

Finding the In(n):
A Saint Paul's Episcopal Church
original
Christmas Pageant and Holy Eucharist



December 24, 2022 | 4 o'clock p.m.

*Saint Paul's Episcopal Church
39 E Central Street | Natick, MA 01760
stpaulsnatick.org*

*Welcome in Love. Worship with Joy. Grow in Faith. Work for
Justice. Seek and Serve Christ in all persons.*

*This pageant was co-created by the people of St. Paul's church; our lay minister in
residence, Dr. Brian Litzenberger; and (quite evidentially), the Holy Spirit.*

We hope you enjoy it, but much more importantly, we hope you allow it in. We invite you to find yourself in this story; this weaving together of what we know in our history, our scripture, our hearts and our imaginations; what we believe to be true about a God who chose to be born among us; and what we know to be true about ourselves and one another.

We pray, as the story unfolds, that you yourself Find Your Way In(n).

Prelude: Christmas Medley, arr. Marianne Kim (organ)

Kelvyn Koning

The Pageant

*Our story begins in darkness, In the beginning...
The Pascal light enters in silence.*

John the Baptist sets the scene

A Magi Sighting

The Collect

You are invited to stand

Intercessor: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

God of love and wonder, You became human and saved us. When we were lost and in danger, trapped inside our own problems, grasping at power and suffering without it, limited and short-sighted and hopeless, You came into the world as an infant, vulnerable and helpless, to lead us to the blessings of Your peace. By Your incarnation, You broke through into our lives and made the impossible possible. Turning over the structures of oppression, You welcomed the outcast and the stranger, making Your love the way for all. Grant us grace this Christmas to welcome this gift, Your love, into our whole selves that no part of us may be a stranger to You. And lead us forward by the light of Your star, to be beacons of Your love in this broken world. All this we ask in the name of Jesus, Your son, our savior, the baby who came and changed everything. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn #84: "Love came down at Christmas"

Blue Hymnal

You may be seated as the story continues

Mary, Rebecca, and Rachel in the Evening

Joseph and Ezekiel at Daybreak

Hymn #81 (verse one only): "Lo, How a Rose"

Blue Hymnal

The congregation remains seated to sing

John Continues...

The Magi (Caffeinated)

The Road Trip

As Mary and Joseph approach Bethlehem, we all join them. Across time and space, our hearts go where they go, our voices join the story in love, in support, in gratitude, and in hope that perhaps we too are called to carry God.

All are invited to lend your voice to the "Congregation" lines.

Congregational Scene on the road to Bethlehem

John the Baptist: And so, we find ourselves on the road to Bethlehem. It's a long journey, they've been traveling for over a week and a half through hostile territory where they had to avoid wild boar and lions and highway robbers, on a donkey. It's been cold and rainy and, of course, she's pregnant.

Joseph: Maybe we should find a place to rest.

Mary: I'm worn through to my bones but I think we should push on.

Congregation: I bring you the strength of our foremothers

M: We can make it. But Joseph, I wonder if I'll be able to do this.

J: Mary, God has chosen you, among all the women in Israel.

Congregation: Mary, you are chosen. Thank you for saying yes!

M: God chose you also, sees who you are. And I see you too.

J: I can see it in your eyes.

Congregation: Joseph you are chosen. Thank you for saying yes!

M: I don't know why God chose us. Sometimes I think I'm asking too much of you.

J: Mary, it is not you who asks.

M: Do you ever wonder how this is all going to work? Where will we live, how will we support him? Protect him? Teach him?

J: I know! Teaching the son of God!?

Congregation: Mary. Joseph. Remember you are beloved. *[Catherine stands]*

M: In you and in God I find strength. I know we are doing what is right. But I wonder how other people will see it.

Congregation: Don't worry about criticism from others. Your path is holy. *[Rob stands]*

J: It's such a scary time to raise a child.

M: It is. I'm scared too.

Congregation: Mary and Joseph, we will hold all your fears. *[Mike stands]*

M: The joy is more than I can contain. And yet my heart is breaking. And I don't know why.

Congregation: Mary there is room in my broken heart for all that breaks yours. *[Alisa stands]*

J: My heart is breaking too. Breaking and bursting.

Congregation: Mary and Joseph your hearts may break but your souls are strong. *[Val stands]*

M: Together with you – and with God's help, we can do this.

J: Together with God.

Mary and Joseph Arrive in Bethlehem (to a little instrumental line of "O, Little town of Bethlehem")

There is no Room in the Inn

A Landowner Gets It

The Cave

Members of our Church form a shelter for Mary and Joseph

Hymn #109 (verse one only/no refrain), "The First Noel"

Blue Hymnal

Leave your hymnal open, we'll get to the refrain once the Shepherds catch on....

The Shepherds and "Angel"

Hymn #109 (refrain), "The First Noel"

Blue Hymnal

The Shepherds Join the Scene

The Magi

Gratitude to Mary

This prayer of gratitude read by the people of the cave wall was written by a parishioner during Finding the In(n)

The Midwife Arrives

The Cave closes as the midwife reads affirmations that a parishioner remembers her own midwife telling her

The Birth

"O Magnum Mysterium" Morten Lauridsen, sung by Ron Williams

*O magnum mysterium, Et admirabile sacramentum, Ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
Jacentem in praeseptio! Beata Virgo, cujus viscera Meruerunt portare Dominum Christum.
Alleluia.*

When you hear the "Alleluias" being sung, the baby Jesus will arrive up the center aisle. You are invited to stand as the baby passes your pew.

Hymn #83, "O Come All Ye Faithful"

Blue Hymnal

The Prayers of the People

These prayers were written by St. Paul's during the final session of Finding the In(n)

Intercessor: God be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

Let us pray.

We pray for all MARYs who carry and care for God. Free them to act with autonomy and love, protect them in body and spirit that the child of God may be born into all our lives.

Congregation: May we be bearers of your love.

We pray for all JOSEPHs who serve and protect the incarnate God. Grant them courage and strength that they may engage with love and empathy all that makes us vulnerable.

Congregation: May we be open to the truth in each other.

We pray for all SHEPHERDS who tend to God's flock. Bring them peace that in stillness they may find and enfold all who have been shut out of the inn.

Congregation: May we build communities where all of God's people belong.

We pray for all MAGI whose gifts do God's work. Bring them your wisdom and conviction to stay true to their path that the abundance of your creation may be enough for all.

Congregation: May we be the hands and feet of Christ in this world.

We give thanks for the birth of Jesus who came and changed everything. Empower us all to be open and to listen to your presence in our hearts.

Congregation: May we be free from all that binds us so that all that we are may walk in love with God. Amen.

The Peace

Clergy and Cast: The Peace of the Lord be always with you!

Congregation: And also with you!

Offertory

"Just Two Words", sung by our Youth Choir

Thank you for your Christmas offerings!

Your generosity helps St. Paul's to keep Finding the In(n) here in Natick and beyond.

The Magi Arrive!

Magi: All things come of thee O Lord!

Congregation: And of thine own have we given thee!

Hymn #128, verses 1&5, "We Three Kings"

Blue Hymnal

The Holy Eucharist

Our Sacred Story continues at the altar where we invite an incarnate God to enter our bodies and lives, infusing us with love at Christmas time and always, that we may allow God to birth new things through us.

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give God and praise.**

Celebrant: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Author Almighty, writer of the heavens and creator of earth. Because you sent the Christ light to be born among the oppressed, to be parented by teenagers, to be protected by Shepherds, to be worshipped by Magi, to be a refugee in Africa, to be a Jew under Roman occupation in the Middle East, to be an adolescent teacher in a Synagogue, to be a carpenter, a Rabbi, a rabble-rouser, a God in flesh, walking by our side, teaching us to love in transformative ways.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Ho - ly,
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow'r and might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who

comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Music: Betty Carr Pulkingham (b. 1928) from *Freedom Mass*. Based on traditional African melodies. Copyright © 1989 Celebration, Aliquippa, PA 15001. All rights reserved. International copyright secured. Used by permission.

Celebrant: We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, according to his command, O Father,

**We remember his death,
We proclaim his resurrection,
We await his coming in glory;**

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN!**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on 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 Breaking of the Bread

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

People: Therefore let us keep the feast, Alleluia!

The gifts of God for the people of God, take them in remembrance that Christ has died for you and feed on him with faith in thanksgiving.

All are invited to come forward to receive Communion when the ushers guide you from your pe. All are welcome to receive the bread (tell the priest if you need GF), and one person will receive the wine on behalf of us all. The chalice bearer will still hold the chalice in front of you and say "The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation" we just ask you to not reach for it at this time. If you would prefer to receive a blessing, simply cross your arms when the priest gets to you.

Hymn #112, "In the Bleak Midwinter"

Blue Hymnal

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray

Incarnate One, thank you for coming to walk with us.

Thank you for inviting us into your story.

Thank you for being so fully human.

Thank you for being so fully Divine.

**Guide us as we leave this place full
in mind, body, and spirit with your love.**

**Help us to make room in the Inn of our hearts
by continuing to find our own way into your amazing story.**

Send us out to tell your story.

Send us out to spread your love.

Send us out to be vessels of new birth in our own day.

Walk with us every step of the way. AMEN.

Gratitude and a Blessing for our Lay Minister in Residence as he departs

Hymn #111, "Silent Night"

Blue Hymnal

The Christmas Blessing

Hymn #87, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Blue Hymnal

Dismissal

Let us go forth in Love finding our way into the greatest story of all time. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!!!

Postlude, "Go Tell it on the Mountain"

Kelvyn Koning

Arranged by Mark Heyes

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO MADE THIS PAGEANT HAPPEN!

Brian * Katy * Kelvyn * Ron * CJ * Annaliese * Claire * Lena * Leah * Nate * Gavin * Siggi * Eli *
Katie * Jane * Madeleine * Bryan * Nathan * Elsie * Val * Dan * Alisa * Mike * Rob * Catherine *
Betsy * John * Dynnelle * Lori * Matt * Georgia * Ross * Gary * Anya * Aya * Ross * Renée *
Maryellen * Camille * Olive * Kim * Poli * Analiese * Ry * Amelia * Monica * John * Joe * Rachel *
Inanna * Marybeth * Ann * Fiona * Rev. Chris * Rev. Becky * All those who participated in The
Finding The In(n) program * All those who made coffee or brought food * all who wandered in
here today and realized they were part of this amazing story * and Jesus too.

GRATITUDE

Christmas Music and Christmas Flowers have been Given by the following people

More Gratitude

We are deeply grateful to those who have pledged to support St. Paul's financially in 2023!

Becky Binns and Greg Gettel	Rick Subber
Emily and Sean Fagan	David and Cherie Binns
Betsy and Andrew Komjathy	Barbara and Dana Crockford
Mari and Joel Barrera	Karen Oakley
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Judi Kuhn	Linda Burgoon
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Jenna and John Stacy	Judy Ravindra
Kathleen and Michael Walz	Andrea Bryant
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Carmen Goodridge	Chuck & Judy Allen-Shaw
Liz Angell	Priscilla & Stewart Wood
Emily & John Bagwill	Kim Parr & Kate Eisenberg
Grace Kelemanik and Lorraine Horgan	Linda and Peter Tardif
Lyman and Ann Phillips Lynch	Brian Mohammed and David Fisher
Suzanne Richardson	David and Cindy Yancey
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Jennifer & Chris D'Antonio	Maryellen Ward
Renée Graham	Ian McReynolds
Walter Lee	Jacques and Alexy Boudreau
Bryan and Lori York	John and Michael Castellino

A beautiful Christmas to each of you and to all those who you love.

A peaceful Christmas to those in fear, in danger, in poverty or war zone.

A healing Christmas to those in pain.

A transformative Christmas to the world.

A Holy Christmas to you, from us.

With Love,

St. Paul's

See you Soon!

December 24th, 2022 | Christmas Eve Eucharist 9PM

December 25th, 2022 | Christmas Morning Eucharist 10AM

January 1st, 2023 | New Year's Day Eucharist 10AM

January 6th, 2023 | Epiphany Party 6PM

Worship Sundays at 8AM and 10AM

And more! Just check stpaulsnatick.org.

You are always welcome here.