

# The United Church of Christ of Robesonia

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551

610-621-5770 -- [office@sprucc.org](mailto:office@sprucc.org) -- [www.sprucc.org](http://www.sprucc.org)

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

## Christmas Eve Worship



*Welcome to our  
7:00pm Worship Service  
In-Person & Streaming Online*



**Sunday, December 24, 2023  
Christmas Eve  
7:00pm**

# 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 welcome to participate in the entire worship service. For an additional option, we have a supervised nursery for 0-8 year olds, located on the first floor. Please see Nursery Coordinators, Laurie Ostimchuk, Beth Miller & Geri Gammel if you are in need of the nursery.

## Junior Worship

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, following the mini message, the option of "Junior Worship" is offered downstairs for elementary age children to learn more about today's scripture lessons with fellow youth.

## 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

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

## Sunday School & Adult Faith Formation Classes

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

## Sunday Worship

Sunday Worship is held at 10:15am.

## Youth Group

Our Youth Group, for those in grades 5-12 (or ages 12-20 years old), meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Last Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:00pm. Members and visitors alike are welcome.

## Young Children & Family Ministries

This ministry's focus is on children younger than youth group and their families, and most of the monthly activities are welcoming of children of all ages. Members and visitors alike are welcome.

## 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 United Church of Christ of Robesonia. For more information about our church, we invite you to talk with our pastors, an usher, a greeter, or any member of our church.

## 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}*

## **Virtual Worship Service**

Online: [Live Stream](#) at [sprucc.org](http://sprucc.org) - Live or Watch & Listen Later on [Our YouTube Channel](#)  
[Facebook Live](#) at <https://www.facebook.com/www.sprucc.org/> - Live or Watch & Listen Later  
[Phone Stream](#) at 1-888-649-5770 - Live or Listen Later

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



www.sprucc.org



Free WiFi

# 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.*

### A TIME OF GATHERING

### RINGING OF THE BELL

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*{If you have not already done so,  
please sign and pass the pew welcome pad  
to the person next to you.}*

### PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP<sup>®</sup> *(Individual Silent Prayer)*

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

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### HANDBELL PRELUDE

*"The First Nowell"  
"Once in Royal David's City"*

*arranged by Helman  
arranged by Larson*

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

### \*PROCESSIONAL HYMN "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Vs1 **O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;**

*Refrain*

**O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.**

Vs3 **Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;  
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**

*Refrain*

Vs4 **See how the shepherds, summoned to his cradle,  
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze;  
we too will thither bend our joyful footsteps;**

*Refrain*

Vs5 **Child, for us sinners, poor and in the manger,  
we would embrace thee with love and awe.  
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?**

*Refrain*

*Composed: John F. Wade, trans. by Frederick Oakeley;  
Public Domain*

**\*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**

Leader: Angels from the realms of glory,  
proclaimed the Messiah’s birth  
People: **Let all creation join in praising,  
with our voices evermore raising**

**\*SUNG CALL TO WORSHIP** “Angels From the Realms of Glory”

♪ Red #104

**Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the new born King.**

*Words: James Montgomery; Music: Henry T. Smart  
Public Domain*

**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>2</sup> (Leader)

When the light of God’s glory shines on us, we may be terrified as were the shepherds on a hillside near Bethlehem. Light reveals our secret sins, our unfaithfulness, our stubborn pursuit of our own agendas. Yet the light beckons us with the hope of a better way. Let us seek it as we make our confession. Let us pray...

**\*CONFESSION OF SIN** <sup>2</sup> (Unison)

**God of glory, God of peace, we confess that we have shunned the light that reveals the truth about us. We cling to worldly things rather than sharing the gifts of this earth. We trust ourselves above all. Save your people, O God; sustain the rivers and trees that sing your praise; and free us to live boldly in the light and truth of Jesus, our Savior. Amen.**

**\*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

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

**\*PRAYER FOR MERCY**

“Kyrie”

♪ Red #518

*Public Domain*

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.**

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON** <sup>2</sup> *(Leader)*

The grace of God shines upon us, bringing salvation to the whole world. We are saved, our sins are washed away, not because of anything we have done, but according to God's mercy in Jesus Christ. Renewed by the Holy Spirit, let us live in hope, peace, joy, love, and light. **Amen.**

**\*CALL TO PRAISE**

Leader: We have heard angels from on high sweetly singing over the plains

People: **We join the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains**

**\*SUNG RESPONSE OF PRAISE**     *"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

*♪Red #105  
French Carol  
Public Domain*

**Glo - - - - ria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Glo - - - - ria, in excelsis Deo!**

*{Please be seated}*

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Light** <sup>1</sup>

**INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES:** *(Leader)*

On this Christmas Eve we are gathered as God's people to celebrate again what Christ's coming means to the world. We join with Christians all over the world who are celebrating tonight.

**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.

*(from Isaiah 9:6)*

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

*(from Luke 2:10, 14)*

and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

*(from Romans 5:5)*

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

Tonight we relight the four Advent candles and recall that the good news means:

Hope           *{a blue candle is lit}*

Peace          *{a blue candle is lit}*

Joy            *{a pink candle is lit}*

Love           *{a blue candle is lit}*

Jesus Christ is the greatest gift who makes all these other gifts possible. So, we light the Christ candle now, as we think about what Christ's coming means to each one of us.

*{The Christ Candle of the wreath is lit}*

**PRAYER:**

Leader: Let us pray...

**ALL:** We thank you, God, for your gift of Jesus Christ to the entire world. We thank you that Christ’s coming makes hope, peace, joy, and love possible for every person in every nation. Encourage us to do our part to bring good will and peace to our families, our churches, our neighborhoods, and the world. Now let your Spirit put us in touch with you, the living God, through the words and music we hear tonight. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. 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**

**First Lesson**            [Isaiah 9:2-7](#)

**Second Lesson**        [Titus 2:11-14](#)

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

**Gospel Lesson**        [Luke 2:1-20](#)

*(RSV - reprinted in the bulletin on page 15)*

**HYMN**

*“Go Tell it on the Mountain”*

♫ *Blue #258*

*Refrain:*    **Go, tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and every-where;  
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born!**

**Vs1**    **While shepherds kept their watching  
O’er silent flocks by night,  
Beheld through-out the heavens  
There shone a holy light.**

**Vs3**    **Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born,  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn.**

*Words adapt.: John W. Work, Jr.;  
African American Spiritual;  
Public Domain*

**Vs2**    **The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior’s birth.**

**MESSAGE**

*Why Christmas Trees Aren’t Perfect*

*by Richard H. Schneider  
Illustrated by Elizabeth J. Miles*

**HYMN**

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem”*

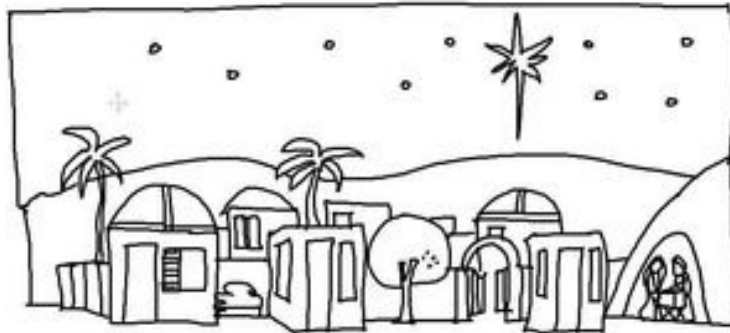
**Vs1** O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie;  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

**Vs3** How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him  
still,  
The dear Christ enters in.

**Vs2** For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wond'ring love.  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth;  
And praises sing to God, the King,  
And peace to men on earth.

**Vs4** O holy child of Bethlehem!  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in;  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel!

*Words: Phillips Brooks;  
Music: Lewis H. Redner;  
Public Domain*



## 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 into hades;  
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" literally means "universal."*

*In the Apostle's Creed we affirm a belief in the "universal Christian church"  
of which Jesus Christ is the sole head.*

*This creed was used by the first Apostles (hence its name), predating the existence of differing denominations.*

*{Please be seated}*

### OFFERTORY INVITATION <sup>②</sup>

**Leader:** We, who have known God's gracious hospitality, are invited to share together in ministry to the homeless, the forgotten, the weary, the lost of our world.

**People:** **Our offerings of gratitude remind us of God's claim on us and on all we possess.**

**Leader:** Let us make a generous response, in thanksgiving for all we have received.

**People:** **We give generously and gladly.**

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

Online Giving

*{Today, we will be passing the offering plate in person. You may also offer your tithe and offering to God through our secure [Online Giving](http://sprucc.org) option on our website at [sprucc.org](http://sprucc.org) (Click Here), or you may mail your offering to United Church of Christ of Robesonia; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551}.*



**CHORAL OFFERTORY**

*"Mary, Did you Know?"*

by Buddy Greene and Mark Lowry

*{Those who are able, please rise and sing the offertory response}*

**\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

*"What Child is This"*

**♩ Blue# 281**  
Words: William C Dix;  
Public Domain

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king to own Him;  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
This, this is Christ the King;  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER** <sup>②</sup> *(Leader)*

Gracious God, your gifts are surprising and beyond our expectation. Thank you for gifting us once again with Christmas. We join ourselves and our offerings with the shepherds who returned to their work glorifying and praising you for all they had heard and seen. With Mary, we will ponder the words and music of this holy event. Transform us as messengers of good news that we may serve you with vision and high purposes in the days ahead.  
**Amen.**

**Sacrament of Holy Communion** <sup>①④</sup>

*The Sacrament of Holy Communion is the central act of Christian worship, bringing us more fully together with one another and the Triune God, through the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-26, Luke 22:14-23, John 13:21-30)*

**\*INVITATION**

Leader: Dearly beloved in the Lord: Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Communion of his Body and Blood, that it might be the abiding memorial of his atoning death; the seal of his perpetual presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit; the mystical representation of the sacrifice of himself on the cross; the pledge of his undying love for his people; and the bond of his living union and fellowship with them to the end of time.

**ALL: The celebration of the Lord's Supper has ever been regarded by the Church as the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship. What we do here is not merely with signs, but with the realities these signs represent. We seek to approach the Lord's Table rightly, striving to be devout and repentant, with a believing mind.**

Leader: We cordially invite to partake of this Sacrament all who are truly grieved and penitent for their sins, who look to the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation, who abide in the fellowship of his Church, and who desire to possess his Spirit and walk in his ways. To all such the compassionate Redeemer himself says: Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

**\*COMMUNION PRAYER**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

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

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader:

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God, who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who made humankind in your own image, and whose tender mercies are over all your works.

We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none.

We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless.

We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory. We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory.

We give thanks to you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons and daughters of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy and sing....

**\*SANCTUS**

*“Holy, Holy, Holy”*

*Seraphic Hymn*

*{Sanctus is Latin for “Holy.” Seraphic Hymn refers to the song of the Seraphim Angels.  
Sabaoth is a Hebrew name for God, referring to God as both creator and ruler of the world}.*

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;  
Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of thy glory,  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!  
Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,  
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!**

*Music Alonzo P. Howard  
Public Domain*

*{Please be seated}*

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader:

Lord, we remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

Leader: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**ALL: Christ has died,  
Christ is risen,  
Christ will come again.**

## PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Ordained Minister:

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We offer you these gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service in behalf of all people.

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, both here at this table and at the tables of those who worshiping with us from their home this holy night, and bless us that as we receive these gifts at your table, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united in communion with Christ and with one another, and we may continue faithful in all things.

**ALL: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. Amen.**

## RAISING AND BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND RAISING OF THE CUP *(Leader)*

### LAMB OF GOD

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

**People: have mercy on us.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

**People: have mercy on us.**

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

**People: grant us peace.**

### CALL TO THE SUPPER

Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.  
Come, for all things are ready.

## SHARING THE ELEMENTS

*{This evening we will be partaking of communion in the pews.*

*The Elders will first distribute the bread,  
the **gluten free** is in the **center paper cup**,  
the regular bread is around it.  
The Pastor will then instruct the congregation  
to eat the bread at the same time.*

*The Elders will distribute the wine and grape juice.  
The **wine is red** in the outer rings, and  
the **grape juice is white** in the inner ring.  
The Pastor will then instruct the congregation  
to drink of the cup at the same time.}*

*---  
{We invite all who profess a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour  
to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion.  
You do not need to be a member of this congregation  
or of the UCC to participate in Communion.}*

*---  
Youth & Children:  
Children of Members who have not yet professed their Christian faith through the Rite of Confirmation  
are to participate in communion and refresher classes prior to communing,  
and follow the "Children & Communion Guide."*

*Children of Visitors - if you commune at your home church, you are welcome to commune here.*

*---  
{Those who are able, please rise}*

## \*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**ALL: Amen.**

*{Please be seated}*

## Candlelight Service <sup>①</sup>

### PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

**Gospel Lesson**

[John 1:1-14](#)

(† NT - pg 91)

### THE PROCLAMATION *(Leader)*

The God who said, "Let there be light," has caused light to shine in our hearts. That light is the glory of God reflected in the face of Jesus Christ. As our candles are a sea of light lit from the one light of Christ, so may the church reflect Christ's light and love in the world. Let us share the Light of Christ.

### SHARING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

*{We will receive the light from the Christ candle.  
As the ushers bring the light to you, please pass the light to the person next to you.  
Keep your lighted candle upright and  
let the person with the unlighted candle tilt their candle to receive the light.  
We will then stand and sing "Silent Night".}*

*{For those who are able, please rise}*

**\*HYMN**

*“Silent Night, Holy Night”*

**Vs1 Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, All is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child!  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Vs6 Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love’s pure light!  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the Dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.**

**Vs2 Silent Night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight!  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing, “Alleluia!”  
Christ, the Savior, is born,  
Christ, the Savior, is born.**

*Words: Joseph Mohr; Trans by John F. Young;  
Music: Franz Gruber;  
Public Domain*

**\*PASTORAL PRAYER**

**\*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.**

**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** ®

**Leader:** As shepherds praised God for all they heard and seen,  
We are commissioned to share Christmas joy.

**People:** **A baby has become our Wonderful Counselor.  
A child is pointing us to the way of hope, peace, joy, and love.**

**Leader:** The grace of God is your salvation, now and always.  
Jesus Christ is the blessed hope who embraces us.

**People:** **We join in glorifying and praising God.  
We welcome the Christ into our hearts and homes.  
We now go to share the Christmas message through our actions and our  
words with the world.**

**ALL:** Amen.

**\*BENEDICTION**

*{Please Extinguish Candles}*

**\*SENDING HYMN**

*“Joy to the World”*

Vs1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come;  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heav'n and nature sing,  
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature  
sing.

Vs3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as the curse is found.

Vs2 Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns;  
Let men their songs employ,  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills,  
and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Vs4 He rules the world with truth and  
grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, and wonders of His  
love.

*Words: Issac Watts;  
Music: Arr. from G.F. Handel by Lowell Mason;  
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**POSTLUDE**



**Free WiFi:** StPaulsUCC-Guest & StPaulsUCC-5G-Guest  
**Password (for both):** iamheretoserve

*May the  
Miracle of  
Christmas  
fill your heart  
with joy.*

## The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

## The Shepherds and the Angels

And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.





## 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) We experience greater oneness with God and each another through Communion
- (9) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others



## Worship Service Resource Credits

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  - ② United Church of Christ Neighbors in Need (NIN) 2023 Resources.
  - ③ *Led By Love* by Lavon Baylor. (1996). United Church Press; Cleveland, OH.
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  - ⑪ 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
  - ⑫ Reprinted with Permission from *Lecturn Resource*. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.
  - ⑬ Miller, Earl D. (1994). *Consecrating Stewards*. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.
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## ††† General Announcements †††

### Welcome!

Merry Christmas! May you feel God's love surrounding you on this very special night as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### Christmas Eve Services

Today's service will begin at 7:00pm. There is a later service that will begin at 11:00pm. Both services will include music, candlelight, and communion. Please join us for one or both.

**All of the services on December 24<sup>th</sup> will be in-person and through Live Stream, Phone Stream and Facebook Live.**

### Annual Pork & Sauerkraut Meal

The Annual Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner will take place on **Monday, January 1, 2024 from 11:00am to 2:00pm.** You may come to eat-in or take-out a meal. The cost is \$12 for adults, \$8.00 for children 6-12 years of age, free for children 5 and under. The menu consists of pork, sauerkraut, green beans, mashed potatoes, apple sauce, roll & cake. Having a pork & sauerkraut meal is a tradition for many/most Pennsylvania-German (Pennsylvania-Deutsche) families. It is a delicious way to begin the new year. Komm onct and eat yourself full!

Help will be needed on the day of the dinner. Please contact Steve Miller or Brian Keppley if you can help.

### Annual Life Begins at 75 Party

The Conrad Weiser Lions Club will hold their Annual Life Begins at 75 Party on Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:00noon at St. Daniel's Lutheran Church. The dinner is for those 75+ years in age and who live or attend church in the Robesonia area. The party consists of dinner, entertainment, and lots of fellowship. If you are 75+ and have not been contacted, please call Tom Murdough at 610-223-3618. If a ride is needed, transportation can be arranged.

### Christmas Fund Offering

The Christmas Fund Offering is usually received on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Funds collected are used to care for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to our lower-income retirees. To learn more please go to [pbucc.org](http://pbucc.org).

Christmas Fund Offering envelopes are the purple envelopes. If you did not receive one when you entered the sanctuary, there are some on one of the tables in the vestibule. Please consider giving to this worthy cause.

### Church Activities

No Bible Studies or choir rehearsals between Christmas and New Years.

No Sunday School next Sunday (12/31).

### Prayers

Please keep in your prayers the many who have medical concerns, need healing, help and God's assuring presence. Please pray for those in our military, first responders, and those whose jobs put them in dangerous situations. Please pray for those throughout our world who need help, protection and support. Please pray for peace in the world.

## About Today

**Church Season - Christmas** - Christmas is the season of celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed one, who is our King and Saviour, who is the Light of the World. The season of Christmas last 12 days and is from sunset of December 24 through January 5. (January 6 is Epiphany).

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

**White** - symbolizes Christ as the Light of the World. of Christ's presence for the Kingdom of God is near.

**Colors of the Advent Season** (such as used for the Advent Candles):

**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 B**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Mark.

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).

### Tonight, December 24, 2023, Lectionary Reading for Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

#### Isaiah

The book of Isaiah (OT) is attributed to three prophets. The first of whom is from where the book gets its name, and is about Isaiah's call to become a prophet and his prophecy that Jerusalem will face God's judgement regarding its immorality in order to be God's Holy City (chaps. 1-39, written 738-688 B.C.), the second is about living in exile in Babylon (chaps. 40-55, written 597-539 B.C.), and the third is about the return from exile to Judah and the rebuilding of the Temple (chaps. 56-66, written 520-515 B.C.). A prophet is one who is divinely appointed by God to lead and instruct.

#### Psalm 96

This OT hymn is a song of praise to God, who with righteousness is both ruler and judge. Glory is given to God who is above everything else in the universe.

#### The Letter of Paul to Titus

This epistle (letter) is written to Titus, who occasionally served and traveled with Paul. Paul is writing instructions to Titus, who is in Crete to organize churches recently established by Paul. 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are known as Paul's Pastoral Letters, because they serve to provide guidance for the leadership of newly formed Christian churches. 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. (C.E.). 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."

### Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> , Lectionary Reading for First Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40