

Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 1, 2024



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING



*NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!*

Worship Leadership

Preacher: The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Kathy Aumiller

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Eric R. Dundore
Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore
Organist: Sarah A. Myers
Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: Jeff Leister
Greeters: Paula Boyer, Chris Grice, Steve Roush,
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place:
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Darryl and Winnie Wentz
Counting Team:
Candle Lighting: The Riesmeyer Family

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

*Visit the church website, under the 'Sign Up' menu heading,
to help as a Sunday volunteer or Worship Participant.
We're grateful for your generosity.*

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**626 Williams Grove Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717)766-7931**

**saintpaulsucc-mech.org
Office: stpaulstaff@outlook.com
Rev. John: revjohnwd@outlook.com**



Rev. Allyssa: allyssaboyer@outlook.com
ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
HOLY COMMUNION

December 1, 2024

The livestream starts with the Announcements. If you'd prefer not to be on camera, kindly choose a seat in the back three pews of the Sanctuary. Leave prayer requests in the bowl in the Common area or give them to the Lead Greeter.

**Those who are comfortable doing so are invited to stand.*

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ORGAN PRELUDE "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Lani Smith

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 115 "The Baptist Shouts on Jordan's Shore"

THE LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE—HOPE (Responsive)

One: We are waiting. We are frustrated and tired. So much of our world seems caught in turmoil.
The darkness closes in on us. Where is the hope?

ALL: In the darkness God lights the first candle of Advent. The divine word is sent to a young teen in a little land in the Mideast. "I'm going to bring a new life into the world, to bring about change, to offer love and salvation." What will be her answer? We listen with bated breath.

One: "let it happen as you say, O God. May the fruit of my womb bring good new to us all."

LIGHT CANDLE

ALL: Let us pray. As you brought the word of hope to Mary and through her to our world, rekindle anew in us this season a sense of hope as we prepare to celebrate your nativity. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE:

"The Candle of Hope" (sung to no. 305, "O Worship the King, All Glorious Above")

The candle of hope we light in this hour

Proclaims that the Lord is coming in power.

We wait for a future, now hidden from view,

When Christ in his glory will make all things new.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God who is always coming to us, may we prepare in this season of Advent to receive You. Build up our hope, that is grounded in Your Presence within us. Guide us in seeing the real hope You provide and how we can share that with others. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We can get caught in expecting others to fulfill our hopes without doing anything to help. We can give in to the temptation that others can completely destroy our hopes. God provides us with ways to not only build up our own hopes but to help others build up theirs. We often stop short of trying. Let us join in a time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us, and through preparing for God's coming to us once again, God offers us the ability to understand the hope that Jesus brings.

ALL: Let us help one another in identifying what is truly hopeful and find ways to sustain and build those hopes for ourselves and all others, all of Creation. Amen.

If you are able, please rise and greet one another with signs of Peace.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*THE GLORIA PATRI (#759 is the tune, but not all the same words)

***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.***

*Children are invited to the front at this time.
Everyone who comes forward will be on camera.*

SING THE CHILDREN TO THE FRONT

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world

Shy and Joyful, Bold and Bright

They are precious in his sight

Jesus loves the little children of the world.

THE WORD FOR THE YOUNG

SING THE CHILDREN TO THEIR SEATS

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so

**Little ones to him belong. They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so**

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16

THE PSALM READING

Psalm 25:1-10

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Luke 21:25-36

“Noticing the Signs”

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)

Advent Blessing

Bless us, Fa - ther, as we pray. Help us seek You day by day. Bind us all in
6 Heart and mind. Bid all our quar - rels cease. Fill the world with Hea - ven's peace. Bid all war and
12 hun - ger cease. Oh, come, Ho - ly Sav - ior, come.

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “The Yearning”

Courtney

Chancel Choir

*DOXOLOGY

**From all who dwell beneath the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung.
Through every land, by every tongue! Amen.**

*THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

Thank you, God, for this family of faith, which enriches our lives and enables us to share. Thank you for making us aware that some faint with fear and others dwell in hopelessness. We are grateful that You show us ways to lift the burdens of our siblings. May our offerings further this ministry among us and beyond our community. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 116 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (vs. 1, 2 & 7)

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is good to give God thanks and praise.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

We gather both in person and in Spirit. For those of you present in the sanctuary, we invite you to come forward if you are able. When you come forward, a piece of bread will be given to you. Once you have received your bread, please proceed to the right or the left and servers will have both wine and grape juice that you may dip your bread in. Gluten-free crackers and white grape juice are also available on a small table between the servers. After dipping your bread/cracker in the wine/juice, you may then eat your communion element and proceed back to your pew. If you prefer not to come forward, please remain in your pew and a greeter will bring you the elements. Please raise your hand if you believe the greeter did not see you.

For those of you joining us via livestream, we hope you have some bread and wine or juice of your choice before you. We trust that God is powerful enough to extend God’s blessing upon these communion elements, wherever they may be.

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

Holy God, we give You thanks for the miracle and wonder of this meal. We give You thanks for your coming to us in the person of Jesus, and for Jesus’ willingness to offer his whole self for our benefit. We can see how we can best live our lives. We can believe all “deaths,” those

losses, endings, and struggles in this life, and the ones at the end of our physical lives, are not the final word. We can trust that Your Spirit is within all of us, and always will be. May the gifts of this table always remind us of the gifts You have given us all. Amen.

*THE HYMN “Prophets Told Us, Pay Attention” (to the tune of no. 126 “Angels from the Realms of Glory”)

***Prophets told us, "Pay attention! God is working in the land.
Lo, the days are surely coming; seek the justice God has planned!
Seek the signs of your redemption; hear God's word and understand!"***

***As we welcome your salvation, all around we see distress;
There is trouble in the nations! There is greed and wickedness;
As we trust in your redemption, may we live your righteousness.***

***May we work for what you call for; may we labor for your reign.
Families cry out at the border; children suffer grief and pain.
May your church, committed, prayerful, work for justice in your name.***

***Christ, you taught us: "Pay attention!" So we humbly serve and pray:
May we gladly live your kingdom in a world that's gone astray.
May the hope of our salvation guide the things we do and say.***

Text: Copyright © 2018 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

*THE BIDDING TO MISSION

*THE WORLD PEACE PRAYER

One: Lead us, O God.

**All: Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
 Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
 Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.
 Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen.**

*THE BENEDICTION

* THE THREE-FOLD AMEN

*The livestream ends after the Postlude. You're welcome to converse in the Narthex after the Three-fold Amen.
However, if you choose to stay for the Postlude, please remain silent until the conclusion.*

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE “Come Thou Almighty King”

Lani Smith

References:

The Advent Candle Lighting liturgy was written by David Schmidt found on pages 18-19 in *Before the Amen: Creative Resources for Worship*, edited by Maren C. Tirabassi and Maria I. Tirabassi; 2007; The Pilgrim Press.

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler, 1994, United Church Press.

The World Peace Prayer is a paraphrase of a verse from the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism, also prayed daily by Roman Catholic Benedictine nuns.

Songs, music, and lyrics used by permission. CCLI License #11380019 CSPL128945

*The white rose on the altar today is in loving memory of Eugene Keith who died this week.
Please continue to keep Martha and all Gene's family and friends in your prayers.*

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Patrice and Gregory Miller, "In honor of children Devon and Ryan,
and grandchildren Hayden and Leo."

Paula and Mark Boyer, "In honor of Rev. Allyssa's 2nd anniversary of her ordination."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COOKIE WALK

How does having a plate of all different kinds of Christmas cookies sound when you've only baked one kind? Well, that's the beauty of the Cookie Walk! St. Paul's many talented bakers will donate cookies packaged to sell for just \$1. You can load up your basket and create a beautiful assortment of cookies for your holidays. The Cookie Walk will be held on December 8. Cookies will be available for purchase before and after Sunday school and after the budget meeting. Please drop off your donated cookies on Saturday, December 7 or early Sunday morning. All proceeds will go to the general operating fund. Any questions - please contact Mary Runkle (717-805-1589) or Jonneke Dundore (717-460-8303).

ADVENT ACTIVITY DAY

Sunday, December 8, 9:15-10:15 AM — On the second Sunday of Advent, instead of meeting in our regular Sunday school classrooms, all are invited to gather in Fellowship Hall to celebrate the season with Advent stories, crafts, and songs. Children, youth, and adults are all invited. We hope to see you there!

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be a painful time. Some people are mourning the death of a loved one. Some are far from home. Some are suffering from illness, addiction, or estrangement. Some are lonely, struggling financially, or in conflict with another. Some are hurting because of the great pain, need, and violence in our nation and around the world. The constant refrains on radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, serves as a reminder to many of what we've lost and how alone we feel. Join us for our Blue Christmas worship service, Thursday, December 12, at 7:00 PM. This service is for every person who is looking for a safe place of rest, comfort, healing, and hope this holiday season.