



WEDNESDAY EVENING PRAYER

&

HOLY EUCHARIST

JANUARY 25, 2023

## THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL



*The Apostle Paul*  
14<sup>th</sup> century

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

## THE CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL (JANUARY 25)

On January 25 we remember how Saul (or Paul) of Tarsus, formerly an enemy and persecutor of the early Christian Church, was led by God's grace to become one of its chief spokesmen.

Our chief sources of information about the Apostle Paul are (1) several of his own letters, preserved for us in the New Testament, and (2) the account of him given by Luke in the book of Acts.

One naturally asks whether we can be sure that the letters attributed to Paul are in fact his. A partial answer is that a forger would run into difficulty. If he wrote a letter, say, to the church at Corinth during Paul's lifetime, and signed Paul's name, the Corinthians would naturally mention it the next time they sent a message to Paul, and Paul would naturally reply: "What are you talking about? I never wrote anything like that!" If a letter supposedly to Corinth were circulated after Paul's death, sooner or later a copy would reach Corinth, and the members of the church there would ask, "If Paul wrote this letter and sent it to us while he lived, how does it happen that no one here has ever heard of it?" Thus, it would be difficult to obtain credence for a forged letter to a congregation. This argument does not apply to a letter to an individual (such as Timothy or Titus). Moreover, it arguably does not apply to the Letter to the Ephesians. Although some ancient copies of this letter begin:

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are [at Ephesus and] faithful in Christ Jesus:

other ancient copies read simply "also" instead of the bracketed words. Thus, it is widely supposed that the letter was written as a general form letter to many churches, with the name of the church to be filled in in each particular copy. This view is supported by the fact that the letter contains no personal greetings and makes no references to the past history of the congregation addressed. Now, a forger might write such a form letter, circulate it after Paul's death, and escape detection, since no particular congregation could say, "Since we did not hear of this letter before, Paul could not have written it." And accordingly, we find that it is precisely Ephesians and the Pastorals (the letters to Timothy and Titus) that are questioned by some scholars who acknowledge Paul's authorship of all the other letters claiming to be by him. (I am not counting the letter to the Hebrews, which is not signed.)

Our other source of information is the book of Acts, where Paul (at first called Saul) appears in 7:58-8:1; 9:1-30; 11:25-30; 12:25--28:31. Here we read how Paul at first opposed and persecuted the Church, how he had a vision of Christ and was converted, and devoted the rest of his life to spreading the Gospel of Christ.

Portions of this account include statements like “we then crossed over to Troas,” which are taken to mean that Luke was a companion of Paul for part of Paul’s journeys. Since these accounts, particularly those of the shipwreck on Paul’s last voyage, show every sign of being accurate eyewitness accounts (see the book *The Voyage and Shipwreck of Saint Paul*, by James Smith of Jordan Hill, FRS) and since a comparison of the style of various portions of the book of Acts makes it highly improbable that it is a scissors-and-paste job, with portions of one man’s work inserted into a story by someone else, many scholars consider the claim that Acts was written by a companion of Paul to be well established.

On the other hand, it is not always clear how the chronology of Luke’s account of the life of Paul is to be fitted with the autobiographical snippets we find in Paul’s own writings, and for this reason some scholars dispute the genuineness of the book of Acts.

# PREPARATION

*Music for Meditation*

*Please stand at the sound of the bell.*

## Opening

✠ The Lord Almighty grant us a peaceful night and a perfect end. *Amen.*

∞ Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

℟ **The maker of heaven and earth.**

∞ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

℟ **Who is worthy of all thanksgiving and praise.**

## Confession

*Priest* Let us confess our sins to God.

*Please kneel or remain standing as you are able*

*All*     **Most merciful God,  
we confess to you,  
before the whole company of heaven  
and one another,  
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed,  
and in what we have failed to do.  
Forgive us our sins,  
heal us by your Spirit  
and raise us to new life in Christ. Amen.**

*The Bishop when present, or the Priest, stands and says*

Almighty God have mercy on you, ✠ forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. *Amen.*

*Please be seated*

# Word

## The Readings

*Silence is kept between the readings*

Galatians 1:11-24

For 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 for 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.

Matthew 10:16-22

'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.

# PRAYER

*Please kneel or stand as you are able*

*Intercessor*

I bid your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for our Bishop; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people. Pray for the Church.

*Silence*

I bid your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people. Pray for justice and peace.

*Silence*

I bid your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison. Pray for those in any need or trouble.

*Silence*

I bid your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him. Pray that they may find and be found by him.

*Silence*

I bid your prayers for the ✠ departed. Pray for those who have died.

*Silence*

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored, especially Blessed St. Paul. Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

O God, who by the preaching of your apostle Paul has caused the light of the Gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we pray, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show ourselves thankful to you by following his holy teaching; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

## **The Peace**

Christ, the Good Shepherd, bind us with a bond of love that cannot be broken. My sisters and brothers, the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Please stand*

## Eucharist

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.

*People* **And also with you.**

*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.

*People* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*People* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

*The Celebrant continues*

It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

*A Proper Preface is said*

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

### **Sanctus**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**✠ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

*Please kneel or remain standing as you are able, the Celebrant continues*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

*The Celebrant continues*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him.  
✠ Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. AMEN.

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

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

*A period of silence is kept*

### **The Fraction Anthem**

*Celebrant* Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

*People* Therefore let us keep the feast.



## The Invitation

*Celebrant* This is the table, not of the Church, but of the Lord. It is made ready for those who love him and for those who want to love him more. So, come, you who have much faith and you have little, you who have been here often and you who have not been here long, you who have tried to follow and you who have failed. Come, because it is the Lord who invites you. It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

## The Post Communion Prayer

*Celebrant* Let us pray.

*Please kneel or stand as you are able*

All **Eternal God, comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken, you have fed us at the table of life and hope: teach us the ways of gentleness and peace, that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Please stand*

∞ In peace, we will lie down and sleep;

℟ **For you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.**

∞ Abide with us, Lord Jesus,

℟ **For the night is at hand and the day is now past.**

∞ As the night-watch looks for the morning,

℟ **So do we look for you, O Christ.**

*Officiant* May the living waters of Christ cleanse us,  
may the Spirit descend upon us,  
and the blessing of God be with us  
this night and always. *Amen.*

The almighty and merciful Lord, ✠ Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
bless us and keep us. *Amen.*

∞ May the divine help remain with us always.

℟ **And our absent brethren. Amen.**







# ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

605 Clay Street • Lynchburg, VA 24504  
voice: 434-845-7301 • fax: 434-846-8668  
[www.stpaulslynchburg.org](http://www.stpaulslynchburg.org) • email: [info@stpaulslynchburg.org](mailto:info@stpaulslynchburg.org)  
Visit and “like” us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/StPaulsLynchburg](http://www.facebook.com/StPaulsLynchburg)

## CLERGY AND PARISH STAFF OF THE DIOCESE

The Rt. Rev. Mark A. Bourlakas, *Bishop*  
The Rev. Todd M. Vie, *Rector*  
The Rev. Dr. Nina V. Salmon, *Associate Rector for Families and Youth*  
The Rev. Deacon Bill Bumgarner, *Deacon*  
Sumner Jenkins, *Organist and Choirmaster*  
John Williams, *Verger* • Anna Crowther, *Head Acolyte*  
Kate Albert, *Part-time Parish Administrator* • Gayle Rhodes, *Office Assistant*  
Susan Carol, CCM, *Music Care Ministry* • Beverly Wilson, *Parish Nurse*  
Margaret Anne Eschenroeder, *Finance Secretary*  
Linda Woody, *Head Custodian* • Tim Shepherd, *Sexton*

## ST. PAUL'S VESTRY

Joyce Bailey, *Senior Warden*  
Mary Blair, John Cros, Andrew Davidson, Andrew Deppensmith,  
Herb Edwards, Kimberly Helbling, George Hurt,  
Cham Light, Dick Morris, Holly Perrow, Steve Smith  
Andrea Bain Zirkle, *Clerk* Steve Baldwin, *Treasurer*

## ST. PAUL'S MISSION STATEMENT

*To Know Christ, To Worship Christ, To Serve Christ, To Make Him Known*