

*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

SWORD POINTS

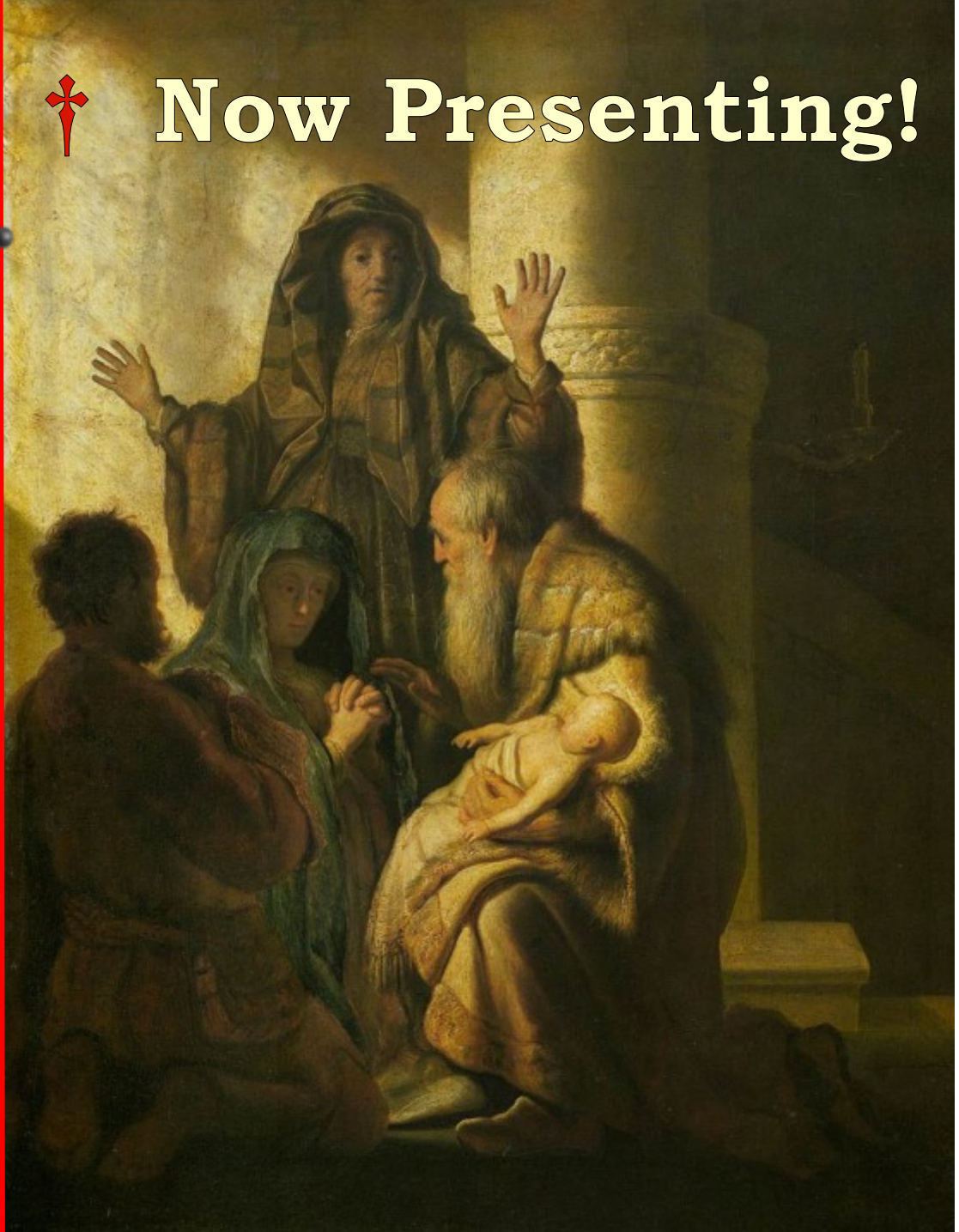
January 30, 2025

www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

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Now Presenting!



† Hint of What Is Coming

40 Days Later... Sunday, February 2, forty days after Christmas, is packed with theological and liturgical significance. A special Feast day in the Church calendar, it is often overlooked when, as in most years, it falls on a weekday. The official name is: The Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple. It is also recognized as The Purification of Mary because the Law of Moses required that she - like the infant Jesus - participate in a rite of purification forty days after childbirth. Its importance underscores that Mary and Joseph raised Jesus in faithful observance of his ancestral religion, a point of significance in his ministry to come.

Some Christians mark this as the official end of the Christmas season - because beyond the "12 Days of Christmas" between Christmas Day and the Epiphany - this day concludes the forty Days of the Incarnation. In some practices, the day is also Candlemas, a traditional time to bless candles for liturgical use. And of course, the period of time of "40" in itself is frequently used throughout the Hebrew and Christian Testaments of The Bible and Christian practice to highlight auspicious activities such as the Israelites wandering 40 years before reaching the Promised Land, and the 40 days of Jesus in the wilderness to prepare for his active ministry. In some Christian denominations we employ 40 days of repentance and fasting in the period of Lent before the Resurrection.

The focus of Sunday's readings for us is the infant's Presentation in the Temple in Jerusalem - a fulfillment of prophecy, a revelation. The prophet Simeon, whose name means "God has heard," is an aged, righteous, and devout man waiting for the promised sight of the Messiah before he will know death. The Holy Spirit has guided him to this moment and as he takes this child in his arms, his joy is palpable. Another aged prophet, Anna, whose name means "full of grace," breaks out in praise of God and tells everyone about this special baby. We, too, can easily get caught up in this moment - remember the excitement of special births, baptisms or christenings in your family?

Then in the midst of the all the elation, Simeon gives Mary a hint of things to come when he says, "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel...a sign that will be opposed...a sword will pierce your own soul too." Given all that Mary and Joseph have experienced so far - angel announcements, the difficult journey to Bethlehem, the birth in less than ideal circumstances, shepherds, heavenly choruses, Wise Men, and prophetic dreams...one can barely imagine what the young new mother, Mary, is thinking. Perhaps Cornish poet Charles Causley's words gives voice to Mary's thoughts and to every parent's hopeful yet anxious wish:

*Vivid upon her tongue
Unspoken prayers
That she may not outlive
The life she bears.*

We know what is coming in the life of Jesus. May our prayers be spoken through our thoughts, words, and actions, bringing consolation, courage for the tests we shall encounter, and the light of salvation to enlighten the world around us in service to our God in Christ.



† Transforming Stewardship

“...they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord...”

LUKE 2:22

How seriously do you take being a Christian? Is “being Christian” something I just do when I attend Sunday service or attend one of my parish functions? It’s easy to be Christian then, it’s harder to be a follower of Jesus when I am out in the world. Would someone recognize you as a Christian by the way you act, dress, and talk? How do you present yourself to the Lord and to others?

TRUE CHRISTIAN



THE WORLD AND FAKE CHRISTIANS



THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Many have undertaken to draw an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, I have decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things you have been taught.

Our Men meet weekly study on Monday nights. They are currently dissecting the Gospel of Luke. Join them each Monday night at 7 pm in Crocker Hall. All the studies are available live on YouTube.

† *This Week at St. Paul's*

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thu, Jan 30 | - 9:30 am | - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| | 7:30 pm | - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary |
| Sat, Feb 1 | - 7:30 am | - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford |
| | 8:00 am | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Feb 2 | | The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple |
| | - 8:00 am | - Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 9:15 am | - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room |
| | 10:30 am | - Sunday School, Classrooms |
| | 10:30 am | - Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 11:45 am | - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room |
| | 7:00 pm | - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (Zoom) |
| Mon, Feb 3 | - 7:00 pm | - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall (YouTube Live) |
| Tues, Feb 4 | - 9:30 am | - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room |
| | 7:00 pm | - Boy Scout Troop #5 |
| Wed, Feb 5 | -10:00 am | - Healing & Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 11 to Noon | - Drive-Thru Food Collection #126 |
| | 7:00 pm | - Ladies Evening Zoom Bible Study (Zoom) |
| Thu, Feb 6 | - 9:30 am | - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| | 7:30 pm | - Property Committee, Guild Room |
| | 7:30 pm | - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary |
| Sat, Feb 8 | - 7:30 am | - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford |
| | 8:00 am | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Feb 9 | | The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany |
| | - 8:00 am | - Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 9:15 am | - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room |
| | 10:30 am | - Sunday School, Classrooms |
| | 10:30 am | - Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 11:45 am | - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room |
| | 7:00 pm | - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (Zoom) |

Check our website daily for schedule updates.





The Priest-in-Charge **WEEKLY**

Fr. Nate, our Priest-in-Charge is distributing a weekly e-mail to communicate things directly from his desk to yours. **Connection, communication, and care** are among the highest priorities of his new ministry, and he wants to make sure there are regular touch points between us. If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **already receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, you don't have to do anything - you're already included on the list! If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **DO NOT receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, or if you want to opt out, write Fr. Nate at priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com and let him know.



We'll be starting a five week Sermon Talkback series this Sunday, February 2nd. The question I'm sure you're asking is: What exactly is a Sermon Talkback?

Well, in his landmark book on preaching, *The Witness of Preaching*, Thomas G. Long argues that - in being tasked to preach a "sermon" - the minister has been commissioned and set apart, by the church, to study the sources of our faith, on behalf of the church, and discern what God is saying to his people.

Part of what that means is that the preaching "event" is meant to be a community event. Sermons are not meant to be one directional communication from the mind of God, through the mind of the preacher, to the mind of the congregation. Preaching is something the clergy do not only for God's people, but with God's people, in an ongoing conversation.

Inspired by this concept, my plan is to do regular "Sermon Talkback" series at least a couple times a year. During these series, you'll be invited to gather for a roundtable discussion of the sermon from that day. This will be a time when you can ask questions, give feedback, and in general, help us all deepen the conversation that the sermon has only just begun.

I am excited and looking forward to learning more from you, and growing in life with God together. Sermon Talkbacks will be offered after both the 8 and 10:30 am services each week beginning February 2nd, and concluding March 2nd. Nate+



† Transforming Stewardship

*"...they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord."
Luke 2:22*

Do we give the Lord the first fruits of our time every week by attending church? Do we set an example for our children and grandchildren by attending services and joyously participating in the celebration of the Eucharist each week? How do we know what God wants us to do unless we communicate with Him?



Sunday February 9th: Greg Garrett is the author of thirty books, including the recent *Rowan Williams and Greg Garrett: In Conversation*, the novel *Bastille Day*, and *The Gospel according to James Baldwin*. He is the Carole McDaniel Hanks Professor of Literature and Culture at Baylor University and serves as Canon Theologian to the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Paris. He speaks, teaches, and preaches across the US and Europe, with recent appearances at the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, BBC Radio, Trinity Church Wall Street, Washington National Cathedral, and Gladstone's Library in Wales. He lives in Austin, Texas with his wife Jeanie and their daughters Lily and Sophia.



Sunday February 23rd: The Rev. Dr. Todd Brewer is the managing editor of Mockingbird Magazine (mbird.com). He graduated from Durham University with a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies. His thesis, *Hermeneutics and Early Christian Gospels*, compared narrative and non-narrative interpretive approaches to the Jesus tradition through a study of the Gospels of Thomas, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It will be published by Mohr Siebeck in early 2025. He also co-edited the [*Cambridge Companion to the Gospels, 2nd edition*](#).



† **The Lord Will Purify**

[Malachi 3:1-4](#); [Psalm 84](#); [Hebrews 2:14-18](#); [Luke 2:22-40](#)

Malachi tells us that the sins of God's people will be dealt with, and the human-divine relationship will be restored. This reconciliation, however, is not in our power to achieve. The healing of our relationship with God is totally dependent on the mercy and loving-kindness of God. Our role is to accept God's refining fire and purifying wash. Like the trauma patient in the emergency room, our self-inflicted wounds must be cauterized and the contaminating debris scrubbed free before healing can proceed. These metaphors make it clear that our reconciliation with God will not be painless - but it will be thorough and eternal if we submit to his treatment.

God will give us every chance to respond to his offer of reconciliation. Since we are so accustomed to the *status quo*, he will send us someone to announce his coming to cleanse us. Without God's help, we cannot recognize that we have a problem in our relationship with him, let alone identify the One who comes as our healer. As the answer to our blindness, God sent John the Baptizer to announce the coming of Jesus as our Savior.

The prophecy continued through Simeon and Anna. Jesus was brought into the Temple and the prophets witnessed to his identity as God's Messiah, the Promised One sent to the



Temple for the salvation of his people.

Jesus is the answer to the corruption of the priests and infidelity of the people that Malachi lamented. In his body he purified the Temple and priesthood, and also made the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the people. As promised by God, he will bring the offering of reconciliation to us.

The aged Simeon adds that this long-awaited Savior will be the salvation not only of Israel, but also of the

Gentiles. In his words are the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abram that Israel would be blessed to be a blessing to the nations. Israel's glory - her true nature - was in her role as God's chosen people. That role in the world was to be the revelation of God's loving-kindness and sovereign nature to the nations so that they would see the goodness of God and seek him. Jesus succeeded where Israel failed - not as an alternative, but as the perfect fulfillment of the sign that was Israel. As all of this took place in the Temple in Jerusalem, the prophetess Anna reminds us that Jesus is at the center of the city of God - the new Jerusalem - and that the nations will be brought into it.

Yet even here at the very beginning of Jesus' life, the prophecy is that although the offer of salvation is universal, its realization is not. The cleansing and reconciliation will not come without a cost. In the severe mercy of God, we will be cleansed through the blood of Jesus. His destiny is to present a choice to all people, and their answer will determine their eternal well-being. Not only will he be opposed and his offer be rejected, but he will be pierced, as will his mother's heart and that of all those who believe in him. Each of us must move beyond the nostalgic sepia pictures of the babe in the manger and embrace the harsh reality of the cross if we are to rise with Jesus in the new Jerusalem.

Look It Up: [Joshua 24:15](#)

Think About It:

God will honor your choice.

- by Rev. Chuck Alley, *The Living Church*, 2025

Presentation of the Lord | Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P./Flickr



† **Ih-pis-kuh-puh I / Dik-shuh-ner-ee**

(Episcopal Dictionary)



† **Ecumenical Councils**

/ ek-yoo-men-i-kuhl - koun-suhlz /

Ecumenical Councils - From New Testament times the church has relied on the decisions of councils called by recognized authority to settle disputes over doctrine and discipline. When a council involves representative bishops from the whole church, it is called "general." When the decisions of a council are recognized by the whole church, it is called "ecumenical" (from the Greek *oikoumen'*, "inhabited world"). The terms "general" and "ecumenical" are not quite synonymous. Seven councils are recognized as ecumenical by both eastern and western churches: Nicaea (325), which dealt centrally with the divinity of the Logos; Constantinople (381), which established the formula for expressing the Trinity and dealt with the divinity of the Holy Spirit; Ephesus (431), which decided against Nestorianism and promulgated a definition of the person of Christ; Constantinople II (553); Constantinople III (680-681); and Nicaea II (787). The latter three councils did refining work on the person of Christ and defined the role of images in worship.



First Council of Nicaea 325

Because of their crucial role in defining the doctrine of the Trinity and Incarnation, Anglicans often regard the first four councils as the most important.

† **Purification of Jesus**

Biblical law taught that the first-born male of any animal had to be offered as a sacrifice to God. This applied to human children as well. Naturally most parents were reluctant to do this. Instead they could offer a substitute of a pair of pure white birds. Usually this happened 40 days after the birth. We celebrate this event on February 2nd. The Gospel is read Sunday because it shows the Holy Family performing their religious duties. They are blessed by God through two prophets.



† How Could the Holy Family Present Jesus in the Temple When They Were Supposed to Have Fled to Egypt?

Many of us grew up hearing the beautiful accounts of Our Lord's birth as described in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. But taking a closer look at these episodes can sometimes become a source of confusion to the more diligent reader.

One particularly pertinent problem is figuring out how to reconcile Matthew's assertion that the Holy Family fled to Egypt right after the visit of the three wise men (see [Mt 2:13-15](#)) with Luke's claim that the Holy Family had ample time to travel into Jerusalem and



*Simeon's Song of Praise, 1631.
Rembrandt van Rijn. Mauritshuis*

present Jesus in the Temple a solid forty days after Jesus's birth (see [Lk 2:22-38](#)). This raises an important question: following the birth of Jesus, were the Holy Family in immediate danger or not? If they weren't, then how do we understand Matthew's account of the flight to Egypt? But if they were in danger, then how could they have brought Jesus to the Temple in the way Luke describes?

To answer these questions, we need to understand that sometimes the biblical authors won't pause to describe every single thing that happened to a particular

person or family. Just like modern biographers, the four evangelists pick and choose which details to share; but just because they don't include a particular story, that doesn't mean they're saying it didn't happen.

Applying this principle to Matthew and Luke, we should understand that Matthew's failure to mention the presentation in the Temple is not evidence that the presentation didn't happen. Instead, we can place Matthew and Luke alongside one another, and piece together with relative ease a more complete story of what took place in the time surrounding Jesus's birth.

To begin with, Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth in the north down to Bethlehem in the south. Bethlehem is just a few miles from Jerusalem, and the Holy Family were compelled to travel there for tax reasons (see [Lk 2:1-5](#)). It is in Bethlehem that Mary gives birth to Jesus (see [Lk 2:6-7](#)). At this time, the shepherds visit the newborn king, and the angels appear singing in the sky (see [Lk 2:8-20](#)).

Then come a couple of events which Matthew, in his more condensed narrative, simply skips over. Since their lives are not yet in danger, the Holy Family feel comfortable remaining in the Bethlehem region for several weeks. Jesus is circumcised and named eight days after His birth (see [Lk 2:21](#)), and presented in the Temple forty days after His birth (see [Lk 2:22-38](#)).

At this point in Luke's narrative, we are told that, "[W]hen they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth" ([Lk 2:39](#)). Although Luke doesn't offer an exact timeline, this verse is suggestive that the Holy Family did return to Nazareth following the presentation in the Temple, but as we'll see, it doesn't mean they intended to stay in Nazareth forever.

In any event, we know from Matthew's Gospel that when the three wise eventually show up on the scene, it is to Bethlehem that they come, not Nazareth. This means that even if the Holy Family returned to Nazareth at some point, they later came back to Bethlehem, and it is on this occasion that their meeting with the wise men takes place.

Importantly, the visit of the wise men does not take place immediately following Jesus's birth. In fact, the visit seems to have taken place a year or even two years after the birth of Jesus. Hence when Matthew gives his description of the wise men showing up in Bethlehem (see [Mt 2:1-12](#)), we need to understand that this is taking place a good while after the nativity even though most of us tend to merge these events together in our imaginations!

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Holy Family Timeline

But isn't all this a bit of a stretch? Not at all! In fact, the suggestion that the Holy Family traveled to Bethlehem regularly and / or spent a lot of time there fits with the general picture of Bethlehem being a town where they have family or property connections, hence their tax obligations. Moreover, as faithful Jews they would have already been obliged to travel to Jerusalem three times a year for religious purposes; and as we've seen, Bethlehem is just a few miles from the city.

As for the idea of Jesus already being one or two years-old when the wise men arrive, this is indirectly corroborated by the infamous edict of Herod, which only occurs after the wise men have visited: "[H]e sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under" ([Mt 2:16](#)). Clearly, Matthew is implying that some time has elapsed between the birth of Christ and the arrival of the wise men and subsequent massacre of the Holy Innocents. If these events had taken place simultaneously, then Herod's men would only have needed to focus on killing newborns, which aren't difficult to distinguish from two year-old infants.

So, to re-cap, a possible timeline would be:

Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem; shepherds come and angels appear ([Lk 2:8-20](#))

Presentation of Jesus in the Temple a few weeks later ([Lk 2:22-38](#))

Holy Family probably returns to Nazareth for a time ([Lk 2:39](#))

A year or two after Jesus's birth, the Holy Family are back in Bethlehem ([Mt 2:8](#))

The three wise men, who set off from a distant land some time ago, finally arrive in



Jerusalem ([Mt 2:1](#))

The wise men come to meet with the Holy Family in Bethlehem, and they are warned in a dream not to return to Herod ([Mt 2:9-12](#))

Joseph is warned in a dream to take his family and flee with them to Egypt ([Mt 2:13-15](#))

Enraged, Herod orders his soldiers to put to death all male boys in Bethlehem aged two or younger ([Mt 2:16-18](#))

The Holy Family remain in Egypt until the death of King Herod some 3-4 years later ([Mt 2:19](#))

Joseph hopes to return to the Judean region - perhaps implying the Holy Family had made Bethlehem, which is located in Judea, their home base following Jesus's birth - but he is warned against it by an angel; so the Holy Family moves back north to Nazareth instead ([Mt 2:19-23](#))

OBSERVANCE OF FEBRUARY 2



Take note

by Kirsten Peterson, Organist & Choirmaster

Greetings!

"How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place" is a familiar hymn at St. Paul's and will be featured as our opening hymn on Sunday. Its text is a paraphrase of Psalm 84, a psalm that expresses the beauty and joy of heaven, of God's dwelling, of eternal life, and one that we will be reading this week. I was thinking about this hymn in the context of Jesus' presentation at the temple by Mary and Joseph, which we also recognize this Sunday. The Presentation (or the Purification, or Candlemas) always falls on February 2...exactly 40 days after Christmas. While God's dwelling place is ultimately heaven, the temple in Jerusalem was often considered to be a physical stand-in...the place where God's presence could be felt most strongly. Jesus was being brought to his Father's house.



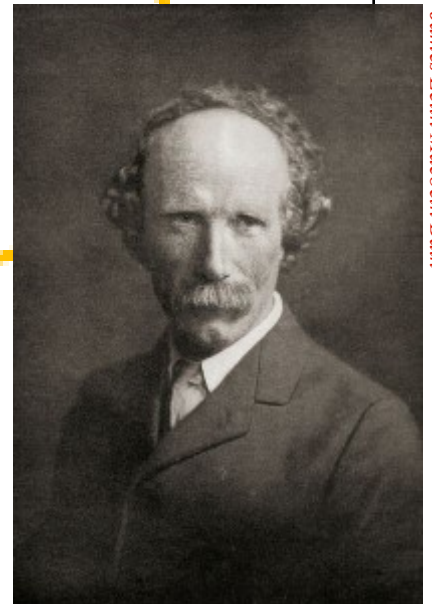
How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me! My thirsty soul desires and longs within thy courts to be; my very heart and flesh cry out, O living God, for thee.

Beside thine altars, gracious Lord, the swallows find a nest; how happy they who dwell with thee and praise thee without rest, and happy they whose hearts are set upon the pilgrim's quest.

They who go through the desert vale will find it filled with springs, and they shall climb from height to height till Zion's temple rings with praise to thee, in glory throned, Lord God, great King of kings.

One day within thy courts excels a thousand spent away; how happy they who keep thy laws nor from thy precepts stray, for thou shalt surely bless all those who live the words they pray.

Because of the text's association with a psalm, there are many versions and translations set to many tunes in many hymnals. In our hymnal, the tune used is BROTHER JAMES' AIR. Who is Brother James? James Leigh Macbeth Bain (1840-1925) (aka "Brother James") is often described as a healer, mystic, and poet. Born in Scotland, Brother James was brought up in a Christian household, but he had a crisis of faith in which he turned from



James Leigh Macbeth Bain

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Choir Notes

religion. His return and commitment to Christianity came via his exposure to Christian theosophy, a more mystical and esoteric philosophical movement of the church. His focus and interest in healing led to his founding of the Brotherhood of Healers, and he spent much of his time working with those in need of physical or mental or spiritual healing, particularly in the slums of Liverpool. As part of the healing sessions, he would often sing.

So that's who Brother James is, but what's an air? An "air" is a song-like vocal or instrumental piece. In Italian, it is called an "aria", in French, an "ayre"...in case you wanted to know. While it is unknown if Brother James had a specific set of words he used with the tune he composed, it has become a fairly popular melody today, paired most often with a paraphrase of Psalm 23, "The Lord's My Shepherd."

Because the pairing of BROTHER JAMES' AIR with "The Lord's My Shepherd" is so common, it left fewer than usual choices for finding an appropriate musical selection. I settled on a really beautiful arrangement by a group called HARC (for the two musicians involved: Ana Hernandez and Ruth Cunningham). This lovely version features cello and a ostinato-like rhythmic riff played by what my ear hears as some sort of mallet instrument. The gentle accompaniment is a fitting foundation for the two vocal parts as they weave back in forth singing the words to "How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place." The calmness of the music allows for much reflection!

Peace and blessings,
Kirsten





† Helping Our Neighbors

Here is an update about St. Paul's ongoing food-related ministries serving our community:

Drive Thru Food Collection - occurs every other Wednesday from 11 am - noon. We have now held 126 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time our trucks delivered to Bethel Community Food Pantry and the Jericho Partnership in Danbury.

Our next food collection, will be Thursday, February 5th and will support the Victory Christian Center, Danbury, and the Jericho Food Pantry in Danbury.

Thank you all for your ongoing generosity and to the many volunteers who have helped to load the trucks and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection Thursday February 5th



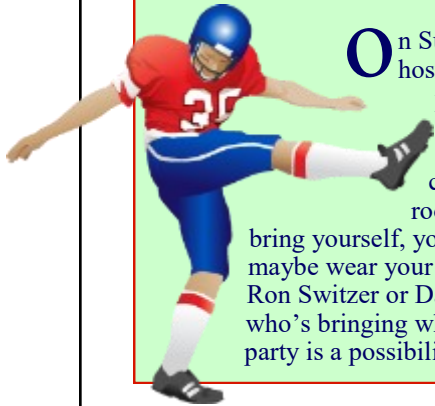
*Help us,
Help others!*

11 am to Noon

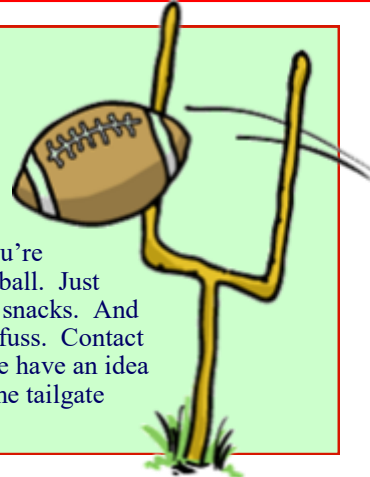
If you would like to request Altar flowers for a particular Sunday in Memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out the flower chart or envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to dszen@yahoo.com or contact David Szen.



† **“It’s Good!”**



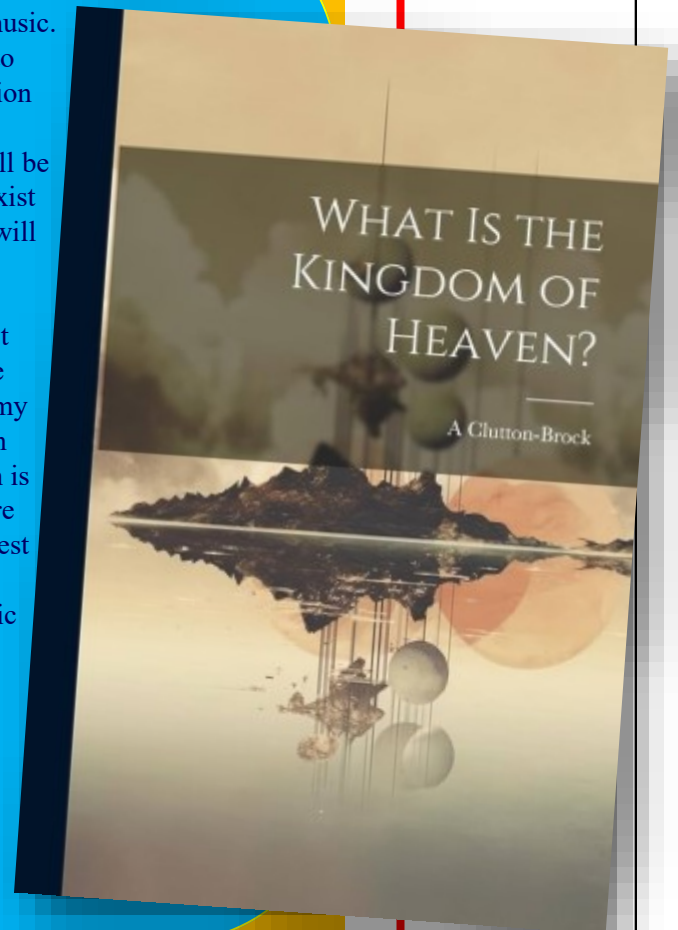
On Sunday February 9th we will be hosting our 10th annual Super Bowl party! We’re setting up our big screen in the Guild Room. And you’re invited. Men, women, children. It doesn’t matter who you’re rooting for. Or even if you like football. Just bring yourself, your favorite appetizer, beverage or snacks. And maybe wear your favorite team shirt. No cost. No fuss. Contact Ron Switzer or Dave Szen if you’re interested so we have an idea who’s bringing what. Weather permitting, a pregame tailgate party is a possibility!



† **Weekly Thought for Reflection**

- from Fr. John Morrison

“But there are other things we cannot understand at all if we see them only in the relation of use. For instance, music. If I listen to a symphony by Beethoven, expecting it to give me some information of use to myself, information that will help me to increase my income or cure my indigestion, I shall not hear the music at all, and it will be to me a mere chaos of sounds. The music does not exist to give me useful information... True, to perceive it will profit me; I shall have the delight of experiencing beauty. But the paradox of the process is this, that I shall not experience the beauty if I try to experience it with an eye to my own profit... If I am to experience the music as it is, I must forget about myself and all my demands and expectations, and allow myself to fall in love with it, if I can; I must allow that relation, which is the music, to happen to me... But further, to be aware of that reality of the music of the universe is the highest good, the highest happiness. Then we ourselves become part of the music; we are by hearing the music constrained to make ourselves part of it; for it is real music, irresistible in its beauty and we cannot but dance to it when we hear it. He himself heard it and danced to it, and by the beauty of his dance, of his life, of his whole state of being, has for two thousand years allured the world, even while the world would not understand the meaning of it.”



Arthur Clutton-Brock, *What is the Kingdom of Heaven?*

The Wonderful Sounds of SONG and MUSIC

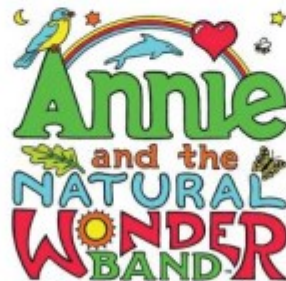
FREE REFRESHMENTS



Share with us a Joyous Saturday
Feb. 8th. at 2:00 pm

Snow Date, Feb 22nd.

Children of all ages...from 3 to 100 years



Christ Church
4 Wellers Bridge Road, Roxbury CT

† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

Presentation at the Temple

by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c. 1290-1348)
painted in 1342, tempera on panel
© Uffizi Gallery, Florence / Alamy

This painting by Lorenzetti originally decorated the altar of St. Crescentius in the magnificent Cathedral of Siena. It depicts the Presentation at the Temple, an event which, according to Hebraic Law, had to take place forty days after a child's birth. Central to the composition, framed by two slender columns, are the Madonna holding the cloth that swaddled the child, the child himself with lively, moving feet and a finger in his mouth, and Simeon speaking while taking the child in his arms. At the far left, Joseph stands quietly, preceded by two women who lack aureoles, marking that they have no holy status. To the right is Anna, accompanied by a Latin cartouche quoting the Gospel of Luke (2:38): "And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Behind the altar, a priest prepares the sacrificial pigeons for the purification offering, holding a knife in one hand while the pigeons are placed to the side, shifting focus from the center to emphasize the significance of the ritual. Pigeons were the cheapest animal offerings in a temple, hence the artist stressing that Mary and Joseph were of very humble background.

The overall setting is a finely decorated Gothic church, reminiscent of the Cathedral of Siena, featuring a nave and two aisles, each adorned with three-foiled ogival arches. Above the priests, a triumphal arch showcases two angels holding a clipeus with the Blessing Christ. The lunettes of the aisles contain prophets, while atop the foreground columns stand small statues of Moses, holding the Ten Commandments, and Joshua, grasping the Sun. Higher up, above the intricately detailed marble intarsia of arches and dragon-patterned friezes, is a garland held by a series of angels.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord highlights the deep connection between Christianity and its Jewish roots. In Jewish tradition, particularly in the writings of the prophet Isaiah, Israel is called to be a light to the nations, revealing God's presence to the world. In the gospel account, the devout elder Simeon recognizes the infant Jesus, brought to the Temple by Mary and Joseph, as the one who will fulfil this calling. Simeon declares that this child will be a light for the Gentiles and bring glory to Israel, embodying the hopes and mission of his people. His life-long yearning is fulfilled in this moment, leading him to a profound prayer of surrender, which has become a cherished part of the Church's Evening Prayer when we recite Simeon's prayer (the Song of



Israel - Walking in Jesus' Footsteps

† Model of Ancient Jerusalem ☆

On our trips to the Holy Land, on our first day in Jerusalem, we stop by the Israel Museum to look down on the outdoor scale model of the ancient city, to visualize old Jerusalem at the peak of its power. The gold-trimmed Second Temple and its vast courtyard dominate the Model of Ancient Jerusalem. Herod's Palace, the twin-spired Palace of the Hasmoneans, the streets and markets are all identifiable.

The time is AD 66, the fateful year the Great Revolt against the Romans erupted, resulting in the destruction of the city and the Temple built by Herod the Great. All that's missing from the buildings of Jerusalem limestone are the people.

This is also the time when Christianity was in its formative stages and the Dead Sea Scrolls - now housed in the museum's Shrine of the Book - were being created.

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was only 36 years before, and the mound of Calvary can be seen just outside the Second Wall (but well inside the new north wall begun by Herod Agrippa I).

The ancient city was then at its largest, spreading over 180 hectares - more than twice the size of the present Old City.

Archaeologists and historians contributed

Construction of the Model of Ancient Jerusalem was undertaken in the 1960s by Hans Kroch, owner of the Holyland Hotel, in memory of his son Jacob, who was killed in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

Originally in the grounds of the hotel, it was transported in 1,000 pieces to its present site, 3 miles away, in 2006.

The model covers nearly 4,300 square yards, using a scale of 1:50. A human figure on this scale would be less than and 1½ inches high.

Archaeologists (principally Professor Michael Avi-Yonah of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem), historians and architects contributed their

(Continued on page 17)

Looking from the lower city to the Herodian towers of the upper city



Pools of Bethesda

Walk in Jesus' Footsteps

Our next trip to the Holy Land is scheduled for July of 2025! We leave on July 1st for a two-week journey into our faith. This trip includes the model of the ancient city and will cover all the basics and have many optional add-ons.

Brochures are available from Pam or David Szen.

(Continued from page 16)

Model of Ancient Jerusalem

expertise to the re-creation of ancient Jerusalem.

The main sources used were writings from the Roman period, construction techniques used in ancient cities similar to Jerusalem, and archaeological discoveries from Jerusalem itself.

Subsequent excavations in Jerusalem have enabled the model to be refined and updated archaeologically.

Imagination augmented archaeology

Archaeologist Jerome Murphy-O'Connor says many arbitrary decisions had to be made in the construction of the model, "and imagination often supplied what the texts or archaeologist's trowel could not provide. The model, therefore, is a hypothesis, a vision of the city as it might have been, and not all elements carry the same guarantee."

According to Murphy-O'Connor, "The portrayals of the Temple and of the Palace of Herod are excellent, but the presentation of the northern part of the city is almost certainly wrong. The line assumed by the northernmost wall of the model rests on inadequate archaeological evidence, and all the buildings it encloses are the product of pure imagination."

Another feature which appears to lack archaeological basis is the red-tile roofing. No roof tiles have been found in excavations of Jerusalem, however there are too many tiles in the model to make a change.

Visitors may walk around the model, though there is no protection from sun or rain. They are not allowed to walk inside the walls.



Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather
be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

Psalm 84:10



† Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible Study

The Women's Tuesday morning Bible Study meets every Tuesday from 9:30 to 11 am in the Guild Room. They are currently studying Proverbs to discuss and uncover the foundation of wisdom, mark out the paths that make us wise, and points us to the ultimate source of all true understanding: Jesus Christ

All are welcome to join in person or through Zoom. The link is available on our website, or contact Mary Beth Durkin durkin.mb@gmail.com for the Zoom link and further information.



† Wednesday Service Growing in Popularity

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer has been growing consistently. With live music and a brief homily, this service is just what you need to sustain you through the week. Come join us and check it out or watch on YouTube Live.



† Praying for the 1/3 of our world that are still unreached with the Gospel.

Aringa

Country: Uganda | Population: 689,000 | Language: Aringa | Main Religion: Islam | Evangelical: 1.50%

The Aringa live primarily in the Yumbe District in northwestern Uganda. Traditionally hunters and herdsman, a growing number of the Aringa are becoming businessmen. They typically have large families and are hard workers. They are mostly Muslim, with a small number of Christians. The Muslim response to evangelism has been mixed, but recent peace in the area has led to more cooperation. Pray for the growth of the church and acceptance in their communities.



† Saints of God

Thursday, January 30th

Charles I of England and Scotland,

King and Martyr, January 30, 1649

Charles I of England is known to many Anglicans, mostly in the Church of England, as a martyr because he protected the Church from being separated from its ancient roots. He died partially because, the Calvinist Puritans who captured him wanted him to remove episcopacy, the apostolic line of bishops, from the Church in England and completely cut it off from the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church that it was. He refused to replace the ancient faith of the Church with a new version, the Calvinism advocated by Puritans even if it meant his death.



Charles was born in 1600, son of King James VII of Scotland and Anne of Denmark. He became Prince of Wales in 1603 at the Union of the Crowns when James became James I of England also. It was during James's reign that the Church of England began to re-establish high-church elements within the Anglican tradition. But at the same time a low-church faction within the church, known as the Puritans. Succeeding Archbishops of Canterbury and other Church of England bishops re-emphasized liturgical ceremonies and the decorating of churches with religious iconography. Puritans however were opposed to any sort of decoration and even called for the re-organization of the church hierarchy through dismissing the historic episcopate. Charles succeeded to the throne in 1625 and later appointed William Laud, previously a bishop of St. Davids, Wells and London, to the see of Canterbury. Laud was a firm supporter of the high-church argument in the Church and was opposed to Calvinism. Laud and Charles carried out a number of reforms in the Church based on retaining its

catholicity. Both men with much of England's support battled against Puritans and Presbyterians, insisting upon episcopacy, and the following of the Book of Common Prayer, which called for a high-church liturgy. The Puritan vs. Royalist debate turned into civil war in 1640s after Laud tried to impose a new Prayer Book on the rebellious Scottish Calvinists and England's Puritan's too feared that he would suppress their voice in the Church. When it came to an end, King Charles was captured and condemned to death by a Puritan parliament. He was offered his life, and even his throne if he would consent to the destruction of the historic episcopate but refused. Destroying the Episcopate would have made the Church of England into a sect, rather than a part of apostolic succession and of Christ's Church. On January 30, 1649 Charles was beheaded, and since recognized as a martyr as he died for the survival of the Church of England, canonized, and added to the Book of Common Prayer as a major feast after the restoration. His cult has survived since his death, known as the Society of King Charles the Martyr.

One of the many problems troubling the Church, including the Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Churches, is unity. Unity is presented as crucial to Christ's Church because it wipes away the face of hatred or contempt within that holy institution. Charles the martyred king, though not the more typical, self humbling saint we are used to, is a focal point for that unity and reminds us of the importance of the oneness of the Church descended from Christ's work while he visited us 2,000 years ago and glued to him, to doing that work today. The one and ancient liturgy used by the Church, the one and ancient episcopal polity of the Church, the one and ancient faith of the Church should not contradict the one, ancient, ever-living and ever-saving savior, Christ, who is the Church. For the Church to spread the one true faith of the one God, we must be one, united body.

Do we give the Lord the first fruits of our time every week by attending church? Do we set an example for our children and grandchildren by attending services and joyously participating in the celebration of the Eucharist each week? How do we know what God wants us to do unless we communicate with Him?



Groundhog Day is this Sunday, February 2nd. It has a surprising connection to the Christian celebration of "The Feast of Candelmas," which is the day that beeswax candles were traditionally blessed. The celebration, also called the Feast of Christ's Presentation in the Temple, is symbolically associated with Simeon saying that Jesus is the "light to the Gentiles" foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures. Superstitious belief claimed that cloudy skies on February 2nd meant an early summer and good harvest. But if the sun shined, this was to forecast forty more days of winter.



✠

Congratulations, New Vestry Members

Congratulations to Jeff Chowanec, Geoff Dent and Diane Peterson, who were elected to serve three year terms on our vestry, at our Annual Meeting last Sunday.



After-Service Prayer Teams - We now have prayer ministers available after each service to meet with people in the first pew. This is in addition to the Wednesday prayer offered at the altar and Healing Sunday prayers at the altar. Please feel free to come forward to ask for prayer for yourself or others.

Phishing Scams - Don't fall for them! Please do not respond to any message from clergy or St. Paul's by email or any other method of communication that asks you to purchase something (often a gift card) or asks for a "favor." **Delete** reply, do not click links in the messages, mark them as any doubt about the veracity of a text or email, at (priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com) or the **these messages, do not Spam or Junk.** If there is contact Fr. Nate by e-mail office



† Our Last Song

Luke 2:22-40

Many of us are familiar with the Nunc Dimittis (The Song of Simeon), especially if you have ever been to an Evening Prayer, Compline or Vespers service. As a youngster when we said or sang the “Nunc Dimittis” (Latin for “Now Dismiss”), what we learned was that the service was almost over and we would be dismissed, for which we were always eternally grateful. Even so, the Biblical story behind it was a tale that often captured our imagination. Simeon was an old man waiting his whole life for this moment and he died as soon as the song left his lips. But it wasn’t a sad story to us. He got what he wanted. Dismissed in peace having seen what he longed for, his life came to the hoped for conclusion. Most of us are not so sure we know what we hope to be at the conclusion of our lives and when you find yourself well past the “middle years” it’s hard to imagine passing that this point would look anything like peace. But then Simeon’s ending is Jesus’ beginning and Jesus’ ending will turn out to be the beginning for Simeon. Which is why he could depart in peace and we will as well, no matter when our last song is sung.



† Greeters Needed

Greeting people in a warm way makes them feel good about their presence in church.

At St. Paul’s, we are always looking for people who feel called to serve in this important ministry. If you are interested in becoming a greeter, please contact Pam Szen (prszen@gmail.com) or David Szen



greeters

† Ladies Wed Evening Bible Study

All women are invited to join the Ladies Wednesday Evening Bible Study for our new study of the book of Ephesians. Every Wednesday evening, 7-8 pm by Zoom. This letter includes many praises and

prayers to God for his saving love and gifts to the church. We look forward to studying and sharing our questions and experiences together. Please join us as we receive God's Word (3:17) "that Christ may dwell in your hearts



through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love." Call or text Carol Wheeler at 203-525-0011 with questions or to be added to the weekly Zoom link email.



Camp Washington

February 14 - February 16, 2025

Winter Wonderland Weekend



**REGISTER NOW AT CAMPWASHINGTON.ORG
OR CALL 860.567.9623 FOR MORE DETAILS**



Our annual mid-year camp reunion for our younger campers - all the fun of Camp- Snow or No Snow!

Join us for some wintery fun at CW!
Hot chocolate! Games! Marshmallows! Laughter!
Fort Building! Friendship! Memory making!

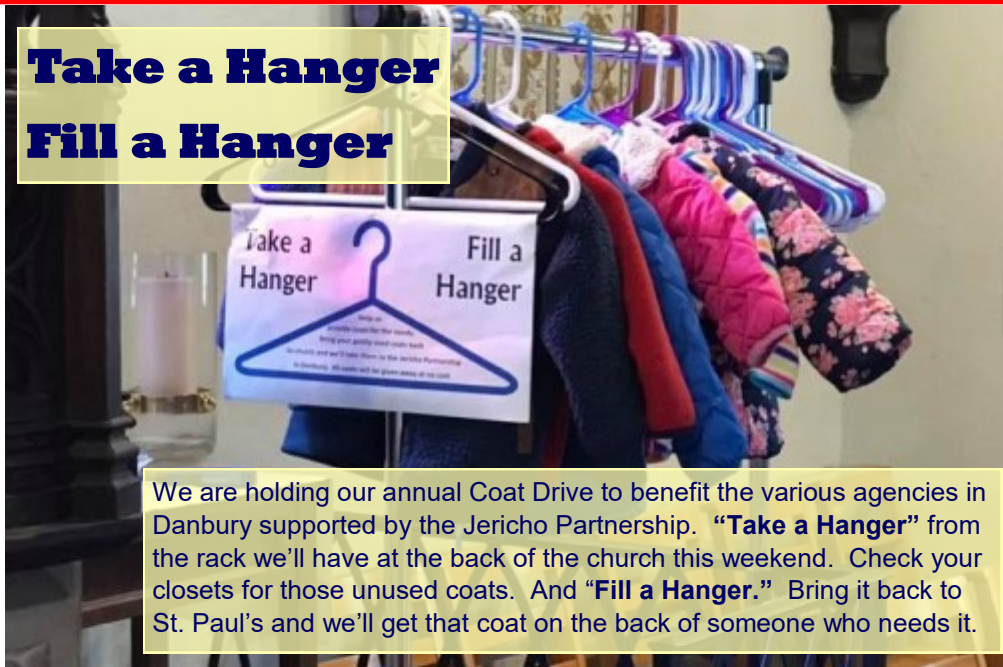
AGES 7-12
\$185 per person

Scan QR Code to register



Camp Washington | 190 Kenyon Road | Lakeside, Connecticut 06758

Take a Hanger Fill a Hanger



We are holding our annual Coat Drive to benefit the various agencies in Danbury supported by the Jericho Partnership. **"Take a Hanger"** from the rack we'll have at the back of the church this weekend. Check your closets for those unused coats. And **"Fill a Hanger."** Bring it back to St. Paul's and we'll get that coat on the back of someone who needs it.

Psalm 122:6

Pray
for the
peace
of
Jerusalem;

May they prosper that love you.



Website Links - Usher, acolyte, lector, intercessor, and lay reader schedules are published monthly on our website at [saintpaulsbrookfield.com / parish ministries / acolytes-lay-readers-lectors-intercessors / downloads](http://saintpaulsbrookfield.com/parish-ministries/acolytes-lay-readers-lectors-intercessors/downloads). Our parish member directory is posted on our website at [saintpaulsbrookfield.com / about / member directory / downloads](http://saintpaulsbrookfield.com/about/member-directory/downloads).

† **Sunday School Info!**

ATTN: PARENTS OF ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Bring your Sunday School students to the classrooms by 10:30. Children will be returned to the sanctuary in time for Communion.



† **“Open Table” Coffee Hour**

We are adding something new to our Coffee Hour Ministry! Occasionally, you will see OPEN TABLE written in one of the Coffee Hour slots. This means that anyone from Saint Paul's is invited to feel free to leave a food item on the table in Crocker Hall as a donation to that particular Coffee Hour. That's it!! Just something different occasionally and nothing else to do! We look forward to your participation and donation on that particular designated Sunday. Thanks all!
Mary Allen, Coffee Hour Coordinator, 203-775-6633 or chamla@charter.net.



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Feb 2nd 8 am - Mary/Chuck Allen 10:30 am - Barbieri's
Feb 9th 8 am - Beck's 10:30 am - Switzer's
Feb 16th 8 am - Boy Scout Troop #5 10:30 am - Boy Scout Troop #5



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS NEEDED

Contact Mary Allen at 203-775-6633 or chamla@charter.net.



THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



February 2, 2025 – The Presentation
Epiphany Bible Study: Week 4

During the season of Epiphany, The Episcopal Church's Office of Global Partnerships is offering a weekly Bible study prepared by writers across the church and Anglican Communion. Each piece, consisting of the Sunday readings, can be studied alone, in small groups, or even with a congregation. You can find the whole study for each week at www.sermonthatwork.org. This week's study for the Presentation was written by **the Rev. Cn. Wadie N. Far**, a priest from Jordan serving in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Commentary from Wadie Far

While for some, God is far and distant, that should not be the case for us Christians. We believe that God came down to earth to be with us, to guide, to teach, to heal, and to give us salvation. In this belief, we should find great strength, for our God is not a distant, far away God, who does not understand our problems and challenges. Rather, God is the one who humbled himself and took on flesh for us. We believe in a God who wants to dwell in our hearts and wants to be close to us. Jesus paid our debt on the wood of the cross, and gave us life; in return, we are asked to believe in him, and that faith, if it is a living faith, should lead us to care for others as he has cared for us. We are to walk humbly with people, teaching and guiding them, listening to them, proclaiming the gift of salvation to them, and reminding them that our Lord and Savior knows what they are going through. He is not far from their suffering, and he has given them life.

Discussion Questions

Have you opened your heart for Jesus to dwell in it?

Do you trust Jesus with your sufferings and challenges, or are you still trying to take care of them by yourself?

Do you lead others to Christ, so that they can find their comfort in him?

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dale Friedly opens presents on Sunday. **Julie Astbury, Heather Melody & Heather Onorato** celebrate on Monday. Throw a party for **Joyce McKenna, Gordy Hiltz** (his 5th!) & **Haley Perry** on Tuesday. **Have a blessed day everyone!**



RFB 

Presents

COFFEE WITH JESUS

Halfway There



I'm trying to be more positive in my outlook. You've always struck me as optimistic. Are you pretty much a "glass half full" kind of guy?



Hey, if you have a glass, even if it's completely empty and bone dry, at least you have a glass, am I right? You're halfway there!



But what if the glass was filled to the halfway mark, Jesus, how would you see that? Is it half empty or half full?



I'm not sure I understand the problem here, Ann. Maybe you just need a smaller glass.



Facebook.com/RadioFreeBabylon



JESS RAY

Thurs., Feb. 6, 2025 | 7:00 P.M.

Tickets \$20

www.communitycoffeehouse.org



Community Coffeehouse | 7 Madison Ave. | Danbury, CT 06810 | (203) 748-4972

† This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

I Am Sending My Messenger

Malachi 3:1-4

In our Hebrew Bible reading the prophet promises that, as the day of the Lord's judgment nears, God will send a messenger to make ready the way. The priests and temple servants who say they are waiting for the Lord need cleansing and purifying most of all. Suddenly the refiner will come to the temple, and then the offerings of the people will be pleasing to the Lord. On this day Christians recognize that with the bringing of the child Jesus to the temple, the time of purifying judgment has begun.

Psalm 84

A song of the pilgrims' happiness as they come to worship in the house of the Lord.

Hebrews 2:14-18

In this lesson we are reminded that Jesus has now shared in all aspects of human life. By himself experiencing death, he has broken the power of death over humankind. This was not done for angels but for the human descendants of Abraham. Made of flesh and blood, participating in our sufferings and temptations, our brother Jesus has become the perfect and merciful High Priest so that sins may be forgiven.

Luke 2:22-40

In our gospel story the infant Jesus is brought to the temple to be presented to the Lord in accordance with the law. The time of Mary's purification is over, and the holy family comes to offer thanksgiving. Guided by the Spirit, a devout man named Simeon perceives that this is the hoped for Messiah. In words which we have come to know as the *Nunc dimittis* ("Now let depart"), Simeon foresees that this child will become the promised light to the Gentiles for the glory of Israel. But he also prophesies that Jesus will be a cause of division, sorrow, and judgment. The ancient prophetess Anna then adds her testimony.

Luke 2:22-40

By the time we have finished reading Chapters 1 and 2 of Luke, we should realize that the stage has been set for a powerful confrontation between two kingdoms. The Pax Romana of Caesar - the way of peace through force of arms; and the peace of Christ - the way of peace through justice.



† Sermon Shorts

“I Need You!” To replay all our sermons, audio and videos follow this link for the [Sunday Sermons](#). Check out our [Sermon Archives](#) as well.



† Your Prayers Are Requested For...

It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. Made like us in every respect, our high priest who knows our suffering and intercedes for us before the throne of mercy. Let us pray through Christ for:

.....**Harlan Jessup, Jan Brochu, Ed Licence, Gail Winkley**, and other parishioners convalescing in extended care facilities.

.....Christ & the Epiphany, East Haven; St. John's, East Windsor; Christ Church, Easton; Holy Trinity, Enfield.

.....Revival at St. Paul's and the greater Danbury area.

.....Comite Hispano, Spanish-language Cursillo, Latino/Hispanic ministry in Connecticut.

.....For the Peace of Jerusalem. - *Psalms 122:6*

.....**Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Sr., Peter Scalzo, Jr., Doris, Karen, Beverly Hall, Robert, Roger, Fred, Cynthia, Valerie, Heidi Pinheiro, Dale Mitchell, Larry, Ruth, Rob Duckett, Blake, Nick Marcalus, Susan Morrison, David McQueen, Pam Altemus, Mary Perry, Helen Picheco, Cliff, Elana and Veronika** continued healing.

.....the people of **Ukraine**; the people of **Niue**; the people of **Malawi**; the bishop, clergy and laity of the Missionary Area of Lodwar – The Anglican Church of Kenya; and our sister and brother members of the **Old-Catholic Church of Switzerland**.

.....For the Church: that the Light of Christ may shine through our lives and reveal God to all who are searching for meaning or purpose to their lives.

.....**Faith Food Pantry**, Newtown, which is the recipient of our food basket collections for the month of January.

.....Papi's Variety Store & Deli, Danbury, a food partner of the Jericho Partnership.

.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; and for all missionaries: that God will inspire the message that they offer, help them to recognize how they can best serve their communities, and sustain them in times of loneliness.

.....**Travelers**.

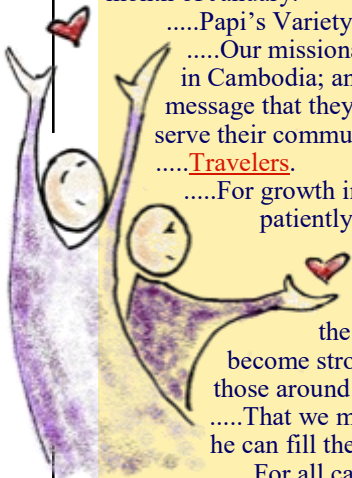
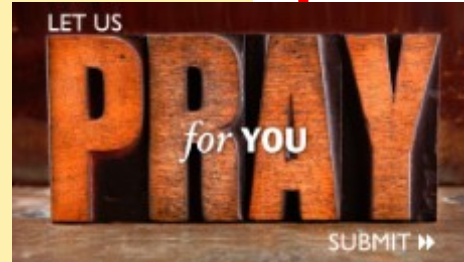
.....For growth in prayer: that like Simeon and Anna, we may patiently await God's word in the silence of our hearts and reflect upon all that God has done for us .

.....For the one third of humanity that does not have access to the gospel, for zealous preachers of the word, that by the Holy Spirit, they that they would become strong in their faith, grow in numbers and be a light to those around them.

.....That we may know that Jesus understands our pain and only he can fill the hole in our heart.

.....For all called to prophetic ministry: that God will strengthen their courage and give them a clear grasp of the truth.

.....**Peace Among the Nations**.



GIVE
IT TO
GOD

Presentation of Jesus in the Temple



"And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.'"



Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)

Punxsutawney Bible Story Hour



Random Fact of the Week!

Did you know ... that Groundhog Day is directly, if not weirdly tied to the Christian liturgical season of Christmas?

The Christian year begins in Advent, with the anticipation of the birth of Christ. The liturgical calendar holds holy days and seasons marking the Christ story, incorporating the life of Christ and the saints into the every day life of every day people. The birth of Christ is celebrated on December 25 at Christmas.

January 6 marks Epiphany, the visitation of the magi to the Holy Family. What you may not know is that February 2 marks the Feast of Candlemas, the 40th day ending the Christmas/Epiphany seasons, celebrating Mary's ritual purification and the presentation of Jesus in the temple according to Mosaic practices. This story

is found in [Luke 2:22-38](#), and includes the beloved stories of both Simeon and Anna blessing and prophesying over the Christ child.

European Christians began associating Christian holidays and liturgical time with long-standing pre-Christian practices. Once such instance is the timing of Candlemas as a halfway marker between the winter and spring equinox.

*If Maries purifieng daie,
Be cleare and bright with sunnie raie,
The frost and cold shal be much more,
After the feast than was before.*

(Reginald Scot, 1584)

This is also the time of year hibernating animals may emerge and decide if they're ready to come out and play. Germans looked to the bear, and then the badger, to predict the weather for the remaining winter period, referring to Candlemas as Badger Day. By the time they immigrated to the Americas, the Pennsylvania Dutch were looking for the emergence of the American groundhog on Candlemas. The rest, as they say, is history.

Find us on Facebook

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Watch us on YouTube

Ecclesiasticus 43:27 - We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: 'He is the all.' - 30 -