

St. Paul's Epistle

Volume 48, Issue 12

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

December, 2025

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church

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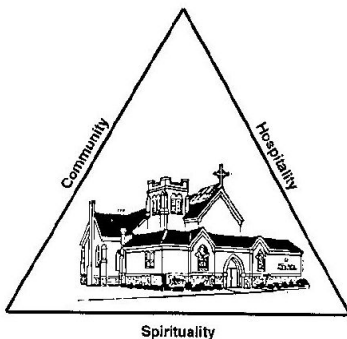
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Pastor's Page

Hello Everyone,

We need you! We are looking for people to light the Advent candles on the Sundays of Advent, as well as the Christmas Eve service. There will be a short reading and lighting of the correct number of candles. Please contact me or the church office to volunteer.

You have a couple of Sundays to get your gifts in for the Family Promise Adult gift bags. There is a box in the hallway between the office and the sanctuary. We will be packing bags on the 10th of December, so the 7th of December is the last Sunday to drop stuff off. Below is a list of items you can get for the gift bag: Wallets; Billfolds; Small Hand Tools; Picture Frames; Spices; Batteries; Hand Towels; Body Soap; Gas/Walmart Card; Stamps; Pocket Calendar; Pens/Pencils; Notepads; Nail Clippers; Flashlight; Chap Stick; Card Games; Socks; Keychain; Devotional Book; Slipper Socks; Umbrella; Cosmetic Bag; Lip Balm; body Sprays; Nail polish; Nail Polish Remover; Nail File, Hair brush; Candles, or whatever else you can think to get. Thanks for all that you do to help those in need.

You will also be receiving our annual Christmas letter, and I hope you will take into consideration giving this Christmas to these local missions of Elida St. Paul's this season: 1/3 will go to Meals 'till Monday, 1/3 to the Samaritan House of Lima, and 1/3 to Family Promise. Your gift this Christmas will help those in need.

For the next 4 weeks, we will be taking 'A Journey through Advent', as we explore the people of Jesus' birth and what their journey was like. We will be looking at Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, and the people of Bethlehem. Join us, Sunday, December 28, for a combined Worship Service at Westside UMC, at 10:30 AM. I hope you will join us, in person or online, as we explore this Journey that is Advent. Until then, I will see you in the mission field.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Paul



Thought for the Month:

Jesus did not come to make
God's love possible, but to
make God's love visible.

—Author unknown



December 7
Coins for Communion
to benefit ACTS Sunnydale House.

Crafty Creatures Candy Sales

Pick up: Saturday, December 13
10-noon in the Fellowship Hall

Thank you all for supporting the Crafty Creatures mission!

December 14
5 Loaves Food Pantry
Canned goods needed:
Fruits and Vegetables



December 21
Winter begins

December 31
New Year's Eve



Upcoming Events for St. Paul's



Deadline: the **20th**
of each month

Christian Symbol

POINSETTIA



This shrub, native to Mexico, is at the heart of legend about a poor girl who wanted to bring Baby Jesus a gift one Christmas Eve. As she walked to church, she gathered a bouquet of weeds — which Jesus miraculously transformed into lovely red flowers. Thus the poinsettia (named for Joel Poinsett, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico who first brought the plant to America) is known in Mexico as la flor de la Nochebuena (flower of the Holy Night). The poinsettia is also an ideal Christmas symbol because its leaves turn red when deprived of sunlight and its flowers (the red inner buds) bloom in December.

St. Paul's Epistle

is published by St. Paul's
United Methodist Church

Secretary	Gail Fessler
Pianist	Lois Cook
Choir Director	Casey Rife
Custodian	Dave Decker



Thank you St. Paul's congregation, and others in the community who packed boxes for Samaritans Purse, Operation Christmas Child. **198 boxes** were delivered to WTLW, and **10 boxes** were created on-line. A total of **208 Boxes** will be sent around the world to touch the hearts and lives of many children and their families. Thank you Jamie Wyant for heading up this mission.



The Boxes were blessed on November 16th, during Children's Moments



Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

They are \$10.00 each.

Please fill out this order form and with payment, place in the offering plate or turn into the office by December 18.

Name: _____

Number of poinsettias: _____

In Honor/Memory of: _____

You may pick up your poinsettia following the Christmas Eve service.



Advent: The Journey

If you or your family is interested in doing a reading and lighting the Advent Candle during worship service, please contact the office or Pastor Paul.

November 30
1st Sunday of Advent
"Annunciation of Mary"



December 7
2nd Sunday of Advent
"Joseph's Dream"

December 14
3rd Sunday of Advent
"Leaping Baby?"

December 24
Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
9:00 PM
"Weary World"



December 21
4th Sunday of Advent
10:00 AM
Worship Service
"Nazareth to Bethlehem"
Children's Program



Special Christmas Offering
Designated to the following Local Missions:
1/3 to Meals til' Monday
1/3 to Samaritan House
1/3 to Family Promise of Lima

Hat and Mitten Christmas Tree.

St. Paul's special Christmas tree for hats, mittens, and scarves will help to keep those less fortunate stay warm this winter. Consider buying Children's, men's, and women's sizes for the tree to compliment the many knitted scarves and hats that are donated.

Advent

Candles That Tell a Story

Lighting its candles each Sunday is a treasured tradition during the four weeks of Advent.

Depending on denomination, churches use different color combinations for the candles. Some place four blue candles around the wreath with a white one in the center, while others use all white. Many light purple candles on the first two Sundays, pink on the third, purple again on the fourth, and then a large white candle on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Each part of the wreath carries symbolic meaning:

- **The wreath:** Its circular shape represents the everlasting love of God, having no beginning or end. The green symbolizes eternal life.
- **The four candles:** Mark the four weeks of Advent. One tradition says that each candle also represents 1,000 years, totaling 4,000 years from Adam and Eve to Christ's birth.
- **Purple candles:** in ancient times, was expensive and was considered the color of royalty and kings. On Christmas, Christ is proclaimed King of Kings. Purple also symbolizes humility and penitence. The first purple candle represents Hope; the second, Peace; and the final purple candle, Love.
- **Blue candles:** Blue is another color often used as a symbol of royalty. Some churches use blue candles to symbolize the night sky and the anticipation of the announcement of Christ's birth. Blue also symbolizes the beginning of a new creation as in the waters of Genesis 1.
- **The pink candle:** Lit on the third Sunday, it represents Joy and marks the halfway point of Advent.
- **The white candle:** The large white candle in the center is the Christ candle. Its light symbolizes Christ the Savior — "the light of the world."

The beauty and brightness from the glow of all five candles is a reminder that Christ's life was the light for all earth's people — "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5, NRSV).

The Advent wreath is more than just greenery and candles—it's a symbol of watchfulness and growing joy as Christmas draws near.

Christmas Prayer: The True Gift

Dear Lord,

You have brought us to Christmastime once more. Help us not to get lost in the glitter and the glow, but to see the true glory of the birth of Your only begotten Son. Keep our hearts from clinging too tightly to parties, presents and decorations, and turn our eyes instead to Christ — who bears Your very image and brings us Your message of love and hope.

In the glorious name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Faith In Action

Worship Attendance:

November 2, 2025	97
November 9, 2025	63
November 16, 2025	82
November 23, 2025	75

Sunday School Attendance

November 2, 2025	18
November 9, 2025	11
November 16, 2025	14
November 23, 2025	13

FINANCIAL GIVING

Unified Ministry Giving:		Other:
November 2, 2025	\$6,585.84	\$350.00
November 9, 2025	\$3,372.76	\$1,095.00
November 16, 2025	\$3,546.00	\$3,665.00
November 23, 2025	\$990.24	\$130.60
TOTAL:	14,494.84	\$5,240.60

Unified Budget:

Weekly Budget Needed = \$4,644.58

November Total Need = \$18,578.32

November Total = \$14,494.84

Deficit = \$4,083.48

Flower Calendar

December 7, 2025	Dan & Margie Best
December 14, 2025	Don & Maedene Holmes
December 21, 2025	Poinsettias
December 28, 2025	Poinsettias

Hospitality Cart

December 7, 2025	OPEN
December 14, 2025	OPEN
December 21, 2025	OPEN
December 28, 2025	OPEN

Communion Servers: December 7

Station #1:

&

Station #2:

Eric & Joella Stern

Communion Servers: Christmas Eve

Station #1:

Eric & Joella Stern

Station #2:

&

Advent Readings

FIND JOY IN THE JOURNEY

Week 1 —HOPE

December 1 - *John 1:1-5*
December 2 - *Isaiah 9:2-7*
December 3 - *Isaiah 11:1-10*
December 4 - *Jeremiah 33:14-16*
December 5 - *Luke 1:5-10*
December 6 - *Luke 1:11-17*

Week 2 —Peace

December 7 - *Luke 1:18-25*
December 8 - *Luke 1:26-38*
December 9 - *Matthew 1:18-21*
December 10 - *Matthew 1:22-26*
December 11 - *Luke 1:39-45*
December 12 - *Luke 1:46-56*
December 13 - *Luke 2:1-5*

Week 3 —JOY

December 14 - *Luke 2:6-7*
December 15 - *Luke 2:8-12*
December 16 - *Luke 2:13-14*
December 17 - *Luke 2:15-18*
December 18 - *Luke 2:19-20*
December 19 - *Micah 5:2-5*
December 20 - *Matthew 2:1-2*

Week 3— LOVE

December 21 - *Matthew 2:3-6*
December 22 - *Matthew 2:7-8*
December 23 - *Matthew 2:9-12*
December 24 - *John 1:14*

His Many Names, Our Great Hope

Long before the manger in Bethlehem, the prophet Isaiah pointed God's people to the promise of a Savior. In Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) we read: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Even before Jesus' birth, his names revealed who he is and what he would bring. Each title carries a promise that still impacts our lives today.

- **Wonderful Counselor.** Jesus brings wisdom and guidance for every situation. In moments of confusion, we can lean on him to direct our steps with love and truth.
- **Mighty God.** He is strong enough to carry our burdens and powerful enough to overcome sin, fear and death itself.
- **Everlasting Father.** Jesus reflects the heart of God the Father, offering care that is constant and unchanging. His love doesn't fade with time or circumstance.
- **Prince of Peace.** In a world filled with turmoil, Jesus offers a peace that goes deeper than circumstances, a peace that guards our hearts and minds.

At Christmas, we celebrate more than a baby's birth. We celebrate the fulfillment of God's promise, a Savior with many names. Each one reminds us of his eternal love and presence. This season, let his names bring you comfort, strength and peace.

Hymn History

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Then Sings My Soul" Book 1, By Robert J. Morgan

1868

*...Bethlehem... though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler of Israel...Micah 5:2*

At nearly six feet six, weighing three hundred pounds, Phillips Brooks cast a long shadow. He was a native Bostonian, the ninth generation of distinguished Puritan stock, who entered the Episcopalian ministry and pastored with great power in Philadelphia and in Boston. His sermons were topical rather than expository, and he's been criticized for thinness of doctrine. Nonetheless he's considered one of America's greatest preachers. His delivery came in lightning bursts; he felt he had more to say than time in which to say it.

While at Philadelphia's Holy Trinity Church, Phillips, 30, visited the Holy Land. On December 24, 1865, traveling by horseback from Jerusalem, he attended a five hour Christmas Eve service at the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. He was deeply moved. "I remember standing in the old church in Bethlehem," he later said, "close to the spot where Jesus was born, when the whole church was ringing hour after hour with splendid hymns of praise to God, how again and again it seemed as if I could hear voices I knew well, telling each other of the *Wonderful Night* of the Savior's birth."

Three years later, as he prepared for the Christmas season of 1867, he wanted to compose an original Christmas hymn for children to sing during their annual program. Recalling his magical night in Bethlehem, he wrote a little hymn of five stanzas and handed the words to his organist, Lewis Redner, saying, "Lewis, why not write a new tune for my poem. If it is a good tune, I will name it 'St. Lewis' after you."

Lewis struggled with his assignment, complaining of no inspiration. Finally, on the night before the Christmas program, he awoke with the music ringing in his soul. He jotted down the melody, then went back to sleep. The next day, a group of six Sunday school teachers and thirty-six children sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

Brooks was so pleased with the tune that he did indeed name it for his organist, changing the spelling to ST. LOUIS, so as not to embarrass him. The fourth stanza, usually omitted from our hymnbooks, says:

*Where children pure and happy pray to the blessed Child,
Where misery cries out to Thee, Son of the mother mild;
Where charity stands watching and faith holds wide the door,
The dark night, the glory breaks, and Christmas comes once more.*



Missions

Trick-and Trunk-or-Treat



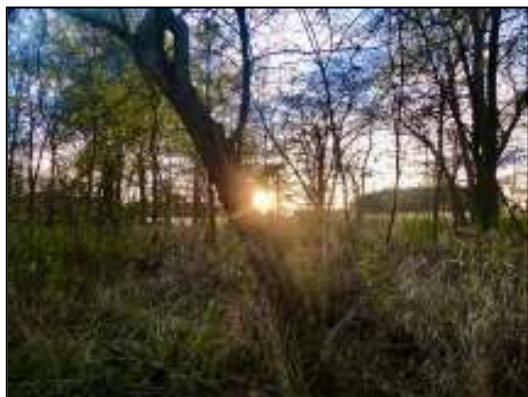
Ramp Build: Thank you Jamie Wyant and Team of Volunteers!



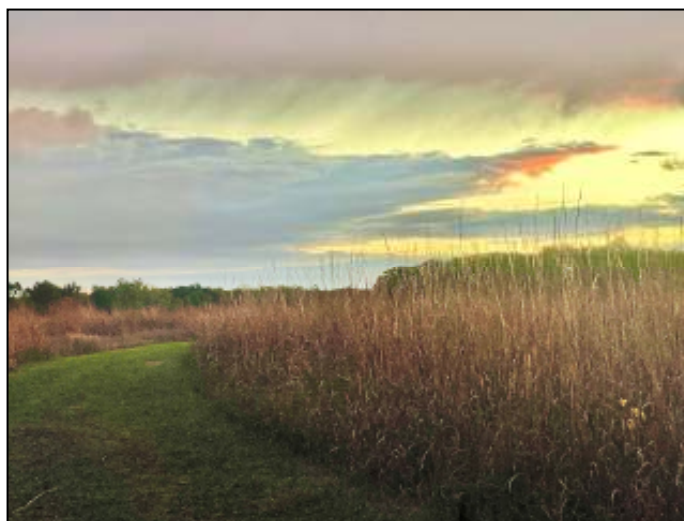
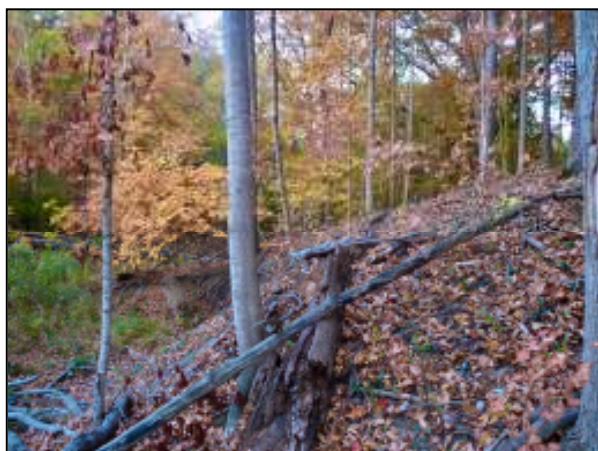
Connecting with...

Baptism

A private baptism was held on October 28, for Jessie, Wren, Andi, and Tanner Harmon. Scott Harmon, already baptized, stood up with his family. Other family members and closest friends were present to witness their special moment. Congratulations!!



Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District held a Nature Photography Contest.
Hudson Rife: 1st Youth Parks Potpourri—Sunrise
Hudson Rife: 2nd place youth Landscape—Tree Debris
Ashton Rife: 3rd Youth Parks Potpourri—Prairie Path



November Happenings

All Saints Sunday, November 2

Memorial ornaments were placed on a tree and names for those saints that passed within this year, were read by Dan Best. A bell was rung by Kerry Fremont as the names were announced. The White candles that were placed on the altar in memory of loved ones were lit by Jackson Rife.



Student Participation Sunday, November 16

Acolytes:

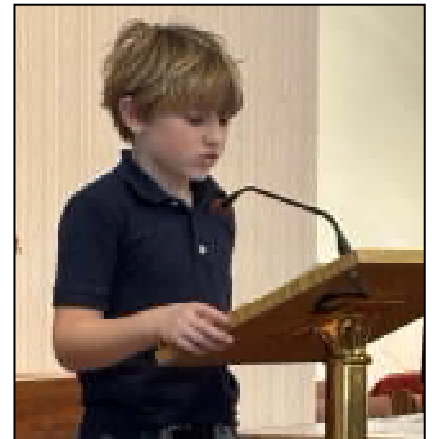
Jonathan Perry, Hudson Rife

Call to Worship:

Rylan McAdams

Opening Prayer:

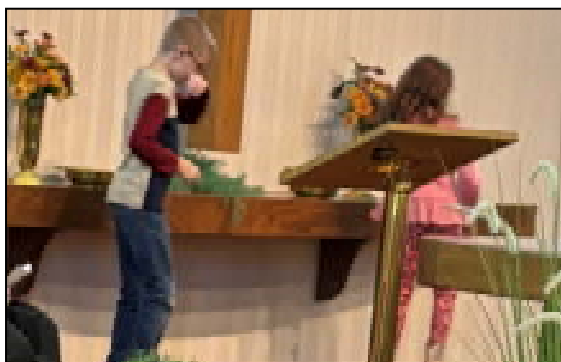
Ashton Rife



Offering Plates:

Jonathan Perry, Izzy Mault

Scripture Reading: Wren Harmon, Jackson Rife



The People of St. Paul's

St. Paul's UMC Family,
Thanks for the beautiful wind chime.
Your thoughtfulness was greatly
appreciated.

The Sodders Family

Thank you to my Church family for
the beautiful flowers, phone calls,
and cards while I was in the hospital.
Have a Blessed Day,

Mary Irvin

Remember in Prayer

Recovering from Surgery
or in the Hospital

Those in Need of Healing,
Support, Strength &
Encouragement

Gary & Janet Grigg

In the Military & Missions

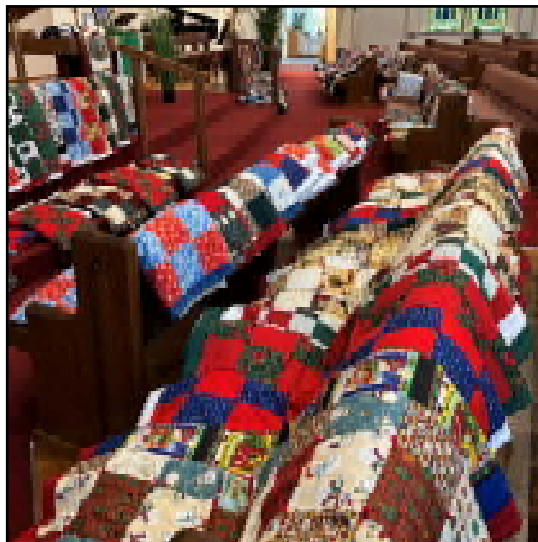
Nathan Stewart

Thank you!

Your support is truly appreciated.
God Bless You,
Lima's Samaritan House Staff

Thank you so much for your generous
donation of \$101.34 to Family Promise.
Your support goes to helping homeless
children and families rebuild their lives
and regain independence.

146 Christmas quilts, from the "Crafty Creatures", were blessed on November 23rd, then taken to Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and dispersed to those in need, on November 26.



Meetings

December 1, 2025
PPR... 7:00 PM

December 2, 2025
Trustees...7:00 PM

December 3, 2025
Worship Mtg...2:15 PM

December 8, 2025
Ad Council/Finance
Mtg...7:00 PM

No Missions

Sundays
Hospitality...9:30 AM
Worship...10:00 AM

Wednesdays
Chancel Choir...
7:00 PM

December 2025

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1 Lena Whetstone A.J. White	2 Micheal Craft Lavonne Segovia	3	4	5	6 Teresa Grigsby Lisa Wurster Sue Theodore
7	8	9	10	11 Ron McAdams	12	13
14	15 Taryn Piper	16	17 Audrey Fox	18 Cavanaugh Clark Pam Moser	19	20
21	22 Wren Harmon Kara Woeller	23	24 Lina Craft	25 Denny Grapner	26	27 Deb Hurd Megan Wyant
28	29 Tiffany Emmons Tammy Segovia	30 Cameron Emmons Tristan Gaghen	31 Jack White			

Anniversaries

*Roger & Jackie
Henderson
December 4; 54 yrs.*

*Dennis & Shara Bowsheer
December 19; 45 yrs.*

*Larry & Gloria Brunk
December 21; 57 yrs.*

*John & Val Kuenzli
December 27*

*Denny & Janna
Thompson
December 29; 47 yrs*



St. Paul's Featured Recipes

Turkey & Spinach Stuffing Casserole

By Susan Nartker

Ingredients		Instructions
1 can 14 1/2 oz.	Chicken broth, reduced-sodium	Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large saucepan, bring chicken broth and butter to a boil. Remove from heat. Add stuffing mix; stir until moistened. Stir in turkey, spinach, and cranberries. Transfer to a greased 11x7 in. baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake uncovered, 10 to 15 minutes or until cheese is melted.
3Tbl.	Butter	
3 cups	Stuffing mix	
3 cups	Turkey, cooked & cubed	
2 cups	Spinach, fresh baby	
1/2 cup	Cranberries, dried	
3/4 cup	Cheddar cheese, shredded	

Crackers Toffee

By Barb Schade

Ingredients		Instructions
2 pkg.	Graham crackers	Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper and place graham crackers on sheet. Sprinkle crackers evenly with chopped nuts. Cobine sugar, butter and vanilla in small pan over medium heat. Bring to boil and boil 3 minutes. Remove from heat and spoon mixture over nuts, coating well. Bake until golden 5 to 10 minutes. Cool completely before serving.
1/2 cups	White sugar	
1 cup	Butter	
1/2 tsp.	Vanilla extract	
1 cup	Pecan or walnuts, chopped	

KIDZ KORNER

Christmas Card treasures



Turn old Christmas cards into beautiful keepsake ornaments! It's a fun, simple way to give new life to cards you've received and add a handmade touch to your tree.

What you need:

- Christmas cards
- Scissors
- Glue
- Circle pattern (cut from cardboard or trace around object)
- Hole punch
- Yarn or ribbon
- Glitter (optional)



What you do:

1. Trace a circle onto two Christmas cards.
2. Cut out the circles and glue the backs together.
3. Decorate the edges with glitter or ribbon for extra sparkle.
4. Punch a hole at the top and thread yarn or ribbon through to hang.



Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.
— James 1:17 (NIV)

PUZZLE

GOOD NEWS TO THE SHEPHERDS

What did the angel of the Lord say to the shepherds?

Directions: Write the first letter of each picture on the lines.

“



”

Luke 2:11, NIV

Answer: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you." Luke 2:11, NIV

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807

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**Our Facebook page
Elida St. Paul's Church**

**Our Web Address:
www.elidastpaulschurch.org
Twitter Account
@ESPCHURCH**



Living Our Faith

The Angels' Song in Three Words

On the very first Christmas Eve, frightened shepherds were suddenly surrounded by light and music. A choir of angels filled the night sky, singing: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14, KJV).

Nineteenth-century pastor Charles Kingsley reflected on how those three simple words — glory, peace, and good will — still capture the meaning of Jesus' birth and the hope it brings.

Glory. God's glory isn't shown in dazzling displays of power but in humility and mercy. The baby in the manger revealed God's greatness by stooping low, forgiving, and showing love.

Peace. True peace is more than the absence of conflict. It comes when we follow God's example of selflessness, giving up pride and selfish ambition to live in harmony with one another.

Good will. God's good will toward us is a gift that transforms our lives. Through Jesus, God invites us out of selfishness and sin into a life marked by love, kindness, and community.

The angels' song wasn't meant only for shepherds long ago. It still sings to us today, calling each of us to live in glory, peace, and good will.