

Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 24, 2024, 4PM



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

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 Leiser
Greeters: Paula Boyer, Corky Short, Candy LaRue

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

CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2024 4PM

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 Little Town of Bethlehem"

Lucy Ann Warriner

*THE PROCESSIONAL CAROL "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

***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!***

***Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest. Refrain***

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLES

LIGHT THE PINK AND PURPLE CANDLES

One: Our time to wait is over. Christmas is here. Our days of preparation are completed. We have witnessed to this very hour, this very night, and we hope that the world has heard the Good News which we have spoken.

All: **We have decided to "Let it be," to do things God's way rather than our own, and to be satisfied with God's will.**

LIGHT THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Our Advent Candles are now all lit: now tonight we have lit the central candle, reminding us that Christ is the light of the world.

All: **We are reminded too, that Christ is the center of our lives, the shining beacon of hope for all the universe. Praise God!**

One/All: Let us pray. **O Holy God, thank you that the light of Christ shines so very clearly tonight. May our joy be full and our hearts rejoice for the world shall never be the same again. Truth, justice, righteousness, and love have once again been set free amongst us. Thank you, God, for this Holy Night of nights! Amen.**

SUNG RESPONSE

“The Christ Candle’s Light” (sung to no. 305, “O Worship the King, All Glorious Above”)

***The Christ candle's light that shines for us here
Tells out the good news that God has come near!
God came, a poor baby, in one time and place,
To show all creation the wealth of God's grace.***

PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Glorious, giving God, You gifted us with Your son Jesus. You trusted us with Your Child. You continue to trust and bless us. Thank you. May our gift to You, be our love and service to others, especially those most vulnerable of Your Children. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

God cannot stand to be separated from us. God comes to us in many ways, over and over again. We confess that because we allow our minds and hearts to be elsewhere, we often miss or refuse the gifts of God’s presence, wisdom and guidance. Let us join in the silent Prayer of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and brings Christmas no matter what.

ALL: **Let us accept the gift of God’s presence; be transformed by God’s Spirit; and share with the world God’s vision for hope, peace, joy, and God’s all-embracing, all-encompassing love. Amen.**

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

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

THE FIRST LESSON Luke 2:1-7

Paula Boyer

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “What Child Is This, Who Laid to Rest”

***What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary’s lap is sleeping?
whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?***

Refrain: This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mary.

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Refrain**

THE SECOND LESSON Luke 2:8-14

Nancy Richey

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “Angels We Have Heard On High”
**Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing o’er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain**

THE THIRD LESSON Luke 2:15-20

Melissa Cawley

THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

Cindy Berry and Vicki Hancock Wright

The Choristers and Friends

“Joseph and the Donkey”
“Rise Up, Shepherd and Follow”
“Oh, Come, Little Children”
“Sleep, Tiny King”
“Glory, Glory in the Highest”

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “In Bethlehem He Was Born”

Donald Lee Moore

*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 coming to us in a human life so expressive of love that two thousand years have not extinguished the flame. May that love burn so brightly in our lives that its fires will spread. Use our offerings to ignite in the world such caring and compassion that all Your children may know joy and peace, in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

***O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.***

***How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heav’n
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.***

CHRISTMAS CREED FROM LATIN AMERICA

**I believe in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Gospel which began in Bethlehem.
I believe in the One whose spirit glorified a small village,
of whose coming the shepherds saw the sign,
and for whom there was no room in the inn.
I believe in the One whose life changed the course of history,
for whom the kings of the earth had no power,
and who was not understood by the proud.
I believe in the One to whom the poor, the oppressed, the discouraged,
the afflicted, the sick, the blind and the leprous gave welcome
and accepted as Savior.
I believe in the One who, with love, changed the hearts of the proud,
and with his life, showed that it is more important to serve than to be served,
and that the greatest joy is in giving your life for others.
I believe in peace, which means justice among all peoples and nations
and love among all.
I believe in reconciliation, forgiveness and the transforming power of the Gospel.
I believe that Christmas is strength and power, and that this world can change
if, with humility and faith, we kneel before the manger.
I believe that I must be the first one to do so. Amen.**

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “Joy To the World”

***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 heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.***

***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.***

**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
wonder, wonders of his love.**

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD John 1:1-18

*THE PASSING OF THE LIGHT

The ushers will light the candle of the worshipper nearest the aisle. Candles should be secure before lighting. Dip only the unlit candle when lighting your candle from your neighbor's. Please help younger children. Always hold your candle in an upright position and maintain a safe distance between the candle and yourself and other people and things. Keep your candle lit until the conclusion of the service. As you leave the Sanctuary, please place the candle and holder in the receptacle in the Narthex. Thank you. Let us now sing.

*THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "Silent Night"

**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.**

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven a far, heav'nly host sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!**

**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.**

*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 "Joy to the World"

Gerald Peterson

References:

Cover Image, Holy Family. Hofheinz-Döring, Margret

The Christ Candle Lighting Liturgy was written by Robert L. Anderson, found in Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi, 1990, The Pilgrim Press.

A Christmas Creed from Latin America was shared by the Rev. Quinn Caldwell, Still Speaking Devotion 1/2/12.

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Gathered by Love" by Lavon Bayler, 1996, 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 Poinsettias and Disaster Relief Gifts are Presented by:

- Daniella & Joshua Benfer In memory of the four chaplains lost with the SS Dorchester on February 3, 1942
- Herb & Melba Bomberger In honor of our 66th wedding anniversary
- Chris & Tina Bowers In memory of David Francis LaPierre
In memory of Robin Lynn Rupp
In memory of Anne Paris Davison
- Paula & Mark Boyer In memory of our parents
- The Davinroys In honor of loved ones
In memory of our family and friends
- The Dundores In honor of family and friends
- Andrew Ginder In honor of Mary Ginder
- Jane & Jeff Leister In honor of those impacted by disasters and those striving to help
- Dave & Patty Scott In honor of Rebecca Scott
In honor of Julie, Rowdy & Walker Lantis
In memory of John & Dorothy Scott
In memory of Barbara Bell
- Pam & Dwight Smith In memory of Tom & Lynn Davies
In memory of Dwight & Rita Smith
- Anna Thompson In honor of children and grandchildren
In memory of parents and grandparents
- Sue & John Ward-Diorio In honor of Tom Ward
In memory of Judy Ward, Evelyn Diorio, Kelly MacCarthy, Jackie & John Diorio, Libri & Tillie Diorio
- Jeff & Randy Whitman In memory of Doris G. Heckman & Doris M. Whitman

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join us on Sunday, December 29, 2024, at 10:30AM for our Christmas Carol and Hymn Service. Rev. Anna Thompson will lead us in worship

STAYING CONNECTED

If you're interested in receiving email updates from St. Paul's head to <http://eepurl.com/hRK0gX> and subscribe.

There will be no Sunday school on Sunday, December 29. Sunday school classes will resume on January 5, 2025. Have a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!