

Welcome to St. Paul's Episcopal Church

1528 Oakdale Road, Modesto, CA 95355 - (209) 522-3267

www.saintpaulsmodesto.org

The Second Sunday After Christmas
January 4, 2026



Mission Statement

We are a worshipping, inquiring and inclusive community united in Jesus' name to change the world.

Welcoming Statement

We invite everyone to join in the communal life of the body of Christ, through participation and leadership in this congregation, and by fully sharing in the life and sacraments of this church. We affirm that each person is a child of God, and that those of every race, ethnicity, creed, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation and gender identity are called to be one with us.

Prelude

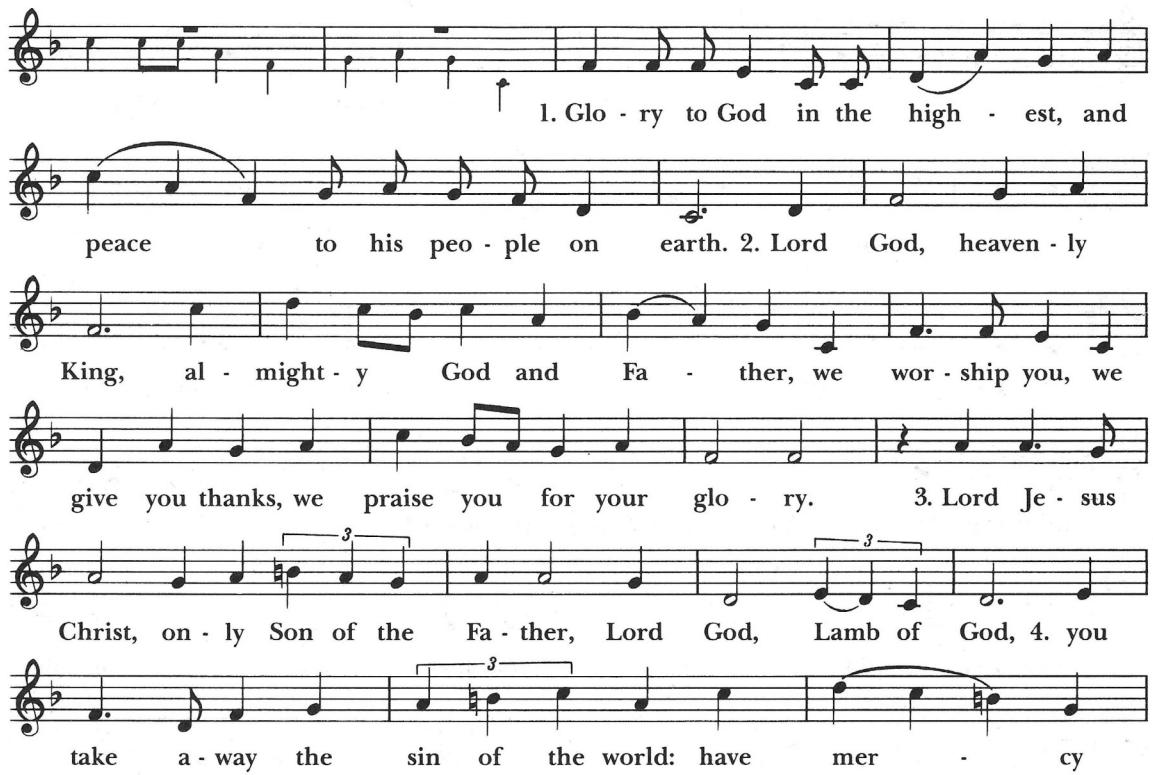
Chuck Sheaffer

Opening Hymn #497 “How bright appears the Morning Star”

Blessed be God: Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit

Glory to God for ever and ever.

Gloria



1. Glo - ry to God in the high - est, and
peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly
King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we
give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus
Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you
take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - - cy

on us; 5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -
 ceive our prayer. 6. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One,
 you a - lone are the Lord, 7. you a - lone are the Most
 High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the
 glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

Setting: Robert Powell (b. 1932)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you

Let us pray.

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lessons

The first lesson is from Jeremiah 31:7-14

Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
"Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel."

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame, those with child and
those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,

and the young men and the old shall be merry.
 I will turn their mourning into joy,
 I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
 I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
 and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
 says the LORD.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 84:1-8

How dear to me is your dwelling, O
 LORD of hosts!

- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! *
 My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD;
 my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house
 and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *
 by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts,
 my King and my God.
- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *
 they will always be praising you.

4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *
whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.

5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place
of springs, *
for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

6 They will climb from height to height, *
and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.

7 LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; *
hearken, O God of Jacob.

8 Behold our defender, O God; *
and look upon the face of your Anointed.

The second reading is from Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn #128 “We three kings of Orient are”

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Glory to you, Lord Christ.

After the wise men had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Sermon: Fr. Brian Dawson

Stillness - the prayer bowl rings to take us in and out of a time of stillness and reflection.

The Prayers of the People

Reconciliation

The Deacon calls us to confession.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

The Priest proclaims God's forgiveness.

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

**Lord make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is discord, union;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 where there is sadness, joy.**

**Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood as to understand;
 to be loved as to love.**

**For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**

Blessings and Celebrations

Birthday Prayer

God of joy and celebration, we thank you for the precious gift of life and for the unique journey that each day brings. As this(ese) your servant(s) celebrate(s) another year of life, we pray for your abundant blessings to be upon them. May your grace continue to guide and shape their paths, filling their days with love, purpose, and joy. Amen

Anniversary Prayer

Blessed are you, O God, for in the good and the bad times of our life you have stood lovingly by our sides.
Bless those whose anniversaries we acknowledge this day.
May they remain faithful and loving so that we may be true witnesses to the covenant you have made with us all. Amen.

Prayer for Those We Love

Gracious God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that you want for us all better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Offertory Hymn #93 “Angels from the realms of glory”

Doxology

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

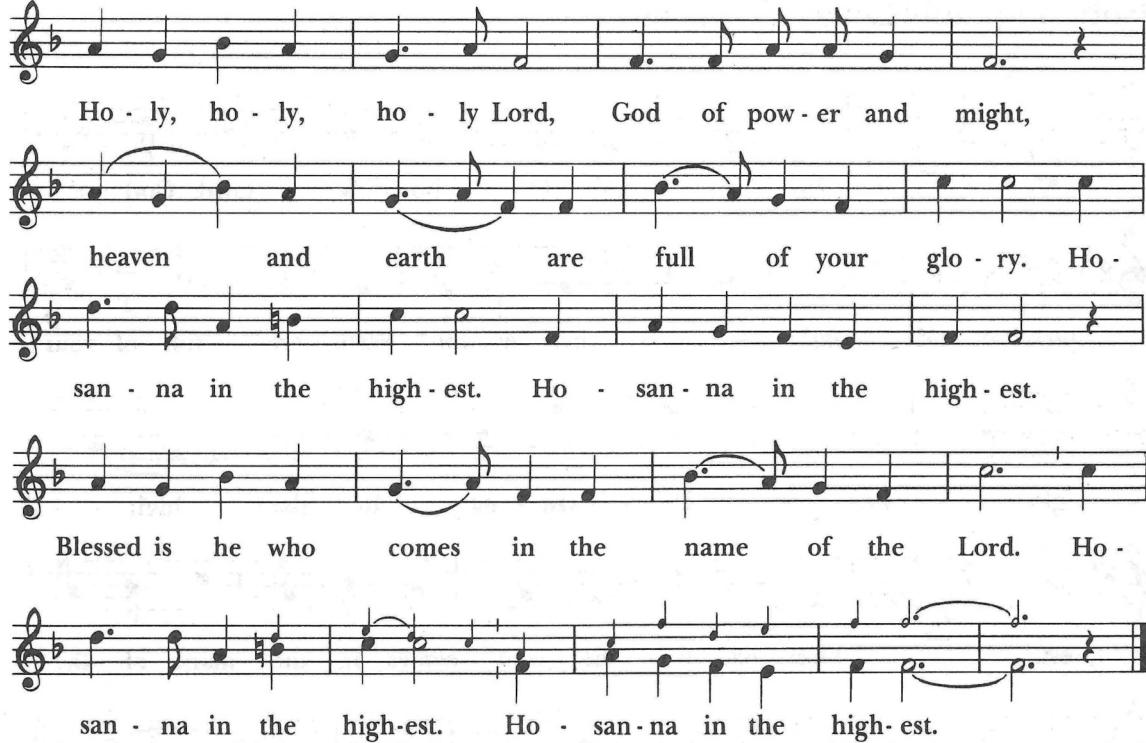
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God, our Source and Ending, Alpha and Omega, we give thanks to you! You have called all creation into being, setting the earth on its foundations.

You have spread out the heavens like a tent, and set a boundary to the seas,
you have filled the world with your creatures and called all things good.

The heavenly beings are your messengers night and day,
and with them we sing and give glory to you:

Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Ho - san - na in the high- est.

Setting: From *A Community Mass*; Richard Proulx (b. 1937)

In these latter days, God leaned toward the earth
and spoke to us by a Son, Jesus the Beloved.
Born of our sister Mary and the Holy Spirit,

guarded by our brother Joseph with fatherly care,
Jesus came among us as a baby, humbly born,
cradled beside the beasts and warmed by their breath,
human as we are, in need of human love.
Yet kings bowed down before him, bringing gifts
and emperors were troubled by his reign –
this Child in whom all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

This Word of God made flesh and full of grace
was sent to deliver us from our sin,
from the power of evil and the fear of death.
As a servant, Jesus emptied himself of might upon the cross,
and as the risen Anointed One is enthroned at God's right hand
to bring mercy and justice to all the earth at the end of days.

And so, rejoicing in all God has done for us,
we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again!

Holy God, as you visited us in the birth of Jesus,
visit us now by the power of your Spirit
in these creatures of bread and wine,
making them for us the Body and Blood of Christ,
the banquet of heaven here on earth,
as we remember how Jesus took bread and blessed and broke it
and gave it to his friends, saying, "Take, eat, This is my body, given
for you.
Do this to remember me."

And after supper, took a cup of wine
and blessed and gave it to them, saying:
“Drink this, all of you.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this to remember me.”

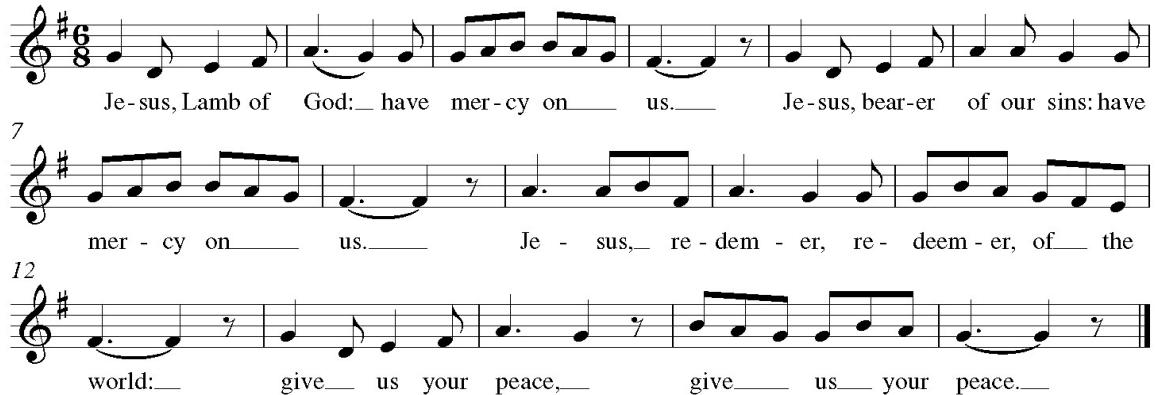
Blessed God, shed your grace brighter than starlight on us
that we may bear your good tidings to all
and renew the weary world in your name:
the name of Emmanuel – God-With-Us,
to whom we give honor and glory in joy, now and for ever.

Amen.

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

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, Thy king-dom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our dai- ly bread. For-give us our tres-pas es, As we for-give those who tres pass a-against us, as we for-give. And lead us not in-to temp - ta- ion, but de - li - ver us from e - vil. Thine is the king- dom and the pow - er and the glo - ry for ev - er. A - men.

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;
Therefore let us keep the feast, Alleluia.



Je-sus, Lamb of God: have mer-cy on us. Je-sus, bear-er of our sins: have
mer-cy on us. Je - sus, re - dem - er, re - deem - er, of the
world: give us your peace, give us your peace.

The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

All baptized persons are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

Gluten free wafers are available. If you want just a blessing, please come to the altar rail and cross your arms over your body.

Communion Hymn #82 “Of the Father’s love begotten”

Extending Our Eucharistic Gathering

A representative of the parish’s Eucharistic Visitors comes forward to receive the bread and wine reserved for those who are sick or otherwise unable to join us in person.

In the name of us all at St Paul’s Episcopal Church, we send our Eucharistic Visitors forth bearing these holy gifts that those to whom they go may share with us in this Holy Communion of Christ’s body and blood. May they with whom these gifts are shared remain bound to us, and we to them.

We who are many are one body, for we all share one bread, one cup.

Post Communion Prayer

Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the Body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal kingdom.

And now, Father, send us out to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

Closing Hymn #99 “Go tell it on the mountain”

Go now to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

We go in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

Postlude

Chuck Sheaffer

All music used with permission, CCLI #1374105

Notice of Parish Meeting

As required in the diocesan canons I hereby give notice of the **Annual Meeting of the Parish of St Paul's Episcopal Church, Modesto**, to take place following the 10.00am service on **Sunday January 25th 2026**. This meeting is called to receive reports and a parish budget, discuss matters of parish business as required and to elect members of the Parish Vestry and Delegates and Alternates to Diocesan Convention. **Nomination forms** can be obtained from the Parish Office and should be returned no later than 5.00pm, Wednesday January 14th.

The Rev'd Brian Dawson, Rector

COMING UP AT ST PAUL'S

Tuesday January 6th – 10.00am Epiphany Day Service

A brief (30 min) Eucharist for the Feast of the Epiphany.
Held in the Guadalupe Memorial Chapel in the hall complex.

Wednesday January 7th – 5.00pm Interfaith Council Dinner & Meeting

In 2026 the Stanislaus Interfaith Council is planning to meet at different worship and faith centres each month, beginning with St Paul's. The first part of the event will include a light meal and opportunity for local faith members to share about their worship centre and events. If you can assist with soup please see Fr Brian.

Saturday January 17th – 9.00am-3.00pm Winter Retreat Day – Merton Meets Baxter

A one-day retreat to be held at St Paul's and led by Fr Brian. Focused on the poetry of Thomas Merton and James K. Baxter, this retreat will look at the themes of God and Faith through the works of these two very different but intersecting men. The day is free but all are invited to register with Fr Brian and bring something to share for lunch.

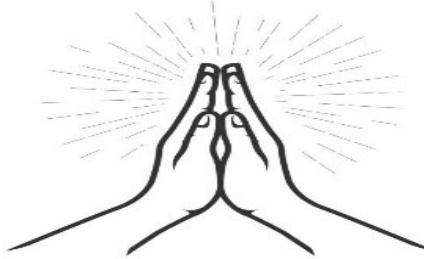
Sunday January 25th – 11.30am Parish Annual Meeting

Our annual receiving of reports and election of new vestry members and representatives.

The meeting will include updates on both the proposed sale of the vacant church land and ongoing maintenance requirements of the campus.

Saturday January 31st – Vestry Retreat

A day long retreat and planning day for Vestry members confirmed at the Annual Meeting.



Prayer and Praise

Remember those who have asked for our prayers

Paige, Bonnie, Susan, Ishmael, Mary, Bob, Howard, Cherie, Annamarie, Ginny, Keith, Bill, Mike, Jose, Rex S., Lora, Hennie, Kevin, Dorothy, Murray, Gina, James, Brandi, Darlene, Theresa, Tony, Ellen, Sandy, Claudine, Tony, Mindy, Ivy, Diane, Christine, Karen, Clare, Jim, Matt, Deborah, Arnold, Lindsay, Wendy, Maureen, Yvonne, Lonnie

Those who have passed away:

Priscilla Abercrombie

Those in the Military:

CPT Sam Birch, USA

CPT Fred Campbell, USAF

CPT Jenavieve Campbell, USAF

PO1st Class Johnny Olmos, US Coast Guard

SGT Carson Repan, USAF

LTC Nathaniel P. Wallace, USAFR

Leaders and Ministries of St. Paul's:

The Clergy, Vestry & Wardens, Eucharistic Visitors



The poinsettias at the altar today
are given to
The Glory of God by
Lynelle Hains and Bob & Clare Jensen in Memory of
John Hains
Loved Ones

COMING EVENTS (Continued)

Friday February 13th (evening) – Saturday February 14th – Building Church Leaders

This Diocesan Vestry Training Event is held at ECCO in Oakhurst and is a requirement for Wardens and Treasurers and strongly encouraged for new vestry members (or those who haven't attended before).

Tuesday February 17th – Shrove Tuesday

Details on our annual pancake event coming soon.

Wednesday February 18th – Ash Wednesday

There will be services in both the morning and early evening as well as 'Ashes to Go' at the entrance to the church between noon and 1.00pm.

Lenten Studies 2026

Our main Lenten Studies series will focus on liturgy and worship. Details coming soon.

2026 Episcopal Liturgical Calendars

Episcopal Liturgical Calendars are available in the Narthex.

January 2026 Ministry Schedule

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Pastoral Team

Fr. Brian Dawson.....209-897-1612.....FrBrianDawson@gmail.com
Deacon Greg Masztal.....deacongreg66@outlook.com
Stephanie Gilmer, Pastoral Care Coordinator.....mzgilmer@gmail.com

Parish Administrator

Linda Lowe: 209-522-3267stpaulsmodestoca@gmail.com

Other Important Contacts

Music Director, Chuck Sheaffercbshea@pacbell.net
Hand Bells, Judy Teterjlpt@sbcglobal.net
Prayer Chainstpaulsmodestoca@gmail.com
St. Paul's Epistle, Barbara Vassellstpaulsmodestoca@gmail.com
Social Media, Deacon Greg Masztaldeacongreg66@outlook.com
Finance Committee, Carolyn Listcarolynlist@sbcglobal.net
Stewardship Campaign, Courtney Smith.....courtneyvsmith@gmail.com

Vestry

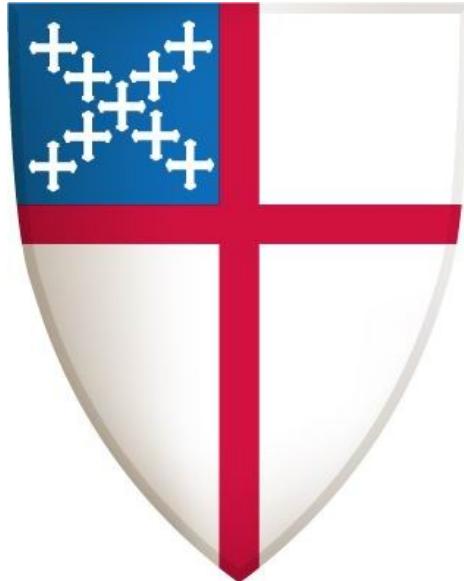
Senior Warden: Joyce Bell -(215) 275-6502bellj1@charter.net

Junior Warden: Peter Krewko (707) 853-3604pmkjfc@att.net

Joyce Bell, Jose Cruz, Sarah Hartmann, Peter Krewko, Luis Martinez, Ann Mootz, Chuck Sheaffer, Nancy Silva, and Courtney Smith.

Treasurer: Greg Burnett

Vestry Clerk: Carolyn List



Livestreamed Sundays @ 10am

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

Then click on videos.

Please note that today's service is being livestreamed on Facebook. If you prefer not to appear on camera, we kindly ask that you sit on the side of the church behind the camera.



Visit St. Paul's website to give online

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

