

O Little
Town of
Bethlehem

OAKS

PARISH

Our Mission

To abide in Christ Jesus for the renewal of all things.

Our Core Values

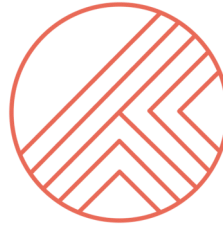
Gospel of Grace



The gospel of grace is the foundation of everything we are and do at Oaks Parish.

At Oaks Parish, we experience holistic flourishing through the person and work of Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ has redeemed us individually, and collectively as a church; we try to mirror that grace in all we do.

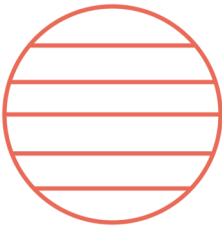
Faithful Presence



We are committed to Portland and aspire to be a church woven into the fabric

of the city. Oaks Parish is a uniquely welcoming and inclusive place. We greet our neighbors, friends, families, and co-workers with infectious hospitality, faithfully showing the love of Jesus in Portland.

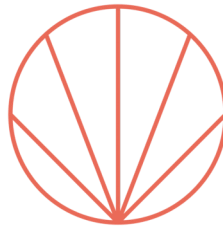
Formative Rhythms



The rhythms of our life shape our character, and at Oaks Parish we anchor our

practices in Scripture and the historical church. Our liturgical and expressive practice of gathered worship on Sunday pervades and shapes our rhythms of prayer, study of Scripture, and gatherings throughout the week. This process of intentional formation, or discipleship, shapes us to be more like Jesus.

Extended Family



Oaks Parish is intensely relational. We strive to live together as a diverse,

multi-generational extended family—not just on Sunday, but throughout the week. We share our stories and how God is redeeming them even as we work, play, and serve together. We want everyone to experience being known and loved in Christ.

Quotes for Reflection

Jean-Pierre De Caussade, *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*

Outwardly Mary's life is represented as simple and ordinary. She does and suffers what others in her situation do and suffer; she visits her cousin Elizabeth as other relations do; she goes to Bethlehem for the census as others do; she lodges in a stable in consequence of her poverty; she returns to Nazareth having been forced to leave on account of Herod's persecution. She lives quietly with Jesus and Joseph who work for their living. Such is the daily bread of the Holy Family. But by what bread do Mary and Joseph nourish their faith? How is what happens moment by moment a sacrament for them? What do they discern beneath the seemingly everyday events which occupy them? What is seen is similar to what happens to the rest of mankind. But what is unseen, that which faith discovers and unravels, is nothing less than God fulfilling his mighty purpose. O bread of angels, celestial manna, precious Evangel, sacrament of the present moment, you bring God to the mean surroundings of a lowly stable in a manger among straw and hay. But to whom do you give yourself? God reveals himself to the humble in small things- 'He has filled the hungry with good things' (Luke 1:53).

N.T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*

The birth of this little boy is the beginning of a confrontation between the kingdom of God – in all its apparent weakness, insignificance and vulnerability – and the kingdoms of the world. Augustus never heard of Jesus of Nazareth. But within a century or so his successors in Rome had not only heard of him; they were taking steps to obliterate his followers. Within just over three centuries the Emperor himself became a Christian. When you see the manger on a card, or in church, don't stop at the crib. See what it's pointing to. It is pointing to the explosive truth that the baby lying there is already being spoken of as the true king of the world.

Advent Meditation

“The Difficult Journey,” Fritz von Uhde (1890)

I Wonder as I Wander (1933)

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor ordinary people like you and like I;
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cow's stall
with wise men and farmers and shepherd and all.
but high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
and the promise of ages it did then recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
a star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
or all of God's angels in heaven for to sing,
he surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

“I Wonder As I Wander” is an American folk hymn transcribed and expanded upon by John Jacob Niles. While traveling as a surveyor in the Appalachians, Niles heard a 3 line fragment of this haunting melody sung by a young child.

Call to Worship

from Isaiah 60

Arise, shine, for your light has come!

The glory of the Lord has risen upon you!

For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,

**But the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.**

Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Arise! Shine! For your light has come!

Songs of Praise

Savior of the Nations Come

This ethereal Advent hymn was translated by Martin Luther from the Latin “Veni, Redemptor gentium,” which has been ascribed to Ambrose of Milan, 4th c. It is set to an adaptation of a medieval plainsong melody.

Words and Music by Ambrose Of Milan, Martin Luther, Melchior Vulpius, William Morton Reynolds
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Come Behold the Wondrous Myst’ry

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Old Testament Reading

Micah 5:1-15 NRSV

1 Now you are walled around with a wall; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the ruler of Israel upon the cheek.

2 But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.

4 And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; 5 and he shall be the one of peace.

If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers. 6 They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword;

they shall rescue us from the Assyrians

if they come into our land or tread within our border.

7 Then the remnant of Jacob, surrounded by many peoples,

shall be like dew from the Lord, like showers on the grass,

which do not depend upon people or wait for any mortal.

8 And among the nations the remnant of Jacob,

surrounded by many peoples, shall be like a lion among the animals of

the forest, like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,

which, when it goes through, treads down

and tears in pieces, with no one to deliver.

9 Your hand shall be lifted up over your adversaries,

and all your enemies shall be cut off.

10 In that day, says the Lord, I will cut off your horses from among

you and will destroy your chariots; 11 and I will cut off the cities of

your land and throw down all your strongholds;

12 and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,

and you shall have no more soothsayers;

13 and I will cut off your images and your pillars from among you,

and you shall bow down no more to the work of your hands;

14 and I will uproot your sacred poles from among you

and destroy your towns.

15 And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance

on the nations that did not obey.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Offering Prayer

Generous God, we have been made in your image. So, in your generosity, make us generous. In your faithfulness, make us faithful. So that whatever gift we bring to you might be an offer of worship before you, as the gold, frankincense, and myrrh were before your son Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

New Testament Reading

Luke 2:1-7 NRSV

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 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. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Bryan Buck: O Little Town of Bethlehem
Lessons in Carols

Notes

Application Questions

1. What sentiment is evoked by the scene portrayed in verse one of O Little Town of Bethlehem and how does that inform your relationship to power?
2. Why is vulnerability the doorway for gospel transformation?
3. What needs to be emptied from your own heart that you might be filled?

Confession of Sin

God of grace and truth,
your prophets told of your promises – of restoration and salvation.
We confess that we have not believed your promise,
that we have preferred brokenness to restoration,
and have lingered with disease, rather than welcome wholeness and
renewal. Forgive our stiff necks and renew our hearts, so that we may
receive the fullness of your promise, and live into that joy. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Isaiah 55:6-7 NRSV

6 Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
7 let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

○ Little Town of Bethlehem

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Confession of Faith

We believe in God, the father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the father almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

We 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.

Communion

We do not dismiss in any set order, come forward when you feel ready.

Form two lines down the center aisle, return to your seats by the side aisles.

Take the elements and consume them at your seat at your discretion.

Bread is locally sourced and gluten free. Choose between red wine and white grape juice.

Mary's Song (Magnificat)

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Benediction

Doxology

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Prayers for Those Not Communing

Prayer for Those Searching for the Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever dared confess, but through you I am more loved than I ever dared hope. Thank you for paying my debt on the cross, taking what I deserved in order to offer me complete forgiveness. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, enable me to see in you the fulfillment of all my true needs, and may I turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to see that your Gospel is bigger than my sin, and that your work breaks the power of sin as well as freeing me from its penalty. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the pioneer and author of my faith. Amen.

oaks parish

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Oaks Parish: Get Connected

Welcome to Oaks Parish

Thanks for joining us today - we would love to connect with you! Jot down your name and email address on the postcard found in your worship guide and drop it in an offering basket before you leave so we can get to know you.

How to Use Postcards

- Let us know you're visiting
- Sign up for the weekly email
- Share a prayer request
- RSVP for an event
- Connect with pastoral staff

Drop your postcard in an offering basket before you leave today!

Morning Prayer

Join us online every Wednesday at 6:30am to pray together for our community and beyond at oaksparish.org/morningprayer.

Social Hour

Join us for coffee, donuts, and conversation today, after the service in the Parish Hall.

Advent Reflection Guide

Prepare your heart for the Advent of our Lord with this year's Advent reflection guide: "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," including Scripture, reflection questions, and prayer. You can listen to the guide (published on Mon, Wed, and Fri) on the Oaks Parish Podcast (found on Apple Podcasts or Spotify) or download to read at oaksparish.org/advent.

Advent for Kids

Families, be sure to pick up a Jesse Tree Ornament Set & Devotional Guide at the welcome desk today (1 per family).

Christmas Eve Worship

We'll celebrate the birth of the newborn King with a Lessons & Carols service on Sunday morning at 10am. This is a service for the whole family so there will be no OP Kids classes.