

**St. Paul's United Church of Christ  
Zion United Church of Christ**

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551  
*St. Paul's UCC:* 610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org  
*Zion UCC:* 610-659-2775 -- mestme@aol.com -- www.1Zion.org

*No matter who you are,  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you're welcome here.*



SECOND SUNDAY  
OF  
*Advent*

*Welcome to our Combined  
10:15am Worship Service  
In-Person & Streaming Online*



**Sunday, December 5, 2021  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**

## Welcome!

*May God's loving presence be very real to you,  
and may you receive strength and guidance today  
That will enable you to handle life's challenges.*

### Children's Bulletins

Crayons and activity bulletins are available in the narthex.

The activities match today's Bible readings and are designed for 3-6 & 7-12 year olds.

### Biblias en Español

Biblias Bilingües en Español y Inglés están disponible en el vestíbulo narthex en la mesa de visitantes azul.

*(Bilingual Bibles in Spanish & English are available in the narthex hallway on the blue visitors' table).*

### Nursery

Persons of all ages (including children) are very welcome to participate in the entire worship service. Due to the COVID pandemic, for the safety of children, we are currently not offering a nursery during worship. Normally, we have supervised nursery for 0-8 year olds, located on the first floor.

### Junior Worship

For the safety of children, we are not offering Junior Worship during the pandemic. Normally, the option of "Junior Worship" is offered downstairs, on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month, following the children's sermon, for elementary age children to learn more about today's scripture lessons.

### Restrooms

Restrooms are located both on the first and second floors to the left of the elevator.

### Changing Tables

All four of our restrooms have changing tables. Each restroom has two "child care protection seats" to keep toddlers safe and secure while their parents use the restroom.

### Water Fountains

For the safety of all, our water fountains are disabled during the pandemic.

### Sunday School & Adult Faith Formation Classes

Classes for all ages are held at 9:00am.

### Sunday Worship

Sunday Worship is held at 10:15am.

### Prayer and Care

If you would like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list, or request a pastoral call, please call or email the church office. You are welcome to take home with you a copy of *Our Daily Bread* daily devotional booklet, located on a table in the narthex hallway.

### Looking for a Church to Call Home

If you are looking for a new church family home, we would be happy for you to consider St. Paul's or Zion United Church of Christ. For more information about St. Paul's, Zion, and the UCC, we invite you to talk with our pastors, an usher, a greeter, or any member of our churches.

### More Information...

Additional literature about our missions, ministries, and fellowship opportunities is located on the **Blue Visitor Table** in the narthex hallway, or contact us using the contact information on the front page of this bulletin.

Please let us know if we can be in prayer with you or if there is any way in which we can help make your worship experience more meaningful.

*{Symbols used in this bulletin: \* = if able please stand; ♪# = Red Hymnal Page; ♪# = Blue Hymnal Page}*



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### **Virtual Worship Service**

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**Facebook Live** (Zion) at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Zion-United-Church-of-Christ-Womelsdorf-733032070041250> -  
Live or Watch & Listen Later

**Phone Stream** at 1-888-649-5770 - Live or Listen Later

**Zoom**: Meeting ID: 104 401 368; Passcode: 301301 (or call 1-301-715-8592) - Live Only

*If you have any access problems, please let us know at 610-621-5770 or [Office@sprucc.org](mailto:Office@sprucc.org)*

# ORDER FOR WORSHIP

## We Gather

*We are coming together as a community of faith to worship our God,  
and provide for one another our love, support, and care.*

*Please Do Not move the red ribbons or sit where they are placed.  
They are there for your safety and the safety of those around you to help designate social distancing.*

### A TIME OF GATHERING

### RINGING OF THE BELL

### PRELUDE

### GREETING AND WELCOME

*{To center your hearts and minds,  
you are invited to individually offer this prayer silently  
during or before the Prelude}*

### PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP<sup>®</sup> (*Silently Before Worship Begins*)

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming, give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

### \*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*"There's a Voice in the Wilderness"*

*♩ NCH #120*

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### \*INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>®</sup>

Leader: Listen! Listen for a messenger from God.  
The way is being prepared for Christ's coming.

People: **We are here to listen for a word from God.  
We have gathered to prepare for Christ's advent.**

Leader: Come with your joys and sorrows, laughter and tears.  
There is a place for you in the company of seekers.

People: **We thank God for our acceptance in the church.  
We rejoice to offer the love of Christ to others.**

## We Repent

*This is a time to confess our wrongdoings and neglects, ask for God's mercy, admit our need for God's forgiving grace, hear the assurance of our forgiveness, and then give God our thanks and praise.*

### \*CALL TO CONFESSION<sup>®</sup> (Leader)

We come before the refiner's fire, that all falseness and impurities may be burned away. Beneath all the pretense and brokenness of our lives, God helps us to discover pure silver and gold. We are highly valued by our Maker. Let us be fully open to God's forgiving spirit.

### \*CONFESSION OF SIN<sup>®</sup> (Unison)

**O God, we have tried to cover up our sins, yet you know the disorder we have caused in our lives. You have witnessed our poor choices and our destructive habits. We have denied our baptism and ignored the responsibilities of discipleship. The good we do is often self-serving, while we avoid the full claims of gospel partnership. Hear our cries of repentance and turn our lives around, that we may know the wonder of your forgiveness, and more fully witness to the gospel in our daily living. Amen.**

### \*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

*{A time to silently offer our personal prayers of confession}*

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

### \*PRAYER FOR MERCY

*"Kyrie"*

*♩ Red #518*

Leader (*spoken*): Lord, have mercy upon us.  
**People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.**  
Leader (*spoken*): Christ, have mercy upon us.  
**People (*sung*): Christ, have mercy upon us.**  
Leader (*spoken*): Lord have mercy upon us.  
**People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.**

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### \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON<sup>®</sup> (Leader)

Good news! God has done great things for us. We are loved; we are forgiven; we are claimed by God's grace. The Holy One has begun a good work in us. Even now, the love of God is expanding our knowledge, sharpening our discernment, and equipping us for excellence. Go and bear good fruit for the Kingdom of God. **Amen.**

### \*CALL TO PRAISE

Leader: Let us offer our praise to the Lord.  
**People: May Jesus Christ be praised.**

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

### \*SUNG RESPONSE OF PRAISE

*"Let's Worship and Adore Him"*

*♩ Blue #247*

**Let's worship and adore Him,  
Let's worship and adore Him,  
Let's worship and adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.**

*Music: Wade's Cantus Diversi; arranged: Tom Fettke  
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*{Please be seated}*

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE <sup>①</sup> - PEACE

### INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES: *(Leader)*

We gather around the Advent wreath today knowing that we are not perfect-that we all make mistakes and do bad things. Only Jesus obeyed God fully. Jesus helps us to live as God wants us to live. Jesus gives us peace.

### READING OF SCRIPTURE: *(Leader)*

“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. 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.”

*(from Isaiah 9:6-7)*

### LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE: *(Leader)*

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is peace, for Christ is called the “Prince of Peace.” Christ’s name is also Emmanuel, “God with us.” The second presence of Christ with us gives us peace day by day.

*{The second Advent wreath blue candle is lit.}*

### PRAYER:

Leader: Let us pray...

**ALL: Eternal God, we thank you that through all the years you have given peace to your people. Help us to have your peace in our lives. We pray that in this Advent season, we may, by what we do, show your presence to the sick, to the hungry, and to the lonely, so that they too may have peace. Amen.**

## We Hear the Word of God

*We seek to learn more about God’s love and grace, and how we are to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our primary text on faith, which we consider to be scripture - sacred writings.*

*We believe the Bible to be the “inspired word of God.” Gospel (which means “Good News”) refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are Christians’ most central books of the Bible.*

### PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

**Old Testament Lesson:** [Malachi 3:1-4](#)

**New Testament Canticle:** [Luke 1:67-80](#)

*{A canticle is scripture that is not in the Book of Psalms, originally written in the Bible as a song, often read responsively with sung responses during worship.}*

Leader: Let us praise God with the Canticle of Zechariah...  
Then John the Baptist’s father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

Leader: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

**People: for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.**

Leader: He has raised up a mighty savior for us

**People: in the house of his servant David;**

Leader: as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

**People: that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.**

Leader: Thus he has shown the mercy

**People: promised to our ancestors,**

Leader: and has remembered his holy covenant,

**People: the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham**

Leader: to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
**People: might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

Leader: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,  
**Leader: for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways;**  
Leader: to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
**People: by the forgiveness of their sins.**

Leader: By the tender mercy of our God,  
**People: the dawn from on high will break upon us,**  
Leader: to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
**People: to guide our feet into the way of peace.**


Leader: The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.  
**People: You will have joy with gladness.**

Leader: The word of the Lord.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL LESSON:**                    [Luke 3:1-6](#)

Leader: The word of the Lord.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

**HYMN**                                    “The Baptist Shouts on Jordan’s Shore” vs. 1 & 3                                     **NCH #115**  
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**CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

**SERMON**

## We Respond with Thanks

*We have heard God's call and have come and worshiped,  
we have confessed our sins and been assured of our forgiveness, we have  
learned more about God's grace and God's will. We now respond by  
re-affirming our faith in God,  
praying with and for one another, trusting in God's providence in our world,  
and giving of ourselves for the sake of the mission and ministry of Jesus  
Christ.*

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

### \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison) *Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
he descended to the dead;  
on the third day he rose again,  
ascended into heaven,  
and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
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.**

\*The word "catholic" means "the universal church" and was the word used in the original version of the Creed. It does not refer here to the particular denomination of the Roman Catholic Church, but rather the whole Christian church of all denominations, the body of Christ, as a universal fellowship.

*{please be seated}*

### CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray....

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

*{A time of silent prayer}*

Leader: You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. May your Holy Spirit inspire the words of those who lead within the church. May our words and our lives bear witness to your love and grace. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill. We especially lift up in prayer.....

*{You are invited to say aloud or to yourself,  
names of those for whom you lift up in prayer}.*

Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: Hear those prayer needs yet unspoken.....

*{You are invited to say aloud or to yourself,  
any additional prayers}.*

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of the expectant Jesus, who taught us to pray....

#### LORD'S PRAYER *(Unison)*

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors,  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen.**

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

#### PRAYER RESPONSE

*"Let's Worship and Adore Him"*

*♩ Blue #247*

**We lift our prayers up to Him,  
We lift our prayers up to Him,  
We lift our prayers up to Him,  
Christ our Lord.**

*Music: Wade's Cantus Diversi; arranged: Tom Fettke; Text: Benjamin D. Motz  
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## OFFERING TIME AND TALENT

*{Prayer Needs, Joys, Opportunities for Study and Service, and other Announcements}*

### OFFERTORY INVITATION <sup>®</sup>

Leader: What is a fitting offering that is pleasing to God?

**People: When we sense the wonder of God's majesty**

Leader: and realize the amazing extent of God's concern for us,

**People: we can only respond with all that we have and all we are,**

Leader: What we place on the altar

**People: is a small measure of our gratitude.**

### RETURNING GOD'S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

Online Giving

*{As we share in hybrid worship, there is no passing of the plate in person.  
A plate is placed in the rear of the sanctuary for offerings to be placed  
when arriving or departing from the sanctuary.*

*Whether worshipping in person or online,  
the safest way to offer your tithe and offering to God through his church  
is through St. Paul's UCC secure [Online Giving](#) option on our website at [sprucc.org](#). [St. Paul's UCC Click Here](#)  
or Zion UCC's online giving at [www.1Zion.org](#) - [Zion UCC Click Here](#)  
Offerings may also be mailed to St. Paul's UCC; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551  
or Zion UCC; PO Box 97; Womelsdorf, PA 19567}.*

### OFFERTORY

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

#### \*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

*"Let's Worship and Adore Him"*

*♫ Blue #247*

**For He alone is worthy,  
For He alone is worthy  
For He alone is worthy,  
Christ the Lord.**

*Music: Wade's Cantus Diversi; arranged: Tom Fettke  
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#### \*OFFERTORY PRAYER <sup>®</sup> (Leader)

Gracious God, how good you have been to us! How meagerly we have responded. You have restored our fortunes when we felt all was lost. You have filled our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. We give thanks, not only with a portion of our income, but also through renewed commitment to righteous living. By your grace, we share in the work Christ came to accomplish among us. May love abound in and through us. **Amen.**

## We Are Sent Out

*In response to God's love and grace,  
we go out into the world to share God's Good News  
through our words and actions.*

#### \*COMMISSION <sup>®</sup>

Leader: Remember those messengers of the faith you have known;  
rejoice and give thanks for their witness.

**People: We, too, will prepare the way of Christ;  
We will help to level the hills and valleys.**

Leader: God will be with you wherever you go;  
The good work begun in you will be brought to completion.

**People: All flesh will see the salvation of our Lord;  
we will live in covenant with our Creator  
and at peace with our fellow humankind.**

**ALL: Amen.**

**\*BENEDICTION**

*{Please remember to wear a mask whenever singing}*

**\*THREE FOLD SUNG AMEN**

♪ **Red #558**  
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**\*SENDING HYMN**

*"Now Bless the God of Israel"*

♩ **NCH #110**  
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*{Acolyte carries the light back into the world, leading us,  
as we now go to carry God's light and love back into the world.}*

**POSTLUDE**

**TIME OF FELLOWSHIP**

***ALL are invited**  
to share in a time of Refreshments and Fellowship  
in the downstairs Miller Fellowship Hall*



**The Bulletins are given by**  
*Geneva Aulenbach & Family  
in loving memory of Geneva's mother,  
Sandy Bruckart.*

**The Altar Flowers are given by**  
*Marissa, Kayla and Ben Aulenbach  
in loving memory of their grandmother,  
Sandy Bruckart.*



## **The Flow of the Worship Service**

Our worship service has an intentional order to it. The flow of worship is called the liturgical movement. The movement reminds us weekly of our journey in faith of moving from being separated from God by sin, to being restored by God's grace as disciples of Christ. It is based on the sixth chapter of the Biblical book of Isaiah.

- (1) God welcomes us and invites us
- (2) We respond to God's call by worshipping Him
- (3) We confess our need for God's forgiveness and grace
- (4) We are assured of God's forgiveness and grace
- (5) We learn more about God's will through scripture, song, and sermon
- (6) We grow closer to God and one another through prayer
- (7) We give God thanks by offering our time, talent, and treasure
- (8) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others



## **Worship Service Resource Credits**

Biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible (1989) by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

- <sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission from *The New Century Hymnal* of the United Church of Christ. (1995). Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press. and/or the *Book of Worship* of the United Church of Christ (1986). New York: United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership.
  - <sup>2</sup> *Gathered By Love* by Lavon Baylor. (1994). United Church Press; Cleveland, OH.
  - <sup>3</sup> Reprinted with permission from *Sundays and Seasons*. (2021). Augsburg Fortress.
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  - <sup>6</sup> scouting.org - resources for Boy Scouts of America
  - <sup>7</sup> Reprinted with permission from *Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ*. (2013).
  - <sup>8</sup> *Lecturn Resource*. (2014). Logos Productions, Inc.; Grove Heights, MN.
  - <sup>9</sup> Edmonds, Robert Lee (Editor). (2008). *In Our Own Way; Living a Scouting Life Through Faith; A Handbook of Prayer and Devotion*. Dallas, TX: Red Honor Press
  - <sup>10</sup> Reprinted with Permission from *Lecturn Resource*. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.
  - <sup>11</sup> Miller, Earl D. (1994). *Consecrating Stewards*. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.
  - <sup>12</sup> The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz
  - <sup>13</sup> *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. (1982).
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**Password (for both): iamheretoserve**



Link to  
 Website's  
 Upcoming  
 Events

## About Today

**Church Season: Advent** - is a season of preparation for the coming of Christ: (1) the second coming of Christ; (2) the preparation for the anniversary of Jesus' birth on Christmas; and (3) the reminder to be daily aware of Christ's presence for the Kingdom of God is near. The season of Advent takes place during the four weeks before Christmas.

**Color of the Paraments** (cloths on the altar, pulpit, and lecturn):

**Blue** - symbolizes the hope found in the anticipated coming of Christ

**Violet** - symbolizes royalty and penitent preparation for Christ our King, who offers forgiveness

**Rose/Pink** - symbolizes joy, as expressed by Jesus' mother Mary

The suggested scripture lessons are from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which selects passages throughout the Bible over a three year cycle. The RCL is the most common lectionary used by Christian churches. We are in **Year C**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Luke.

The Bible is in two sections: Old Testament - OT (scripture prior to Christ's birth), located in the first 2/3 of the Bible; and New Testament - NT (about Christ & early church). The first four books of the NT are called the "Gospels," which Christians consider the most central books of the Bible.

### This Sunday, December 5 -- Lectionary Reading for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Malachi 3:1-4 *or* Baruch 5:1-9; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

#### **Malachi**

Malachi is the last book of the OT. It was written between 465-444 B.C. This book carries two messages: (1) because of their lack of devotion to God, God is not pleased with the people of the church; and (2) God will soon send a messenger to purify and reunite Israel.

#### **Baruch**

Baruch was a scribe and friend of the OT prophet Jeremiah. His book contains the oldest writings about the exile of the Jewish people in 597 B.C. by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, during the reign of the Jewish King Jehoiakim (609-598 B.C.). It was written to lead the Jewish people and their king to confess their sin, pray for God's forgiveness, and seek God's wisdom; and to console them that God was with them and would deliver and restore them. None of the original Hebrew writings of this book have ever been found. The present form was compiled and adapted in 168 B.C. to bring comfort to the Jewish people after the Syrian army captured and desecrated their Temple in 167 B.C.

Baruch is a deuterocanonical (after-canon or second-canon) text in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, and an apocryphal (secret, hidden, or non-canonical) book in most Protestant churches. The 18 deuterocanonical/apocryphal books are deemed important writings, but not held in the same high authoritative regard as the more widely accepted 66 canonized books of the Bible.

#### **The Letter of Paul to the Philippians**

This epistle (letter) (NT) was written by the Apostle Paul from prison in the 60s A.D. Paul and Timothy are sending this letter to the church in Philippi, thanking and rejoicing with them for their steadfast faithfulness, prayers, and support, cautioning them of missionaries who focus on physical wants and needs, and encouraging them to stay true and united to his and Timothy's teachings and example. Paul was a Christian, Jew, Pharisee, Roman citizen, and church leader, who had a direct encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Paul wrote more of the NT than any other person.

#### **The Gospel According to Luke**

The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles is attributed to Luke "the beloved physician," written around 59-90 A.D. Not having met Jesus personally, Luke undertook the task of "investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account" of Jesus Christ, "so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed."

### Next Sunday, December 12 -- Lectionary Reading for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

ADVENT

120

There’s a Voice in the Wilderness

Isa. 40:3–11; Ps. 103:15–17

J. Lewis Milligan, 1925; alt.

1 There’s a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a  
 2 O Zi - on, who of - fers good tid - ings, to the  
 3 But the word of our God is for - ev - er, our De -

call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a  
 height of the moun - tains dare! Lift your voice to the cit - ies of  
 fend - er’s will is strong; God stands in the midst of

high - way, a high - way for our God! The  
 Ju - dah: “Be - hold your God!” de - clare. Like the  
 na - tions, to ren - der right the wrong. Then

Before moving to Canada, J. Lewis Milligan was a successful British journalist and poet. This text was written in 1925 to celebrate the union of three churches into The United Church of Canada, a body he served as public relations director.

Tune: ASCENSION Irr.  
H. Hugh Bancroft, 1938

val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the loft - y hills brought  
 flowers of the field we per - ish, our hu - man works de -  
 God shall be as a shep-herd, the lambs gath-ered to God's

low: make straight all the crook - ed pla - ces  
 cay, the power and pomp of na - tions  
 breast; and pas - tures of peace shall greet them,

where Em - man - u - el may go!  
 shall pass like a dream a - way.  
 to give to the wea - ry rest.

ADVENT

The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore

115

Charles Coffin, 1736  
Transl. The New Century Hymnal, 1993

John 1:6-8, 19-28; Mark 1:1-8;  
Luke 3:2-6, 15-18; Matt. 3:1-6, 11-12

1 The Bap - tist shouts on Jor - dan's shore, the  
2 The earth and sky and sea now feel that  
3 Clean up your hearts, lay down the way, for  
4 Through you, O Je - sus, you a - lone sal -

earth shakes with the might - y roar, A - wake, let laz - y  
which their Au - thor will re - veal: The Child now leap - ing  
God ap - proach-es day by day; Pre - pare for such a  
va - tion, so - lace, strength are known; With - out your love we

sleep now flee: be - hold, the voice of proph - e - cy!  
in the womb as God does hu - man form as - sume.  
wor - thy heir, for such a guest your house pre - pare.  
fade like grass, like wilt - ed flowers our lives will pass.

5 Your hands ex-tend, our pain em-brace,  
lift up the pros-trate, show your face;  
Though we in part your beau-ty know,  
O blos-som forth, your splen-dor show.

6 O One who comes to set us free,  
O Child, to you our song will be,  
With Fa-ther, Spir-it moth-er-ing,  
to you shall praise for-ev-er ring!

Charles Coffin, distinguished scholar and Latin author, was rector of the University of Paris for a time. The hymn, appearing here in a new translation, is from a breviary ordered by the archbishop of Paris to replace ancient Latin hymns with newer ones.

Tune: WINCHESTER NEW L.M.  
Musikalisches Handbuch, Hamburg, 1690

ADVENT

110

Now Bless the God of Israel

Luke 1:68-79; Ps. 18:1-3; Isa. 9:2-7

Ruth Duck, 1985

1 Now bless the God of Is - ra - el, who comes in love and power,  
 2 Re - mem-ber-ing the cov - e - nant, God res - cues us from fear,  
 3 In ten - der mer-cy, God will send the day - spring from on high,

who rais - es from the roy - al house de - liv - erance in this hour.  
 that we might serve in hol - i - ness and peace from year to year;  
 our ris - ing sun, the light of life for those who sit and sigh.

Through ho - ly proph-ets God has sworn to free us from a - larm,  
 And you, my child, shall go be - fore to preach, to proph-e - sy,  
 God comes to guide our way to peace, that death shall reign no more.

to save us from the heav-y hand of all who wish us harm.  
 that all may know the ten - der love, the grace of God most high.  
 Sing prais-es to the Ho - ly One! O wor - ship and a - dore!

*This text by United Church of Christ clergywoman Ruth Duck is a paraphrase of the "Benedictus," which is often sung at morning prayer. She came to appreciate daily prayer while studying at the University of Notre Dame.*

Tune: FOREST GREEN C.M.D.  
Traditional English melody  
Harm. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

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