



St. Paul's United Church of Christ
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DECEMBER 2022

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The Epistle

is a monthly publication of St. Paul's UCC.

Comments, suggestions, and submissions are welcome!

Please wear a mask inside if you wish.

Live stream services on St. Paul's Facebook Page & YouTube Channel.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STAFF

Pastor.....The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
Associate Pastor..... The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Administrative Assistant.....Renee E. Durbin
Director of Music.....Eric R. Dundore
Chorister' Director.....Jonneke A. Dundore
Assistant Music Director.....Mark A Dundore
Organist.....Sarah A Myers
Assistant Organist.....Patrice G. Miller
Audio & Video.....Jeffrey A. Dundore
Sexton.....Michael W. Hatz
Consistory President.....Sherry Spencer
Pastor Emeritus....The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold
Ministers.....The Entire Congregation of St. Paul's

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00-4:00 ♦ Office email: stpaulstaff@outlook.com
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Rev. John's email: revjohnwd@outlook.com
Rev. Allyssa's email: allyssaboyer@outlook.com
Eric's email: ericdundore@outlook.com
Web Address: www.saintpaulsucc-mech.org

FROM THE PASTOR

It is the Advent Season: it is December and Christmas is coming; our Congregational Meeting to approve the Budget is coming; the Cantata is coming, oh yes, and Jesus is coming. We can forget this last arrival, when we are all caught up in what else is going on. It is very easy to do.

I am not talking about a culture war or war on Christmas here. So much of what we do over the next three to four weeks is connected to our faith and to our Congregational life. However, being involved in all that and getting caught up in the cultural side of Christmas, which is also important because of the family connections we have around the celebration of the holiday, can cause us to be so hectic that we lose sight of what the Advent Season is designed to do.

Advent purposely calls us to slow down. All day and every day? Most of us cannot do that. But we can set aside some time each day to slow down and contemplate what it means that Jesus is coming; meditate on how Jesus will be coming into the world, into our lives this year.

We have to slow down so we can pay closer attention, be very mindful. Such an important part of what the Christmas story teaches us is that God does come into the world but in unexpected ways. If we are not focused, if we are not paying attention, we can easily miss or only barely see or grasp how Jesus has entered the world and our lives. And we want to have the clearest and fullest experience as we can get, because even with that what Jesus is asking us to do, how Jesus is asking us to live, can be difficult to comprehend and fulfill. Thankfully we have each other to try and help us understand and live into our discipleship.

May we each and all find hope, peace, joy and love this Advent Season, and may the presence of God's Spirit within us connect us to how Jesus is coming into the world and our lives this year, helping us understand how we can share that hope, peace, joy and love.

Peace, Rev. John

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 15, at 7:00 PM. This service is for every person who is looking for a safe place of rest, comfort, and healing this holiday season.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

There will be no Sunday school on Sunday, December 25 and Sunday, January 1. We look forward to seeing you in Sunday school again on January 8, 2023. Have a very merry Christmas!

ADVENT ACTIVITY DAY

Please join us for Advent Activity Day! On the third 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 an Advent storybook, take-home goodies, and crafts we will make for residents of local UCC assisted living homes. Children, youth, and adults are all invited! Sunday, December 11, 9:15-10:15 AM.



GET TO KNOW ST. PAUL'S CONSISTORY!

In a continuing effort to get to know your Consistory, please let me introduce:

Chris Bowers



I was born and raised in Baltimore, MD where I attended the Episcopal church and sang in the choir from the age of seven. After moving to New Haven, CT, where I lived for thirty years and raised five children, I completed a Master of Social Work degree and re-located to PA after the children were grown and I met my wife, Tina. Sadly, I lost my 23-year-old son, David, to cancer in January, 2006. With my heart broken, and feeling a sense of loss and distance from God and from people, I found St. Paul's on a list of open and affirming churches and joined ten months later. My most powerful experience of healing and belonging has come from being a part of the Chancel Choir at St. Paul's. I was warmly welcomed and have found a home there for the past sixteen years (and by the way, Altos

rock!) Singing in the choir has restored my relationship with God and with a church family, and I am now taking the next step of serving others with St. Paul's Consistory.

Term Started: 2022

Term Ending: 2025

Committee Liaison to: Youth Ministries

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:

Sunday, Dec. 11th. Following the morning worship. Please plan to join us. We will be discussing and voting on the 2023 Budget.

JANUARY EPISTLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Monday, December 19, 2022.

Church Calendar - The most up to date calendar is on the Church website. Help us keep it current by scheduling your events at the Church thru the Office at stpaulstaff@outlook.com or 717-766-7931.

Thank you!

Spotlight on Sacred Art

This month, our spotlight is on the **Chrismon tree**.

Have you ever looked closely at the Christmas tree in St. Paul's? This is a special type of Christmas tree called a **Chrismon tree**. Just like with Christmas trees, the evergreen tree itself symbolizes the eternal life Jesus Christ provides. However, Chrismon trees differ from regular Christmas trees in that they are only decorated with white or clear lights. And the Chrismons (ornaments) that hang on the tree are all made from white and gold material, because they are the liturgical colors of the Christmas season, symbolizing the purity and sovereignty of Christ. The word "Chrismon" comes from the Latin phrase *Christi Monogramma*, meaning "monogram of Christ." These are ancient symbols for Christ or some part of Christ's ministry. Our Chrismons were cross stitched by hand by St. Paul's members Marian Hoffman and her daughter Joyce Roth. It took them three years to complete all the Chrismons. Can you find these Chrismons on our Chrismon tree?

Alpha and Omega ΑΩ = the beginning and the end

Chi Rho Ϟ = first two letters of "Christ" in Greek, superimposed

circle and triangle = unity and eternity of the Trinity

anchor = hope

butterfly = resurrection; the immortality of the soul

chalice = Holy Communion

cross and crown = Jesus is king of kings

David's harp = joy

dove = Holy Spirit

Greek cross = cross with four equal arms

IHS = Abbreviation of Jesus' name in Greek, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ

lamp = wisdom

manger = humility

rainbow = covenant

sand dollar = Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection

shell = baptism

Star of David = Jesus' heritage

wheat = the Bread of Life

Triquetra = three-pointed knot symbolizing the Trinity

fish = ΙΧΘΥΣ (ichthys), Greek for fish; an acrostic for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

IC XC NIKA = "Jesus Christ conquers;" IC and XC are the first and last letters in the Greek words for "Jesus" and "Christ," respectively. "NIKA" is connected to the Greek word for "victory."



Are you curious to learn more about a particular symbol, artwork, or other feature? Let us know by contacting Pastor Allyssa or Rev. Anna Thompson. We would love to hear from you!



THOSE IN NEED OF PRAYER:

Addie (Stork-Whitson); **Kevin & Karen Allison**; **Ann**; **Barb**; **Barb Bell**; **Joanne Bender**; **Cindy Bensel**; **Mary Bensel**; **Beverly** (Hayden); **Bill & Bob** (Gabriel); **Barbara Blust**; **Melba Bomberger**; **Brendan and Family** (Richey); **Brian** (Shearer); **Jenny & Erica Budd** (Lingenfelter); **Anna & Dale Burns**; **Nancy Cabrera** (Runkle); **Jeff Carlson** (P. Miller); **Cheryl** (Freeman); **Ron Chronister**; **Alyssa Claar** (A. Thompson); **Pat Cleland**; **Mary Clark Coleman** (Riesmeyer); **Heather Connelly** (Bomberger); **John & Sheri Conner** (Layne); **Rita Davidson** (Plymette); **Evelyn Diorio**; **Dotty** (Richey); **Gail Dougherty** (Ritter); **Allen Dreibelbis**; **Nancy Dreibelbis**; **Richard Ecks** (Plymette); **Harry Felton** (Sponsler); **Bob & Eve Fenner**; **David Fetterman** (Aumiller); **Jerry Foulke & Lynn Carson**; **Fenton Fox & Rick Holtzapple**; **Diane Freeman**; **Steven Freeman**; **Ron Gabriel**; **Jack and Jean Gatesman** (Richey); **Bill Gladstone** (Aumiller); **Richard Gordon**; **Floyd Gouse**; **Shirley Grammer**; **Harriet & Mark Grimm**; **Dr. Mark Hagenbuch** (Bomberger); **Jane Hall**; **Mike Hatz**; **Noah Helwig** (Trout); **Jim and Leslie Hoehn**; **Brenda Hoffer** (Stork-Whitson); **Beth Hough**; **Michele Hughes** (Murphy); **Ingrid** (Richey); **Jane Leader Janeczek** (Aumiller); **Janie** (Biss); **Dan & Will Jones**; **Josh** (Ritter); **Julia** (Fox/Holtzapple); **Elaine Kansy** (Hoehn); **Kathy** (Simpson); **Martha & Gene Keith**; **Stephen Keith**; **Rev. Dr. Chris Kennedy** (Ward-Diorio); **Jesse King**; **Dave Kirkwood**; **Glenn Kline**; **Sandy Kline**; **Deb Korhut**; **Kristine and Family** (Ward-Diorio); **Audra Kucharick** (Aumiller); **Jean & John Layne**; **Debbie Lever** (A. Thompson); **Larry Linder** (Stork-Whitson/Williams); **Liam** (Simpson); **Lori** (Murphy); **Luca**; **Taran M.** (Taylor); **Manny** (Sharp); **Marie** (Murphy); **Michael & Ernie** (Richey); **Michelle & Family** (Mihmet); **Charles Miller** (Lloyd and Matthew's dad); **Linda Miller**; **Melissa Miller** (Bender); **Sue & Dayne Miller**; **Tasha Misner** (Trout); **Ernie Moyer**; **Nicolas Murillo** (McFarland); **Randy, Dar & Sarah Murphy**; **Beth Myers** (Richey); **Gene & Ruth Ellen Myers** (Boyer); **Susan Myers** (A. Thompson); **Nyugen, Thu** (P. Boyer); **Ryan Onufer & family** (Grice); **Jim & Mary P.** (Rhoads); **Paula Padget** (P. Miller); **Panker Family** (Richey); **Eric Potts** (A. Boyer); **Randy** (Bender); **Anne Rankin**; **Richard Reba** (Richenbacher); **Robert Reiner** (Bender); **Carol Rhoads**; **Jason & Rachelle Rhoads**; **Wes Rhoads & Family**; **Nancy, Tom & Dan Richey**; **Dave and Lois Ritter**; **Franklin, Andrew, Levi Roth**; **Rhoda & Ned Rupp**; **Betsy & Benny Rushong**; **Sam** (Freeman); **Jane & Tom Scott & Family**; **Scott & Tracey** (Davinroy); **John Shandra**; **Sharon and Family** (Lingenfelter); **Sherry** (Short); **Corky Short & Candy LaRue**; **Siemons Family** (Wood); **John Showers** (Aumiller); **James Sowell** (Sandy Kline); **Barbara Sterner**; **Dory Szeles** (Sterner); **April Thomas** (Bomberger); **Cathy Thomas**; **Tracy Thrush Family**; **Tiberius** (A. Thompson); **Kathy (Wolford Witmer) Toth**; **Shannon & Phoenix Trout**; **Bill Utley** (Boyer); **Rosalie Utley** (Boyer); **Vickie** (S. Miller); **Suzy Weeks** (Richey); **Jean and David Weiss**; **Leita Wentz**; **Geri Williams** (A. Thompson); **Ryan Wilson** (Bomberger); **Chelsey Wirth**; **Fran Wolford**; **Mitchell Worley** (Jones); **Suzanne Worley** (Jones); **Kevin Young** (A. Thompson); **Russell Young** (Rushong); **Zachary** (Taylor).



Thank you for the lovely bouquet of flowers for Ron following his surgery. Both of us are enjoying the beautiful fall flowers. Ron and I also really appreciate the prayers offered for Ron from our church family. Thank you so much,
Susan and Ron Gabriel

TimeToSignUp.com - Online Sign Up Sheets

Sunday, December 4, 2022 10:30 AM	Sunday, December 11, 2022 10:30 AM	Sunday, December 18, 2022 10:30 AM	Saturday, December 24, 2022 - Christmas Eve - 4:00 PM	Saturday, December 24, 2022 - Christmas Eve 11:00 PM
Acolyte	Acolyte	Acolyte		
Lector Becky Thompson	Lector Kathy Aumiller	Lector	Acolyte	Acolyte
Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table - Consistor Paula Boyer	Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table Jim Pirtle	Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table Paula Boyer	Acolyte	Acolyte
Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door - Consistory	Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door Becky Thompson	Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door Steve Roush	Worship Welcome Team Member Steve Roush	Worship Welcome Team Member
Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door - Consistory Steven Roush	Worship Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door Dave Scott	Worship Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door Corky Short	Worship Welcome Team Member	Worship Welcome Team Member
Worship Welcome Team Member - Consistory Wendy Hayden	Altar Flower Delivery Martha Keith	Altar Flower Delivery Mary Runkle	Worship Welcome Team Member	Worship Welcome Team Member
Worship Welcome Team Member - Consistory	Nursery Attendant	Nursery Attendant	Worship Welcome Team Member	Worship Welcome Team Member
Worship Welcome Team Member - Consistory	Nursery Attendant	Counting Team Member Steve Roush	Worship Welcome Team Member	Worship Welcome Team Member
Altar Flower Delivery Becky Thompson	Counting Team Member Joan Moyer	Counting Team Member	Worship Welcome Team Member	Worship Welcome Team Member
Nursery Attendant Susan Ward-Diorio	Counting Team Member Dave Scott		Nursery Attendant	
Nursery Attendant			Nursery Attendant	
Counting Team Member Mary Runkle				
Counting Team Member Martha Keith				



Thank you very much, St. Paul's, for the altar flowers Chris Grice delivered to our home last Sunday. I kept the arrangement as it was until Tuesday when I took it apart, offered some blooms to some friends, and then made various small containers of flowers to put around the house. Thank you again for thinking of us with the loveliness of autumn in these flowers. Betsy Rushong

Dear St. Paul's,
Thank you for the gorgeous altar flowers. What a beautiful arrangement! Also, thanks to Carol Sizemore for taking time out of her schedule to hand deliver the bouquet. Thanks again, Kay Ohrin.

To the congregation of St. Paul's UCC,
I want to send a heartfelt 'Thank you' for all you prayers and the beautiful flower arrangement that was sent to my home during my COVID convalescence. All have lifted my spirits and health more than I can express.

Love and thankful, Deb Kassahun

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

12/01	Doris Albrecht	12/13	Dale Burns
	Raymond Krouch	12/14	Sandra Ritter-Butz
	Rylie Wentz		Roland Parthree
12/02	Devon Miller	12/15	Thomas Amtower
12/05	Lindsay McCorkel	12/16	Jean Jones
	George Bingaman	12/17	Vic Brown III
12/06	Jasmyn Brackbill		Gloria McPherson
12/07	Pat Cleland	12/18	Madeline Simpson
12/09	Gerald Foulke	12/19	Evelyn Warfield
12/11	Ann Boyer	12/21	Dale Thorpe
	Ryker Wentz	12/22	Tania Pineo
12/12	John Chripczuk	12/25	Corky Short
	Willard Jones	12/26	Merikay Wood
	Shane Morell		James Haas
		12/27	Kateri Grice

ANNIVERSARIES

11/25	Mark & Andrea Dundore
12/02	William & Susanne Mullin Jr
12/05	Marshall & JoAnn Bender
12/06	Timothy & Samantha Kiner
12/11	Jill & David Morell
12/18	Alan & Diane Richenbacher
12/19	Judith & David Clovsky
12/22	Willard & Jean Jones
12/24	Lawrence & Joanne Schmick
12/27	Herbert & Melba Bomberger
12/30	James & Kim Pirtle
	Martha Spong & Kathryn Johnston
12/31	Ned & Rhoda Rupp
	Christine & Timothy Chandler

Events & Announcements



PRISM

Adventuring life on your own and looking for a fun night out? PRISM (People Rallying in Singles Ministry) is gathering for our first casual supper on December 11th at 5:00. We'll be enjoying chili and cornbread and evening of getting to know each other and sharing how we'd like PRISM to serve our community. RSVP or Questions? Talk to Carol Sizemore at 717-858-3105.

CONTRIBUTIONS for 2022 must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2022.

Questions on your 2022 contributions can be directed to Renee in the Church Office. Monies received after the start of 2023 will be booked for 2023.



THE CHRISTMAS FUND for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the

Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

This offering is received on the Sunday before Christmas, December 18th.

NEW HOPE NEWS:

Tremendous thanks to all who donated food items for New Hope's Thanksgiving baskets. St. Paul's members donated 230 lbs. of food, two Giant turkey gift certificates and \$50.00 cash. Thanks also to anyone who dropped off turkeys at New Hope. Needy families in our area will have a blessed Thanksgiving thanks to your generosity!!

POLLYANNAS

Pollyannas will be having their next lunch meeting 11:30 am, Tues, Dec 27 at Perkins on Erford Rd. We will be meeting in the small back room. If you are planning to attend, please contact Bonnie Plymette (591-8471).

CALLED TO CARE

Called to Care training to begin on January 17th, 2023. Please contact Martha Keith if you are considering joining this important ministry at St. Paul's.

WHAT IS A COOKIE WALK?

Save yourself a lot of hassle this holiday season by walking down to Fellowship Hall and purchasing a variety of cookies made by members of our congregation. Fill a basket (provided) with yummy goodies priced at \$1.00 each and take home a variety

to share with family, friends, co-workers, etc. Of course, if you like to bake, you can donate your own cookies portioned out to sell for \$1.00. Questions? See Mary Runkle or Jonne Dundore.

It's that time of year...

HOLIDAY COOKIE WALK



Sun., December 11!
Sale Hours 9:00 AM - 12Noon
in Fellowship Hall

**PLEASE PACKAGE YOUR COOKIE OR
CONFECTION DONATIONS IN BAGS TO SELL
FOR \$1.00 OR MARK OTHERWISE.**

Drop off your cookies Saturday, December 10th
8am to 4pm (Cart will be outside kitchen door)
OR Sunday, December 11th by 8:30 AM
See Jonneke Dundore or Mary Runkle
with any questions.

The proceeds will be split between
St. Paul's General Fund and
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

UNDECORATING THE SANCTUARY

Undecorating the sanctuary will take place on Saturday, January 14th starting at 8:00AM. Come when you can, leave when you must! See Jonneke Dundore with questions.

'MITTEN TREE'

The 'Mitten Tree' is now a 'Mitten Bin' in order to not crowd our Common area. We are placing 2 bins marked for winter mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and warm socks. We will be collecting them throughout Advent. Items will then be taken to New Hope Ministries for distribution. January 14th is the deadline to contribute.

ADVENT OFFERING

Thank you to one and all for your generous contributions through your pledges, to our Dreams and Visions Into Reality Campaign and to the special offerings we receive for the wider UCC. If you are able, please consider making an extra contribution for Advent. Your generosity will help us cover unexpected and additional expenses we incurred this year and allow for timely payment of our benevolences.

If you want to list that you are giving this special offering "In Memory of" or in "In Honor of" of someone, we want to allow you the opportunity to do this again this year. If we receive it by December 15th, we will list it in the Christmas Eve Worship Bulletins. Thank you so much for your support.



WISHING YOU A
**MERRY
CHRISTMAS!**

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear! We will leave St. Paul's at 4:00 PM sharp on Sunday, December 18, and drive to the homes of some of our congregation's seniors to sing carols. Bring comfortable shoes, warm clothes, and a joyful spirit. We plan to return to the church building

around 7:00 PM. Children, youth, and adults are all invited to participate, but you must sign up so that we can arrange transportation for everyone (sign up on our website or on the bulletin board in the Common). Children in 5th grade or younger must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. If you are willing to volunteer as a driver, please let us know when you sign up. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Allyssa.

Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la!



EPIPHANY TREE

January 8, 2023 — The “Burning of the Greens” is a familiar holiday event at St. Paul’s. But this year, to be better stewards of the environment, instead of burning our evergreen tree, we are placing it in our columbarium garden and decorating it with handmade edible ornaments for our bird and squirrel neighbors. First, join us in Fellowship Hall during the Sunday school hour, 9:15-10:15 AM, to help make the edible ornaments. Then, join us after the 10:30 AM worship service to bless the Epiphany Tree and celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world. Thank you for helping us start a new Epiphany tradition at St. Paul’s!

CONGRATULATIONS REV. ALLYSSA!

Please join us in congratulating (now) Rev. Allyssa Boyer on her ordination which took place in a service at St. Paul’s on Sunday, November 27th. Thank you to all who attended and helped us celebrate.

ST. PAUL’S ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL DINNER!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH

FOLLOWING THE 10:30 SERVICE & ANNUAL MEETING



- Join us in Fellowship Hall for our Annual Congregational Dinner of Pork & Sauerkraut.
- We will be honoring our members with 50 or more years.
- To help cover the cost of the meal, there will be a charge of \$9.00 for ages 13 & up, \$5.00 for ages 5 – 12, ages 4 and under are free.
- Sign-up sheets will be in the Common Area. Also sign up sheets will be available for dessert donations and helpers. All sign up sheets will be online as well.

A Liturgy for Christmas Day

for families & individuals at home

Call to Worship

One: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward all.

All: For out of God's own being, Jesus has come to bring love and light to all people.

A Reading from Scripture: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The

true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

A Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem

1. 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.

2. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

Prayer

All: Loving God, we thank you that you have come into our lives and that you act with saving power to make all things new. We thank you for pouring out your life into the human form of Jesus, and for the continual rebirth of Christ in the human heart. Touched by your Word made flesh, we would embody, incarnate, and signify your love on this earth. May the joy of Christmas never end, but continue through the ages until at last your reign of justice and peace is fully established on this earth. We pray in the name of Jesus, the Word. Amen.

Benediction

One: Glory to God in the highest!

All: God has come to us and shared our common lot, and so we rejoice!

One: Go forth rejoicing in the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Adapted from the "Book of Worship," United Church of Christ, New York: United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, 1986.