

Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 15, 2024



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING



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

Worship Leadership

The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
Preacher: The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Eric Dundore

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: Candy LaRue, Don Dupes, Corky Short
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place: Jonneke Dundore, Dale Thorpe
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Patrice Miller
Counting Team:

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

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ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 15, 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 "In the Bleak Mid-Winter"

Charity Boyles

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 122 "Come, O Long-Expected Jesus"

THE LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE – LOVE (responsive)

LIGHT THE FIRST TWO CANDLES

One: The Advent season is filled with activities—shopping, baking, planning, partying—added to our normal flow of things. How can we find time to focus on the Christ child? So often we go with what clamors the loudest and we miss the gentle "tap tap" at the door. How can we let go of our frenzied busyness, our hectic activity, to let love incarnate into our lives?

All: **Weary travelers clog the inn demanding their lodging, food, entertainment. And here stand a pair of poor ragged souls asking you to do even more. How can one be hospitable in a time like this, to people like these?**

One: I'm sorry, we are full. But I see you too have need. Perhaps we can work something out. There is a stable out back..." And another candle joins those flickering two.

LIGHT THE THIRD CANDLE

All: **Let us pray. O holy child of Bethlehem, we open our hearts to you. And we seek to offer your hospitality to others in need in this holy season. May we share your love near and far. Amen.**

SUNG RESPONSE

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

The candle of love tells what we are worth:

God loves us so much, God came to the earth!

An angel brought news of a child who would be

The one who would save us and set us all free.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Let Your face shine on us, loving God. Break through the obstacles that keep us from seeing Your way. Melt down the barriers that keep us from knowing the embrace of Your love. Speak to us here, that our hearts may be open, and our lives may be changed. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We confess that we have not always been truthful; we've deceived others, and we've deceived ourselves. There are moments when we have embraced carelessness, cruelty, and oppression, sometimes out of maliciousness, but more often out of ignorance and exhaustion. Still, we recognize that we have made excuses instead of seeking to correct our wrongs. This is an opportunity for us, in silent reflection, to be open to God's wisdom and forgiveness. Let us join in silent prayers of confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: Those who allow themselves to know God are already in touch with God's mercy. It is newly experienced every day. It is available to the least of us and the greatest.

ALL: **God has been doing great things for us. Let us commit the bodies God has given us to doing God's will. May our spirits rejoice as we magnify our God together.**

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.

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS (Unison)

May God's grace be upon these shawls...warming, comforting, enfolding, and embracing. May these mantles be safe havens...sacred places of security and well-being...sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the ones who receive these shawls be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be!

*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

Micah 5:2-5a

THE READING OF THE PSALM

Psalm 80:1-7

*THE HYMN No. 119 "My Soul Gives Glory to My God"

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Luke 1:46-55

"My Soul Magnifies the Lord"

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)

Advent Blessing

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

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY "People Look East"

arr. Helman

Hand Chimes

*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 Your mercy and protection, for feeding us physically and spiritually, for caring for us like a shepherd. We present our offerings as an act of gratitude. What we can never repay we pause to appreciate. In the name of generosity we cannot match, we seek to be generous toward others. May these offerings do far more than support our church. We dedicate ourselves and these gifts to honor Christ through ministry in the world. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 104 "We Hail You God's Anointed"

*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 "Rejoice, The Lord is King"

James Mansfield

References:

The Advent Candle Lighting liturgy, slightly adapted, was written by David Schmidt, on page 18 in "Before the Amen: Creative Resources of Worship," edited by Maren C. Tirabassi and Maria I. Tirabassi, The Pilgrim Press: Cleveland, OH, 2007.

The Prayer of Invocation, Call to Confession, Words of Assurance, and Prayer of Dedication are adapted from "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler, The Pilgrim Press: Cleveland, OH, 2001.

The Prayer of Blessing is by Janet Bristow, 2008, www.shawlministry.com.

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.

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ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Alan and Diane Richenbacher, "In celebration of our 53rd wedding anniversary."