

The United Church of Christ of Robesonia

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551

610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org

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



*Welcome to our
11:00pm Worship Service
In-Person & Streaming Online*

† † †

**Sunday, December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve
11:00pm**

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 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

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 2nd 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](https://www.sprucc.org) at [sprucc.org](https://www.sprucc.org) - Live or Watch & Listen Later on [Our YouTube Channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
[Facebook Live](https://www.facebook.com/www.sprucc.org/) at <https://www.facebook.com/www.sprucc.org/> - Live or Watch & Listen Later
[Phone Stream](https://www.sprucc.org) 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



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 ^③

*{To center our hearts and minds,
as transition from the chaos of the outside world into holy calm of God's presence}*

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.

PIANO PRELUDE

"Go Tell it on the Mountain"

arranged by John Carter

{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: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

People: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all.

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** ^④ *(Leader)*

Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching him, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

***CONFESSION OF SIN** ^② *(Unison)*

Almighty and most merciful God our Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before thee, under a deep sense of our unworthiness and guilt. We have grievously sinned against thee, in thought, in word, and in deed. We have come short of thy glory, we have broken thy commandments, and turned aside every one of us from the way of life. Yet now, O most merciful Father, hear us when we call upon thee with penitent hearts, and for the sake of thy Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy upon us. Pardon our sins; take away our guilt; and grant us your peace. Purify us, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, from all inward uncleanness, and make us able and willing to serve thee in newness of life, to the glory of thy Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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** ④ *(Leader)*

Hear now the comforting assurance of the grace of God, promised in the Gospel to all that repent and believe: As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their way and live. For God so loved the world, that he gave us his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Unto as many of you, therefore, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, who truly repent of your sins, and believe in the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ, with full purpose of new obedience, I announce and declare, by the authority and in the Name of Christ, that our sins are forgiven, according to his promise in the Gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

***PASSING THE PEACE**

{As a sign of reconciliation with God and one another, greet those around you with a handshake, embrace, or simple wave (as you are comfortable), accompanied by such words as the following. During the cold and flu season, you may wish to choose the simple wave.}

Individual: The Peace of Christ be with you.

Response: **And also with you.**

***CALL TO PRAISE**

Leader: O Lord, open our lips

People: **And our mouths shall show forth your praise.**

***SUNG RESPONSE OF PRAISE**

"Gloria Patri"

♪ *Red #492*
Composed by Charles Meineke
Public Domain

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

{Please be seated}



Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Light ①

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES: *(Advent Wreath Reader)*

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: *(Advent Wreath Reader)*

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: *(Advent Wreath Reader)*

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

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| Hope | <i>{a blue candle is lit}</i> |
| Peace | <i>{a blue candle is lit}</i> |
| Joy | <i>{a rose/pink candle is lit}</i> |
| Love | <i>{a blue candle is lit}</i> |

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}

SILENT PRAYER OF REFLECTION

PRAYER: *(Advent Wreath Reader)*

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.

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON

[Isaiah 62:6-12](#)

REFLECTION

"White as Snow"

by Joni Eareckson Tada

OFFERTORY INVITATION ^②

Leader: All creation proclaims God's saving power and faithfulness.

People: Our offerings can make a powerful witness.

Leader: They are expressions of gratitude but also proclamations of commitment.

People: They celebrate God's covenant with us, demonstrated in the gift of Jesus.

Leader: Let us give as we have been blessed.

People: We give of our first and best to God, as God gave of his first and best to us.

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](https://sprucc.org) option on our website at sprucc.org (Click Here), or you may mail your offering to United Church of Christ of Robesonia; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551}.

PIANO OFFERTORY

"What Child is This?"

arranged by Preston Keys

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

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE

"We Give Thee But Thine Own"

♩ Red#258

*Written by William Walsham How, Arr. by Joseph Barnby
Public Domain*

**We give Thee but Thine own,
What-e'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee. Amen.**

*OFFERTORY PRAYER ^④ (Leader)

Leader: Gracious God, to the preaching of the good tidings of salvation,

People: We dedicate our gifts.

Leader: To the teaching of Jesus' way of life,

People: We dedicate our gifts.

Leader: To the healing of broken bodies and the soothing of fevered brows,

People: We dedicate our gifts.

Leader: To the leading of every little child to the knowledge and love of Jesus,

People: We dedicate our gifts.

Leader: To the caring for helpless age and the relief of all who look to us for help,

People: We dedicate our gifts.

Leader: To the evangelization of the world and the building of the kingdom of God,

People: We dedicate our wealth, our efforts, and our lives.

Leader: Receive them, O God, and use them to your glory;

People: For Jesus, our Redeemer's sake.

ALL: Amen.

GOSPEL SCRIPTURE LESSON

[Luke 2:1-20](#)

(RSV - Reprinted in Bulletin on pg 14)

REFLECTION

"The Life of a Child"

by Joni Eareckson Tada

Sacrament of Holy Communion ①④

*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)

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.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper has ever been regarded by the Church as the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship. We enter here into living communion with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and do show forth our fellowship with one another as members of his Church. Gathering about his table we profess our desire to be numbered among his people and to work in his ways.

*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 unto you, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God. Therefore with the whole company of your people we laud and magnify your glorious Name, evermore praising you with joy and singing....

*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.

BREAKING BREAD AND RAISING 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 by coming forward for intinction.

*First: receive a piece of broken bread in your hand;
Second: dip it into one of the two chalices;
Third: consume it.*

*The **gold chalice has red wine**, and
the **silver chalice has white grape juice**.*

The pastor is handing regular bread;
there is **gluten free** bread on the bread plate.

*We invite the piano (left) side to come forward in a line first,
followed by the pulpit (right) side second}.*

*{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}.

{As you receive the elements, you may say the following...}

Pastor: The Body of Christ broken for you.

Individual: **Amen.**

Elder: The Blood of Christ shed for you.

Individual: **Amen. or Thanks be to God.**

{During the Communion Service, you are invited to sing the following carols.}

HYMN

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

Vs1 **Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.**

Vs3 **Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the new-born King.**

Refrain

**Gloria in excelsis Deo,
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

Refrain

Vs2 **Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song?**

Vs4 **See him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.**

Refrain

Refrain

*French Carol
Public Domain*

HYMN

"It Came Upon The Midnight Clear"

Vs1 It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to men
From heaven's all gracious King";
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Vs3 And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow;
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
Oh, rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

Vs2 Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing;
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Vs4 For, lo the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling.
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

*Words: Edmund H. Sears; Music: Richard Storrs Willis
Public Domain*

{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}

REFLECTION

"Christmas Decorations"

by Joni Eareckson Tada

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

Gospel Lesson

[John 1:1-14](#)

(† NT - pg 91)

Candlelight Service ①

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.**

Vs3 **Silent night! Holy night!
Darkness flies, all is light;
Shepherds hear the angels sing:
Alleluia! Hail the King!
Christ, the Savior, is born,
Christ, the Savior, is born.**

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.**

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.**

*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: Go out to spread the good news of great joy.
Salvation is offered to all of humankind.

**People: Glory to God in the highest heaven;
Peace on earth among all whom God favors.**

Leader: We are a holy people, chosen and redeemed.
By God's mercy we are granted new life.

**People: We go out to tell the world what God is doing.
Let us glorify and praise God in all we do.**

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;
Public Domain*

POSTLUDE



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

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 Quirin i-us 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 readings this evening are from *A Christmas Longing* by Joni Eareckson Tada, Multnomah Books, Sisters, Oregon, 1996.

When Joni was 17 years old, she dove into the Chesapeake Bay, where she thought the water was deeper than it actually was, and from that accident, was paralyzed from the shoulders down. She writes and paints holding pens and brushes in her teeth, to share inspiring messages to others of the strength, hope, and faith she has received from her Christian faith.

She also started a non-profit to help other people with disabilities: joniandfriends.org





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

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.

- ① 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 United Church of Christ Neighbors in Need (NIN) 2023 Resources.
 - ③ *Led By Love* by Lavon Baylor. (1996). United Church Press; Cleveland, OH.
 - ④ *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. (1982).
 - ⑤ Reprinted with permission from *Sundays and Seasons*. (2023). Augsburg Fortress.
 - ⑥ 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.
 - ⑦ Reprinted with permission from *Sourcebook of Worship Services*
 - ⑧ scouting.org - resources for Boy Scouts of America
 - ⑨ Reprinted with permission from *Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ*. (2013).
 - ⑩ *Sunday Sermons Preaching Resources*. (2017). Margate, NJ.
 - 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.
 - ⑭ The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz
 - ⑮ The Rev. Mary Etta Mest
- One License is our Church Copyright License #A-728042,, which is a subscription service giving us copyright permission to print the words and music found in the bulletin and to live stream music on the internet during the Worship Service.
Cartoons are reprinted with permission from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*. (2023).
Schneider, Richard H. (1987). *Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect*. Illustrated by Elizabeth J. Miles. Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee.



Staff & Leadership

Pastor & Teacher: The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz - PastorMotz@sprucc.org - 610-621-5770 (O)

Pastor & Teacher: The Rev. Mary Etta Mest - mestme@aol.com - 610-659-2775 (C)

Music Minister: The Rev. Robert Masenheimer

Bell Choir Director: Miriam Borkert

Office Secretary: Geri Gammel - Office@sprucc.org - 610-621-5770 (O)

Sextons: Michael Pastor & Terry Pastor

Treasurer: Terry Pastor

Financial Secretary & Assistant Secretary: Geneva Aulenbach

Consistory President: Elsa Wertz

Consistory Vice President: George McLain

Consistory Secretary: Geri Gammel

††† 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

This evening's service will begin at 11:00pm. It will include music, candlelight, and communion. We are happy that you are able to join us this Christmas Eve evening.

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 20th 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 24th. 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.

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 31st, Lectionary Reading for First Sunday after Christmas

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