# St. John's UCC, Fullerton

575 Grape Street & Whitehall PA 18052 www.stjohnsuccfullerton.org & 610-264-8421



## We Worship, We Love, We Serve - No Matter What!



December 7, 2025 Second Sunday of Advent 9:30 am

# We Worship

#### Welcome to St. John's UCC, Fullerton!

We are proudly an Open & Affirming (ONA) Congregation of the Penn NE Conference United Church of Christ!

You are WELCOME HERE!

Our Offering is received as we gather for worship, with plates located on pedestals at the back. We graciously accept your gifts of praise and gratitude to God, to be presented during the service. While guests are welcome to contribute, please know there is no obligation; the financial support of our church is primarily the responsibility of our congregation members.

**Sunday Social** is a time to gather for light refreshments and connection time, to visit, make new friends and build relationships. Join us in Fox Hall following worship each Sunday, hosted by various congregants and groups.

Children's Faith Formation begins in the early part of our worship service in the sanctuary, including the Children's Message. Parents are asked to accompany their child if they are at the kids' table in the back. On Communion Sundays, the children remain in the worship service.

\* Those who are comfortably able, please stand

#### Chimes

#### Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Steven Davis

- Prayer Shawls Prayer Quilts at the back as you come in.
- Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates (PNEC-CM) December 14 worship
- Quiet Christmas with Asbury UMC, December 18, 7:00pm
- Service of the Nativity, December 21, 5:40pm Pre-Music,
   6:00pm Worship Service

## \*Greeting and Sharing the Peace of Christ

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you!

Music to Prepare our Hearts for Worship

Advent Star
Edward Broughton

\*Call to Worship Liturgist: Sharon Czekner

One: We come to prepare the way;

All: The way for Christ -

One: the hope of Christ, the peace of Christ – **All:** To enter our world, to enter our hearts.

One: We cry out together in the wilderness:

All: The kingdom of heaven has come near.

One: We come to be part of the light-

All: The light that shines in the darkness.

\*Opening Hymn

O Come, Divine Messiah Verses 1 and 3

found on page 3

**Affirmation of Faith** 

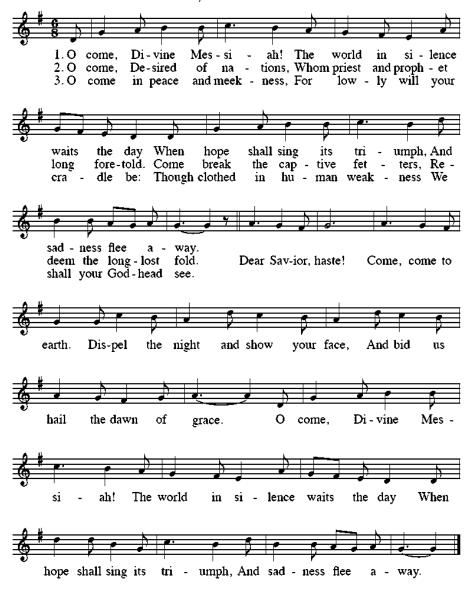
Liturgist: Sharon Czekner *The Christmas Creed (adapted)* 

All: I believe in God, Creator of all things, who sent the Son as my Savior.

I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, announced by angels, worshiped by the Magi, who lived to suffer, die, and rise again, to free me from sin, death and the power of the evil one.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who has brought me to faith in Christ, and by whose continuous work in my heart I am ever led to lay before the feet of Christ my worship, my life, my love; to live under Him as my King, both now and forevermore. Amen.

## O Come, Divine Messiah!



Text: Voncz, divin Messic, Abbé Simon-Joseph Pellegrin, 1663–1745; tr. by Mary of St. Phillip, SND, 1825–1904, alt. Tune: VENEZ, DIVIN MESSIE, 7 8 7 6 with refrain: French carol, 16th C.

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

Bruce and Bobbi Pope

One: "They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:9-10). We are the followers of that root of Jesse Isaiah spoke of. We are the ones who are now called to stand as a signal to the world, to all of creation, that peace is the will of the one who created us. Peace is the knowledge of the Lord that we proclaim from sea to shining sea.

All: We light these candles, the candle of joyful hope and the candle of proclaimed peace, in part to remind ourselves that we are a people rising toward God's promise. But we also light them as a sign to the world, an announcement there are some who hold on to hope and there are some who work the ways of peace. We stand as a sign that Emmanuel is still our fervent prayer.

## Come, Lord Jesus, Come



WORDS: Revelation 22:20, adapt. MUSIC: Dean McIntyre, 2004

BEERSHEBA 5.5.5.5

Music Copyright © 2004 The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church; PO Box 340003; Nashville TN 37203. Telephone 615-340-7073. Website http://www.umcworship.org. All rights reserved.

Invitation to Confession and Response Liturgist: Sharon Czekner

One: John the Baptist's cry echoes through the ages:

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near! Here and now, we go to God in humility and faith, confessing our sins.

(Time for Silent Prayer)

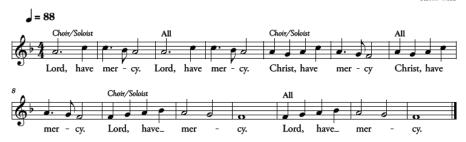
All: God of all creation, your vision of peace is beyond our knowing. We have been hurt and we have seen destruction, so we turn around and hurt others, destroying what you have called good. Forgive us, and fill us with your knowledge, so we may help bring forth your peaceful kingdom.

## **Sung Response**

## Lord Have Mercy

Based on "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Kevin Weed



### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

Liturgist: Sharon Czekner

One: My friends in Christ, here is the good news: speak with the whispers of hope until it silences despair; sing the carols of compassion until all join in the chorus; shower others with wonder and delight and join in God's dance of grace.

All: Thanks be to God. We are forgiven! So, let us welcome others with open arms, just as we have been embraced in God's love. Amen

Children's Message

Rev. Davis & Samantha Kistler

Hymn

Comfort, My People

page 6 of the bulletin



Scripture Reader: Sharon Antrim

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass; their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers; the flower fades, [when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers; the flower fades but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom and gently lead the mother sheep.

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

**Sermon** Samantha Kistler

Advent through the Movies: The Preachers Wife "Peace"

**Song of Praise** Is Your Heart Prepared for a King?—Robert Lau In the quiet of the night, or in morning's early light, is your heart prepared for a King? Will you hear an angel sing? Will your own hosannas ring? Is your heart prepared for a king?

Wait! Watch! Pray for the One who brings hope to a wearied earth. Wait! Watch! Pray for the One who brings peace, who brings peace by His birth.

Can you see the shining star? Does it call you from afar? Is your heart prepared for a King? Is the babe of whom we sing born to be our God and King? Is your heart prepared, is your heart prepared for a King?

# We Love

## Pastoral Prayer and Prayers of the People

Rev. Davis & Samantha Kistler

## The Lord's Prayer

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

#### **Sacrament of Holy Communion**

Please sign the communion book in the back of the church if you have not done so at a service of communion in 2025.

We Are an Inclusive Community!
In the United Church of Christ, we observe an "Open Communion." ALL persons are welcome to receive the gifts of God's grace and love with us at the table.
In The United Church of Christ, ALL means ALL!

## **Eucharistic Prayer for Advent** Written by Thom Shuman

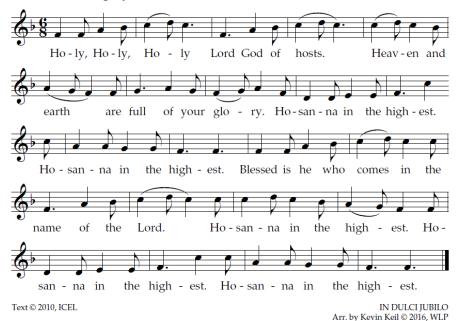
One: In those days when chaos reigned, creation appeared, Coming God, as you spoke the Word which caused snow to cap mountains; as you breathed the Spirit which give life to sheep and shepherds; as your steadfast loved shaped all that is good and beautiful and good.

All: All this was intended for those clothed in your image of grace and hope, but we insisted on putting on sin's coat, cinching death's belt around our ways.

One: Through the prophets of every age, we heard your words of encouragement but chose to keep looking for life in the seductions offered to us by sin.

All: So, in that moment we least expected, Jesus came, to baptize us with the Holy Spirit's peace and hope.

One: And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



One: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

All: Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

One: Blessed are you in the darkness

All: And in the light.

One: Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

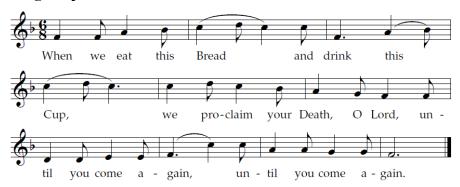
All: Blessed are you in the prophet's hopes and dreams.

One: Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

All: Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

One: On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take and eat: this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Therefore we proclaim our hope,

#### **Sung Response**



Text © 2010, ICEL

IN DULCI JUBILO Arr. by Kevin Keil © 2016, WLP

One: Now in these days, as we gather around the table gifted with the bread and the cup, may your Spirit of wisdom rest on us,

All: That we may recognize the vulnerable and welcome their gifts in our lives;

One: May your Spirit of might rest upon us,

All: So we may stand up to injustices around us;

One: May your Spirit of unity rest upon us,

All: So we may resist all people, all words, which seek to divide us;

One: May your Spirit of compassion rest upon us,

All: So we may remember, and serve, the hungry, the homeless, the lonely in this holiest of seasons.

One: And when your harvest of peace comes at the end of all time, and we are gathered with our siblings around your feast, we will sing and glorify you forever, God in Community, Holy in One. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

## **Sung Response**



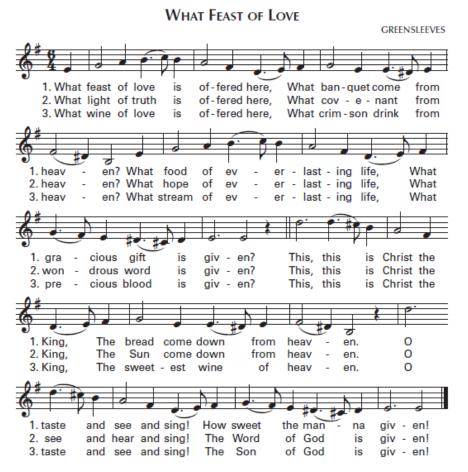
IN DULCI JUBILO Arr. by Kevin Keil © 2016, WLP

### **Sharing the Meal**

The elements will be passed in the pew, and we will receive the bread and wine at the same time. Once the hymn is completed, we will share in the meal.

## **Music During Communion**

What Feast of Love



Text: 87 87 67 67; Delores Dufner, OSB, © 1986, 1993, The Sisters of St. Benedict. Published by OCP.
All rights reserved. Music: Trad. English melody, 16th cent.; Bramley and Stainer's Christmas Carols New and Old, 1871.

One: The body of Christ and cup of our salvation, given for us.

All: Amen

Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: God our hope, strengthen us with this heavenly food. Lead us to live in joyful expectation of the coming again in glory of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Offering Our Gifts, Tithes and Offerings to God



Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness in supporting the ministry of St. John's UCC!

\*Doxology

*In the Bleak Midwinter* 

What can I give him, Poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet what I can I give him—Give my heart.

\*Prayer of Dedication Liturgist: Sharon Czekner

All: In this season of anticipation, we offer these gifts as signs that we long to live by your story. Use them and use us to bear fruit worthy of repentance. In the name of the one who is coming and is already among us, Christ, our Lord. Amen.

# We Serve

\*Sending Hymn #153

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus Verses 1 and 2

\*The Benediction

Samantha Kistler

**Postlude** 

Prepare the Way of the Lord William Rowman

All music in this bulletin is copyrighted and reprinted under OneLicense #A-735634

#### Flower Sponsorship

In honor of Elijah's 18th Birthday—With Love from Mom, Dad, and Kendra Fox

## Our Worship & Faith Formation Sunday Schedule 8:15am Friendship Class 9:30am Worship/Faith Formation: Holy Moly 10:30am Sunday Social

## Second Sunday of Advent, December 7 Lectionary Readings

Isaiah 11:1-10 and Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 Romans 15:4-13 and Matthew 3:1-12

#### Serving in Worship Leadership

Liturgist: Sharon Czekner Scripture Reader: Sharon Antrim Worship Tech: Bill Castello Altar Guild: Corrina Purdon Ushers and Greeters: Sharon Antrim, Robin Brensinger, Kay Chryst, Tom

Chryst, Wendy Fox, Kirby Hower, Corrina Purdon

#### Third Sunday of Advent, December 14 Lectionary Readings

Isaiah 35:1-10 and Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55 James 5:7-10 and Matthew 11:2-11

### Serving in Worship Leadership

Liturgist: Janet Boyd Scripture Reader: Tyler Shankweiler Worship Tech: Bill Castello Altar Guild: Marion DeMilio

Greeter: Pam Repetz and Jackie Maxon Ushers: Marion DeMilio and Karen Stoisits

> Attendance – November 30 Onsite – 85 Online – 28

#### IN OUR PRAYERS

Please remember in your prayers all those who are ill, in our area hospitals, or otherwise in need of prayer: Shirley Abel, Phyllis Ambearle, Grace Arnold, Margaret and Richard Baatz, Christina Bach, Clarence Biehn, Bob Bold, Sherry Castello (Bill's mom), Rob Czekner, Roxanne DeMilio, Janet and Jim Ebert, Gus Geissinger, Gary George, Sally Gibson, Sandy Glass and Tracey Glass, Mike Gravely, Donna Held, Ray and JoAnn Hower, Geraldine Keim, Jean McGonigle, Dave Mohr, Karen Moyer, Molly

Nicholas, Carol Raszler, Joey Raszler, Bert Smith, Leona Snyder, Barry Stephens and Rev. Becca Stephens, Martha Strauss, and George Williams.

Continued prayers for those in our military, especially Dominic DeMilio, Kaden Rossanese, and Nathan Unger.

If you or a family member is admitted to the hospital, tell them you are a member of St. John's or <u>use the church code</u>, <u>473</u>. To add someone to our prayer list please contact the Church Office.

## Christmas Eve Wednesday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Service at 6PM

Carols, Communion and Candlelight Service. Pre-Service music begins at 5:30PM featuring music from the Bell Choir of St. John's and our Adult Choir.

#### **INCLEMENT WEATHER NOTICES**

If inclement weather requires cancellation of Sunday services, notices will be on Channel 69 news or www.wfmz.com/weather/stormcenter.

#### HOLIDAY SHOPPING AT ST. JOHN'S

Stop by the lounge area before or after worship today to see the vast assortment of items our crafters "Keeping You in Stitches" have to offer. For the Christmas season, there are ornaments, Christmas décor, & stocking stuffers. For the household, choose from bowl cozies, table runners, shopping bags, & T-towels. For babies & children, we have baby sweaters, bibs, burping cloths, boo boo bunnies, tooth fairy pillows & American Girl doll sweaters.

#### PEEPS MEETING

There will be no formal PEEPS meeting in December; however, the PEEPS Women's Group will meet on **Wednesday**, **December 17**, at **1:00 p.m.** at City View Diner (1831 MacArthur Rd.) as we enjoy a meal and celebrate the Christmas season together. Please contact Regi Mohr at 610-390-0872 or regimohr@live.com if you plan to attend.

#### THE CHRISTMAS FUND

For over 100 years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to UCC ministers, church workers, and their families with emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities, health Page | 14

premiums, and Christmas "thank you" gift checks to our lower-income retirees. Special offering envelopes will be received on Sunday, December 21, and for the entire month of December.

#### GROCERY OPPORTUNITIES - GIANT, WEIS & REDNER'S

Buy Giant and Weis gift cards and the church receives 5% back. Also good for purchasing gas. Get your gift cards from the office or by seeing Tom Moyer & Carol Raszler every Sunday. Save the register tapes from Redner's and the church receives 1% back. A collection jar for the tapes is on the table in the lounge area or see Karen Stoisits. Please do not roll the Redner's tapes and do not include other stores' receipts.

#### TURKEYS NEEDED

During the upcoming holiday, many of you will win turkeys, get them as gifts, or earn them with the supermarket rewards program. If you would like to donate your turkey for our fundraising events, please contact Carol Raszler to make arrangements.

#### WHITEHALL FOOD PANTRY

We continue collecting boxed or packaged stuffing mixes for the month of December. Monetary donations are always accepted along with any other food donations. They can be placed in the shopping cart found in the coatroom area next to the sanctuary. Volunteers for the food pantry are needed for the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month from 9:00am to 11:30am and from 5:30pm to 8:00pm. at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church located at 3900 Mechanicsville Rd. in Whitehall. Contact Gary Black at 484-274-2405 or email at gary.t.black@outlook.com to volunteer.

## LEHIGH VALLEY SAVEAROUND BOOKS 2026 ARE HERE

This coupon book, good for all of 2026, contains discount offers for restaurants, hotels, car rentals, entertainment venues, amusement parks, clothing, food, and much more. Cost is \$25

#### **GRIEF SUPPORT ~ HEALTHCARE MINISTRY**

If you're grieving the loss of a loved one, you are invited to attend a monthly daytime grief support group at Asbury UMC, 1533 Springhouse Rd., Allentown. Rev. Evelyn Stupp, Asbury's Pastor of Bereavement and Care Ministries, leads the group. For more information and to indicate your interest in attending, please contact her at estupp@asburylv.org or 610-428-9095.

#### BUS TRIP TO SIGHT AND SOUND: "JOSHUA"

Wednesday, June 3, 2026. Bus leaves St. John's at 8am for 11am show. After the show we will enjoy a lunch buffet at Yoder's restaurant in nearby New Holland, PA. Cost of trip, including chartered bus, downstairs theater tickets, lunch buffet, and tips is \$150 per person. (Children may be a little cheaper.) Because we need to know how many are interested in this trip, we ask that you make your reservations <u>ASAP</u>. Please include a \$75 deposit with each reservation, and give to Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler.

#### APPLEBEES BURGERS FOR A CAUSE

Now available! Applebee's burger gift cards are good for any burgers on their menu (Some cost over \$17.00), for the price of \$10 per card. The certificates never expire, and are good at Applebee's in our area. They make great stocking stuffers! See Carol Raszler or Tom Moyer to purchase these certificates.

#### ANNUAL REPORTS

It's that time of year again to begin working on the Annual Report. The due date for your report to be in the office is January 5<sup>th</sup>, but of course the earlier the better!

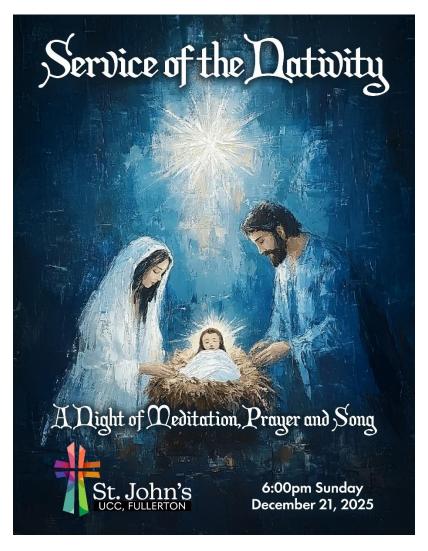
#### POCONO PRAISE BAND

St. John's Lutheran on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Chestnut invites you to a concert of contemporary Christian music for Christmas by the Pocono Praise Band this afternoon at 2:00. The concert will be followed by light refreshments. Bring a non-perishable food item for the Whitehall Food Pantry.

## SERVICE OF THE NATIVITY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>

Invite family, friends, neighbors and others to share in this evening of music and meditation. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Service of the Nativity is a great way to introduce people to St. John's.

Music begins at 5:40pm and the Service at 6:00pm. Come celebrate the gift of God in the birth of the Christ Child in the Nativity story. Refreshments to follow the service. A free will offering will take place on behalf of the music ministry.



## CHURCH CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 7 – DECEMBER 14

Sun 12/7	8:15 am 9:30 am 10:30 am	Adult Faith Formation Friendship Class Worship – Second Sunday of Advent Social Hour Newsletter Deadline
Tues 12/9	1:00 pm 6:00 pm 6:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	
Wed 12/10	9:00 am 12 noon 6:00 pm 6:30 pm 7:00 pm	Painting Group Zumba
Thurs 12/11	7:00 pm	Choir
Fri 12/12	5:00 pm	St. George Church School
Sat 12/13	9:30 am	Zumba
Sun 12/14	8:15 am 9:30 am 9:30 am 10:30 am	Adult Faith Formation Friendship Class Worship – Third Sunday of Advent Faith Formation Social Hour

#### **OUR STAFF**

Senior Pastor Rev. Steve Davis

srpastor@sjuccf.org

Director of Music Patrick Sandt

music@sjuccf.org

Ministry Intern Samantha "Sam" Kistler

samanthamkistler@gmail.com

Office Administrator Alison Berger Boor

officesecretary@sjuccf.org

Treasurer Sue Weldner

sbweldner@gmail.com

Financial Secretary Michelle Gutekunst

& Coordinating Custodian financialsecretary@sjuccf.org

custodians@sjuccf.org

Worship-Media Tech Bill Castello

& Connections Newsletter Editor stars@sjuccf.org

newsletter@sjuccf.org

Custodian Christina Bach

ironton1@verizon.net

Custodian Geoffrey Jackson

geof.bloomberg24@gmail.com