

Bethesda Episcopal Church

The Feast of the Conversion of St Paul

25 January 2026

8.00 Holy Communion

*The order of service is printed on the laminated card.
The Reading, Gospel, and Prayers of the People can be found below.*

10.00 Sung Eucharist

Organ

Voluntary in F Major, Op. 2 No. 3

George Berg (1730-1775)

All stand as the choir and ministers enter.

The Opening Hymn #126

From the Hymnal 1982

The Celebrant says

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Gloria in excelsis

Healey Willan (1880-1968)

Glo - ry be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men.

We praise thee, we bless thee, we wor - ship thee, we glo - ri - fy

thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glo - ry, O Lord

God, heaven - ly King, God the Fa - ther Al -

might - - y. O Lord, the on - ly be-got-ten

Son, Je - sus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the

Fa - ther, that ta - kest a - way the sins of the world, have mer - cy up -

on us. Thou that ta - kest a - way the sins of the world, re - ceive our

prayer. Thou that sit - test at the right hand of God the Fa - ther, have

mer - cy up - on us. For thou on - ly art ho - ly;

thou on - ly are the Lord; thou on - ly, O Christ, with the Ho - ly

Ghost, art most high in the glo - ry of God the

Fa - ther. A - - - - -

men.

Remain standing.

The Collect of the Day

The Lord be with you. **And with thy spirit.**

Let us pray. O God, who, by the preaching of thine apostle Paul, hast caused the light of the

Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same by following the holy doctrine which he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All sit.

The First Reading

Acts 9:1-22

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?' Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

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

Remain seated.

May God be merciful to us and bless us, * show us the light of his countenance and come to us.

Let your ways be known upon earth, * your saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; * let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, * for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; * let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has brought forth her increase; * may God, our own God, give us his blessing.

May God give us his blessing, * and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

The Second Reading

Galatians 1.11-24

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Galatians.

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother. In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; they only heard it said, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me.

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

All stand.

The Alleluia



Verse: Great and holy is Paul, the chosen vessel of God; meet indeed to be glorified, and to inherit the twelfth throne.

Remain standing.

The Holy Gospel

Matthew 10.16-22

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.

Glory be to thee, O Lord.

Jesus said to the twelve, "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

The Sermon

Fr Gary Kriss

After the sermon, all stand.

The Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible;
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God;
begotten, not made;
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried:
and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;**

whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life,
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church;
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

All kneel.

The Prayers of the People

In our prayers today, we remember the Church in the Province of Chile; and in our diocese, Bishop Williamson and the people of St Paul's, Kinderhook. We ask God's blessing on those celebrating birthdays and anniversaries this week; and those whose year's mind falls at this time.

Let us now join our prayers with those of our Savior Jesus Christ, seeking the Father's blessing, and the gifts of the Spirit, saying, Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, our great high priest, living for ever to intercede for us, pray for the Church, your broken body in the world. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, king of righteousness, enthroned at the right hand of your majesty on high, pray for this troubled world, and make it subject to your just and gentle rule.
Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Son of Man, drawing humanity into the life of God, pray for your brothers and sisters in any need, distress or sorrow, especially Joe, Rolfe, David, Holly, Julie, Eric and Bethany. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, pioneer of our salvation, bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection, surround with your saints and angels those who have died trusting your promises. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Lord over all things, ascended far above the heavens and filling the universe, pray for us who bear witness to your glory and power. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Celebrant: Almighty God, giver of strength and joy: change, we beseech thee, our bondage into liberty, and the poverty of our nature into the riches of thy grace; that, by the transformation of our lives, thy glory may be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Confession and Absolution

Let us humbly confess our sins to Almighty God.

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against thee**

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

The Celebrant says the Absolution.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all those who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand. During the exchange of the Peace, you may greet those around you in the name of the Lord.

The Peace

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And with thy spirit.**

Hymn at the Offertory #525

From the Hymnal 1982

Remain standing.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.
 Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up unto the Lord.
 Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.
It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Through the great shepherd of thy flock, Jesus Christ our Lord; who after his resurrection sent forth his apostles to preach the Gospel and to teach all nations; and promised to be with them always, even unto the end of the ages. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying,

The Sanctus and Benedictus

Healey Willan (1880-1968)





All kneel.

All glory be to thee, O Lord our God, for that thou didst create heaven and earth, and didst make us in thine own image; and, of thy tender mercy, didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. He made there a full and perfect sacrifice for the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

For in the night in which he was betrayed, he took bread; and when he had given thanks to thee, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you; for this is my Blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me."

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father, we thy people do celebrate and make, with these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee, the memorial thy Son hath commanded us to make; having in remembrance his blessed passion and precious death, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and looking for his coming again with power and great glory. And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and, with thy Word and Holy Spirit, to bless and sanctify these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be unto us the Body and Blood of thy dearly-beloved Son Jesus Christ.

And we earnestly desire thy fatherly goodness to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, whereby we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, our selves, our souls and bodies. Grant, we beseech thee, that all who partake of this Holy Communion may worthily receive the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ, and be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction; and also that we and all thy whole Church may be made one body with him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. **Amen.**

Our Father

And now, as our Savior Christ hath 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 Fraction

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

The Prayer of Humble Access

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Communion is administered at the altar rail. Please move at the direction of the ushers.

Agnus Dei Missa Brevis in G *Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)*

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.*

Motet Tu Es Vas Electionis *J. Michael Haydn (1737-1806)*

Tu es vas electionis, Sancte Paulus Apostole, vere digne es glorificandus.
Praedicatur veritatis et doctor gentium in fide et veritate. Per te omnes gentes
cognoverunt gratiam Dei. Intercede pro nobis ad Deum qui te elegit.

Thou art the chosen vessel, Saint Paul the Apostle, meet indeed to be glorified.
Preacher of truth and teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth. By thee, all
nations have known the grace of God. Pray for us to God who chose thee.

Hymn #255 *(Remain seated or kneeling)*

From the Hymnal 1982

After Communion, all kneel.

The Prayer after Communion

Let us pray. **Almighty and ever living God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favor and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of thy everlasting kingdom. And we humbly beseech thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.**

The Blessing and Dismissal

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The Closing Hymn #542

From the Hymnal 1982

Organ

Voluntary in B-Flat Major

Thomas Sanders Dupuis (1733-1796)

Notices

Welcome to Bethesda Church. Thank you for joining us this morning. If you are interested in becoming a member of the parish, please introduce yourself to an usher.

Thank you to Fr Kriss for celebrating and preaching today; and those reading and leading prayers: Mary Withington at 8am; Lynda Redman and Gabriel Francisco at 10am.

The **altar flowers** are in honor of Elsie Priestley's 103rd birthday and in memory of Ray Priestley given by their daughter, Lynne.

Join us for **coffee and fellowship** following the 10am service. Thank you to Armando and Rowan for hosting today.

Annual Giving Statements are available at the back of the church.

Special Monthly Envelope for January. The special monthly envelope for the month of January assists the church with the cost of fuel during the winter months. We are grateful for your assistance and generosity.

Forward Day by Day The latest edition of *Forward Day by Day* is available on the back table. Copies are \$2 each.

Our Annual Parish Meeting will take place following the 10am Sung Eucharist next Sunday, 1st February.

Holy Communion on Thursdays at 12:10 will resume on 5 February.

Mere Christianity with Jonathan Kimmel will meet again on 15 February at 9am to discuss Sections 5-12.

Parish Office The office is open this week: Tuesday and Wednesday 10am -12.30pm; and Thursday 1pm – 3.30pm.

The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle

Today we keep the feast of the Conversion of St Paul. When modern people speak of “conversion,” they usually mean some tremendous event which moves them from one way of life into its complete opposite. And so, on the feast of the Conversion of Paul, it might be thought that we are celebrating Paul’s change of religion, as if he ceased being a Jew and became a Christian. The Book of Acts, with its story of Paul’s overwhelming experience on the road to Damascus, has reinforced this view. But Paul himself did not see the event in quite the same way.

We have his own words in the Letter to the Galatians: “He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.” In using such language, Paul placed himself in the company of the prophets of ancient Israel; and when he tried to say what had happened to him, he spoke in terms of a prophetic calling. So, it was not the revelation of another religion that Paul experienced. Instead, he experienced something which revealed the meaning and purpose of his whole life; and by this revelation of Christ, God also manifested the meaning and purpose of Paul’s Judaism. Paul was not responding to a demand that he deny Judaism and change his religion. He was responding to a call that he share in the fulfillment of Judaism and make all other nations partners with Israel in the one salvation of God.

Almighty God, by the preaching of your servant Paul you caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world. May we who celebrate his wonderful conversion follow him in bearing witness to your truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From For All the Saints, Stephen Reynolds





Please place this form in the collection plate if you would like us to get in touch with you:

Name:

Phone:

Email address:

Home address:

Preferred contact method:

Contact Reasons:

- ☐ Visitor or new resident
- ☐ Would like more information about the church and/or worship
- ☐ Interested in opportunities to serve
- ☐ Would like to speak with or have a visit from the priest
- ☐ Would like information about pledge envelopes or regular giving to Bethesda
- ☐ Other _____

The Reverend Charles Wallace, Rector

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