

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Stockbridge, Massachusetts
December 5, 2021 – The Second Sunday of Advent**

Prepare the way of the Lord

For this Second Sunday of Advent we hear again the voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness. The gospel writer makes it very clear when and where John appears; and yet, John's cry comes to each of us in whatever wilderness we find ourselves.

Whether in a wilderness of loneliness, or illness, or even a seemingly untethered political climate, we hear John's call back to God. "Prepare...See!" We are called to get our own affairs straight so that we might be ready for the extraordinary gift of the Messiah. But make no mistake: straightening paths, filling valleys, and flattening mountains is hard work. Are we up to it?

This Advent, what do you need do to be ready to take in the love of God made flesh in Jesus Christ? Welcome to St. Paul's, where we share in the work of getting ready!

Collect

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Altar flowers are given in gratitude for Margaret Rousseau.

10:00 Service Music Hymns are in the blue *Hymnal 1982*

Prelude		Prelude on "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"	Wayne L. Wold
Opening Hymn	59	Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding	<i>Merton</i>
Sequence Hymn	76	On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry	<i>Winchester New</i>
Offertory Hymn:	75	There's a voice in the wilderness crying	<i>Ascension</i>
Communion Voluntary		Variation on "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"	Wayne L. Wold
Closing Hymn	67	Comfort, comfort ye my people	<i>Psalms 42</i>
Postlude		Postlude on "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"	Benjamin Kolodziej

Worship Teams (If you exchange shifts with someone, please notify the Church Office by Wednesday morning at office@stpaulsstockbridge.org.)

Today, December 5

Celebrant The Rev. Jane Tillman
Preacher The Rev. Sam Smith
8:00 Reader Fred Clark
10:00 Ushers/ Ryleigh Fillio
Greeters Devyn Fillio
10:00 Reader Vaunie Graulty

Next Sunday, December 12

Celebrant The Rev. Sam Smith
Preacher The Rev. Jane Tillman
8:00 Reader Duncan Pollock
10:00 Ushers/ Natalie Boyce
Greeters Peter Dillon
10:00 Reader Kendra MacLeod

Readings

Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Canticle 16 (The Song of Zechariah – Luke 1:68-79)

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *

he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *

born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Philippians 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

Our Next Community in Faith Offering

Tuesdays, December 7 & 14, 7:00-8:00 pm

Sing Noel! An exploration of the music of Advent and Christmas

Via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84454154743?pwd=cFRHTXp4ajlsWlNOZnVsdXNSRkp1dz09>

Of all the various aspects of Christmas, perhaps none is more beloved, and more reminiscent, than the music of the season. Together we will explore the music we love, learning not only the stories of the creation and meaning of these beloved songs, but also taking time to use them as tools for meditation. No preparation needed – just join us to talk about and pray on the music we cherish.

Parish Prayer List

- People we pray for on Sundays: **Cecilia, Charles, Helen, Jean, Greg**
- Long-term prayer list: **Piers, Katrina, Rich, Karen, Michael, Ronnie, Tom, Khali, George, Doug, George, David, Barbara, Christy, John**
- Our partners at Grace Church, Great Barrington and their priest Tina Rathbone; Christ Trinity Church, Episcopal-Lutheran, Sheffield and their priest Erik Karas; the Austen Riggs community and the Riverbrook Residence; victims of violence, abuse, persecution and disaster at home and abroad; those impacted by the pandemic
- Outreach Ministries of the Week: **Lee Food Pantry & Berkshire Community Diaper Project**
- Diocesan Cycle of Prayer: **St. Luke’s Church, Worcester**
- Anglican Cycle of Prayer: **The Anglican Church of Burundi**
- Pray for the repose of the soul of **Patrick Wright** (*Darryl Lafferty’s brother-in-law*)
- Birthdays: **Donna Gray** (Dec. 11th)

COVID Precautions

We strongly encourage everyone over the age of 12 who attends in-person services at St. Paul’s to be fully vaccinated, and be masked when attending worship in the church. These simple actions not only protect our communities by slowing the spread of the virus. Those who are not vaccinated are invited to worship with us online. (For links, visit our website, stpaulsstockbridge.org.) Thank you for helping keep us all safe!

Giving for Christmas

Once again St. Paul's will be providing Christmas gifts to benefit a local family. This year our adoptive family has two children: a 12-year-old boy and a 1-year-old girl. There will be a sign-up sheet in church on Sunday or contact Matt Fillio to sign up. If you would like to take part in this project but are unable to go shopping, please email Matt, who is happy to be your personal shopper. Checks should be made out to St. Paul's Discretionary Fund, with "Local Family Christmas" in the memo. Checks should be made out to St. Paul's Discretionary Fund, with "Local Family Christmas" in the memo.

We ask you to place your unwrapped items in pews beside the pulpit; all gifts must be dropped off at the church by **December 14, 2021**. Gifts will be delivered to the organization in time for Christmas giving. We hope you'll take part in this project as we offer support and love to our neighbors. Any questions please email or call Matt Fillio. (413-822-3759 or mcfillio@yahoo.com)

**Join us for *The Holy Moment*
Friday, December 10, 7:30 pm**

A Holiday Candlelight Concert with Oakes & Smith

Featuring Katherine Oakes, vocals
Robert Oakes, vocals, guitar, piano
Justin Green, vocals percussion, harmonium
Kalidasa Joseph Getter, flute, clarinet

This concert experience offers listeners a moment of stillness and peace during the often-hectic holiday season, a moment to touch the depths of this joyful and holy time of year. Oakes & Smith draw from a range of sacred and secular, contemplative and festive, traditional and original holiday music.

Admission is free, and donations will be gratefully accepted. Masks will be required, and all attendees will be asked to show proof of vaccination. The concert will also be available to view online—go to our website for the link! For more information, visit oakesandsmith.net or stpaulsstockbridge.org.

The Cantilena Chamber Choir will present **Christmas at Trinity** at Trinity Episcopal Church in Lenox on Sunday, December 5, at 3p.m. Some singing, some readings, and some instrumental music will highlight the return of a beloved Christmas tradition. The concert will include many traditional carols, including some in new settings by the composer John Rutter and Bob Chilcott. There will be an audience sing-along with your favorite must sing carols too!

All tickets are \$20, and free for children 12 and under. Admission to the concert is possible only with proof of full vaccination at the door. Masks are required indoors at all times. All of our performers are fully vaccinated, and wear masks at all times during the events. Trinity Episcopal Church

Christmas Flowers

If you would like to contribute toward special flowers for Christmas, please list those whom you wish to honor or remember on a "Christmas Flower" form by **Sunday, December 19**. Forms and payment may be put in the collection plate or mailed to St. Paul's, PO Box 704, Stockbridge MA 01262.