

Rev. Mark Piedmonte
Music Director – Gregory Fraser

** Congregation please stand as you feel comfortable*

CHIMING OF THE BELLS

PRELUDE Liszt Christmas Tree Part 3

INTROIT – *Mary Did you Know?*

SHEEP PEN: Light the Advent Candle 3

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING - RESPONSIVE READING

Leader: Joy is the celebration given by God through the light of the world.

All: Joy is the celebration given by God at the birth of the Christ Child.

Leader: Joy is the celebration when the angels sang “Glory to God in the highest.”

All: Let us dance and sing and shout for joy. Christ is coming again.

(Two purple and one pink candles are lit.)

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Source of light, shine in our lives and in your world with your life-giving joy.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

ADVENT SONG: “*Light the Advent Candle*” verse 3

Light the advent candle 3, Think of heavenly harmony

Angels singing “peace on earth”, at the blessed Savior’s birth

*Chorus: Candle, candle burning bright, shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright,
fill our hearts with Christmas light*

CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF SEWING SEEDS OF LOVE

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Promised One of God brings good news to the oppressed and binds up the brokenhearted. **All: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

Leader: The Promised One of God proclaims liberty to captives and release to prisoners.

All: We are witnesses to the light of Christ!

The Promised One of God comforts all who mourn and gives a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. **All: Rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, holding fast to what is good, we are witnesses to the light of Christ!**

*OPENING PRAYER

Leader: By the light of Advent, let us pray: **All: We thank you, O God, for Jesus Christ - the One who came, who remains, and promise to come again. Give us eyes to see him today among those who are oppressed, imprisoned, brokenhearted, or beaten down, and we, like the prophets before us, will give our testimony, too: how Christ releases and sets free; how he turns ashes into garlands; how he repairs and builds up what was ruined. We, too, will point others to Jesus, the Light of the world. Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN: Savior of the Nations Come (GTG #102)

CALL TO CONFESSION:

Leader: Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts through our lives and relationships. But God is able to restore us. Like water coursing through a desert, the waters of baptism flow through us, reminding us that we belong to God and are raised to new life. In this promise, let us pray:

All: Merciful God, you love justice; why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form of evil? You have given us the gift of your Spirit; why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us? You have given us the words of the prophets and the Word himself; why, then, do we despise and ignore what we have heard from you? You have sent the light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light? Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us! Even if we have gone out in tears, God brings us home shouting for joy. **All: Thanks be to God: we are forgiven and made new in Jesus Christ! Amen.**

*RESPONSE: GLORIA PATRI

*PASSING OF THE PEACE:

Leader: May your hearts be filled with the peace of Christ! **All: And also with you!**

WORDS & GESTURES OF PEACE

SONG OF PRAISE: *Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming* (GTG #129)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

Leader: Holy One, giver of life and light, as your word is read and proclaimed, illumine our hearts and minds, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives may reflect God’s glory. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING:

Isaiah 61:1-11

Thessalonians 5:16-24 and John 1:19-23

RESPONSE TO THE READING OF GOD’S WORD

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord! **All: Thanks be to God!**

Advent Sermon Series: ***All Your Favorite Christmas Classics - Hope, Peace, Joy and Love!***

MESSAGE: Week One: ***Joy-Filled Voices***

Rev. Mark Piedmonte

HYMN: Joy to the World (GTG #

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH Apostle’s Creed (Please remain standing)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR JOYS & CONCERNS (Please be seated)

THE LORD’S PRAYER (unison)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY / DEDICATION

CLOSING HYMN: *Rejoice Ye Pure In Heart* (GTG #804)

*BENEDICTION / *RESPONSE: *Go Now in Peace*

Go now in peace...never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day. Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do. Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see. God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love

POSTLUDE: Liszt Christmas Tree Part Two

ANNOUNCEMENTS
TODAY, December 17, 2023

9:00am 10:00am 10:15-10:45am 11:00am 4:00pm	CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE – Chapel Sewing Seeds of Love Friendship Time TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE – Chapel Blue Holiday Interfaith Service 4pm at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. For many, the holidays are a time of great joy and celebration! Others will be navigating through the holidays dealing with various kinds of grief and loss. Please hold in prayer all those who are not able to experience the same "joy to the world" in the same way they have during previous holidays. We would like to invite all who would find it helpful to a Community Interfaith "Blue Holiday" service. This service is to hold space for anyone experiencing grief during the holidays. All are invited!
5:00pm	Dinner and a Show! Congregational Life and Christian Ed invite you to an evening of food and fun! Congregational Life will prepare the turkey, ham & mashed potatoes, you are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share. Then, sit back and enjoy our Sunday School Performance of A SUPER CHRISTMAS!


THIS WEEK: December 18-23

Monday, Dec 18 Tuesday, Dec 19 Wed, Dec 20 Thursday, Dec 21 Friday, Dec 22	Share & Care 6:30pm Advent Bible Study 6pm Office Hours 10-3pm Office Hours 10-3pm Advent Bible Study 6pm Office Hours 10-3pm
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday, Dec 24	10am Combined Service – Advent Week 4 4pm Family Christmas Eve Service 7pm Service of Lessons and Carols
Sunday, Dec 31	NEW YEARS EVE at St Paul's UMC (404 Flower Street) – All are invited to join together with our neighbors at St Paul's on 12/31 for a special New Year's Eve celebration! Come for a worship service at 6:00 PM and stay for fellowship afterward. Attendees are asked to please call Pastor Peggy by December 19 so the church may have a headcount for planning purposes.

STEWARDSHIP: Sun, Dec 10th Weekly Giving: \$1771 Attendance: 50



Dec. 5 ... Lottie Nickell
Dec 6 ... Dorothy Hall
Dec 6 ... Doug Parks
Dec 12 ... John Curtis
Dec 12 ... Emily Vocke
Dec 12 ... Edward Warren
Dec 14 ... Tony Davis
Dec 16 ... Riley Pruitt
Dec 19 ... William Campion, Sr.
Dec 20 ... Pamela Russell
Dec 30 ... Anne Marie Cook
Dec 30 ... Macy Woroniecki

Blessing Box: Our Blessing Box is in need of some important and popular items. This is the time of year where there is a greater need for assistance. Susan Todd and Carol Neal take great care in making sure the Blessing Box remains full. Please check your cupboards at home or grab an extra at the grocery store and help us keep the box full. Items that typically fly out of the box are: canned vegetables, canned meat, canned beans, salt & pepper, spaghetti sauce and noodles, bottled water, Kleenex, toothpaste, soap, razors, shaving cream, hygiene items, laundry soap, paper towels, toilet paper & pet food.

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2023 Christmas Flowers

John Falcone**Memory of:**

Phebe Mary Falcone

Honor of:

Vicki Tillery

Jim & Sue Mallory**Honor of:**

Our Children, Grandchildren

& Great-Grandchildren

Fred & Carol Neal**Memory of:**

Our loved ones

Honor of:

Our Children & Grandchildren
and Great Grandson

George Phillips**Memory of:**

S. Glenn Phillips

George Phillips III

Mark Hammond

Brett Hammond

Carol Rose**Memory of:**

Hershel L. Rose

Honor of:

All our Children and Youth

Pat Rouch**Memory of:**

David Rouch

Honor of:

Adam, David, Matthew

William & Ryan

Susan Todd**Memory of:**

Bob & Bertha Jackson

Tom & Linda Truitt**Memory of:**

Myrtle & Edward Truitt

Dewey & Connie Davis

Wayne & Ann Truitt

Honor of: Our Grandchildren

Marshall, Hannah, Laura & Brett



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4pm Family Service in the Chapel

7pm Service of Lessons and Carols in the Sanctuary



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