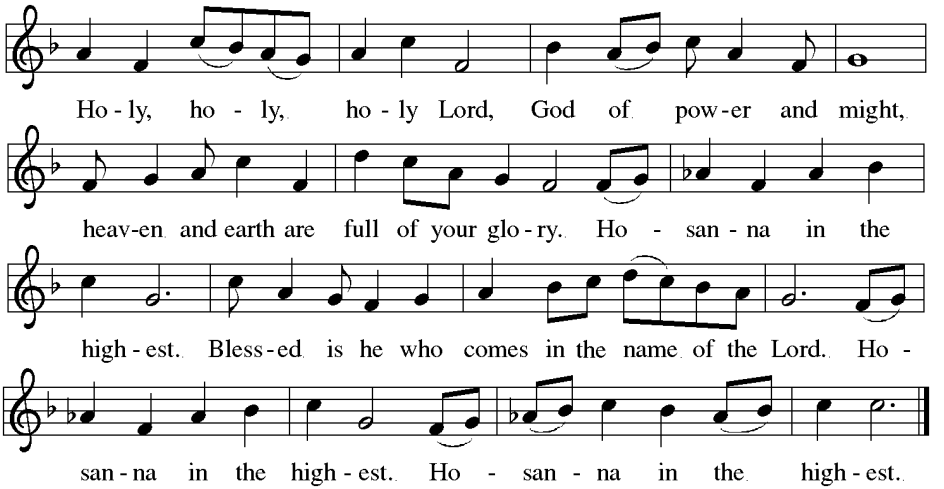
* DIALOGUE



*PREFACE

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*SANCTUS



*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Holy God,

Creator of all, the of Life,
and the Light of all,
at the birth of time
your powerful word created all things.

Through the prophets you called your people to be a light to the nations.

In the fullness of time,

you sent your Word, born of Mary,
to shine in our darkness,
revealing to us your mercy and might,

and to make us your beloved children.

In the night in which he was handed over,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

In his Nativity and as we eagerly await his great Epiphany we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

A: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore,
his birth and life among us,
his death and resurrection,
we await his coming again
when all things will be restored in him
and we will rejoice in your holy and life-giving light.

A: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup,
that, held and nourished by you,
we, your children, may live as light for the world,
shining with the brilliant radiance of your Son.

A: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever. **A: Amen**

*Lord's Prayer

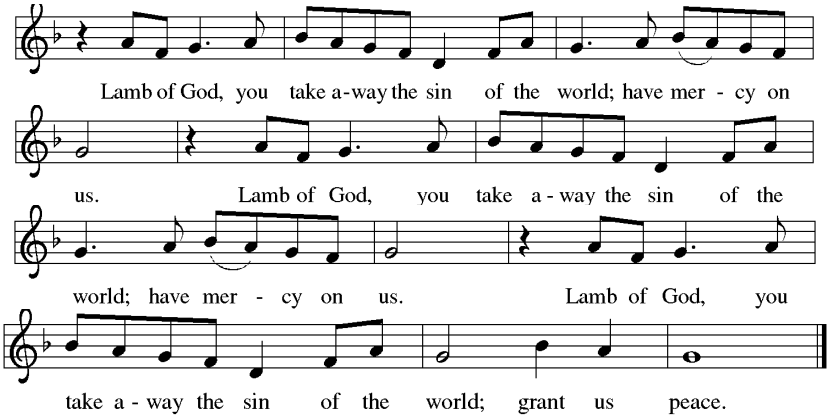
P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: A child has been born for us, a Son given to us. Come, receive the gift of Jesus.

*Lamb of God



A note on Communion Wafers

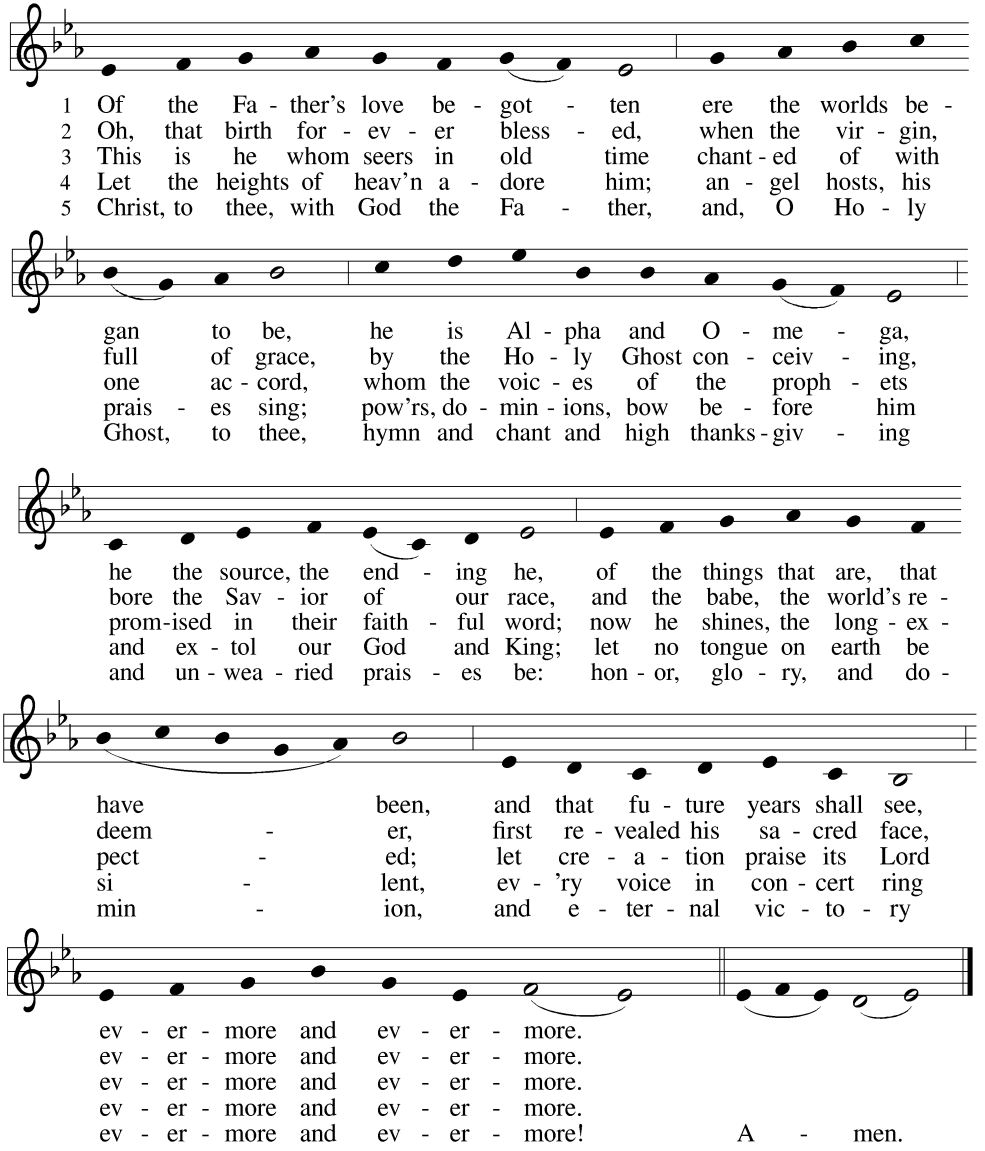
To topple barriers that prevent participation in worship, we want to make it possible for individuals with Celiac Disease or gluten intolerant to be able to eat the Body of our Lord. Our default wafers are made by Parish Crossroads and are known as "Low Gluten Wafers" because they contain trace amounts of gluten. However, the wafers are tested at least once a year for how much gluten is in them. Since 2020, the wafers have routinely tested to contain 15ppm gluten or less (The US FDA defines most food products with 20ppm or less as "gluten free"). Use the QR Code and look for the link that gives the most recent test results.

If you still have concerns, we have some truly gluten-free wafers available upon request.

Communion

L: The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you. **A: Amen.**

Communion Hymn: *"Of the Father's Love Begotten"* (ELW 295)

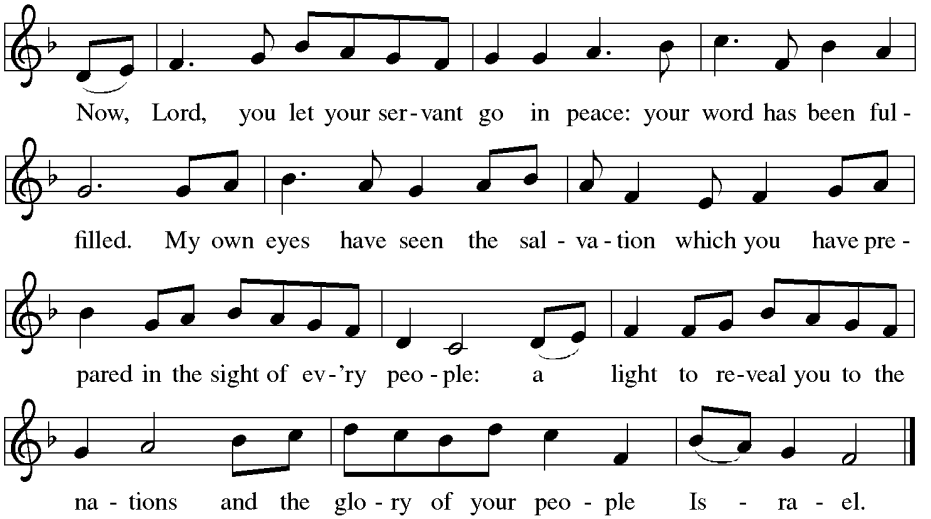


Text: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348–413; tr. composite
Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, plainsong mode V, 13th cent.

*Post-Communion Blessing

L: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in grace.
A: Amen.

*Post-Communion Canticle – *Nunc Dimittis* (*Now, Lord)*



*Post-Communion Prayer

L: Let us pray. Merciful God, we thank you for Jesus, who is our heavenly food. Strengthened by this goodness, send us forth to announce your peace, comfort the afflicted, and share the good news of great joy. **A: Amen.**

Sending

*Sending of Communion

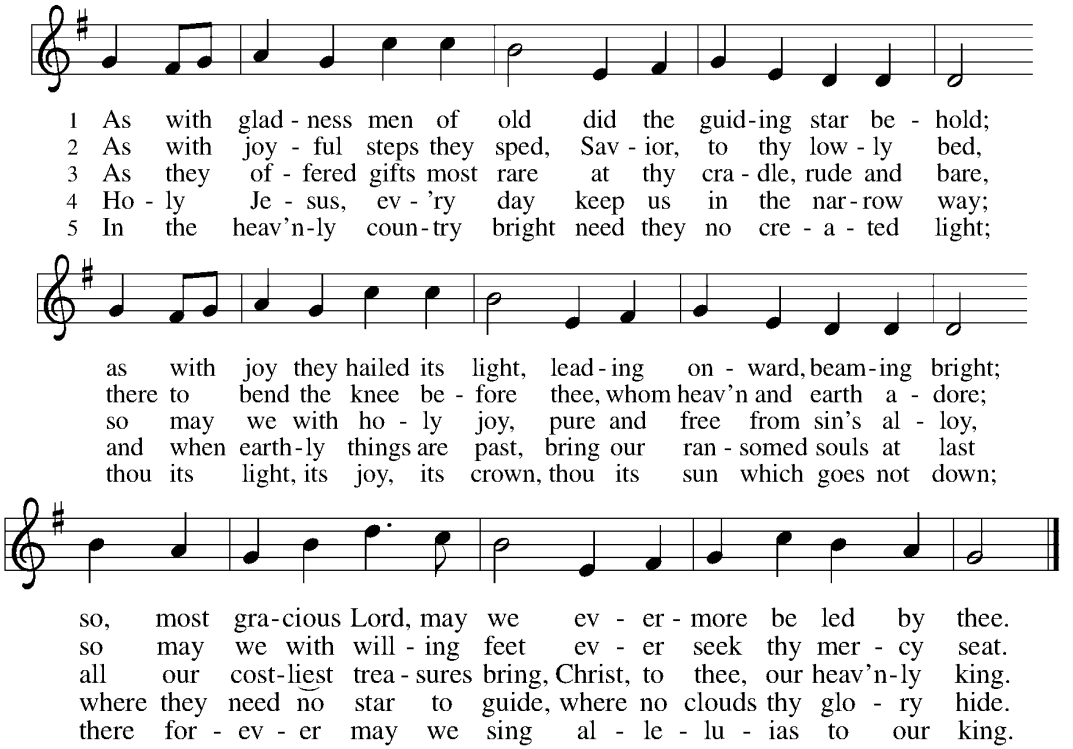
Announcements

You may be seated.

*Charge to the People

*Blessing

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, ✢ and the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

*Sending Hymn: *"As with Gladness Men of Old"* *(ELW 302)*

Text: William C. Dix, 1837–1898, alt.
Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. The Word of God dwells in you richly.
A: Thanks be to God.

Postlude: *"The First Noel"* *(Mary McDonald)*

Daily Readings for the week

Sunday, January 5
Jeremiah 31:7:14
Sirach 24:1-12 {alternate}
Psalm 147:12-20 (12)
Wisdom 10:15-21 (20) {alternate}
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:[1-9] 10-18

Monday, January 6
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (11)
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Tuesday, January 7
Daniel 2:1-19
Ecclesiastes 4:17—5:1
Psalm 72

Wednesday, January 8
Daniel 2:24-49
Ecclesiastes 5:15-20
Psalm 72

Thursday, January 9
Ecclesiastes 1:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Psalm 29

Friday, January 10
Ecclesiastes 2:1-11
1 Corinthians 2:1-10
Psalm 29

Saturday, January 11
Ecclesiastes 3:1-15
1 Corinthians 2:11-16
Psalm 29

ST PAUL
PINE GROVE MILLS
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Serving Today

Worship Leader.....Pastor Paul Tomkiel
Assisting Minister.....Karen Magnuson
Organist..... James Rearick
Sacristan.....Ann Reede
Reader.....Eleanor Bird

About St. Paul

Purpose

We are a beacon, boldly sharing the light of Jesus' grace and love.

Mission

Guided by Jesus, we strengthen faith, deepen compassion, extend generosity, and serve community.

Core Values

Faith ❧ Compassion ❧ Generosity ❧ Community

Our Bible Verses

As Paul was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. [Jesus said,] 'Paul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before the nations.'– Acts 9:3,15

Land Acknowledgement

St. Paul is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Susquehannock people, where we gather for worship this morning. We also acknowledge the Seneca, Cayuga, Lenne Lenape, as well as all of our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to care for this place – this land – and call it their home.

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