

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Preparing for the Light**  
December 3, 2023 9:30 a.m.  
Bonnie Jacque, Pastor

**PRELUDE**

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**JOYS AND CONCERNS**

Creation Joy

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

**ALL: The first candle honors the earth, from which we are all born; the bed of straw on which the Child will lay; the many roads he will walk, beginning with the road to Bethlehem, which he travels in his mother's womb. May this candle waken our longing for hope this Christmas.**

**INTROIT**

Star Child

Verse 1

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: In the times when we tremble

**All: The Light is with us**

One: In the times when we fail to hear

**All: The Light is with us**

One: In the times when we dare not look

**All: The Light is with us**

One: In our worship, in our lives

**All: Let us prepare for the Light to come among us.**

**\*HYMN**

Immortal, Invisible

#1

**RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

One: When we feel so negative about ourselves, and we do not hear the acceptance of those who care about us.

**ALL: Forgive us, O Lord.**

One: When our sense of isolation blocks out our awareness of your abiding love.

**ALL: Forgive us, O Lord.**

One: When we feel so guilty, we cannot hear your forgiveness and find new life.

**ALL: Forgive us, O Lord. Amen. The good news is that we are accepted and affirmed by God as we are.**

One: The good news is that we are not strangers to ourselves or to one another.

**ALL: We are God's children, members of one body. Our sins are forgiven. We have been brought into new life.**

### **ADVENT SUNG RESPONSE**

Traditional tune of

“Gloria Patri”

Glory be to the Christ Child,  
God's strength made weak, has come to the light our way.  
As the first born of creation, the Alpha and Omega,  
Won-der-ful birth, God has come to earth.

### **PASSING THE PEACE**

One: Peace be with you.

**MANY: And also with you.**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** Isa 64: 1-9; Ps 80: 1-7, 17-19; Mark 13: 24-37

**\*HYMN**

O How Shall I Receive You

#102

**MEDITATION**

Promisers of the Light

### **INVITATION TO OFFERING**

**\*DOXOLOGY**

Angels We Have Heard on High

#124

verse 1

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**COMMUNION PRAYER**

**We thank you, God, that you have provided for all the worlds that ever were or will be by giving yourself to them in love.**

**We thank you for Jesus, your Word, who lived among us, uncovering your presence. We ask now that you bless us, as we share this bread and cup that we might be nourished by that same unbounded love, and so be encouraged to be your servants to the world. And now, as your daughters and sons who you have reconciled to yourself, we pray: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. 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**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING** Bountiful God, we give 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. Amen.

**HYMN** Good Christian Friends Rejoice #129

## **BENEDICTION**

One: Let us live honorably as in the day. May we have nothing to hide from God or others.

**MANY: We seek to live in the light of God's love. We want to be ready when Christ comes.**

One: We have been privileged to ascend God's mountains. We are honored by God's call to us.

**MANY: It has been good to meet together in God's house. It is good to serve together in God's world.**

One: May we carry the peace of God wherever we go. Let us share that peace with all whom we meet.

**MANY: For the sake of all, we say, "Peace be with you." To all the world, we promise, "We will seek your good." Amen.**

## **POSTLUDE**

\*If rising from a seated position is an issue for you, please remain seated. The phrase "Please stand in body or spirit as you are able" is intended to give you permission to do so without embarrassment.

Congregational Response to each prayer request is: **Your prayer is our prayer. Your joy is our joy.**

**Communion** is open to all, including children with parent's approval. We serve wine in the outer rings and juice in the middle. We offer a gluten-free wafer for those with gluten intolerance or need a gluten-free diet.

**Reminders:**

12/05 – Seniors 10:30 AM

12/10 – Secret Pals Christmas Party at 12:30

12/17 – Children's Christmas Program at 9:30 service

12/24 – Christmas Services at 9:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.

**Christmas Poinsettia** The altar committee will be purchasing poinsettia arrangements for Christmas. Donation forms are available on the greeters stand. A \$5 donation will let you remember or honor a loved one and help to decorate the sanctuary.

**Please remember with your prayers, cards, calls and visits:** Ron S, Joyce O', Cheryl F. Ken S., Steve M. and Jo. and J. S.

**Resources:** spillthebeans.com, *Before the Amen* by Maren Tirabassi and Maria Tirabassi, Editors, *Star-Child* written by Shirley Erena Murray and music by Carlton R. Young; *Christmas Gloria* written by Jacqueline A. Burnett

**Birthdays:** Saturday the 9<sup>th</sup> Barb B. celebrates her birthday.

**Greeters for This Week:** LuAnn and Bill E.

**Greeters for Next Week:** Eugene & Vicki D.

**Liturgist for This Week:** Jill S.

**Liturgist for Next Week:** Brett M.

Following worship, you are invited for coffee and conversation in fellowship hall.