



The Annunciation by Henry Ossawa Tanner

God Incarnate Taking Place

First Sunday of Advent/Love Gift Sunday

This profound expression of God's redemptive purposes found in stanza three of our featured Advent hymn, *Of the Father's Love Begotten*, capsulizes the miracle of the Word becoming Flesh. Said in a slightly different way, *The Divine Word Became Jesus*. This is no minor thing. It was an earth-shattering revelation because Love, in its fullest expression and intensity, was coming to live with us forever. That love lives today, despite attempts to dismiss or undermine it.

On this first Sunday of Advent, we get this first glimpse of Love as understood through Mary's love of God when she said, *let it be with me according to your word*.

December 3, 2023

10:15 am

Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

500 W. Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446

10:15 am—December 3, 2023— First Sunday of Advent/Love Gift Sunday

You are invited to stand when indicated by an asterisk and speak the words in bold if able.

PRELUDE: Of the Father's Love Begotten.....Setting by Wilber Held

WELCOME/JOYS AND CONCERNS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Without love, we have nothing. To love God, to love God's creation, to love the people God made each and all of us to be ~ this is our purpose as people of faith.

As Advent, the season of waiting begins, we wait for love by practicing it and by making space for the love we know is coming.

We seek to love and be known as people of love, offering a light in the darkness of judgement, loneliness, and fear.

We are choosing to center our lives around the light of Love. We light the candle of Love today to symbolize the love that created us, the love we seek to share with the world, the love that guides us through this season, and the love that we long for as we anticipate the birth of Christ. Amen.

*CONFESSION

Loving God, many of us have come to church today with gifts in hand, eagerly ready to share. We have a vision of our chancel full of thoughtfully purchased presents, and what a vision it is! What we tend to lose sight of, however, are the other kinds of gifts that we are called to hold in our hands and our hearts in this season of Advent: the gifts of love, hope, joy, and peace. In a season where there is so much to look at, it's hard to focus on the vision it takes to make our hearts full and ready for the coming of your son. On this day of generous giving, may Christ's gift of love be the most important one that we share as we help to make the world ready for Christmas. Amen.

*ASSURANCE

When we confess our sins, claim our shortsightedness and our tunnel vision, and ask for God's vision to guide us, God opens our eyes and our hearts with the power of forgiveness and grace. May we claim these precious gifts, and may they be among the many that we share with others this day, this season, and always. **AMEN.**

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN: Of the Father's Love Begotten

The choir sings stanzas 1 and 2. All sing stanzas 3, 4, and 5.

The Candle of Love is lit on the Advent wreath while the hymn is sung.



1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten, Ere the worlds be - gan to be,
2. This is he whom seers in old time, Chant-ed of with one ac - cord,
3. Bless - ed dawn - ing of sal - va - tion, As the Word is shown in grace,
4. Let the heights of heav'n a - dore him; An - gel hosts, his prais - es sing;
5. Christ, to thee, with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly Ghost, to thee,



He is Al - pha and O - me - ga, He the source, the end - ing he,
Whom the voic - es of the proph-ets, Prom-ised in their faith - ful word;
In - to earth - ly flesh re - ceiv - ing: God in - car - nate tak - ing place.
Pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore him, And ex - tol our God and King;
Hymn and chant and high thanks-gi - ving, And un - wear - ied prai - ses be:



Of the things that are, that have - been,
Now he shines, the long - ex - pect - ed;
Now the light of God re - veal - ed,
Let no tongue on earth be si - lent,
Hon - or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion,



And that fu - ture years shall see, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
through the Child of hu - man face, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
And e - ter - nal vic - tor - y, Ev - er - more and ev - er - more!

LOVE GIFT SUNDAY 2023: GOD INCARNATE TAKING PLACE

REFLECTION

Emmanuel Incarnate

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – Stanza 1



O come, O come, Em-man - u - el, and ran-som cap-tive Is - ra - el
That mourns in lone-ly ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.
Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

ANTHEM: The Angel Gabriel.....Setting by Kristina Langlois

Dayspring Incarnate

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – Stanza 6



O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer our spir-its by your ad - vent here;
Love stir with-in the womb of night, and death's own shad-ows put to flight.
Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

REFLECTION

ANTHEM: Silent Night, Holy Night.....Setting by Paul Laubengayer

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Silent night, holy night!</i> | <i>Silent night, holy night!</i> | <i>Silent night, holy night!</i> |
| <i>All is calm and all is bright</i> | <i>Shepherds quake at the sight;</i> | <i>Son of God, love's pure light</i> |
| <i>Round yon virgin mother and child.</i> | <i>Glories stream from heaven afar,</i> | <i>Radiant beams from thy holy face</i> |
| <i>Holy Infant, tender and mild,</i> | <i>Heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!</i> | <i>With the dawn of redeeming grace,</i> |
| <i>Sleep in heav'nly peace.</i> | <i>Christ, the Savior, is born!</i> | <i>Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.</i> |

-Joseph Mohr, tr. John F. Young

Desire of Nations Incarnate

HYMN: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – Stanza 7

O come, De-sire of Na - tions, bind all peo-ples in one heart and mind;

Make en-vy, strife, and quar - rels cease; fill the whole world with heav - en's peace.

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

Reflection

ANTHEM: Will You Be Ready.....Mark Patterson

People who walk in darkness have seen a great light.
The light will shine upon them; may it shine brightly tonight.
Will you be ready for the light, ready for the light to shine upon you?
Will you be ready for the light, ready for the light to shine?
Will you be watching? Will you be list'ning? Will you hear the angels sing?
Will you be waiting? Will you be searching for a Savior and a King?
Will you be ready for the light, ready for the light to shine upon you?
Will you be ready for the light, ready for the light to shine?
People keep watching, true light is coming, look for a bright star in the East.
Look for the Christ Child, born in a manger, there you will find the Prince of Peace.
Will you be ready for the light, ready for the light to shine upon you?
Will you be ready for the light, ready for the light to shine?
Will you be ready, ready for the light to shine?
Ready for the light to shine, shine? Will you be ready?

-Mark Patterson

INVITATION/WORDS OF INSTITUTION/PRAYER OF BLESSING

BRINGING OF GIFTS/SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

Christ's table is open to all. Everyone is welcome to participate in the sacrament of communion.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING/DEDICATION OF GIFTS

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.

**Closing Hymn: Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn.....NCH 107*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: Toccata on *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*.....Austin Lovelace

Following worship, you are invited to join us for fellowship in Assembly Hall.

Worship Leaders

Rev. Addie Stong, Preacher & Liturgist

Rev. Dale Davis, Preacher & Liturgist

Andrew Paulson, Organist & Chancel Choir Director

Abbie Lamp, Children's Choir Director

Love Gift Sunday Gift Helpers and Communion Servers

Children's Choir

Chancel Choir

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Of the Father's Love Begotten

Text: Aurelius P. Clemens, 348-ca.413; Tr. composite

Music: DIVINUM MYSTERIUM, Plainsong, Mode V, 13th century; Setting by Michael Burkhardt, © 1993, Morningstar Music Publishers

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, 1710; Based on ancient antiphons from Advent Vespers

Tr. John Mason Neale, Henry Sloane Coffin, and others

Music: VENI EMMANUEL, French Processional, 15th century; Arr. Thomas Helmore

Will You Be Ready

Text: Mark Patterson, © 2002 Choristers Guild

December 3, 2023

- The Nursery will be open for you to use mindfully, if your little one needs a break. No volunteers will be on duty, so a parent, grandparent, or responsible adult must stay with their child.
- Today's worship available later online on St. John's Facebook Page, Website or YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/stjohnsucclansdalepa](https://www.youtube.com/stjohnsucclansdalepa)
- Please ask a Hospitality Team member for an audio device if you are having difficulty hearing the service.
- CD's of this morning's service are available by contacting the church office.
- Reminder: The wheelchairs and first aid kit are stored in the "First Aid Closet" in the narthex (the door is clearly labeled). The automatic external defibrillator (AED) is located in the church Library on the wall closest to the Sanctuary.

Worship Assistants

Hospitality: Bill Leslie, Team leader; Bob Bertolette, Brian Hutchinson, Margie Jewell, Gale Linderman, Scott Vanderburg

Elder of the Morning: Sally Atkiss

CD Technician: Robin MacMullen

Chancel Flower Ministry: Lisa Thim

Driver: Scott Vanderburg

Umbrella Ministry: Judy Johnston

Chancel Flowers

In memory of Eloise Atkin's Dec. 8th birthday from Roger Atkin and family

In memory of loved ones from the Longcoy and Wenner families

In memory of loved ones and her husband, Fred, from Thelma Brunner

In memory of Earl Bruce Kirk's passing from his daughter, Barbara Kirk

Remembering with love, Ashley MacKinstry Guest, Kristoffer Guest, Paul Hagerty and other family loved ones from the MacKinstry-Rogers family

This Week at St. John's

If you would like more information, please contact the church office 215.855.5489 or office@st-johns-ucc.org

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|-----|----|-----|---|--|
| Dec | 3 | Sun | 9:00 am | First Sunday of Advent – Love Gift Sunday Connect ³ , Activity Room Praying Hands Stitchers, Library 10:15 am Morning Worship, Bringing of Gifts, Communion, Sanctuary Budget Meeting Fellowship |
| Dec | 5 | Tue | 7:00 pm | NAMI, AA |
| Dec | 6 | Wed | 5:00-7:00 pm 5:30 pm 6:00 pm 7:30 pm | Wednesday Night Live Community Meal, Assembly Hall Evening Worship, Fireside Room Children's Music, Music Room United Ringers Handbell Choir Adult Education, Library Chancel Choir and Friends, Sanctuary |
| Dec | 7 | Thu | 9:30 am | Soup Prep |
| Dec | 8 | Fri | 9:30 am 6:00 pm | Soup Prep Chess |
| Dec | 10 | Sun | 9:00 am 10:15 am 4:00 pm | Second Sunday of Advent Connect ³ , Activity Room Morning Worship, Sanctuary Snyder Baptism Budget Vote Advent Celebration during Fellowship Soup Sale Enlightener due date Artist Series Christmas Festival – <i>In the Stillness</i> |

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|--|------------|
| Weekly amount needed for Current Income 2023 | \$7,788.46 |
| Weekly amount needed for OCWM 2023 | \$865.00 |
| A Look at the Week of November 19, 2023 | |
| Attendance: 10:15 am, November 19 | 119 |
| Attendance: 5:30 pm, November 22 | NO WNL |
| Offering For Current Income | \$4,398.00 |
| Offering For Our Church's Wider Mission | \$847.00 |
| A Look at the Week of November 26, 2023 | |
| Attendance: 10:15 am, November 26 | 99 |
| Attendance: 5:30 pm, November 29 | 26 |
| Offering For Current Income | \$4,633.34 |
| Offering For Our Church's Wider Mission | \$817.50 |

To give online through our secure platform, visit
<https://app.easytithes.com/app/giving/stjohnsucc>

Scan here for online giving



St. John's United Church of Christ

500 West Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446 Office: 215.855.5489 email: office@st-johns-ucc.org

If you would like more information about St. John's please speak with one of the staff

or visit our website at <http://www.st-johns-ucc.org>

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|---|---|
| Rev. Dale Davis, M. Div., Interim Senior Pastor | Rev. Adelaide L. Stong, M. Div., Associate Pastor |
| Andrew Paulson, M.M., M.A., Minister of Music | Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children & Youth |
| Lisa Delp, Church Admin. | Bill Bergey, Custodian |
| Leroy Horst, Buildings & Grounds Supervisor | Liz Rivett, Council President |

Announcements

Soup Sale – Sunday, December 10

We need volunteers on Dec. 7th & 8th to assist with prepping veggies, etc., and then cooking & packaging the soup. If you are interested in helping with this fundraising event, contact Anne Kinsey at 215-470-8456 (phone call or text) or email kinseyreport@verizon.net.



Advent Celebration

On December 10th the Board of Educators will be hosting fellowship time and an Advent Celebration, including caroling and a craft for kids/family. Come out and join in some holiday fun during fellowship time!



Wrapping Presence

Volunteer Opportunity

As reported in the November Enlightener, the Church Council endorsed supporting the Wrapping Presence organization (www.wrappingpresence.org) with volunteers to serve the residents at The Harborview Rehab & Care Center Lansdale in the distribution of holiday gifts so that the residents have gifts to give to their close ones. Wrapping Presence is looking for 20 Wrapping Buddies to assist the residents in selecting gifts (provided by Wrapping Presence) and wrapping them so that they have gifts to give when their close ones visit during the holidays.

The event will take place on Thursday 14th December from 1:00-4:00 pm and there is a website for sign-ups at <https://bit.ly/WP-NHS> (please ignore the ads on the sign-up site, scroll down to the 14 December event to provide your information and then click the button at the bottom to confirm your choice). Wrapping Presence will provide experienced volunteers to guide St. John's volunteers in assisting the residents. Some volunteers will have the opportunity to interact with the residents and help them select gifts (information on who they are selecting gifts for will be provided) while others, skilled in wrapping, will wrap presents and attach gift cards. The gifts will be placed in decorated gift bags (a WNL activity will be planned for bag decorating) for the residents to bring back to their rooms.

Please contact Bill Cagney for more information or assistance in signing up:

215.385.2882 (text)

215.641.4930 (home)

Billcagney@verizon.net

2023 Poinsettia Donation Form



Due Date 12/18/23

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Name _____ Amount \$ _____ Envelope # _____

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2023 AT ST. JOHN'S ~ GOD INCARNATE TAKING PLACE
The birth of Christ is a reminder that God comes to us in subtle, intimate, and surprising ways.
Join us as we follow the story of *God Incarnate Taking Place*.



Sunday, December 3: First Sunday of Advent

10:15am – Sunday Morning Worship with Holy Communion

Join us for Love Gift Sunday, a morning service of giving as we recall God's greatest gift to us.

Wednesday, December 6

5:30pm: Wednesday Evening Advent Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, December 10: Second Sunday of Advent

10:15am – Sunday Morning Worship

4:00pm – In the Stillness: The 2023 Christmas Festival

Join the St. John's Chancel Choir and Friends, The North Penn Chamber Singers, and the North Penn Brass Ensemble for an annual St. John's Artist Series holiday tradition! A festive reception follows the concert.

Wednesday, December 13

5:30pm – Wednesday Evening Advent Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, December 17: Third Sunday of Advent

10:15am – Sunday Morning Worship with the St. John's Brass Ensemble

Wednesday, December 20

No 5:30pm Wednesday Evening Advent Worship (Dinner will still be served from 5pm-7pm)

7pm – Service of Longest Night

Join us for an evening worship service on this very tender night of the year.

The Chancel Choir leads us in an evening filled with reflection and love.

Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve

10:15am – Sunday Morning Worship with Holy Communion

Music from the Children's Choir, Piano, and Organ.

Join us as we sing familiar carols and hear the Christmas story read from the Gospel according to Luke.

A special Christmas Eve prelude begins at 10am.

10:15pm – Sunday Evening Worship with Holy Communion

Music from the Chancel Choir, United Ringers (Handbell Choir), String Quartet, Piano, and Organ.

Join us as we sing familiar carols, hear the Christmas story read from the Gospel according to Luke, and light candles to welcome the birth of Christ. A special Christmas Eve prelude begins at 10pm.

Wednesday, December 27

No Wednesday Evening Programming

Sunday, December 31: New Year's Eve

10:15am – Sunday Morning Worship

Join us as we end 2023 and welcome 2024 with a special New Year's Eve worship service.

Service of Longest Night

Wednesday evening December 20, 7:00 p.m.



Each year as the holidays arrive also come a range of emotions. All around us we can sense excitement, anticipation, and joy. But we can also experience stress, loneliness, feelings of being overwhelmed, sadness, or the feeling of being disconnected or lost.

The Service of Longest Night is an opportunity for anyone and everyone feeling out of sorts for any reason and who need some time to center, to reflect, to connect with companions of faith, and to be reminded that we are being held by a light that is stronger than darkness, whose love embraces us just as we are.

We hope you will join us in the sanctuary for this meaningful time of prayer, reflection, and music led the Chancel Choir. Be sure to join us for a meal from 5pm-7pm in Assembly Hall before the service. *There will be no 5:30pm worship in the Fireside Room.*