

CHRISTMAS EVE
DEC. 24, 2023, 4:00PM



For unto you is born this day in the city of David
a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord.
And this shall be a sign unto you;
Ye shall find the babe
wrapped in swaddling clothes,
lying in a manger.
Luke 2:11-12

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

The Eve of The Nativity of Our Lord

Rector: The Rev. Catherine D. Hicks
The Rev. Tom Hughes, Rector Emeritus

**(BCP—Book of Common Prayer, H-Hymnal 1982; S Numbers are the service music found in the front of The Hymnal 1982; WLP-Wonder, Love and Praise)
LEVAS-Lift Every Voice and Sing II)**

In the name of Christ, we welcome you to this Church. May those who sorrow find comfort; the weary, rest; the unhappy, joy; the troubled, peace; the stranger, friends; and to all the sense of God's Presence in this holy place. We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Port Royal, the Nandtaughtacund, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of the Rappahannock Tribe.

The Ringing of the Bell

**Pre-Service Music A Medley of Carols
Larry Saylor, Voice/Guitar**

**Prelude I Wonder as I Wander arr. L. Woo
Denise Gregory, piano and Mary Peterman, flute**

Processional Hymn O come, all ye faithful H 83

Lighting the candles of the Advent wreath

(I will light candles this Christmas, poem by Howard Thurman)

I will light candles this Christmas.
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.
Candles of love to inspire all of my living.
Candles that will burn all the year long.

Let us pray.

God of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem, where the Light of the world is humbly born into the darkness of human night. Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world, so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice, and defenders of all for whom there is no room. **Amen.**

Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.

Glory to God forever and ever.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn of Praise

Angels, we have heard on high

H 96

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

God of eternity, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for all creation shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, and reverence for all life, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth, to the glory of your holy name. **Amen.**

Hymn

Joy to the World

H 100

A Reading from The Prophet Isaiah, Chapter 9, Verses 2-7.

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;

those who lived in a land of deep darkness--
on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace

for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96 *Cantate Domino*

1 Sing to the LORD a new song; *
sing to the LORD, all the whole earth.

2 Sing to the LORD and bless his Name; *
proclaim the good news of his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the nations *
and his wonders among all peoples.

4 For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; *
he is more to be feared than all gods.

5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols; *
but it is the LORD who made the heavens.

6 Oh, the majesty and magnificence of his presence! *
Oh, the power and the splendor of his sanctuary!

7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples; *
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.

**8 Ascribe to the LORD the honor due his Name; *
bring offerings and come into his courts.**

9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; *
let the whole earth tremble before him.

**10 Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is King! *
he has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity."**

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; *
let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

**12 Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy
before the LORD when he comes, *
when he comes to judge the earth.**

13 He will judge the world with righteousness *
and the peoples with his truth.

**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.**

A Reading from The Letter to Titus, Chapter 2, verses 11-14.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sequence Hymn

It came upon the midnight clear

H 89

The Holy Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke.

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and

was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon

The Rev. Catherine Hicks

Nicene Creed

BCP 358

The Prayers of the People

With the angels of heaven we proclaim your glory, O God. As the radiance of your presence lights up the heavens, we pray for enlightenment for your church on behalf of the whole world.

Gathered as a community on this Christmas Eve, we pray for your church in every place, that we may make known to others what has been told to us about this child. (Silence)

We pray for the people of St Peter's, Oak Grove. As they mourn the fiery destruction of their sanctuary, may they find light and joy in the company of one another, and the strength to repair this devastation.

We pray for those with heavy hearts in the Holy Land. May they know that even in the darkness of violence, war and death, your light still shines in the darkness, and that the darkness shall not overcome it. End all hostilities by ushering in the endless peace of your design. Establish your reign of justice and righteousness, for you are the Lord of hosts who, with zeal, will do this. (Silence)

Help us to bear Christ's light in every place of need. Draw near to those who spend this night apart from community: Travelers and those far from home, people who live alone, one who waits in a hospital room, or by a hospital bed, one who sits in a prison cell, one who dwells in unhappiness, one who is working deep in the night, one estranged from family or friends. (Silence)

Comfort those who are poor and vulnerable, the child at risk, the homeless on the streets, those suffering from the deprivations of war, those who are hungry, and those contending with prejudice and scorn. Comfort all on our prayer list, their families, and those who care for them. (Silence)

Praying aloud, together,

Grant that, through our prayers, our lives may shine with the presence of Christ for all creation, for he is our Lord forever and ever. Amen.

The Peace

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Announcements

Offertory

**In the Bleak Midwinter
St. Peter's Choir**

Holst/Printz

The Holy Communion

Eucharistic Prayer 2 from EOW for Christmas Eve

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

We praise you and we bless you, holy and gracious God, source of life abundant.

From before time you made ready the creation.

Your Spirit moved over the deep and brought all things into being: sun, moon, and stars; earth, winds, and waters; and every living thing.

You made us in your image, and taught us to walk in your ways.

But we rebelled against you, and wandered far away; and yet, as a mother cares for her children, you would not forget us.

Time and again you called us to live in the fullness of your love.

And so this day we join with Saints and Angels in the chorus of praise that rings through eternity, lifting our voices to magnify you as we sing

Celebrant and People

S 125

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the
highest, hosanna in the highest.**

Glory and honor and praise to you, holy and living God.

To deliver us from the power of sin and death and to reveal the riches of your grace, you looked with favor upon Mary, your willing servant, that she might conceive and bear a son, Jesus, the holy child of God.

Living among us, Jesus loved us and proclaimed your dream of peace.

He broke bread with outcasts and sinners,
healed the sick, and spoke out the good news of hope.

He gave himself for our weary world,
Accepting death so that we might live,
And held our darkness deep within
until through the cross and grave and empty tomb
he set us free for love.

On the night before he died for us, Jesus was at table with his friends.

He took bread, gave thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to them, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine. Again, he gave thanks to you, gave it to them, and said:

"Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

And so we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Now gathered at your table, O God of all creation, and remembering Christ, crucified and risen, who was and is and is to come, we offer to you our gifts of bread and wine, and our lives in thanks and praise.

Pour out your Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Breathe your Spirit over the whole earth and make us your new creation, a people of grace and truth, carrying your good news of joy into every season.

Savior Jesus Christ. May we love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. Thank you for the rejoicing in our lives, and for your promise of steadfast love when our days are hard with sorrows. Surround us now with the love that will not let us go, and give us rest, in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Blessing

The light of the Christmas star to you
The warmth of a home and hearth to you
The cheer and good will of friends to you
The hope of a childlike heart to you
The joy of a thousand angels to you
The love of the Son and
God's peace to you

May the good news of this night inspire us to tell the world of our great joy: For to us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord. Glory and praise to you forever! **Amen.**

And the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Hark! the herald angels sing

H 87

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Postlude

Festal Fanfare

J. S. Bach

(from the Fourth Organ Concerto)

Resources

Lighting the Advent Wreath "I will light candles this Christmas" by Howard Thurman

Opening Collect Revised Common Lectionary Prayers

Prayers of the People Revised Common Lectionary Prayers and Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year A, Vol 1, Kimberly Bracken Long, ed.

Closing Collect, Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year A, Vol I, Kimberly Bracken Long, ed.

Announcements

Welcome to St Peter's. May you find God's love present with you in this place and return here often to worship. The communion bread is gluten free. All are welcome at the Lord's table.

The offering plates are in the back next to the doors. Your gifts help support God's work through this church. Mail - PO Box 399, Port Royal, VA 22535. online - <https://news.churchsp.org/onlinegiving>

Happy Anniversary—Cookie and Johnny Davis (Dec. 21).

Happy Birthday – Rob Dobson (Dec. 26), Alice Hughes (Dec. 29), Linda Upshaw (Dec. 30), Vivian McDonald (Dec. 30).

The ECM collected \$1,545 for Christmas and Thanksgiving. \$500 went to Social Services for Thanksgiving dinners for 10 dinners. \$800 was sent in December for Christmas donations. This is the second largest donation over four years since 2020. Thanks for your donations!

Sun., Dec. 31, 11:00am – Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sun., Dec. 31, 5pm - New Year's Eve dinner in the Parish House. Bring a dish!

Thank you for your generosity—Your donations have made a positive difference for many in need in this Christmas season.

Now the Work of Christmas Begins

“When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,
the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among the people,
to make music in the heart.”

-Howard Thurman (1899-1981). Thurman was an influential African American author, philosopher, theologian, educator and civil rights leader.

Poinsettias, 2023

By Laura Carey

In memory of Milton Carey and John Whitfield

By Ken and Andrea Pogue

In memory of Myrtle Samuels and Barbara Pogue

By Alice and Tom Hughes

In memory of memory of Jan Hughes and Gary Nuckols

By Jim and BJ Anderson

In memory of Bella Merkl and infant daughter Jones

By Linda and Tom Kramer

In thanksgiving

By Ken and Andrea Pogue

In Thanksgiving for our St Peter's Church family and its support for the Jamaica School Project

Endowment Fund for Christmas 2023

By Ben and Catherine Hicks

In honor of our daughters and our granddaughter

Parish Life at St. Peter's, 2023

We are a group of people of various ages, of various races and nationalities, economic situations, educational levels, political persuasions, and varying ways of interpreting scripture and theology. We are united in our love for God, for one another and our neighbors.

Education -Every Wednesday at 10AM we meet for **Bible study** to learn from scripture commentaries and from one another as we share our viewpoints about the scriptures that will be heard in church on the following Sunday. During this time we also pray for one another, and for those in our congregation and community who are sick, suffering, or in need. Currently, a class for young children is offered on Sunday mornings at 10:15AM and opportunities for Christian Education for all ages takes place on Zoom.

We support the **Sacred Ground** project of the Episcopal Church to combat systematic racism. In that capacity we have established a scholarship for minority students.

Worship -Our worship is shaped by the liturgies in The Book of Common Prayer. We celebrate Holy Communion at our principal worship service at 11AM on Sunday. We come together for special liturgies spread throughout the year, including Christmas Eve and Holy Week services. People are welcome to attend worship services online on YouTube.

Our doors are open to the community. We participate in the annual **United Thank Offering** that provides grants to Episcopal churches around the world. With the help of **Caroline County Social Services** and leadership from the Episcopal Church Men (ECM), St. Peter's adopts families at both Thanksgiving and Christmas and provides meals and gifts based on the needs of the families. We work with **Caroline's Promise** to provide school supplies for Caroline County students, and with the **Caroline County Public Schools** in offering various activities in the community. **The Village Harvest food distribution** of fresh produce and meats, in conjunction with the **Healthy Harvest Food Bank**, is held on each third Wednesday of the month from 3-5PM, and is open to anyone in need of food. This ministry benefits approximately 90+ people in this area each month. St Peter's also belongs to **CERVE**, a county organization that also provides financial assistance. We also offer **"Shred-it"** as a community service to dispose of secure documents and to lessen the use of the landfill.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

823 Water Street PO Box 399, Port Royal, VA 22535

Website: www.news.churchsp.org Parish Office: (804) 742-5908

The Vestry

Cookie Davis, Larry Saylor (2024)

Elizabeth Heimbach, Helmut Linne von Berg (2025)

Linda Upshaw (2026)

Jim Heimbach, Treasurer, Elizabeth Heimbach Registrar

Senior Warden, Elizabeth Heimbach

Junior Warden, Cookie Davis

Brad Volland – Music Director & Organist

The Rev. Catherine D. Hicks, Rector

The Rev. Tom Hughes, Rector Emeritus

(540) 809-7489, (540) 898-1586, stpetersrev@gmail.com

Christ Centered, Biblically Based, Spirit Filled, Caring

Prayer List

Stanley and Cindy Fields, Marion Mahoney, The Wisdoms, The Pogues, Laura Carey, The Pannells, The Linne von Bergs, Brad Volland, Rob Dobson, Lydia O' Neil, John Hess, Charles McGuire, The Segars, The Faibisys, The Felicianos, Thom Guthrie, Vivian McDonald, Bill Wick, Jim Heimbach

Ralph and Diane Powell, Enid and Albert Barnett (Pogue relatives), Pinkie Mayfield (Laura Carey's friend), Kristina Childs, Cy and The Rev Deacon Linda Murphy (Saylor friends), Joe Parker, Dot Wright, Gordon Flesher, Beryl Harrison, Larry Saylor's family, Jesse Clarke's family, Daryl Potter (Hughes friend), Joanne and Herbert Wilkerson, Jimmy and Nancy Davis, Julie Davis, Otis Felts (family and friends of Johnny Davis), Dale Brittle, Ruth Smith, Joyce Smith (Laura Carey's sisters-in-law), Lisa Herbert, John Ryan Kirwin (Jean Devitt's son), Max and Rita Jensen (Duke friends), Barbara Deal, Roberta Rutledge, (Pogue friend), Patterson family, Valerie Leitch, Liz Ruthven, Charlene Schnakenberg, Nathaniel Schnakenberg, (Fisher family), Wayne Cohen (Pogue family), , Mrs. Watson, Hyacinth Wallace, Orville Watson, The Glasgows (Feliciano family and friends), Sylvia and Jonathan Coleman (Cleo's daughter and son), Ann Pyle (Carolyn Duke's mother), Harvey Yarus (friend of Tom Kramer), Lois Christie, Rosie Dowdy, Bill Lauck, Anthony Bowman, Dylan Puryear (BJ's grandson), Gloria Jewell, The Hill family (Lydia O'Neil's family), G. Lee Baldwin, Linda Oliver, Pat , Joan Pemberton (Brad's family), Louise Chapman (Barbara Segar's cousin)

Serving in the Armed Forces

PJ Koons

Steven Lee

Alexis Rye

Scott Estes

reg Merkl

Michael Hobbs

Cliff Lance

Grace Grimaldi

Alex Long V