

# The Nativity of Our Lord

## Christmas Eve Vespers

December 24, 2020

7:00 p.m.



*Mark Missman-Arian is an American realist painter who studied at the Frudakis Academy in Philadelphia, Barnstone Studios in Allentown, PA, and in Florence, Italy.*

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**  
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# St. Paul's Lutheran Church

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[www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)

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**WELCOME** Thank you for being with us.

We are a Christian church within the Lutheran tradition (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) and we welcome people of all Christian traditions as well as people of other faiths and people of little or no faith. Christian worship has been offered to God in this congregation for 184 years. By worshipping with us this evening, you become part of that living tradition.

**Restrooms** are available in the Good Shepherd Room (Springettsbury lobby) and the narthex. Baby changing stations are provided in these restrooms.

**Thank you for your faithfulness** in making offerings in person, through the mail or by using online options from your financial institution or through the "Donate" now from the church website [stpaulsyork.org](http://stpaulsyork.org). Your gifts are keeping us current with the commitments associated with St. Paul's and our ministry partners.

## Guidelines for Worship during the time of COVID-19

### Entering and Leaving the Church:

*Face masks are required.*

*Kindly sign in at the door through which you entered. This will help if we need to be in contact.*

*Please take your service bulletin with you and dispose of it properly.*

### Offerings:

*Monetary offerings may be placed in the basins provided at the entrances to the nave prior to the service or immediately following the service. You may also donate via our website at [www.stpaulsyork.org](http://www.stpaulsyork.org)*

### While in the Nave:

*Worshippers should sit in designated pews only. You may sit together as a family. We ask that you practice social distancing from one family to the next within the pew.*

Our COVID-19 task force is assisting us as we remain open at St. Paul's. Please thank Deacon Ellen Doughty, Dr. Jessica Ericson, Sheridan Palmer, Deacon Harold Sargeant, Dr. Martha Thomas and Tim Yakim for their dedication and service.



*The Altar Flowers are presented to the Glory of God with praise and thanksgiving for all that God provides by Andrew and Ellen Doughty and in memory of Josephine M. Cushner, John Cushner, M.D. & Mary R. Maxwell by JoAnne Cushner Debes & Family*

THE ENTIRE ST. PAUL'S STAFF WISH YOU

THE JOYS AND BLESSINGS OF THIS HOLY SEASON.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM:

VICTOR, TED, PATEE, KELLY, DALE, DEB AND PASTOR STAN.

### STAFF

Pastor ..... Reverend Stanley D. Reep  
Youth Director ..... Kelly Moore-Spencer  
Organist, Choir Director ..... Victor Fields  
Bookkeeper ..... Dale Zeiger  
Secretary. .... Patee Pizzirusso  
Sexton ..... Ted Weikert  
Director of Preschool (854-1996) ..... Deborah Becker  
Sister Congregation ..... Mpuguso Lutheran Church, Tukuyu, Tanzania

# The Nativity of Our Lord

7:00 PM Vespers

*The people's responses are in bold.*

## PRELUDE

*What Child is This (Greensleeves)*  
Leah McComas, flute

Dennis Janzer

*Stand*

## ENTRANCE HYMN

*Once in Royal David's City Stanza 1—Solo Stanza 2—All*

Irby

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Once in royal David's city<br/>stood a lowly cattle shed,<br/>where a mother laid her baby<br/>in a manger for his bed:<br/>Mary was that mother mild,<br/>Jesus Christ, her little child</p> | <p>2 <b>He came down to earth from heaven<br/>who is God and Lord of all,<br/>and his shelter was a stable,<br/>and his cradle was a stall;<br/>with the poor and meek and lowly,<br/>lived on earth our Savior holy.</b></p> |
|--|---|

## DIALOGUE

The light shines in the darkness,  
The Word became flesh and lived among us,  
To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**And the darkness has not overcome it.  
And we have beheld Christ's glory.**

**In the Word was Life, and the life was the light of all people**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have made this night shine with the brightness of the true light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

*Sit*

## PSALMODY

PSALM 96: 1-3, 9-13 *sung by the cantor with congregation refrain*

H. Hopson

### REFRAIN



- <sup>1</sup> Sing to the LORD | a new song;\*  
sing to the LORD, all | the whole earth.
- <sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD and | bless his name;\*  
proclaim the good news of his salvation from | day to day.
- <sup>3</sup> Declare his glory a- | mong the nations\*  
and his wonders a- | mong all peoples. **REFRAIN**
- <sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness;\*  
let the whole earth trem- | ble before him.
- <sup>10</sup> Tell it out among the nations: "The | LORD is king!\*"  
He has made the world so firm that it cannot be moved; he will judge the peo- | ples with equity."
- <sup>11</sup> Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all | that is in it;\*  
let the field be joyful and all that | is therein. **REFRAIN**
- <sup>12</sup> Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the LORD | when he comes,\*  
when he comes to | judge the earth.
- <sup>13</sup> He will judge the | world with righteousness\*  
and the peoples | with his truth. **REFRAIN**

## PSALM PRAYER

Lord Jesus, the incarnate Word, when you consented to dwell with us, the heavens were glad and the earth rejoiced. In hope and love we await your return. Help us to proclaim your glory to those who do not know you, until the whole earth sings a new song to you and the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

PSALM 97:1, 6-12

*sung by the cantor with congregation refrain*

H. Hopson

### REFRAIN



- <sup>1</sup> The LORD is king; let the | earth rejoice;\*  
let the multitude of the | isles be glad.
- <sup>6</sup> The heavens de- | clare his righteousness,\*  
and all the peoples | see his glory.
- <sup>7</sup> Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight | in false gods!\*
- Bow down before him, | all you gods.
- <sup>8</sup> Zion hears and is glad, and the cities of Ju- | dah rejoice,\*  
because of your judg- | ments, O LORD.
- <sup>9</sup> For you are the LORD, most high over | all the earth;\*
- you are exalted far a- | bove all gods.      **REFRAIN**
- <sup>10</sup> The LORD loves those | who hate evil;\*
- he preserves the lives of his saints  
and delivers them from the hand | of the wicked.
- <sup>11</sup> Light has sprung up | for the righteous,\*  
and joyful gladness for those who | are truehearted.
- <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in the | LORD, you righteous,\*  
and give thanks to his | holy name.      **REFRAIN**

## PSALM PRAYER

God our king, you clothe the sky with light and the depths of the ocean with darkness. Among the peoples you work wonders, and rain terror upon your enemies. Do not try your servants by fire, but bring us rejoicing to the shelter of your home, where with your Son and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever.

## OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

- <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness —  
on them light has shined.
- <sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.
- <sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- <sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood  
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
- <sup>6</sup> For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- <sup>7</sup> His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Choral Ensemble

*Nativity Lullaby*

Cesar Franck/ arr. K. Lee Scott

**NEW TESTAMENT READING** Luke 2:1-20

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

*Stand*

**HYMN**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*Stanza 1 & 2—Choir*

*Stanza 3—All*

1      O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the king of angels: *Refrain*

2      Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
in the highest: *Refrain*

3      **Yea, Lord, we greet thee,  
born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father,  
now in flesh appearing: *Refrain***

*Refrain*      **Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him,  
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

*Sit*

**SERMON**

Pastor Reep

**RESPONSE**

**Choral Ensemble**

*Christmas Night*

John Rutter

*Stand*

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.\* On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## LITANY

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For Elizabeth, James, and Edward our bishops, for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthen in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who work to bring peace, justice, health and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the faithful who have gone before us and are at rest, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord.

**To you, O Lord.**

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandment; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever.

**Amen.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**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,  
forever and ever. Amen**

**HYMN***Silent Night, Holy Night! Stanza 1—Solo Stanza 2—All*

Stille Nacht

**1** Silent night, holy night!  
 All is calm, all is bright  
 round yon virgin mother and child.  
 Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
 sleep in heavenly peace,  
 sleep in heavenly peace.

**2** Silent night, holy night!  
**Shepherds quake at the sight;  
 glories stream from heaven afar,  
 heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!  
 Christ, the Savior, is born!  
 Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**PRAYER**

Let us pray. Almighty, God, in the incarnation of your Son you began the work of our deliverance from sin and death. Through the grace given us in your Son, strengthen us in spirit and renew in us the New Birth we have through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**BENEDICAMUS**

Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen**

**HYMN***Hark! The Herald Angels Sing Stanza 1 & 2—Choir Stanza 3—All*

**1** Hark! The herald angels sing,  
 "Glory to the newborn king;  
 peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
 God and sinners reconciled."  
 Joyful, all you nations, rise;  
 join the triumph of the skies;  
 with angelic hosts proclaim,  
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
 Glory to the newborn king!

**2** Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
 Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
 late in time behold him come,  
 offspring of a virgin's womb.  
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
 Hail, incarnate deity!  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
 Jesus, our Emmanuel!  
 Hark! The herald angels sing,  
 Glory to the newborn king!

**3** Hail the heav'n-born  
**Prince of Peace!**  
**Hail the Sun of righteousness!**  
**Light and life to all he brings,**  
**ris'n with healing in his wings.**  
**Mild he lays his glory by,**  
**born that we no more may die,**  
**born to raise each child of earth,**  
**born to give us second birth.**  
**Hark! The herald angels sing,**  
**Glory to the newborn king!**

*Sit***POSTLUDE***Coventry Carol*

Raymond Weidner

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*Please be respectful of distancing and personal space as you leave.*

*Feel free to gather outside for conversation.*

*Please take your service bulletin with you and dispose of it properly.*

## Christmas Eve B, 2020 Pastor's Sermon

Roger signed up to work as a census taker. On one of his first days canvassing a neighborhood he knocked on the door of a Mrs. Harriet Manson. Mrs. Manson was a proud woman, and while she was willing to answer some of Roger's census questions there were a few for which she would not respond. One such question had to do with her age. When asked how old she was Mrs. Manson responded with a question.

"Did Mr. and Mrs. Hill across the street answer that question?"

"They certainly did" responded Roger.

"Well then" said Mrs. Manson "simply fill in what they said, because we are about the same age."

Roger filled in the line on the census form, thanked Mrs. Manson and went on to the next home. At the end of the day Roger submitted his days' work to his supervisor. Miss Shanna looked over the pile of forms rather quickly and then called Roger back into her cubical.

"Roger" she said "you need to be more exact with the information you obtain from the clients."

"What do you mean" asked Roger.

"Look, Roger, look at this form" said Miss Shanna.

"You simply can't put down that Mrs. Manson is as old as the Hills!"

It is 2020. Like I needed to remind any of you! It is the year of the census. I am not really certain who it is on the current playing field that is calling the shots on the Census in our nation; Roger, Miss Shanna or someone higher up in the administration, but at the birth of Jesus it was Caesar who was calling the shots. His imperial decree led Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. Now if you don't think that the census mattered, take note that in the span of five verses, census is mentioned four times.

It is like having a conversation with an elementary age child in early December and in nearly every sentence they work in what it is that they would like to have for Christmas. The census was the tool that the Roman government used to levy taxes and calculate how much military force would be needed in order to keep peace, order, and maintain an upper hand. Census had the capacity to incite insurrection. It could easily be the catalyst for revolt.

The gospel writer Luke uses the census to advance the plot, to get Mary and Joseph to be in a particular place at a particular time. What should be noted is that when Caesar **commands**, the parents of Jesus **do** what is required. There is a certain amount of fear lurking behind the scenes. Imagine fear, when we just heard the angel herald "fear not" to the shepherds on the Hills outside of Bethlehem. But fear is lurking.

To be truthful, I don't think that Mary and Joseph are the revolutionary sorts. Mary sang about the poor being lifted up and the rich being sent away empty. And Joseph is a woodworker; he uses a plane and sandpaper, varnish. I don't peg them for the kind who would get onto social media and spew a bunch of stuff to get people worked up and garner a following of anti-taxers and militia want-to-bees. No I think that from the beginning of the story we are seeing how the imperial power of Rome, of humankind, is going to be in a thirty odd year collision course with the baby Jesus whose birth we celebrate this night. We are witnessing the curtain rising on the story of how God's promised Messiah the one whose rule will be forever will come into complete and total tension (butting heads) with the emperor Caser's political authority and military power.



Of course, even the emperor's decree can bring about God's purpose. It is that census decree that gets Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem linking them to the scripture, which underscored that the Messiah would be from the line of David. So something as simple as the census, decreed by a foreign government, brings to fruition the fact that the Messiah would be born in the scriptural epicenter Bethlehem.

Now we know what got Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. The more pressing question is what got you here tonight? Why did you switch on social media to follow along on the Christmas journey? What brings us together tonight is the power of the story that what Mary sings about comes to be in Jesus. The poor are lifted up and the rich are sent empty away. Those seeking to secure their own future with political authority and military power are shown that in Christ Jesus there is another way. It is the power of God's gentle rule, of God's gracious power to transform lives and lift up the lowly and do great things for them, for us. And that story centers on a baby named Jesus born in a stable who slept gently that first night on the fresh hay piled into a cow's trough. He ends up away from home, starts his earthly life without the comforts of a family residence, and his parents are most likely weary, stressed, anxious, and a little bit afraid of the too many unknowns they are confronting.

How many unknowns are you confronting this night? How weary, stressed, anxious or afraid are you? Oh, you may be waiting for some political decree to signal that things will be different, made right. You may be anticipating some military force to straighten out what you find to be crooked. But it is in this tiny child whom we welcome, the one who grows up only to collide with the powers of the likes of Caesar, where we find true solace. Jesus binds us together.

This takes place away from home not in Bethlehem as an infant but away from home in Jerusalem as a grown man. It wasn't the census that incited an insurrection that day in Jerusalem, but it was an angry mob that forced the hand of leadership to release a bandit, a common criminal rather than an innocent man. The angry mob instilled fear in the governmental authorities and forced their hand. A known criminal Barabbas was released and Jesus was condemned to death on a cross.

There it is at the end of his earthly life without any comfort on the hard wood of the cross that he gives himself for us; the true Christmas present. On the cross he takes upon himself the; wearies, stresses, anxieties, and fears of humanity. Jesus confronts all of them so that you and I are set free from them. They along with sin and death no longer define us. In the decree of Christ Jesus you are set free. The Christmas carol states it this way; *The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight*. Jesus comes among us to reign forever, so that in his census everyone counts, everyone matters, and everyone belongs. Amen.



### **In Loving Memory of . . .**

Mr. & Mrs. Marion Bloss by Dean & Ann Becker  
Our Fathers, David Boyer and Ronald Becker by Larry & Deb Becker  
My Husband, Curvin Berkheimer, Jr. & My Son, Thomas Berkheimer by Janet Berkheimer  
Our Parents by Mike & Becky Bingham  
Josephine M. Cushner, John J. Cushner, M.D., & Mary R. Maxwell by Jo Anne Cushner Debes & Family  
My Grandmother, Lillie M. Diehl and my brother, Joseph R. DiOrio, Jr., by Dorothy DiOrio  
Our family in Heaven by Linda & Mike Hanson  
Donald Heistand by the Heistand Family  
John F. Houck & John M Houck, by Audrey & David Houck  
Robert & Thelma Delancey and Helen Crumbling by Angela Lauer  
Margie & Richard T. Martin, Michael T. Martin, Dale K. Shellenberger, Wilfert & Vidla Wildasin, and James & Julia Martin by the Martin Family  
Pearl & Harry McKee and Elsie & Paul Kennedy by Tom & Judy McKee  
Parents Helen & Navin D. McWilliams, Jr. by Navin McWilliams, III  
Michele Winters by Lisa & Joshua Miller  
Our Parents, John & Mary Monk and Charles & Ruth Jones by John & Kathy Monk  
Our Parents, Edward & Savinah Brenneman, and Walter & Helen Riese by Doris & Richard Riese  
Our Parents, by Ronald & Norma Riese  
My mother, Thelma Nace and Step-father, George, and my father, John L. Rudacille by Pat Rudacille  
Our Parents, Harold & Grace Sargeant, Donald & Bertha Spencer and our grandson Dalton Walburn  
by Donita & Harold Sargeant  
My Parents, Frank & Annamarie Polk by Pat Scarborough  
Verda Williams & Alexis Schedin by Julie Schedin  
Gene & Neil Shue by Norma Shue  
Don & Alan Spencer, C. S. & Laura Ely, Helen & Lloyd Spencer, Kathy & Robert McDowell, and Evelyn  
Loyd by Norma Ely Spencer  
Our Parents, Thomas & Mildred Goach and Walter & Pauleen Uffelman by John and Martina Uffelman  
My Parents Bill and Emily Kain by Carol Kain Woodbury

### **In Honor of . . .**

Our Children and Grandchildren by Mike & Becky Bingham  
Kelly, Ryan, Megan, & Wes by Linda & Mike Hanson  
My Grandchildren, Alexis & Thomas Heistand, and Daniel, Ryan, & Brynn Butler by June Heistand  
Our Children Anna, Drew, & Paula by Scott and Nicki Herdson  
Joan Barresse, Steve Schedin, & Dee Schedin by Julie Schedin  
My Great Grandchildren, Jordan & Spencer, Nicholas & Emily by Norma Ely Spencer

### **Dedicated to the Glory of God by...**

Mike & Becky Bingham          George & Janet Fitch          Julie Shedon          The Turner Family

**Thank you for the donation of all the beautiful poinsettias this Christmas Season.  
They may be taken home following the 10:30 a.m. liturgy, December 27, 2020**