The Fourth Sunday of Advent ✺ December 24, 2023
The Holy Eucharist ✺ 10:00 a.m.

Welcome to St. Paul’s.

Welcome to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul! We are glad you are worshiping alongside us today. You are welcome here. All of who you are is welcome here.

If you are new to the Episcopal Church, you may wish to note a few things about our worship style. In general, we stand to sing and pray, and to hear the Gospel (the Good News) of Jesus Christ. We sit to hear other scripture and to listen to the preacher. You may notice that some people choose, at certain times, to kneel, or to make the sign of the cross on their body, or to bow. You may do any, all, or none of those things. Kneelers are located under the table in the back of the church, should you wish to use one.

Children are always welcome in the service, as is their wiggling and whispering, and their need to move and explore. There is a children’s activity area in the back of the church for use as needed. Sunday School for children aged four through grade five is available between services, beginning around 10:00. There is no formal nursery, but please feel free to explore the space and how it might meet your needs.

You can find most everything you need in this bulletin. The music we sing is found within this bulletin or in the blue Hymnal 1982 found either on your seat or in the rack under the seat in front of you. Hymn numbers that begin with the letter S are in the front section of the hymnal.

If you are new to this community and wish to know more about it or to receive our weekly e-mail newsletters, please fill out a green card located on the table in the back of the church and either leave it on the table or hand it to the clergy or an usher. We would love to know you more fully!

Finally, a word about Communion (Lord’s Supper, Eucharist) – the bread and wine. The table fellowship we experience together is for everyone. Everyone. It is a grace freely given by the one who loves us so very much. And it’s for you.
Opening voluntary: Prelude in G minor

Cesar Cui (1835-1918)

The Word of God

At the entrance of the choir and clergy, all stand and sing

Processional hymn 56  *O come, O come, Emmanuel*

Blessed are you, holy and living One.

You come to your people and set them free.

We join in singing the Trisagion (thrice Holy):

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The Celebrant says the Collect of the Day, a prayer to bring focus to the community’s worship:

God be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.  

A short period of stillness is kept.

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

We sit to hear a reading from Hebrew scripture:

A reading from the Second Book of Samuel

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all
your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people.

Thanks be to God.  
Stillness follows.

We stand to sing a metrical version of the Magnificat, the Song of Mary

Sequence Hymn 265  The angel Gabriel from heaven came

We remain standing for a reading from the life of Jesus:
The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon  The Preacher breaks open the scripture.  

The Ven. Stan Baker

A short period of stillness follows the Sermon. Then we stand and join in saying together the Nicene Creed, a statement of Christian faith dating from the fourth century:

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, 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.
The Deacon introduces the prayers and then you are invited to speak aloud one or more of these prayers as you are moved to do so. It is fine for more than one voice to lift up a prayer.

In the hushed anticipation of your coming, O Lord, remind us that you are always with us, that like Joseph we might always be eager to fulfill your will, and be eager to pray. Stillness

Deacon

Voice

O God, we pray for the church in this and every land,

that you might teach us your ways and that we might walk in your paths.

All

Voice

O God, we pray for our nation, and all nations,

that your peace would be manifest in every corner of the earth.

All

Voice

Out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and you shall judge between the nations.

O God, we pray for the sick, the suffering, and those in distress of any kind.

that you would heal all injuries, comfort all grief, and settle all wrongs.

All

Voice

In your kingdom sorrow and sighing will flee away.

O God, we pray for those things for which we are thankful.

that we may rejoice in all things.

All

Voice

In your kingdom even the wilderness and dry land are glad and rejoice.

We thank you for your presence with us

and pray that you might be always present with those whom we love.

O Christ, hear our prayers, restore us, and show us the glorious light of your countenance, that we might be saved. Amen.

Deacon

Let us confess our sins to God.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;

in your compassion forgive us our sins,

known and unknown,

things done and left undone;

and so uphold us by your Spirit

that we may live and serve you in newness of life,

to the honor and glory of your Name;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Celebrant offers absolution.

Celebrate

People

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you. We greet one another in the Name of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Communion

Ushers pass a plate to collect an offering for the work of the Church. Electronic giving is available on-line or through the QR code on announcements insert. The choir sings an anthem:

My soul doth magnify the Lord,

and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaid.

For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm.

He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat

and exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things.

And the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel

as he promised to our forefathers Abraham, and his seed forever.Amen.

Gifts of bread and wine are brought forward. The Holy Table is prepared, and we sing the offertory hymn

497 How bright appears the Morning Star

The Great Thanksgiving: Eucharistic Prayer B

The Celebrant continues the Eucharistic prayer, leading to the singing of the Sanctus:
Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

The Celebrant continues with the prayer. After the words said over the bread and wine, all join in saying the Memorial Acclamation:
Therefore, according to his command, O Father,
We remember his death, We proclaim his resurrection, We await his coming in glory.

The prayer concludes,
By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and for ever.

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we now pray,

Our Father in heaven, hal-low’d be your Name, your king-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us to-day our dai-ly bread. For-give us our sins as we for-give those who sin a-gainst us. Save us from the time of trial,
Setting  Ambrosian chant, harmonized by Mark Howe, 1990

The Celebrant breaks the bread. After a moment of stillness, all sing the Fraction Anthem.

The table fellowship we experience together is for everyone. The bread may be received directly into your hand, one palm crossed over the other. The wine may be taken by sipping from the cup or touching the bread to the cup. Please note that there is a separate shallow bowl for intinction (dipping the wafer into the wine). Gluten-free wafers are available; please indicate your need at the time you receive Communion. Those who prefer not to receive the sacrament may come forward for a blessing.

During Communion we sing an ostinato:

After a period of stillness, we stand and sing

Hymn 74  Blest be the King

Bread and wine may be given to a representative of the congregation, to take to those who are ill or shut in.

N., in the name of this congregation I send you forth, bearing these holy gifts, that those to whom you go [especially N....] may share with us in the communion of Christ’s body and blood.

We who are many are one body, because we all share one bread, one cup.
We remain standing and say this prayer together:

Eternal God,
you have graciously accepted us as living members of our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Savior. Amen.

The Celebrant pronounces a blessing, and then the Deacon dismisses us, all responding,
Thanks be to God.

The People may remain and listen to the organ music that follows or may leave quietly, so as not to disturb those
who stay to listen.

Closing voluntary:  The heavens declare the glory of God

Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739)

SERVING IN THE LITURGY TODAY

Crucifer: Adam Skiff  Lectors: Anne Clark, Barrie Montross
Usher: Henry Kellogg  Chalice Ministers: Pamela Van de Graaf, Alice Van Buren

Upcoming Services at St. Paul's Cathedral

Saturday, December 24, 2023 – Christmas Eve
4:00 p.m.  Christmas Pageant and Holy Eucharist
9:30 p.m.  Choral Music and Carols
10:00 p.m.  Festal Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 25, 2023 – Christmas Day
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 31, 2024
The First Sunday after Christmas Day
10:00 a.m. Lessons & Carols

Sunday, January 7, 2024
The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Transferred)
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, followed by
Undecorating of the Church

Sunday, January 14, 2024 – The First Sunday after the Epiphany
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Church School
11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
We are on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples for thousands of years and is the home of the Western Abenaki People. Our Cathedral community honors, recognizes, and respects these peoples as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we gather. Once taken from the Abenaki people by the people of the United States, this land was taken again, during the period of Urban Renewal in the 1970s, from the Italian immigrants who had found a welcome on these shores. We acknowledge that we are guests in this land, and pledge to respect and protect the land and waters within our use.