



ST. PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Athens, TN

Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025—5:30 p.m.

CHORAL EVENSONG

This Evensong service is a tiny fragment of something else: it is part of the worship which is offered to God by Christian people every hour of the day and night, in every part of the world. When you come to Evensong, it is as if you were dropping in on a conversation already in progress—a conversation between God and his people which began long before you were born and which will continue long after your death. So, do not be surprised or disturbed if there are some things which you do not understand right away. For a brief moment, you step into the continual stream of worship which is being offered today and which will be offered to the end of time. You are one with those who worship here on earth and in heaven. Evensong is drawn almost entirely from the Bible. Its primary purpose is to proclaim the wonderful works of God in history and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its secondary purpose is to evoke from the worshipper a response of praise, penitence, prayer, and obedience. Much of the English of the service is the language spoken and written by our ancestors more than four hundred years ago. It may sound old fashioned but its meaning is not out of date.

—*From St. Paul's Cathedral in London, England*

Please stand, in body or spirit, when the choir and minister enter, and at points marked †.

PRELUDE *Threnodi*

Frederik Magle

† WELCOME AND GENERAL CONFESSION

The Reverend Claire Brown

The LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him. —*Habakkuk 2:20*

LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. —

Psalms 26:8

I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. —*Psalms 51:3*

Dearly beloved, the Scripture moveth us, in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought, at all times, humbly to acknowledge our sins before God;

yet ought we chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

All kneel or continue standing, as able.

Almighty and most merciful Father; we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, To the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; and hath given power and commandment, to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his Holy Spirit; that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The minister kneels, the people still kneeling, and repeat with her:

Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The minister continues, and the choir responds, musical responses by Craig Phillips:

O Lord, open thou our lips, *and our mouth shall show forth thy praise.* O God, make speed to save us. *O Lord, make haste to help us.*

All rise.

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.* Praise ye the Lord. *The Lord's Name be praised.*

† HYMN 36 *O gladsome Light*

All are seated.

PSALM 114 *In exitu Israel*

Hallelujah! When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech, Judah became God's sanctuary and Israel his dominion. The sea beheld it and fled; Jordan turned and went back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like young sheep. What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? O Jordan, that you turned back? You mountains, that you skipped like rams? you little hills like young sheep? Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, Who turned the hard rock into a pool of water and flint-stone into a flowing spring.

All stand.

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.

All are seated.

FIRST LESSON *Amos 6:1–14*

Alas for those who are at ease in Zion, and for those who feel secure on Mount Samaria, the notables of the first of the nations, to whom the house of Israel resorts! Cross over to Calneh, and see; from there go to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is your territory greater than their territory, O you that put far away the evil day, and bring near a reign of violence? Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away. The Lord God has sworn by himself (says the Lord, the God of hosts): I abhor the pride of Jacob and hate his strongholds; and I will deliver up the city and all that is in it. If ten people remain in one house, they shall die. And if a relative, one who burns the dead, shall take up the body to bring it out of the house, and shall say to someone in the innermost parts of the house, 'Is anyone else with you?' the answer will come, 'No.' Then the relative shall say, 'Hush! We must not mention the name of the Lord.' See, the Lord commands, and the great house shall be shattered to bits, and the little house to pieces. Do horses run on rocks? Does one plough the sea with oxen? But you have turned justice into poison and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood—you who rejoice in Lo-debar, who say, 'Have we not by our own strength taken Karnaim for ourselves?' Indeed, I am raising up against you a nation, O house of Israel, says the Lord, the God of hosts, and they shall oppress you from Lebo-hamath to the Wadi Arabah.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silence is kept, after which all stand with the choir.

† MAGNIFICAT *The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55)*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered

the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever. *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.*

All are seated.

SECOND LESSON *Luke 1:57–68*

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, ‘No; he is to be called John.’ They said to her, ‘None of your relatives has this name.’ Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, ‘His name is John.’ And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, ‘What then will this child become?’ For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silence is kept, after which all stand with the choir.

† NUNC DIMITTIS *The Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29–32)*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel. *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.*

All remain standing for the Creed.

† THE APOSTLE’S CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE VERSICLES AND RESPONSES *(The responses, set to music by Craig Phillips, are sung by the choir)*
The Lord be with you. *And with thy spirit.*

All kneel or sit, as able.

Let us pray. *Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.*

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us. *And grant us thy salvation.* O Lord, save the State, *and mercifully hear us, when we call upon thee.* Endue thy ministers with righteousness, *and make thy chosen people joyful.* O Lord, save thy people, *and bless thine inheritance.* Give peace in our time, O Lord, *because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.* O God, make clean our hearts within us, *and take not thy Holy Spirit from us.*

COLLECTS

Collect of the day

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

A Collect for Peace

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee, we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

A Collect for Aid against Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

All are seated.

ANTHEM *O Heavens, Open from Above*

Colin Mawby

O heavens, open from above, let fall the silent dew upon our parched and desert hearts: make new the earth, make new. O earth, break open clotted depth, let sprout the silent seed from every old and barren soul: make speed, O God, send down your justice soon; raise up your peace—'tis late. Let faithfulness and love embrace: We wait, O Lord, we wait!
—Genevieve Glen

All kneel or stay seated.

THE PRAYERS

Let us pray:

A Prayer for the President of the United States, and all in Civil Authority.

Almighty God, whose kingdom is everlasting and power infinite; have mercy upon this whole land; and so rule the hearts of thy servants THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, the Governor of this State, and all others in authority, that they, knowing whose ministers they are, may above all things seek thy honour and glory; and that we and all the People, duly considering whose authority they bear, may faithfully and obediently honour them, according to thy blessed Word and ordinance; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

A Prayer for the Clergy and People.

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; send down upon our Bishops, and other Clergy, and upon the Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and, that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

A Prayer for all Conditions of Humanity

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all humankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of people; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen.**

A General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all people; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful: and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. **Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants,

as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

† HYMN 76 *On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry*

† THE BENEDICTION (*all respond*)

The Lord be with you. **And with thy spirit.** Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand when the minister departs and please be as quiet as possible during the final instrumental music, which is the conclusion of the service.

† THE POSTLUDE *Second Study in English Folksong*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

OFFICIATING

The Reverend Claire Brown

MUSICIANS

St. Paul's Choir and Guests

Dr. Andrew Owen, *Director*
Ms. Amy Wu, *Organist and Pianist*
Ms. Ashley Atkinson, *Clarinet*

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

We are disciples of Jesus Christ, serving, nourishing, and loving all God's people.

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Parish Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Claire Brown, *Rector*

Kelsey Aebi, *Seminarian*

Diva Creps, *Parish Secretary*

Dr. Andrew Owen, *Music Director*

Amy Wu, *Accompanist*

Bryan Andrew, *Sexton*

Heidi King, *Table Graces Director*

Paisley Woody, *Nursery Minister*

Holland Borwick, *Assistant Nursery Minister*

Vestry

Trey Ivins, Senior Warden, 2025

Sheri Owen, Junior Warden, 2026

Beth Blackledge, 2026

Doug Cross, 2027

Stephen Dick, 2025

Will Murray, 2027

Danielle Norris, 2026

Charlie Senn, 2026

Mandy Woody, 2027