The United Church of Christ of Robesonia

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551

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



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

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December 11, 2022 3rd Sunday of Advent Gaudete Sunday 10:15 a.m.

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. For an additional option, we have supervised nursery for 0-8 year olds, located on the first floor.

Junior Worship

On the 2nd and 3rd 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

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; S# = Red Hymnal Page; <math>J# = Blue Hymnal Page}







Free WiFi

Virtual Worship Service

Online: Live Stream at spruce.org - Live or Watch & Listen Later on <u>St. Paul's UCC YouTube Channel</u> <u>Facebook Live</u> (St. Paul's) at <u>https://www.facebook.com/www.spruce.org/</u> - Live or Watch & Listen Later <u>Phone Stream</u> 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 @spruce.org

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

WELCOME AND 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 2 (Unison)

Mighty One, we rejoice that you strengthen our weak hands and make firm our feeble knees. You open our eyes and unstop our ears. You meet our hungers with good things. You disturb our false pride while helping us discover our true strength. You topple us from our pretensions while lifting up the lowly to claim the inner power you alone can provide. We have assembled to worship you. Awaken the gladness that comes when we recognize your presence. We long to know you in this hour. Amen.

PRELUDE

{Those who are able, please rise}

*PROCESSION	AL HYMN
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"Praise the Almighty!"

Red #8 One License #A-728042 Reprinted at the back of the bulletin on colored paper.

*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 2

Leader: Come away from hast and frantic busyness. This is the season for quiet waiting.

People: It is hard to still our souls when we are so busy. It is hard to be patient with ourselves or others.

Leader: Receive God's mercy and strengthen your hearts. A Savior is coming; God's love is near.

People: We want to hear and believe God's promises. Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior.

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 ^② (Leader)

To all whose lives seem like a desert wasteland, God offers refuge and invites: Come to the living waters. To all who feel they are wrestling with lions and ravenous beasts, God offers a refuge. The Judge who is standing before us awaits our confession with compassions and the promise of healing.

*Confession of Sin ② (Unison)

Gracious God, come into our emptiness. We feel empty because we have shut you out of our lives. Break through our pretensions, Holy One. We pretend to be powerful because we have not claimed the peace that is available deep within when you dwell with us. Quiet our grumbling and complaining. We are impatient because we have focused on things, not on you. Enter our lives with the forgiveness you have promised to all who are truly sorry for their unfaithfulness. Release us from our self-created prisons. Amen.

*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

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

*SUNG PRAYER FOR MERCY	"Kyrie"	Red #518
Leader (spoken):	Lord, have mercy upon us.	Public Domain
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[®] (Leader)

God speaks to our fearful hearts. Be strong. Do not fear. I will come to save you. Sorrow and sighing flee away. Joy and gladness are yours. "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them." Praise God! **Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE FOR JOY [®]

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES: (Advent Reader)

Soon we shall celebrate the birth of Jesus. We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angel said on that first Christmas Day: "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people."

READING OF SCRIPTURE: (Advent Reader)

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

(from John 15:9-11)

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE: (Advent Reader)

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is joy, joy that is ours not only at Christmas but always.

(Light the third (rose/pink) candle in the wreath)

PRAYER

ALL:

Advent Reader: Let us pray...

O Holy One, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. We can feel a joy in our lives and see it in those around us. Still, for some of us this is a sad time because of unhappy things that have happened in our lives. Help us to have the joy that does not depend on earthly happiness but on you. Help us to be filled with your joy so that we may share it with a joyless world. Amen.

*CALL TO PRAISE (1)

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



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(Please be seated)

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 Canticle (New Testament Song): Mary's Magnificat: <u>Luke 1:39-55</u> NCH 732 Carolyn Jennings



Leader: Let us praise God with Mary's Magnificat... Sung Refrain: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Leader: In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my LORD comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the LORD."

Sung Refrain: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

- Leader: And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the LORD,
- People: and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
- Leader: for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
- People: Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
- Leader: for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
- People: and holy is his name.

Sung Refrain: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

- Leader: His mercy is for those who fear him
- People: from generation to generation.
- Leader: He has shown strength with his arm;
- People: he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
- Leader: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
- People: and lifted up the lowly;

Leader: he has filled the hungry with good things, **People: and sent the rich away empty.**

Sung Refrain: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Leader: He has helped his servant Israel,

People: in remembrance of his mercy,

Leader: according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

People: to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Sung Refrain: My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

New Testament Letter: <u>James 5:7-12</u>

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

GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 11:2-11

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

Hymn

"Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus"

Red #89 Public Domain

MINI-MESSAGE

{Children may return to their pews and remain for the rest of worship, or 0-8 year olds may go downstairs to nursery, or on the 2nd & 3rd Sundays of the month, elementary age children may go downstairs at this time for the additional option of "Junior Worship")

CHILDREN'S SONG "Praise Him"

#89 Master Chorus Book Traditional Lyndell Leatherman

Praise him, praise him, praise him in the morning, praise him at the noontime. Praise him, praise him, praise him when the sun goes down.

Serve him, serve him, serve him in the morning, serve him at the noontime. Serve him, serve him, serve him when the sun goes down.

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: The Apostle's 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.

(Please be seated)

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you. **People: And also with you.** Leader: Let us pray....

SILENT PRAYER

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.

SUNG PRAYER RESPONSE tune: "Gloria"

We uplift our prayers, we uplift our prayers, we uplift our prayers to you Lord. Hear our prayers, grant us peace, alleluia, alleluia!

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OFFERTORY INVITATION ⁽²⁾

Leader: God continues to lift up the lowly and to topple the powerful from their thrones. **People:** God judges us, not by worldly standards of greatness but according to the genuineness of our compassion and the extent of our faithfulness. Leader: Our offerings are one measure of our priorities.

People: May they reflect glad and generous hearts.

RETURNING GOD'S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

CHORAL ANTHEM

"All Earth is Hopeful"

ful" Alberto Taule

{Those who are able, please rise}

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

tune: "Gloria"

Given to God, given to God, all we ha-ve is yours Lord! Lifted to God, lifted to God, alleluia, alleluia!

Receive our gifts, receive our gifts, all we ha-ve is yours Lord! Lifted in praise, lifted in praise, alleluia, alleluia!

Text: Benjamin Motz; Music:Jacques Berthier Reproduced with permission under license #3087725 CCLI

{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 worshiping 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 <u>Online Giving</u> option on our website at **sprucc.org**. <u>St. Paul's UCC Click Here</u> 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 PRAYER 2

Majestic God, thank you for inviting us to share the blessings you pour out on us. We want to extend the healing ministry of Jesus who gave sight to those who were blind and new insight to some who only pretended to see. Use our resources to heal attitudes as well as bodies, to bring wholeness, not just cures. Help us to address the inequities of the earth that leave so many without food or shelter or hope. Lead us into your kingdom in the midst of our daily living. **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 ⁽²⁾

- Leader: God has been present with us here today. God also sends us out into the world.
- People: Our eyes and ears have been opened to God's truth. We have good news for all who need to hear it.
- Leader: Be patient with others and do not grumble. Be patient with yourselves as you seek the Holy Way.

People: Like the prophets, we seek to speak in God's name. Like lowly servants, we are eager to help others.

ALL: Amen.

*BENEDICTION

*THREE FOLD SUNG AMEN

Red #558 Public Domain

*SENDING HYMN

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

Red #99 Public Domain

Reprinted at the back of the bulletin on colored paper.

{During the hymn, today's Greeters & Ushers may return to the rear of the sanctuary, to help greet after worship.}

{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

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

TIME OF FELLOWSHIP



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 worshiping 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.

- ¹⁰ 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.
- ² Gathered By Love by Lavon Baylor. (1994). United Church Press; Cleveland, OH.
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- ⁽⁹ Reprinted with permission from the Order of Worship for the Reformed Church in the United States. and/or The Hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. (1985) New York: United Church Press.
- ⁽⁵⁾ Reprinted with permission from Sourcebook of Worship Services
- ⁽⁶⁾ Reprinted with permission from Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ. (2013).
- [®] Lecturn Resource. (2014). Logos Productions, Inc.; Grove Heights, MN.
- 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
- [®] Reprinted with Permission from Lecturn Resource. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.

Miller, Earl D. (1994). Consecrating Stewards. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.

¹⁰ The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz

The Rev. Mary Etta Mest Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. (1982).

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PO Box 97; Womelsdorf, PA 19567 www.1Zion.org

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Free WiFi: StPaulsUCC-Guest & StPaulsUCC-5G-Guest **Password** (for both): iamheretoserve Website's Link to Upcoming Eve



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.

Gaudete Sunday: This "Sunday of Joy" is the third Sunday of Advent. It is also known as "Refreshment Sunday." For those who are fasting during the Advent season, this is a day to break from that fast.

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

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 A**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Matthew.

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).

This Sunday, December 11, 2022 -- Lectionary Reading for the 3rd Sunday of Advent-Gaudete Sunday

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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."

James

This NT Epistle (letter) is commonly attributed to James, the brother of Jesus, who was a leader in the Christian church from 36 AD until his martyrdom in 62 AD. This letter is written not to one particular church in a particular area but a number of Christian churches in general. James addresses a number of topics in his letter including: being faithful in times of trial, that real faithfulness involves putting words into practice, the importance of helping the poor and not seeking earthly riches, speaking appropriately, choosing God's wisdom over Earthly wisdom, and the importance of actively being in a Christian community of faith in support of one another.

The Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew's Gospel was written around 80-90 A.D. in Antioch, Syria by a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian. The first writing was probably by a Christian scribe who wrote in the name of Matthew. Matthew was a disciple who knew Jesus personally.

Next Sunday, Decemb	er 18 , 2022 Lectio	onary Reading for the 4th	Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 2:1 -5	Psalm 122	Romans 13:11-14	Matthew 24:36-44

From the Addiction & Recovery Taskforce:	The Pennsylvania Department of Health reports that of the 5,343 overdose deaths that occurred in PA in 2021 78% involved fentanyl. It is odorless, tasteless and cannot be easily detected. It is often found in street drugs without the user being aware it is there in what could be a	deadly dose. Until November 3, the state of Pennsylvania classified fentanyl strips as drug paraphernalia. On that date Governor Wolf signed a bill making them legal. These strips would allow people to test drugs before use, which may save their lives. This is part of Harm Reduction initiatives	being brought forward across the country. As of January 2023, these strips will be available from <u>nextdistro.org</u> and other resources.	UCC Seeking Generosity Officers	The United Church of Christ, National Setting has an opening for four Generosity Officers to be deployed throughout the U.S. by region. The Generosity Officers will assist the Director of Philanthropy, the Development Strategist, OPTIC team, and volunteers in carrying out the major gift program/planned giving program of the national setting	of the United Church of Christ. Each will hold primary responsibility for the solicitation of individual gifts of \$10k or more for the UCC. These positions will be charged to identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward 75- 100 prospects and donors, concentrating on one of the identified	Regions of the UCC, partnering with other staff and conference offices and local churches as appropriate. This position will require both electronic and direct face-to-face solicitation and stewardship, with an expectation of travel.	Generosity Officer (Middle Atlantic): Penn NE, Penn SE, Penn Central, Penn West, Central Atlantic – Apply at this link: https://www.appone.com/MainInfoReq.asp?R_ID=5038752
CHURCH COMMINICAS	December 11, , 2022 The Christmas Fund	"[The Magi] set out and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy." Matthew 2: 9-10	The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.		This year, we rejoice at the opening of possibilities for gathering and worshipping together again, as we anticipate the good news of great joy at Christmas. Still, challenges remain for many of our pastoral leaders who continue to experience loss of income as congregations struggle with budget shortfalls.	Please show your continued gratitude for our active and retired UCC clergy who need our support by encouraging your congregation to give generously to the Christmas Fund this year.	* * * * * CHRISTMAS FUND FOR THE VETERANS OF THE CROSS AND THE EMERGENCE FUND	A Construction that the Persistent that the second second construction of the second second construction of the second se

WWW.PSEC.ORG

OUR CHURCH'S WIDER MISSION IN SOUTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA







Music used by permission of Mrs. Julius Röntgen.

His Advent 99 LANCASHIRE LAURENTIUS LAURENTI, 1700 Tr. Sarah B. FINDLATER, 1854 7.6.7.6.D. HENRY SMART, 1836 In joyous rhythm 1. Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, And let your lights ap - pear; 2. See that your lamps are burn - ing; Re - plen - ish them with oil, 3. Our Hope and Ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear! The eve - ning is ad - van - cing, And dark - er night is near: And wait for your sal - va - tion, The end of earth - ly toil. A - rise, Thou Sun so longed for, O'er this be - night - ed sphere! The Bride-groom is a - ris - ing, And soon He draw - eth nigh; The watch - ers the moun-tain Pro-claim the Bride-groom near, on With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, We plead, O Lord, to see Up, pray, and watch, and wres - tle: At mid-night comes the cry. Go meet Him as He com - eth, With al - le - lu - ias clear. of earth's re-demp - tion That brings us un - to Thee. The day A-MEN.