

St. Paul's Episcopal Church



December Issue

December 9, 2023

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

In all the years that I have been privileged to write articles for church newsletters, I have never been asked to write one for December and Christmastide, known as The Twelve Days of Christmas. That honor has always been given to the priest in charge or rector in the Episcopal Church. This Christmastide is very different for us, the people of Saint Paul's. Due to the retirement of our beloved priest Father Nick Lorenzetti, we find ourselves in the difficult process of calling a new priest to be our spiritual leader. Although we don't know when that call will be answered, our Lord has not left us alone: we have each other to love and support us as we journey together.

In reading the December articles in the years preceding this year, no matter the state of the church or the world, our priests have always found a way to write of joy and hope. As I read the daily news, I struggle to find almost anything that might bring the world the hope of peace in our time, and yet the Christ Child shall be born. This Christ Child, this Son of the Living God, the Anointed of the Father, the promise of salvation of all who believe, will be born.

In the midst of my despair, how may I think of love and joy? What can I write that will encourage my sisters and brothers as well as myself to have faith that Emmanuel will come? In that instant of thought and prayer, the Lord had mercy on me, and the music and lyrics of the songs of Advent and Christmas began to fill my brain. These are songs of the Christian virtues of love, joy, hope and peace.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight

“I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”
Joy to the world the Lord is come
Let Earth receive her King
And in despair I bowed my head
“There is no peace on Earth” I said
For hate is strong and marks the song
Of peace on Earth, good will to man

Then sealed the bells more loud and deep
God is not dead nor doth He sleep
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail
With peace on Earth, good will to man

“Bring a Torch Jeanette, Isabella”
Bring a torch to the stable call
Christ is born, tell the folks in the village
Jesus is born, and Mary’s calling
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is the Mother
Ah! Ah! Beautiful is her Son

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”
O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, come ye to Bethlehem
O come and behold Him, born the King of Angels
O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him
O come let us adore Him
Christ the Lord

As beautiful as these carols are, they are preceded by an equally beautiful hymn of Advent, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” which expresses not only our hope for a joyful, thankful life in Christ, but also acknowledges the never-ending pain and darkness of the world we live in without Him. This hymn of Advent tells us that we are “in this world, but not of this world.” We are the “Beloved of the Lord.”

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel;
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Adonai, Lord of Might
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law,
In cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

I pray that we may all feel and know that we are truly the Beloved of the Lord and that we may all feel joy and thanksgiving in the birth of the greatest gift of our living, loving, merciful Lord, His Son Jesus.

With Love and Prayers, Your Servant in Christ,
Deacon George

December Ministry Schedule

	Dec 3	Dec 10	Dec 17	Dec 24 Morning Prayer	Dec 24 5pm family	Dec 31
Clergy Homily	Rev. Dondi	Rev. Lyn	Rev. Kathie	Dcn. Greg	Rev. Lyn	Rev. Kathie
Acolytes	Annamary Jim P	Judy T Nancy S	Judy T Nancy S		Judy T Nancy S	Judy T Nancy S
Lectors	Ann M Christine J	Barbara V Steph HW	Nancy S Ann M	Steph G Judy T	Joyce B Sarah H	Steph G Christine J
Intercessor	Judy T	Linda L	Caroline L		Nancy S	Sarah H
Greeters	William S Phil M	Ishmael H Claudine R	Christine J Phil M	William S Sarah H	Claudine R Carolyn L	Phil M Christine J
Ushers			David L			David L
Vestry Rep	Judy T	Linda L	Carolyn L	Roberta B	Nancy S	Sarah H



Socks!

Thank you for generously donating socks every Advent season in recent years. For this year any donations of socks will be part of the ongoing collection for the Shower Shuttle. For information about this ministry, contact Judy Thorkelson, 209-531-5513.

Poinsettias for Christmas

Our sanctuary will be decorated with all the things that show how special the Christmas season is for us at St. Paul's. If you want to donate towards the poinsettias that will be in the sanctuary, please include that information on a check or envelope. If you are making your donation in honor or memory of a loved one, please include that information as well. Thanks so much.





Salvation Army Shelter Dinner

The Salvation Army Dinner Team cooked and served dinner at the Shelter in downtown Modesto Sunday, November 19th. The 130 guests and staff enjoyed Hot Chicken Salad (a chicken and rice casserole), mixed vegies, rolls, Apple Dump Cake, and milk. We were told that they always love to have us come because we bring the food ready to be served, it is always delicious, and we clean up after ourselves. We have an amazing team! And we are always happy to have help as we provide blessings to folks that need to understand our love and commitment to them.

Please contact Linda Lowe, 209-496-3937 or lwlowe@outlook.com for more information.

Prayer support, cooking, serving and donation assistance are always greatly appreciated.

Don't miss out!

In his poem “The Inn That Missed Its Chance,” Amos R. Wells writes from the perspective of the “fairly crazed” innkeeper who recalls Bethlehem becoming “a hive at swarming-time.” Of the couple who requested shelter on what became Christmas Eve, the proprietor asks, “Could I know that they were so important?”

There was a sign, they say, a heavenly light
resplendent; but I had no time for stars.
And there were songs of angels in the air
out on the hills; but how was I to hear
amid the thousand clamors of an inn?



If the innkeeper had only known Jesus’ true identity, he says, he would have turned the place upside down, sending other guests out to the stables instead. When Jesus returns — “as he will surely come” — the anonymous innkeeper wants everyone to know: “Tell my Lord that all my inn is his, to make amends.”

Vestry Member Announcement

In a few short months we will convene the Annual Meeting to do a variety of important things in the life of the parish. One of the parts of the Meeting is to elect new Vestry Members. There will be several openings for 3-year terms, beginning in January 2024.

To be elected to the Vestry a member must:

- ◆ Be a baptized and confirmed or received member of the church
- ◆ Pledge financially to support St. Paul's, with a commitment to fulfill that pledge
- ◆ Agree to complete the Praesidium Academy on-line program
- ◆ Participate in the life of the church with regular attendance and assist with ministries

Contact Linda Lowe, 209-496-3937 or lwlowe@outlook.com for more details and to receive an application.

Financial Report for October 2023

	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23
Operating										
Income:	18,963.00	12,433.93	15,679.90	16,643.04	18,284.34	13,785.17	16,571.41	14,895.98	11,817.04	16,798.57
Facility Use:	7,050.00	7,950.00	10,900.00	6,000.00	6,300.00	6,000.00	7,380.00	8,061.10	8,500.00	6,300.00
Fundraisers:	0.00	257.66	0.00	0.00	72.44	573.80	193.00	42.00	97.00	40.00
Outreach:	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,034.00
Restricted										
Income:	1,491.00	825.00	864.00	810.00	932.24	780.00	705.01	642.00	50,998.43	891.25
Total										
Income:	27,504.00	21,466.59	27,443.90	23,453.04	25,589.02	21,138.97	24,849.41	23,641.08	71,506.41	25,063.82
Expenses:	24,879.51	22,614.41	34,779.36	26,551.43	18,484.40	19,787.42	24,520.33	22,214.60	18,171.69	30,569.50
Net										
Income/loss:	2,624.49	-1,147.82	-7,335.46	-3,098.39	7,104.62	1,351.55	329.08	1,426.48	53,334.72	-5,505.68



Winter Family Retreat

Join us January 12 - 14, 2024 for a weekend of games, snow play, relaxation, and fun!

Prices range from \$150 single occupancy to \$460 for a family of 5.

Lodging/Meals/Supplies included

Please visit our website at www.ECCOyosemite.org or call 559-683-8162 to register.

Registration Deadline: 1/3/24



The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin

News about Diocesan events and weekly spiritual encouragement are available at the Diocese of San Joaquin website, <https://www.diosanjoaquin.org>. The “Friday Reflection” is available through the “News and Resources” link. To receive the Friday Reflection directly to your in-box, sign up via the link at the top of the Home page.

ADVENT CALENDAR



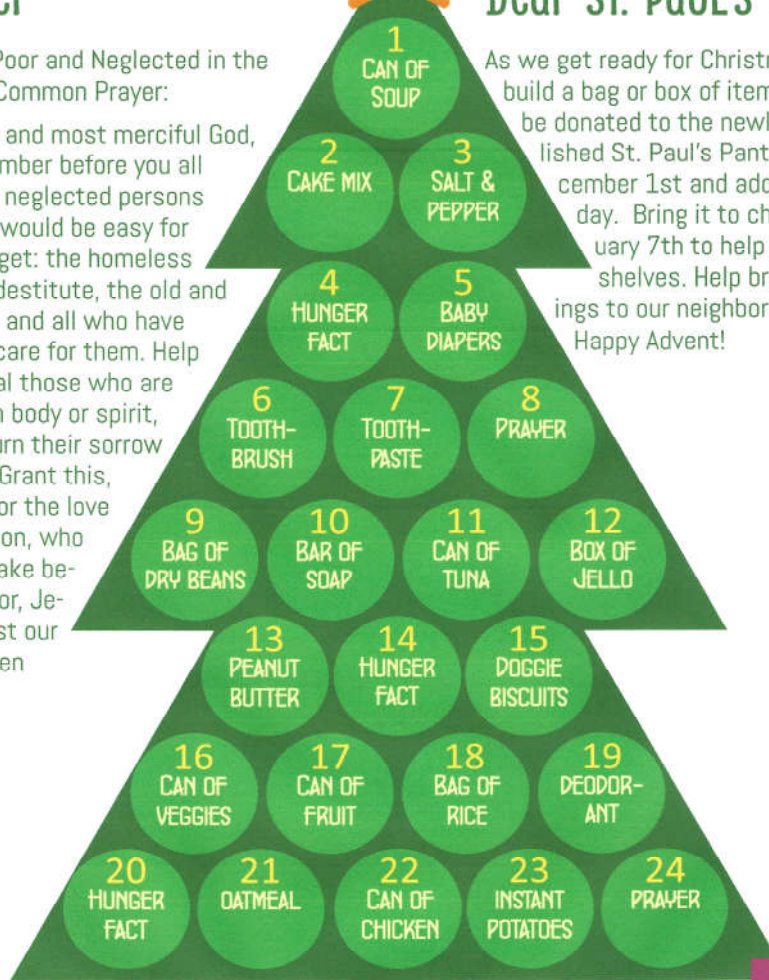
Prayer

For the Poor and Neglected in the Book of Common Prayer:

Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Dear ST. PAUL'S FAMILY

As we get ready for Christmas, let's build a bag or box of items that will be donated to the newly established St. Paul's Pantry. Start December 1st and add items each day. Bring it to church by January 7th to help stock the shelves. Help bring blessings to our neighbors. Happy Advent!



DAY 4

Food Insecurity:
Lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle.

HUNGER FACTS

DAY 14

In Stanislaus County, approximately 64,300 persons were "food insecure" in 2022.

DAY 28

Nationwide, 44 million persons, including 20% of children, are "food insecure".



• FOR YOUR INFORMATION •

- ☪ Sunday School has started and is held in the room at the back of the church during the Homily.
- ☪ If you are interested in joining the Altar Guild please contact Elaine Paradis or Toni Clark.
- ☪ Choir is still on a break.
- ☪ Tai Chi meets in the Parish Hall every Tues. and Thurs. from 9-10.
- ☪ If you are interested in playing hand bells, contact Judy Teter.
- ☪ Food Distribution continues in the Parish Hall the 1st Wednesday of every month from 10 to 11 (NOTE THE NEW TIME). If you are interested in helping, please contact Judy Teter. If you have grocery bags to donate, please bring on Sunday.
- ☪ The first Sunday of the month there is a donation box on the altar rail for Interfaith Ministries (Now called The Stanislaus Food Initiative).
- ☪ There will be a clothing donation box for MoPride in the narthex. We will be collecting clothing year around. They are also in need of feminine hygiene products.
- ☪ If you are interested in helping with Salvation Army dinners, please contact Linda Lowe.
- ☪ If you are interested in joining Knit One, Pray Two, please contact Gayle Ivy. They will be meeting the 3rd Monday of the month at 1 pm in the youth room of the Parish Hall. This years charity is the Seaman's Institute. They are making scarfs, hats, socks etc.
- ☪ There are still free Covid 19 tests available in the Narthex or in the church office.
- ☪ If you are interested in joining a Wednesday Morning Prayer service or our Book Club contact Judy Thorkelson jthork2404@aol.com
- ☪ There will be a basket in the narthex for the Shower Shuttle, they always need underwear and socks! We will also be putting together hygiene kits and need two-blade razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, travel Kleenex, combs and q-tips. Clothes soap and dryer sheets are also a big need.



Prayer and Praise

as of 12-4-2023

☞ Please pray for healing and comfort for the following people:

Theresa Grieshaber

Craig Persons

Pam & Mike Cox

Suzy Cano

Elaine Paradis

Carol Collier

Susan Sell

Linda's Aunt Mudge

Deacon George

Robin Magenot

Sarah Manfredoni

Ann Mootz's sister-in-law

Bonnie Palmer

Michael Thorington

Barbara Weeden

Leslie Littlefield

Sheri, the Bearden's daughter

Darla Davisson

Sharon Andrew's daughter-in-law

☞ Susan Sell's son Bryce for strength.

☞ Please pray for those in war torn areas everywhere; Ukraine, Holy Land, Gaza, Palestine and Afghanistan.

☞ Please pray for the country of Ukraine and all the residents for peace and healing.

☞ Please pray for the people of Hawaii, especially the victims of the wildfires on Maui.

☞ Pray for the leaders of all nations for wisdom.

Please see Jeni's weekly email for the entire list.



If you have any prayers, praises or updates you would like added, please contact Jeni using the church phone number 209-522-3267.

Shower Shuttle



Thank you to all who have and hopefully will, bring donations for the Shower Shuttle. What is the Shower Shuttle/Laundry Shuttle? The Shower and Laundry Shuttles are operated by The Church in the Park and are retrofitted very large vans that allow people to shower and to wash their clothing. The Shower Shuttle is available on Tuesday mornings at the Modesto Gospel Mission and the Laundry one on Wednesday mornings. Our donations help to serve the people

who use their facilities - the underserved and the unsheltered. They arrive by foot, bike, pushing carts, pulling wagons, and in cars they are sleeping in. The Church in the Park staff provide some toiletries for them as well as new sox and underwear when they are available. They serve approximately 35 to 45 people each Tuesday and Wednesday. Our donations help with that mission - to provide people the opportunity to brush their teeth, shave, and put on a fresh pair of sox after showering etc.

There is a laundry basket on the table by the Church's front door for donations. Items such as safety razors, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sox, underwear for men and women are always appreciated.

In addition, two St. Paul's parishioners are preparing 100 gift packs to be given out during the holidays to the unsheltered. If you would like to join in the blessing of giving out a gift pack to someone living on the street, please let me know and I would be happy to provide you with a gift pack.

Thank you again for your continued generous support for the least among us. Blessings, Judy Thorkelson, jthork2404@aol.com/209-531-5513



What's New at St. Paul's

- ◆ Cables across the front parking lot have been installed, preventing unwanted car issues overnight and after church activities
- ◆ Look for the Advent Calendar in this issue to help stock St. Paul's Pantry to offer special blessings to our community
- ◆ The Cookie Walk will be Saturday, December 9 and Sunday, December 10
- ◆ The Annual Meeting will feature a video about ways that we can help promote educational opportunities in South Africa
- ◆ Pledges for the support of St. Paul's continue to be received
- ◆ Elections for the Vestry will happen in January

Please continue to pray for the Vestry/Search Committee.

Ponderings at the end of a day — or year



Dutch Catholic priest and theologian Henri Nouwen found it useful to reflect on several questions at the end of the day: “Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone’s face? Did I say words of healing?” Pondering such questions may prove valuable at the end of a year as well: “How did I contribute to peace in the world this past year? Did I bring smiles to others’ faces? Did I offer words of healing?” Nouwen continued, and we can too: “Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?”

Many of us set New Year’s resolutions for self-improvement, asking, “What are my goals? How can I better myself, my weight, my work-life balance, my habits?” But Nouwen said of his self-inquiry: “These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and [in] the life to come.” His resolution was to share God’s love with others. With God’s help, it can be ours as well, for each new day and each new year.

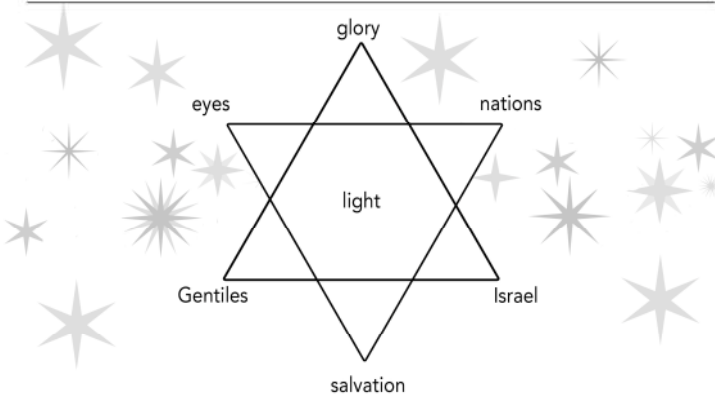
Kid's Page



SIMEON'S SIGHT

When Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to the temple, they heard a special prophecy from Simeon.

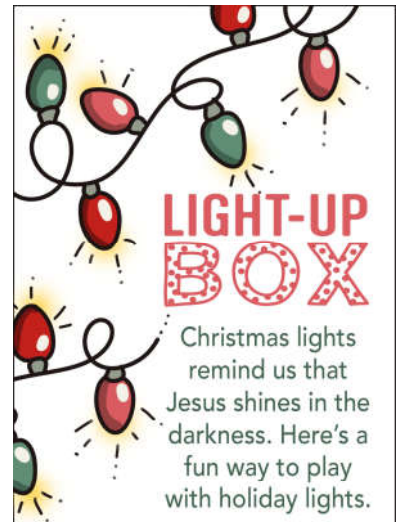
Directions: Using the star key, write the words in the correct spaces to complete Luke 2:30-32, NIV.



"For my _____ have seen your _____, which you have prepared
 in the sight of all _____: a _____ for revelation to the
 _____, and the _____ of your people _____."

Luke 2:30-32, NIV

Answers: eyes, salvation, nations, glory, Israel, Gentiles, light, Simeon



What you need:

- A strand of Christmas lights
- A large clear plastic container and lid
- Green tissue paper
- Colorful beads



What you do:

1. Plug in the lights and place them in the container.
 2. Put on the lid. (If the lid isn't transparent, flip the box over.)
 3. Play with your light box, using these ideas as starters:
 - Cut tissue paper into triangles and arrange them in a tree shape. Decorate the tree with colorful beads.
 - Use the light box for tracing. Place a picture on it, with a clean sheet of paper on top. Then trace the drawing.
 - Use magnet tiles to build designs atop the light box.
- Try building a 3-D Christmas tree!





Michael B. Curry, our Presiding Bishop
David Rice, our Bishop & **Anna Carmichael**, our Canon

Armed Forces



Tom Allen, Wyoming Air National Guard
Melissa Allen, U. S. Air Force
Brandon Alonzo, U. S. Air Force
Christopher Bradley, U. S. Navy
T. J. Browning, U. S. Navy
Jay Colón, U. S. Air Force
Brandon Cox, Texas Air National Guard

Jenavieve Johnston, U. S. Air Force
Jorgito Fuentes, U. S. Navy
Johnny Olmos, U. S. Coast Guard
Cole Medeiros, U. S. Navy
Nate Wallace, U. S. Air Force R
Carson Repan, U. S. Air Force

If you have any updates or new names for the Armed Forces list, please let Cherie Sheaffer know.

Please pray for all of our sisters and brothers in Christ.
God of wisdom and love, help me and all others who are struggling with difficult circumstances find direction and strength to face our challenges. Give us the assurance that underneath us are your everlasting arms, which will sustain us through everything we face day and night. In Jesus' name. Amen.

December Birthdays

Linda Lowe - 6
Alanna Verges - 8
Carlos Marrujo - 10
Lora Burnett - 19
Eric Sheaffer - 19

Ivanna Duran Gallardo - 20
Annamary Peck - 20
Mike Statzer - 24
Niniv Tamimi



December

December Anniversaries

Chad & Beatrice Peters - 2
David & Linda Lowe - 19

If your birthday or anniversary is in December and you aren't listed here, please let Cherie Sheaffer know. We don't want to leave anyone out.



December 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Church office hours
8:30-1:30 Mon-Thurs

- Dec 9-10 Cookie Walk
- Dec 10 Second Sunday of Advent
- Dec 17 Third Sunday of Advent
- Dec 21 First day of Winter
- Dec 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve service
- Dec 25 Christmas Day
- Dec 31 New Year's Eve

Gentle Reminder

Jeni Statzer, our Parish Administrator, keeps track of the calendar for all church events. If anyone wants to use any part of the facility, please contact Jeni at the church office, 209-522-3267. Jeni's hours are 8:30-1:30, Monday-Thursday, and she is always happy to talk with you all.

This applies to events on weekdays as well as weekends. It is always wonderful to have our facility used..... coordination is essential. Thanks for everyone's cooperation.



St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Modesto, CA

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Pauls-Episcopal-Church-of-Modesto-CA-106952012668211/>

Then click on videos.



[www.https://www.saintpaulsmodesto.org/](https://www.saintpaulsmodesto.org/)





The Epistle

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Dec 9, 2023, Volume 14, Number 12 December

Church Office Phone: 209-522-3267

Office Hours: 8:30-1:30 Mon - Thurs

E-mail Addresses

Parish Admin. & Facilities Coordinator

Jeni Statzer, jstatzer@saintpaulsmodesto.org

Music Director, Organist & Choir

Chuck Sheaffer, cbshea@pacbell.net

Bell Choir Director

Judy Teter, jltpt@sbcglobal.net

St. Paul's Epistle & Bulletins

Cherie Sheaffer, cbshea@pacbell.net

St. Paul's Web Page & Social Media

Greg Maszta, gregmasz@gmail.com

St. Paul's Event Coordinator

Tracy Pugh, vinofileincal@gmail.com

Stewardship Campaign

Sarah Hartmann

Finance Committee

Judy Teter, jltpt@sbcglobal.net

Safeguarding God's Children/People

Jeni Statzer and Stephanie Gilmer

Vestry Members

Senior Warden - Linda Lowe, 209-496-3937

lwlowe@outlook.com

Jr. Warden - Carolyn List

Treasurer - Stephanie Gilmer (non vestry)

Roberta Bearden

Sarah Hartmann

Chuck Sheaffer

Nancy Silva

Judy Teter

Sunday Services

Holy Eucharist at 10 am in the church and live streamed on Facebook. You can find a link to the live stream on our webpage

Sunday School during the Homily

www.saintpaulsmodesto.org



www.saintpaulsmodesto.org

Visit and like us on Facebook

St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Modesto, CA

