

The Epistle of Saint Paul's:

December, 2021 vol 12

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Is there really a Santa Claus?

Our contemporary figure of the jolly gentleman with bags of toys for children is believed to come from a real person, Nicholas of Myra. Myra was an ancient Greek, then Roman, city on the coast of what is now Turkey. The consensus is that Nicholas was born (c. 270) to a wealthy Greek Christian family and that his uncle was also a bishop. His uncle ordained him priest.

Much of what is written about Saint Nicholas was written centuries after his death. However, one of the early stories about him describes his secret gift-giving to a poor family. He tossed a bag of coins in the window after dark to provide a dowry for the daughters. The humble and secret generosity is considered virtue in gift-giving.

He has also been credited with calming a severe storm while traveling by ship to the Holy Land. As a result, Nicholas also is a patron saint of sailors.

The legendary secret gift giving, especially to the young or poor, is a good model for us as we continue the tradition of gift giving this season.

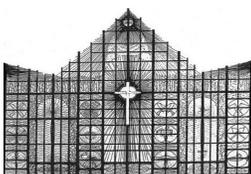
The Feast of St Nicholas of Myra, bishop c. 342, is celebrated on December 6.

Collect for the Feast of St Nicholas of Myra

Grant, Almighty God, that your church may be so inspired by the example of your servant Nicholas of Myra, that it may never cease to work for the welfare of children, the safety of sailors, the relief of the poor, and the help of those tossed by tempests of doubt or grief; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Prayer for the Search Committee

O God of patient and gentle strength, who knows our needs even before we ask, may your loving presence guide us as we seek the next rector for St. Paul's. Give us an open spirit, discerning hearts and clear minds, that we may trust your will for us and become ever more united in your son our Savior, Jesus Christ. Inspire our conversation, deepen our prayer, and make us a community of humility and grace. Raise up for us, we pray, a priest and pastor who will boldly proclaim your Gospel, faithfully administer your sacraments, and serve your people with love and compassion. *Amen.*



St. Paul's
church
EPISCOPAL



Who's Who at St. Paul's

Priest

The Rev. John Scott

Rector Emeritus

The Rev. Leslie C. Hughs

Organist-Choir Director

Steven L. Rosenberry

Wardens

Jeff Vunck
Kelly Dalton

Vestry

Robert Chase
Sandie Feck
Karen Hibbert
Ninni Jacob
Brian Kivilahti
Tristan Lowery
Beth Moll
Terry Tamer
Sheila Smith

Treasurer

Mary Jane McGuire

EPISTLE Newsletter Editor

Susan Harwood
Pamela Coutchié

Photographs

Brian Kivilahti
Pamela Coutchié
Candace Deisley
Jeff Vunck

Deadline for article submission is the 15th of each month.

Wardens' Letter

*"Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat,
Please do put a penny in the old man's hat,
If you haven't got a penny, a ha-penny will do,
If you haven't got a ha-penny then God bless you!*

... a favorite Muppets' song from the late 1970's, with its origins in Victorian England, the sentiment still applies today (all except the ha-penny). The chorus reminds us that while the Christmas season is exciting with many preparations in progress, busy as we are, we should share our blessings with those who need our help. Does this remind you of the incredible, generous spirit of St. Paul's Church?

The Choir and Liturgical participants are busy practicing the beautiful Lessons and Carols for the December 5th service, and for the various heartwarming services of this joyous Advent season. The church is a-buzz with preparations for Advent youth activities and Bible study. With our Mitten Tree and Adopt-Two-Families in full swing, collecting supplies for the food pantry and participating in the soup kitchen, St. Paul's families continue to show their generosity and care for those who need our help... just as we are taught in Luke 3:11 *"If you have two coats," he replied, "give one to the poor. If you have extra food, give it away to those who are hungry."* St. Paul's continues to follow Jesus' teaching and share all we have.

In our secular world, December inundates us with an avalanche of Christmas sales, commercials, ads, and round-the-clock seasonal music. Once normally dark neighborhoods are transformed overnight with decorations and lights, as each house seems to compete with its neighbor! Our senses are overladen with what we see, hear, feel, taste and touch, all starting earlier each year. Growing up, it seemed Christmas time didn't show up until after Thanksgiving, which is definitely not the case now.

As we live in this world, Romans 12:2 urges us *"Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect."* In our spiritual community, December is when we eagerly await the birth of Christ Jesus, Our Lord and Savior! In the Bible there were no ads or sales helping folks to prepare for the coming events, there was no internet for

Continues on page 3



The Advent Wreath

We light one more candle each week as we approach Christmas. Each candle has a meaning. The first candle is Hope, the second is Peace, the third candle is Joy and the fourth candle is Love. The white central candle is lit when the Light comes into the world at Christmas

Photo by [KaLisa Veer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Continued from page 2

Joseph and Mary to browse for available rooms through Expedia or Trivago, nor was there a GPS for the Three Kings to follow... but the scene played out perfectly, nevertheless. Mary and Joseph followed their legal commitment to be counted in the census and met a generous merchant along the way. The Wise Men followed the Star of Bethlehem to Jesus's birthplace. Dreams and visions from God guided them all on their paths.

The Church in Rome began to formally celebrate Christmas on December 25 in the year 366, as the date on which the perfect and most precious gift was given to us. As we search for the perfect gifts this year, let us remember that no gift can compare with the perfect gift we have received in Christ Jesus.

As we gather together to celebrate with family and friends in these upcoming weeks, we encourage you to find time to pause and reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. Please keep in your prayers the less fortunate, the homeless, those who serve our nation and protect us both here and abroad, and those who are separated from loved ones by distance or Covid restrictions.

We reflect that the Bible tells us *"It is better to get wisdom than gold, and to choose understanding rather than silver!"* (Psalms 16:16). May the true spirit of Christmas shine in your heart and light your path!

Peace and Joy to you all!

Jeff Vunck

Kelly Dalton



Special Christmas Offerings

Offerings may be made in memory of loved one, or in thanksgiving, using the special offering envelopes in the Narthex. Or enclose a list of names ("In Memory of" or "In Thanksgiving for") in an envelope with a check with "Christmas Memorial" in the memo. Offerings received by December 19 will be listed in the bulletin for the Christmas Eve Service.

OUTREACH NEWS

Christmas Shopping : Adopt –Two–Families

St. Paul's Church is adopting two local families this Christmas. The families were recommended by our local Head Start program. Both families have small children. The wish lists for each family are posted in the Narthex as gift tags on two "trees". Please take an item tag(s) from the display board and indicate on the sign up sheet the item (s) that you are going to donate.

Please wrap each item separately and attach the tag to each package. Please bring the wrapped and tagged donations to the church not later than Sunday, December 12. Volunteers will complete the lists between December 12 and December 19. They will deliver the Christmas packages before Christmas Eve. For further information or to provide financial support to this effort, contact Kelly Dalton. Thank you for your generosity.

Food Pantry

The food pantry is still open and busy. During the holiday season, the pantry benefits from additional volunteers when college students are home for the holidays. Please add a few items to your own shopping list: the usual needs (cereal, canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned meats, peanut butter, soups and chili, pasta and pasta sauce) and the personal care items (shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toilet paper, toothpaste and tooth brushes). Jams and cookies are special items to brighten the holidays. (Sorry, no homemade food can be accepted.)

Loaves and Fishes

The soup kitchen serves the hungry every Saturday when much of the rest of the community is shopping. Share the holiday spirit with fellow volunteers. Contact Dan Halloran for information.

The Mitten Tree Thanks Mary S



Who is Mary S? Why should the Mitten Tree thank her?

Mary is a wonderful lady who lives in Illinois. Every year she sends handmade scarves and hats for our Mitten Tree. She is related to Lynette Noonan. Her beautiful and bright contributions are decorating the tree to inspire you to join her in providing warm items for those in our community. You may contribute handmade or purchased items for adults or children. Gloves, mittens, hats, scarves, and even lap robes, are warmly welcomed. Please join Mary and the St Paul's Knitters in adding warmth and love to those in need.

The Mitten Tree will thank you, too.



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: Christmas

We are offering a presentation from the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: **The Birth of Jesus and the Adoration of the Shepherds** on Christmas Eve. Although there will not be a formal service in the sanctuary, we will convert our Narthex into an Atrium with the materials we have been using during this past year. Adults are encouraged to bring children, grandchildren, young family members and young friends. The presentation is geared primarily to the 3-12 year olds but younger children will enjoy being there as well. The presentation will begin at 4pm. Following the presentation, children will have the opportunity to see other atrium presentations and/or to engage in their own artwork. Families may leave at any time. Children will receive a packet to take with them. We will close the atrium at 6 pm.



Please RSVP to pcoutch@yahoo.com or stpaulsec@logical.net or call the office. We need to know number of adults and number of children (ages helpful) in order to set up seating for adults who may wish to observe. Children will be seated on the rugs on the floor. Masks are required for all over the age of 2. We will do our best to observe social distancing but we also recognize that that is not always possible with very young children.

An atrium is a place set aside for the child to come to know God, to experience God in their own way and at their own pace. Through the use of passages from scripture and from the liturgy and hands-on materials, the catechist listens with the child, asking who God is and how does God love us.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd** program, please contact Pam Coutchié directly at pcoutch@yahoo.com or through the church office.



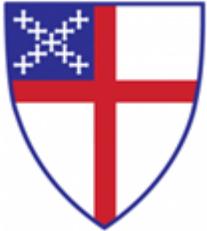
Church mouse found his quiet Saturday disturbed by the cleaning and greening of the church! Jeff Vunck and his able assistants, Brian Kivilahti, Jake Dalton and Pierce Dalton, were very busy everywhere. The decorations only begin to describe where they were working.



Ladies Who Lunch

Everyone enjoyed lunch at the Normanside in November. We will gather on at Lisa Walker's home for Pizza and to watch the movie QUEEN BEES on Wednesday, December 8th at 12:30 pm. Please RSVP (and for directions) to Candace.Deisley@gmail.com. Please join us!

Come Get Quiet with Us



Advent Quiet Day

December 11, 2021 9:00 am to Noon
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.,
10 North Main Ave. Albany, NY



Take time for yourself in prayer or meditation as we prepare for the Christmas Season. We will provide prayer and craft stations. Open to all regardless of faith background. Feel free attend for any amount of time.



Be Still and Know that I am God. Ps.46:10

Save the Date—Mark your Calendars Today



MIDWEEK EUCHARIST on **Wednesdays** in **December** at 12:10 pm.

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY on **Wednesdays** in **December** at 7:00 pm in the Blue Room and on Zoom. Contact Kelly Dalton for Zoom information.

SERVICE OF ADVENT LESSONS and CAROLS will be held on **Sunday, December 5** at the 10:30 service.

ST. PAUL'S WEDNESDAY CRAFTERS will meet on **Wednesday, December 8** following the 12:10 Eucharist. Please contact Carolyn Burnworth for more information.

DAUGHTERS OF THE KING ADVENT QUIET DAY, Saturday, December 11 from 9-12 at St Andrew's church.

LOAVES and FISHES Soup Kitchen, at St Francis Mission, **Saturday, December 11** Please contact Dan Halloran directly to help at danielhalloran3@gmail.com

BEAVER CROSS - Youth Games Night on **Friday, December 17**. Please contact Kelly Dalton for details.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY meets on **Saturday, December 18** at 10 am in the Blue Room. For further information contact Sheila Smith at Sheilarsmith@icloud.com.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE will be held in the Sanctuary on **Friday, December 24** at 7 pm.

CHRISTMAS EVE CHILDREN'S CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD will be held on **Friday, December 24** at 4 pm in the Narthex. **RSVP** required due to need to plan for space. Please contact the office at stpaulsec@logical.net or Pam Coutchié at pcoutch@yahoo.com



The Elves stopped their work long enough to be photographed by the Senior Warden Elf, Jeff Vunck.

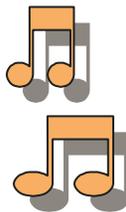


**A Meditation on Christ's
Advent and Nativity**

A Service of Lessons and Carols

will be held at the 10:30 am Service on Sunday, December 5, 2021.

Music will include works by Palestrina, Poston, Mendelssohn, Hassler, Smith, and Bach. Poems by Ranier Maria Rilke, Madeleine L'Engle, and Rowan Williams will be read as mediations following the scripture lessons.



Lectionary Readings
December, 2021



Cut along the dotted lines and save as a bookmark for reference

December 2021	
DECEMBER 5	Organ Prelude: Bach – Come now, Savior of the hea-then Advent Lessons and Carols Palestrina – Matin Responsory Mendelssohn – In Advent Victoria – Ave Maria Poston – Jesus Christ the Apple Tree Smith – There is no rose Hassler – Dixit Maria Organ Postlude: Bach – Come now, Savior of the hea-then
DECEMBER 12	Organ Prelude: Dupre – <i>Three Antiphons on Ave Maris Stella</i> Biebl – Ave Maria Hassler – <i>Kyrie (Missa super Dixit Maria)</i> Anon. – Rejoice in the Lord always Organ Postlude: Jean-Francois Dandrieu – <i>Dialogue from Magnificat</i>
DECEMBER 19	Organ Prelude: Bach – Come now, Savior of the hea-then Fedak – <i>Magnificat from Austin Canticles</i> Malcolm – <i>Kyrie (Missa Ad Praesepe)</i> Organ Postlude: Bach – Come now, Savior of the hea-then
DECEMBER 24	Darke – Service in F Mendelssohn – <i>Weinachten</i> Distler – Lo how a rose Smith – There is no rose Niles – I wonder as I wander Chilcott – Sussex Carol Organ Postlude: Louis-Claude Daquin – Noel VI
DECEMBER 26	(Choir Vacation) Organ Voluntary: Messaien – The Shepherds (from <i>The Nativity</i>) Organ Postlude: Pachelbel – <i>Vom Himmel Hoch</i>

December 5
Second Sunday in Advent

Malachi 3:1-4
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6
Canticle 4

December 12
Third Sunday in Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18
Canticle 9

December 19
Fourth Sunday in Advent

Micah 5:2-5a
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
Canticle 15 (*Magnificat*)

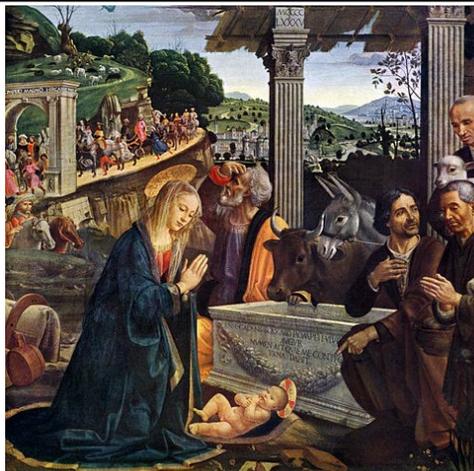
December 24
Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20
Psalm 96

December 26
First Sunday of Christmas

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7
John 1:1-18
Psalm 147

O Little Town of Bethlehem



Adoration of the Shepherds, Dominick Ghirlandaio, 1485, Sassetti Chapel, Santa Trinita.

O Little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by:
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light:
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

Phillips Brooks 1835-1893



CONTACT INFORMATION



Church Phone: 518-463-2257

Rectory Phone: 518-451-9549

Fax: 518-463-2981



St. Paul's Episcopal Church

21 Hackett Boulevard

Albany, NY 12208



Church Website:

<http://www.stpaulsinalbanyny.org>

Church e-mail:

Internet

stpaulsec@logical.net

Believe 
OUTLOUD™



St. Paul's celebrates the Holy Eucharist on Sundays at 8 a.m. (Quiet Holy Eucharist in the Chapel) and 10:30 a.m. (Holy Eucharist with Choir and Organ in the Sanctuary) Daily Morning Prayer is said at 9 a.m. from Monday to Thursday. Midweek Holy Eucharist is celebrated on Wednesdays at 12:10 in the Chapel. Masks required indoors.