

WEEKLY BULLETIN

2101 WILDWOOD AVENUE, COLUMBUS, GA 31906

Fourth Sunday of Advent

John's Gospel doesn't begin with angels or shepherds. It begins with eternity. *"In the beginning was the Word..."* Then, astonishingly, *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."* In these few words, John unveils the mystery of Advent: the eternal Son of God stepped into skin and bone into our world.

This is not an abstract truth. It's personal. When Jesus became flesh, He didn't take on power or privilege. He entered the world through poverty, obscurity, and weakness. He entered as light into darkness — to a world bound by fear, division, and injustice.

That's what makes the lyric from *O Holy Night* so fitting for this Sunday: *"Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother."* The Incarnation breaks the barriers we build. The eternal Word became human to declare that every human bears the image of God, and every soul is worthy of redemption.

John tells us, *"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him... He gave the right to become children of God."* The dignity of Christ's humanity lifts the dignity of all humanity. In Christ, the true light gives light to everyone for it shines in the darkness, but the darkness could not overcome it.

Advent reminds us that the Incarnation is not about escaping the world — it's about God entering fully into it. Jesus didn't avoid the mess. He moved toward it. In Christ, God moves into our neighborhood. As we draw near to Christmas, the world still aches under chains of loneliness, despair, and brokenness. However, we sing, not as wishful thinkers, but as truth-bearers: *in His name, all oppression shall cease.*



Traditional Worship

8:30 A.M.

Illiges Chapel (M250)

Rev. John Fugh, Jr.

***What God Brings: The God Who
Never Gives Up on the Dawn
Psalm 130***

Contemporary Worship

9:00 A.M.

Fellowship Hall (M220)

Rev. Dr. Shane Green

The Great Reversal

(A Weary World Rejoices)

John 1:1-14

Traditional Worship

11:00 A.M.

Sanctuary (M260)

Rev. Dr. Shane Green

The Great Reversal

(A Weary World Rejoices)

John 1:1-14

Broadcast Live at 11:00

at stpaulcolumbus.live

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the church continues to use blue paraments to reflect the deepening sense of hopeful waiting as Christmas draws near. Blue invites us to pause, watch, and prepare our hearts for the light that is about to break into the world.

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

ST. PAUL CHURCH CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

12:00 PM TRADITIONAL WORSHIP IN SANCTUARY

4:00 PM TRADITIONAL WORSHIP IN SANCTUARY

6:00 PM TRADITIONAL WORSHIP IN SANCTUARY

4:00 PM & 6:00 PM LIVE-STREAMED SERVICES AT
STPAULCOLUMBUS.LIVE

- THERE WILL BE NO WORSHIP SERVICES ON CHRISTMAS DAY. HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS!
- ON DECEMBER 28, WE WILL HAVE ONE COMBINED TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE AT 11:00 A.M. THIS WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE BY LIVE-BROADCAST AT STPAULCOLUMBUS.LIVE.

“Share the Joy!” We’re creating Christmas Eve goody bags for our first responders and need candy canes, snack cakes, crackers, nuts, granola bars, and gum. Please bring donations to the church office. To help deliver bags on Christmas Eve, contact grace@stpaulcolumbus.com.



PASTORS & PROGRAM STAFF

Rev. Dr. Shane Green
Senior Minister

Rev. John Fugh, Jr.
Associate Minister

Philip Badcock
Church Administrator

Grace Bailey
Director of Christian
Education

Lauren Coleman
Administrative
Assistant

Dr. Bruce Getz
Broadcast Operations
Manager

Donna Hightower
Director of Children's
Ministry

Roy Hightower
Assistant to Director of
Children's Ministry

Theresa Holzknecht
Communications
Director

Catherine Hutchings
Receptionist

Shannon Land
Executive Assistant

Wayne Martz
Director of Music
Ministry

Laura Marvets
Director of Youth
Ministry

Cindy Shavers
Financial Records &
Administration

KIDMIN MOMENTS

The Christmas story is powerful because God chooses to enter the world not with grandeur, but through the humble birth of a baby laid in a manger. By arriving in such modest circumstances, God aligns with the poor and marginalized, showing that divine love reaches everyone. It is no surprise, then, that the first to hear of Jesus' birth were shepherds—people living on society's edges—who received a heavenly announcement from angels. Their encounter underscores that the joy surrounding Jesus' birth is meant for all people. Jesus' humble arrival and the shepherds' angelic visitation reveal that God's good news is meant for everyone, especially those often overlooked.



Club 45 had a fun-filled evening of ice skating! We had such a great turnout for this event. Thank you to everyone who participated, especially our 4th and 5th Graders! To get involved, contact donna@stpaulcolumbus.com

SPY MINISTRY

🎄 SPY Christmas Party is TONIGHT! 🎄 It's our last SNY of the year, so let's end it right! Join us tonight from 5:30–7:30 p.m. in the Youth Building.

Rock your best (or worst!) Christmas sweater, bring a \$10 White Elephant/Dirty Santa gift, and don't forget a Christmas breakfast dish for our potluck. Expect games, food, laughs, and lots of fun with friends as we celebrate together. Don't miss it—we can't wait to party with you! 🎉

SNY will be back on January 11.

Sunday, December 21
8:30 AM Traditional Worship (M250)
9:00 AM Contemporary Worship (M220)
9:30 AM Weekly Communion (M260)
10:00 AM Bridges SS Class (M235)
10:00 AM Disciple 1 Bible Study (Library)
10:00 AM Foundry Class (Y101)
10:00 AM High School Youth SS Class (Y104)
10:00 AM Middle School Youth SS Class (Y106)
10:00 AM New Life SS Class (Y102)
10:00 AM Seekers Class (M234)
10:00 AM Wesley/Miller-Wilson Class (M232)
10:00 AM Wildwood Class (M150)
11:00 AM Traditional Worship (M260)
2:00 PM Spring Harbor Worship (Off Campus)
5:30 PM SNY Christmas Party (Y210)

Monday, December 22
1:30 PM Staff Meeting (M203)

Wednesday, December 24
12:00 PM Christmas Eve Service (M260)
4:00 PM Christmas Eve Service (M260)
6:00 PM Christmas Eve Service (M260)

Thursday, December 25
Merry Christmas! Rejoice!

Friday, December 26
Office Closed

**“BUT THE ANGEL SAID
TO THEM, ‘DO NOT BE
AFRAID; FOR SEE—I AM
BRINGING YOU GOOD
NEWS OF GREAT JOY
FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.’”
Luke 2:10**



Today's Sunday School Lesson
for Preschool and Elementary
Children
The Shepherds' Story (Luke 2:8-20)
Anchor Point – We celebrate the
birth of Jesus.
Say the Bible verse together:
"A child is born to us." (Isaiah
9:6)

Questions for family discussion:

- Why do you think the angels told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus before they told anyone else?
- How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw baby Jesus?
- Do you have an amazing moment from your life you would like to share with others?

Prayer:

Dear God, we praise and thank you for who you are. Help us to share your story with others. Amen.

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

SERVING THIS WEEK

- (8:30) Acolytes: SaSa Varner and Mims Watkins
- (11:00) Acolytes: Mae Murphy and Anna O'Hara
- Cross Bearer: Sophie Mills
- Acolyte Helper: Erin Murphy

ALTAR GUILD

- Sanctuary, Chapel, and Fellowship Hall: Cathryn Pease, Michelle Caves, Melissa Martin, Katie Parker, Sally Tebeau, Donna Hand, and Liz Lampton.

USHERS

- (8:30) Ken Crumpler, Stan Copelan
- (11:00) Joe Bridges (lead), Brent Parker, Vaughn Bray, Mason Lampton

The flowers on the Sanctuary Altar are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Alexander "Shay" Byars** by his family.

MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

Building Fund

In memory of **Johnny Jackson**

In memory of **Carol Auten**

- both by Vicki and Ken Toole

Media Fund

In memory of **Marilyn Fugh**

- by Vicki and Ken Toole

Wynnton Neighborhood Network

In memory of **Donald Tommey**

- by Alice Douglas

You may make your **2025 Year-End Contribution** by placing it in the offering plate by December 28. You may also bring it to the church office by Wednesday, December 31 (by 1:00 p.m.). You may also send it to the church if postmarked by December 31.

Our **Marriage Retreat** is in just 3 weeks! Join us January 9–11, 2026, at Pursell Farms in Sylacauga, AL. We'll have guest speakers, but also time to share great meals and partake in activities the farm has to offer. RSVP today on our website at stpaulcolumbus.com/events!

Members and friends, you're invited to join us for a **journey to Italy, June 2–11!** We'll explore our Christian heritage in some of the world's most breathtaking cities. The cost is \$5,390 per person, and space is limited. Reserve your spot by calling 706-327-7419.

Please keep our **Music Ministry Search Committee** in your prayers as they discern the next leader to guide and inspire our worship through music. Pray for wisdom, unity, and clarity as they continue to interview candidates and listen for the Spirit's direction. May God prepare both our church and the person(s) God is calling to this vital ministry of praise.

St. Paul Church Bulletin published weekly, except Christmas and New Year's (U.S.P.S. No. 516560)
Published weekly by St. Paul Church, 2101 Wildwood Ave., Columbus, Georgia 31906. Periodicals postage paid at Columbus, Georgia 31908.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Paul Church, 2101 Wildwood Ave., Columbus, GA 31906.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 21, 2025
11:00 a.m. Traditional Service

Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Chiming of the Hour

The Welcome & AnnouncementsRev. John Fugh, Jr.

The Choral Call to Worship.....*Prepare the Way of the Lord*

The Cross and Flame Come to the Altar

The Prelude.....*Movements 1 & 2 from Medley of Traditional Christmas Carols*

Flute - Jeanne Martz, Cello - Mason Stokes, Harpsichord - Wayne Martz

The Hymn of Celebration.....*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* (#196)

The Affirmation of Faith*The Apostles' Creed* (#881)

The Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath.....Cathryn and Adam Pease Family

Advent Reader: *“And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and laid him in a manger.” Luke 2:6–7*

Advent Reader: *Today we light the Candle of Peace.*

Congregation: The child born in humility will break the chains of pride and oppression.

Advent Reader: His kingdom overturns the powers of this world.

Congregation: We light this candle as a sign of God’s justice and mercy made flesh. “Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother...”

Chancel Choir Response: *Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices...O night divine, O night when Christ was born!*

The Pastoral Prayer with the Lord’s Prayer.....Rev. Fugh

The Leader: *Let Us Worship God with His Tithes and Our Offerings.*

The Offertory Prayer.....Rev. Fugh

The Offertory.....*Movements 3 & 4 from Medley of Traditional Christmas Carols*

Flute - Jeanne Martz, Cello - Mason Stokes, Harpsichord - Wayne Martz

The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below: praise Him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

The Scripture Lesson.....John 1:1-14

Leader: *The Word of God for the People of God.*

Congregational Response: *Thanks be to God.*

The Passing of the Peace

Leader: *The Peace of Christ be with you.*

Congregational Response: *And also with you.*

The Welcome and Registration of Attendance

(Children ages 3 through Second Grade are dismissed at this time to go downstairs to the Pre-K/Kindergarten room for a Birthday Party for Jesus.)

The Children’s Moment.....Mrs. Donna Hightower

The Anthem.....*Away in a Manger*, arr. J. Rutter

Solo - Len Kilgore, Flutes - Jeanne Martz and Mason Stokes

The Sermon.....*The Great Reversal*, Rev. Dr. Shane Green

The Hymn of Consecration.....*Away in a Manger* (#217)

The Cross and Flame Go Before Us into the World

The Choral Benediction and Amen.....*Go, Tell It on the Mountain* (#251)

The Postlude.....*Joy to the World*, arr. A. Fedak

The Church Returns to His World to Serve Him