



St. Paul's Anglican Church

The Anglican Archdiocese
of North America

Monthly Gazette

December 2025



Parish News

The Hymnal Plus has arrived and Bp. George and Mariann are working on setting it up for services. It will take a little time to become familiar with it but it should greatly enhance our services.

The St. Paul's website is finally up and running. It is located at StPaulsPrescott.org. Stop in and look at it! And don't forget the Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/546064278127172>.

We will have another Bake Sale on December 13 from 10-3. We will have a lot of yummy stuff made by parish members.



Thank you to Fr. Walt and Bea for donating a new sandwich board for the Bake Sale. It is created so that other signs can be inserted into the frame.

Please let Mariann know if you are interested in decorating the Church for Christmas. If no one is interested, it may be kind of drab. Also, if you can, please contribute poinsettias for the Sanctuary. Advent 4 is on December 21 so we will not decorate until then.

Ann-Marie has graciously volunteered to lead the Sunshine Club. If you know of anyone that is ill, please let Ann-Marie know so we can send them a get well card.

We had a few birthdays in November.



Sally Bagby



Dan Basinger



Angel Macias

December Birthdays

4 Fr. Aaron Tremblay
5 Fr. Walt Crites

December Anniversaries

None

Special Prayers

Mary Moore

St. Paul's

John, April and Baby Willow

Mary P.

Clyde

Jack L.

Lee Nelson

Calendar

The following is the calendar for December, 2025.

Holy Communion is every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Lunch Club every 2 weeks on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. has been suspended until after the holidays. The venue will be announced the Sunday before at Church.

December **21** - St. Thomas the Apostle

24 - Christmas Eve

25 - Christmas Day

26 - St. Stephen

27 - St. John the Evangelist

28 - Holy Innocents

Special Services

St. Thomas the Apostle

On the shortest day of the year, December 21, the Church turns its gaze to St. Thomas the Apostle. His name often carries the shadow of doubt, for he was the one who refused to believe unless he could see and touch the risen Christ. Yet the story does not end in hesitation.

When Christ appeared again, Thomas was invited to place his hand upon the wounds of the crucified Lord. In that moment, doubt gave way to the most profound confession: *"My Lord and my God."* This cry of faith echoes through Anglican and Orthodox worship alike, reminding the faithful that questions and struggles can lead to deeper conviction.

In Anglican tradition, the timing of Thomas's feast is deliberate. Just days before Christmas, believers are called to prepare their hearts not only for the birth of Christ but also for the recognition of His divinity. Thomas's journey from uncertainty to bold proclamation mirrors the journey of every Christian who must move from hearing the story of Christ to embracing Him as Lord.

Orthodox practice, while often commemorating Thomas more fully after Easter, still honors his witness as part of the Church's rhythm of faith. His doubt is not treated as failure but as a doorway — showing that honest searching can lead to the clearest vision of God.

The narrative of Thomas does not end in Jerusalem. Tradition tells of his travels far east, preaching the Gospel in lands as distant as India, where he gave his life in martyrdom. His feast day, therefore, is not only about belief but about mission — the faith that once trembled became the faith that carried the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

The Feast of St. Thomas is a story of light breaking into darkness. On December 21, when the nights are longest, the Church remembers the apostle whose doubt was turned into radiant faith. His words — *"My Lord and my God"* — become the Church's own confession, preparing hearts for the coming of Christ at Christmas and affirming that faith, even when tested, can shine brighter than the longest night.

Christmas Eve

As the sun sets on December 24, the Church enters the holy stillness of **Christmas Eve**. In both Anglican and Orthodox traditions, this night is not merely the eve of a holiday—it is the threshold of mystery, the moment when heaven bends low to meet earth.

In Anglican worship, Christmas Eve often begins with lessons and carols, Scripture readings tracing the long story of salvation from Genesis to the Gospels. The congregation hears of humanity's longing, the prophets' promises, and finally the angel's announcement to shepherds. The liturgy builds like a candle flame, growing brighter until the proclamation: *"Unto us a child is born."* For Anglicans, this night is about expectation fulfilled—the Word made flesh, entering history in humility.

In the Orthodox Church, Christmas Eve is marked by fasting and prayer, a final preparation before the feast. The services are rich with hymns that weave together prophecy and fulfillment. The Royal Hours are read, recalling the ancient longing for redemption. By evening, the faithful gather for the Vespereal Divine Liturgy, where Old Testament readings point directly to Christ's birth. The night culminates in the hymn: *"Today the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth to the Eternal Word."* For Orthodox Christians, Christmas Eve is the doorway into the Incarnation, a sacred pause before the joy of the Nativity.

Though expressed differently, both traditions share the same heartbeat: Christmas Eve is a night of **waiting and wonder**. It is the hush before the angels sing, the silence before the shepherds run to Bethlehem. It is the Church standing in awe, knowing that the Creator of the stars is about to be cradled in a manger.

In Anglican and Orthodox practice alike, Christmas Eve is not simply about anticipation—it is about **entering the mystery of God-with-us**. The night teaches that salvation comes quietly, in humility, and that the light of Christ shines brightest when the world is most still.

Christmas Day

The dawn of Christmas Day breaks with a sense of holy wonder. In Anglican and Orthodox traditions alike, this day is not simply a commemoration of a past event—it is the living celebration of God entering human history.

In Anglican churches, the morning light often begins with the Eucharist, where the words of Scripture resound: *"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."* The liturgy carries the joy of fulfillment—prophecies long awaited now realized in the birth of Christ. Hymns such as *"O Come, All Ye Faithful"* invite worshippers to join the shepherds and angels in adoration. For Anglicans, Christmas Day is the moment when the Incarnation becomes the heart of faith: God is not distant, but present, born into the world to redeem it.

In the Orthodox Church, Christmas Day is known as the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Divine Liturgy proclaims the mystery of the Incarnation with hymns that weave together heaven and earth: *“Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom.”* Icons of the Nativity show the cave, the manger, the Virgin Mother, and the angels, reminding the faithful that the eternal Word chose humility as His dwelling. For Orthodox Christians, this feast is not only about Christ’s birth but about the cosmic renewal of creation—the light of God shining into the darkness of the world.

Though expressed in different liturgical forms, both traditions tell the same story: on Christmas Day, the Church gathers to proclaim that God has come among us. The child in the manger is the Savior of the world, the one who bridges heaven and earth, eternity and time.

Christmas Day in Anglican and Orthodox practice is a celebration of God-with-us. It is the day when the Church sings with angels, kneels with shepherds, and marvels with Mary at the mystery of the Incarnation. More than memory, it is participation: the faithful enter the story of Bethlehem, rejoicing that the light of Christ has dawned and will never be overcome.

St. Stephen

The day after Christmas, the Church turns from the manger to the first martyr. St. Stephen, remembered on December 26 in both Anglican and Orthodox traditions, is called the Protomartyr—the first to shed his blood for Christ. His story is told in the Acts of the Apostles, where he is chosen as one of the first deacons, entrusted with serving the poor and proclaiming the Gospel.

Stephen’s witness was not only in service but in speech. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he spoke boldly before the council, recounting the history of Israel and declaring that Jesus was the fulfillment of God’s promises. His words cut to the heart, and in anger, the crowd dragged him outside the city to stone him. Yet even as stones fell, Stephen’s eyes were lifted to heaven. He saw Christ standing at the right hand of God, and with his final breath he prayed: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”

In Anglican tradition, Stephen’s feast day immediately after Christmas reminds the faithful that the joy of Christ’s birth is inseparable from the cost of discipleship. The child in the manger came to bring salvation, and Stephen’s martyrdom shows the depth of commitment that following Christ requires. His prayer of forgiveness echoes the mercy of Christ Himself, teaching Anglicans that love must triumph even in suffering.

In Orthodox practice, the Feast of St. Stephen is woven into the rhythm of the Nativity season. The hymns of the day honor him as the first to bear witness with his life, and his vision of Christ in glory is celebrated as a foretaste of the Kingdom. The Orthodox Church sees Stephen’s

martyrdom not as defeat but as victory—the triumph of faith over fear, of eternal life over death.

The Feast of St. Stephen is a story of courage and mercy. In both Anglican and Orthodox traditions, his witness stands as a bridge between Christmas joy and the reality of Christian discipleship. The manger leads to the cross, and the cross leads to glory. Stephen's vision of Christ and his prayer for his enemies remind the Church that true faith is lived not only in celebration but in sacrifice, and that the light of Christ shines even in the face of death.

St. John the Evangelist

In the days following Christmas, the Church turns its attention to **St. John the Evangelist**, the beloved disciple. His feast, kept on **December 27** in Anglican tradition and honored in Orthodox practice, is a reminder that the mystery of Christ's birth is not only about the manger but about the Word made flesh, proclaimed and lived.

John's story is unique among the apostles. He was the youngest, the one who leaned on Christ's breast at the Last Supper, the only disciple who stood at the foot of the cross with Mary when others had fled. From that moment, he became the guardian of the Mother of God, entrusted by Christ Himself: "*Behold your mother.*" His life was marked not by martyrdom in blood, but by a long witness of love and truth.

In Anglican worship, John is remembered as the writer of the Gospel that begins not with Bethlehem but with eternity: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" His feast day, placed so close to Christmas, reminds Anglicans that the child in the manger is none other than the eternal Word, the light shining in the darkness. The liturgy often emphasizes John's role as the apostle of love, whose letters call the Church to live in fellowship with God and one another.

In Orthodox tradition, John is honored as *Theologos*—the Theologian. His Gospel is considered the most mystical, revealing the divine nature of Christ with clarity and depth. Icons often show him as an eagle, soaring high into the mysteries of God. The Orthodox Church treasures his witness as one who saw beyond the surface, who proclaimed that God is love, and who lived to an old age, bearing testimony until the end.

The Feast of St. John the Evangelist is a celebration of **love, truth, and vision**. In both Anglican and Orthodox traditions, John's life reminds the faithful that discipleship is not only about following Christ in action but about abiding in His love. His Gospel and letters continue to call the Church to see beyond appearances, to recognize in the child of Bethlehem the eternal Word, and to live as children of light.

Holy Innocents

In the days after Christmas, when the Church is still rejoicing in the birth of the Savior, the calendar turns to a darker yet deeply meaningful remembrance: the **Feast of the Holy Innocents**, kept on **December 28** in Anglican tradition and honored in Orthodox practice as part of the Nativity cycle.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story. When the Magi did not return to Herod, the king's fear turned to fury. In his attempt to destroy the newborn King, he ordered the slaughter of all male children in Bethlehem two years old and under. These little ones, who never spoke a word of faith, became the first witnesses to Christ by their blood. The Church calls them the *Holy Innocents*, martyrs not by choice but by circumstance, whose lives were caught up in the mystery of the Incarnation.

In Anglican worship, their feast day is a sobering reminder that the joy of Christmas is set against the reality of a broken world. The child in the manger came into a world of violence and fear, and the Innocents bear witness to the cost of human sin. Yet their death is not meaningless: they are remembered as the first-fruits of Christ's victory, children who share in His glory. The liturgy often emphasizes God's care for the vulnerable and calls the faithful to protect the innocent in every generation.

In Orthodox tradition, the Holy Innocents are honored as martyrs, their number beyond counting. Hymns of the day speak of them as lambs slain for Christ, whose blood testifies to the coming of the true Shepherd. Their commemoration is woven into the joy of the Nativity, reminding the faithful that Christ's birth is not sentimental but cosmic—a light shining in darkness, a Savior born into a world that resists Him.

The Feast of the Holy Innocents is a story of sorrow transformed into hope. In both Anglican and Orthodox traditions, it teaches that even the smallest lives are precious to God, and that suffering is not forgotten in His Kingdom. Their witness reminds the Church that Christ came to redeem not only the strong but the vulnerable, and that His light shines even in the shadow of violence.

The Book of Common Prayer
The Ministration of Holy Baptism

In the Orthodox Anglican Church, baptism is not seen as a mere ceremony but as a holy mystery, a sacrament ordained by Christ Himself. The service begins with solemn prayers, reminding the congregation that this act is God's work, not human invention. The priest invokes the name of the **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**, echoing Christ's command to His apostles, and the candidate is presented before the font as one who seeks new life.

The liturgy often begins with the **making of a catechumen**—the one to be baptized is marked with the sign of the cross, prayed over, and renounces the devil and all his works. This act symbolizes turning away from the old life and preparing to enter the household of God. Sponsors or godparents stand with infants, promising to nurture them in the faith, while adults make their own vows of repentance and belief.

The central act is the washing with water. Whether by immersion or pouring, the water is a visible sign of an invisible grace. The Orthodox Anglican Church teaches that in baptism, sins are forgiven, the Holy Spirit is given, and the person is incorporated into the Body of Christ. The prayers emphasize that this is not simply symbolic—it is God acting through His Word and Spirit.

Following baptism, the newly baptized is often anointed with holy oil (chrismation in Orthodox practice, or signing with the cross in Anglican usage), marking them as sealed by the Spirit. The congregation welcomes the new Christian, affirming that baptism is entry into the life of the Church, where the believer will be nourished by Scripture, prayer, and the Eucharist.

The service concludes with thanksgiving, as the Church rejoices that another soul has been brought into the covenant of grace. Baptism is described as both **a beginning and a belonging**: the start of a lifelong journey of discipleship and the assurance that the baptized person is now part of Christ's family.

In narrative terms, the Ministration of Holy Baptism in the Orthodox Anglican Church is the story of **death and rebirth, renunciation and belonging, cleansing and sealing**. It is the moment when the Church gathers to witness God's promise fulfilled—that through water and the Spirit, a person is made new, joined to Christ, and welcomed into His body, the Church.

Joke of the Month

— One Sunday a pastor told the congregation that the church needed some extra money and asked the people to prayerfully consider giving a little extra in the offering plate.

He said that whoever gave the most would be able to pick out three hymns.

After the offering plates were passed, the pastor glanced down and noticed that someone had placed a \$1,000 bill in offering. He was so excited that he immediately shared his joy with his congregation and said he'd like to personally thank the person who placed the money in the plate.

A very quiet, elderly and saintly lady all the way in the back shyly raised her hand. The pastor asked her to come to the front. Slowly, she made her way to the pastor. He told her how wonderful it was that she gave so much and in thanks asked her to pick out three hymns.

Her eyes brightened as she looked over the congregation, pointed to the three handsomest men in the building and said, "I'll take him and him and him."

The Book of Common Prayer has a wonderful lectionary for reading the Bible, both Old and New Testaments. The following are the readings for the month of December 2025. This will be the last month this appears in the Newsletter. It is in front of the Book of Common Prayer. If you do not have a Book of Common Prayer at home, please contact Bp. George.

Book of Common Prayer Readings

December 1

Mon	Lev 19:1-2, 9-18	Phil 1:1-11	Deut 10:12	Matt 27:11-26
Tue	Lev 19:26	Phil 1:12-26	Deut 13:1-11	Matt 27:27-44
Wed	Lev 20:1-8	Phil 1:27 - 2:18	Deut 15:7-15	Matt 27:45-56
Thu	Lev 25:23-31	Phil 2:19	Deut 17:14	Matt 27:57
Fri	Lev 26:1-13	Phil 3	Deut 18:15	Matt 28:1-10
Sat	Lev 26:27-42	Phil 4	Deut 19:11	Matt 28:11

December 7 - Third Sunday before Advent

<1>	Ruth 1:1-17			
	Col 3:5-11	Joel 3:9-17	Matt 13:36-52	
<2>	Hab 1:12 - 2:4, 9-14			
	Luke 12:35-48	Amos 5:14-24	Gal 6:1-10	

Mon	Obad 1-9	I Peter 1:1-12	Deut 24:10-18	I Thess 1
Tue	Obad 10	I Peter 1:13	Deut 25:1-3, 13-16	I Thess 2:1-16
Wed	Mal 1:6-11	I Peter 2:1-10	Deut 26:1-11	I Thess 2:17 - 3:13
Thu	Mal 2:1-10	I Peter 2:11-17	Deut 28:1-14	I Thess 4:1-12
Fri	Mal 3:1-15	I Peter 2:18	Deut 29:2, 9-21	I Thess 4:13
Sat	Mal 3:16 - 4:6	I Peter 3:1-12	Deut 30:11	I Thess 5:1-11

December 14 - Second Sunday before Advent

<1>	Isa 2:6-19			
	Matt 25:14-29	Gen 19:1-3, 12-17, 24-28	Luke 17:20	
<2>	Isa 66:1-2, 10, 12-16, 18-23			
	II Thess 1	II Esdras 8:63 - 9:13	II Peter 3:1-14, 17-18	

Mon	Lam 1:1-6	I Peter 3:13	Wis 1:1-7	I Thess 5:12
Tue	Lam 1:15	I Peter 4:1-6	Wis 6:1-11	II Thess 1
Wed	Lam 2:1-10	I Peter 4:7-11	Wis 6:12-21	II Thess 2:1-12
Thu	Lam 4:1-6, 9	I Peter 4:12	Wis 7:7-14	II Thess 2:13 - 3:5
Fri	Lam 4:11-20	I Peter 5:1-7	Wis 7:15-22a	II Thess 3:6
Sat	Lam 5	I Peter 5:8	Wis 7:22 - 8:1	Jude

December 21 - Sunday Next Before Advent

<1>	Jer 4:23			
	Matt 25:31	Qoh 11:9 - 12:8, 13-14	Heb 13:1-21	
<2>	Jer 3:14-18			
	I Cor 11:17-32	Isa 25:1-9	John 5:17-29	

Mon	Joel 1:13	II Peter 1:1-11	Wis 9:1-4, 9-11	Rev 1:1-8
Tue	Joel 2:1-11	II Peter 1:12	Wis 9:13	Rev 1:9
Wed	Joel 2:12-19	II Peter 2:1-10a	Wis 10:1-4, 15-21	Rev 2:1-11
Thu	Joel 2:21	II Peter 2:10b	Wis 11:21 - 12:2	Rev 2:12-17

Fri	Joel 3:1-8	II Peter 3:1-10	Wis 12:12-19	Rev 3:1-6
Sat	Joel 3:9-17	II Peter 3:11	Wis 13:1-9	Rev 3:7-13

December 28 - First Sunday in Advent

<1>	Mal 3:1-6, 4:4-6			
		Luke 1:5-25	Isa 62	Matt 25:1-13
<2>	Isa 28:14-22			
		Heb 12:14	Isa 13:6-13	I Thess 5:1-11

Mon	Isa 1:1-9	Mark 1:1-13	Isa 1:10-20	Rev 3:14
Tue	Isa 1:21-28	Mark 1:14-28	Isa 2:1-5	Rev 4
Wed	Isa 2:6-19	Mark 1:29-39	Isa 3:1-3, 8-15	Rev 5

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The Anglican Archdiocese of North America

Archbishop George Parrish, presiding

