



*Statue of the Visitation at Church of the Visitation in Ein Karem, Israel*

## **God Incarnate Taking Place**

### **Second Sunday of Advent**

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 second Sunday of Advent, we hear the testimony of Mary as she boldly proclaims that God overrules those who think they rule the world. According to Mary, God's mission is to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry with good things. If you want to know the reason for the birth of Jesus, that's a good place to start.

**December 10, 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 10, 2023— Second Sunday of Advent

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

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PRELUDE: People, Look East.....Setting by Linda Lamb

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.

**Something is unfolding, something is emerging; a new birth is on the horizon.**

**Even if we can't yet see it, we sense it!**

Yes, the world is about to turn! A new beginning is underway,  
and we are called to be hope-filled and ready!

**We are choosing to center our lives around this light of Hope.**

**For in this light, we can see dawn peeking over the horizon.**

**We are able to feel the possibility of new life. What we long for will come to be.**

Come let us worship in the light of hope!

**Amen.**

\*CONFESSION

God of wonder, mystery, and the unexpected, we are in holiday mode. Planning, shopping, baking, decorating, ordering, and wrapping are well underway. There are lists, places to go, things to accomplish. But are we preparing for the birth of Jesus in our lives, or are we simply moving through the pageantry of Christmas without much in the way of the preparation that really matters? God, help us to slow down and reflect, as did Mary, on the wonder, majesty, and miracle of your coming to live among us. Remind us that you came to earth without a show, without pomp, without the countless distractions. And yes, God, we do confess that it's sometimes easier to focus on the external glamour of the season as opposed to preparing our hearts for the way you want to live in them. Forgive us, we pray. Amen.

\*ASSURANCE

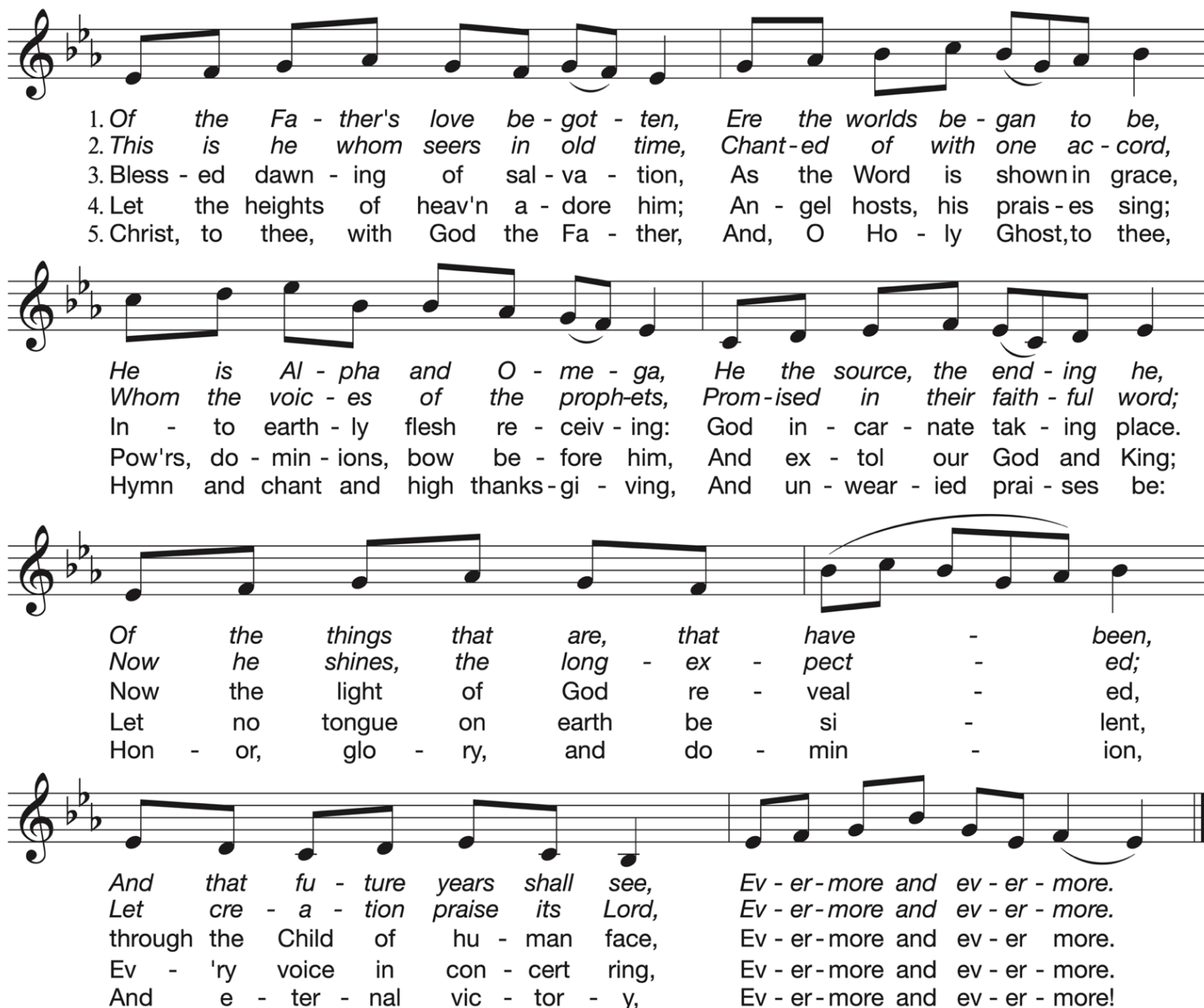
Time and time again, we can get swept up in our agendas. All the while God patiently waits for us to come to the realization that we are off course. God's forgiveness comes to us from a place of love. That love wants joy and peace for us and for the world.

**Praise be to God!**

**\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN/ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING: Of the Father's Love Begotten**

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

*The Candle of Hope 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!

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

Emma Grace Snyder-Schaffer, daughter of Brian Snyder and Jenna Schaffer

The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God. In as much as the promise of the gospel is not only to us but also to our children, baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, the sign and seal of their participation in God's forgiveness, and the beginning of their growth into full Christian faith and discipleship.

Emma ~ Baptism is a sacrament of God's boundless grace, a celebration of God's unconditional, never-ending love. It is also a promise-making time. Brian and Jenna, will you promise, with God's help, to reflect God's "no strings attached," endless love in your relationship with Emma?

(Parents): Yes, we will.

Baptism is also a christening. It completes the naming process. To the name you have given your child, Emma Grace, we will add the name, Child of God, member of God's family. Will you seek to help Emma come to know who she is at the deepest and most basic level?

(Parents): Yes, we will.

Baptism is also about anticipation. We anticipate the time when Emma will confirm the decision to live in the power of God's love and grace and follow the ways of Christ. Will you, with your nurturing and encouragement, prepare Emma for that time?

(Parents): Yes, we will.

Will you, Godparents Jessica, Vida, and David, support Brian and Jenna in this commitment and become a special friend and faith partner to Emma?

(Godparents): Yes, we will.

Let us join together as the people of St. John's and members of the body of Christ to make our own promises as we welcome and embrace this beloved one...

**As members of Christ's church, we promise this child our love, support, and care. With joy and thanksgiving, we welcome you into Christ's church to share with us in ministry, for we are all one in Christ.**

#### BAPTISM PRAYER

We thank you, God, for the gift of creation made known to us in water and word. Before the world had shape and form, your Spirit moved over the waters. Out of the waters of the deep, you formed the firmament and brought forth the earth to sustain all life. In the time of Moses, your people Israel passed through the Red Sea waters from slavery to freedom and crossed the flowing Jordan to enter the promised land. You have come to us through water in the stories of Jesus who was nurtured in the water of Mary's womb, baptized by John in the water of the Jordan, and became living water to a woman at the Samaritan well. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and sent them forth to baptize with water and spirit. Bless, by your Holy Spirit, gracious God, this water. Bless Emma, bless all who touch and taste this water that she and all may be ever reminded of your abiding presence and claim on their lives. Amen.

#### ACT OF BAPTISM

BAPTISMAL HYMN: Child of Blessing, Child of Promise, Stanza 1

Child of bless - ing, child of prom - ise, bap - tized with the Spir - it's sign;

With this wa - ter God has sealed you un - to love and grace di - vine.

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

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.**

ANTHEM: Mary Went Up to Hill Country.....Carl Schalk

*Mary went up to hill country, Elizabeth she came to see.*

*Her cousin's greeting which she heard came by the Spirit's inward word:*

*"You are the mother of my King." Then sweetly did the virgin sing:*

*My heart God's greatness voices, my soul in him rejoices.*

*He is my Savior, faithful, true; His mercy will enfold you too.*

*Stay-at-homes never let us be, but go we up through hill country.*

*And there speak kindly, each to each, the Spirit's greeting that can reach  
the heart and open it to sing the song that only faith can bring:*

*My heart God's greatness voices, my soul in him rejoices.*

*He is my Savior, faithful, true; His mercy will enfold you too.*

*-F. Samuel Janzow*

SERMON: "The First Disciple" .....Rev. Dale Davis

HYMN: Mary, Woman of the Promise.....123


*Stanza 1: All*

*Stanza 4: Lower Voices*


*Stanza 2: Higher Voices      Stanza 5: All*

*Stanza 3: All in Harmony*

JOYS/CONCERNS/PRAYERS/SUNG RESPONSE: My Soul Gives Glory to My God, Stanza 5




Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup - ports those in dis - tress,




re - mem - ber - ing past prom - is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.


\*INVITATION TO OFFERING/SUNG RESPONSE: We Hail You God's Anointed, Stanza 3




The wise shall bow be - fore you and gold and in - cense bring;



all na - tions shall a - dore you, and praise all peo - ples sing;



To you shall prayer un - ceas - ing and dai - ly vows be said,

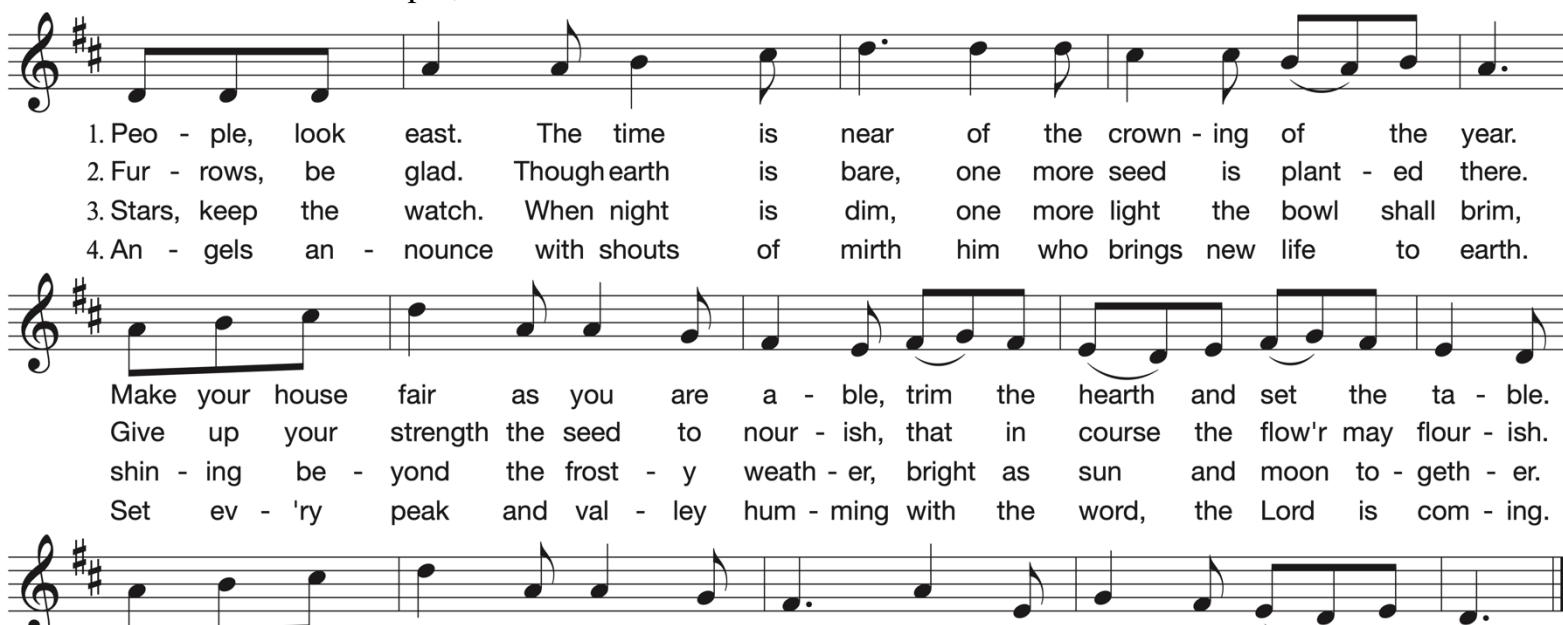


your realm is still in - creas - ing, with you, O Christ, as head.

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION



**\*CLOSING HYMN: People, Look East**



1. Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing of the year.  
2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plant - ed there.  
3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,  
4. An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.

Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.  
Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in course the flow'r may flour - ish.  
shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.  
Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.

Peo - ple, look east, and sing to - day: Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
Peo - ple, look east, and sing to - day: Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
Peo - ple, look east, and sing to - day: Love, the Star, is on the way.  
Peo - ple, look east, and sing to - day: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

**\*BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE: People, Look East.....Setting by Kristina Langlois

**BUDGET VOTE RESULTS**

***Following worship, you are invited to join us for an Advent Celebration  
hosted by the Board of Educators in Assembly Hall.***

***Be sure to return at 4pm for the Artist Series Christmas Festival!***

**Worship Leaders**

Rev. Dale Davis: Preacher

Rev. Addie Stong: Liturgist

Andrew Paulson: Organist, Chancel Choir Director, and United Ringers Director

Chancel Choir

United Ringers

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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, 13<sup>th</sup> century;

Setting by Michael Burkhardt, © 1993, Morningstar Music

*Child of Blessing, Child of Promise*

Text: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981, © 1991 GIA Publications

Music: STUTTGART, Psalmodia Sacra, Gotha, 1715

*Mary Went Up to Hill Country*

Text: F. Samuel Janzow, © 1994 Concordia Publishing

*My Soul Gives Glory to My God*

Text: Miriam Therese Winter, 1987

© 1978, 1987 Medical Mission Sisters

Music: MORNING SONG, Kentucky Harmony, 1816

*We Hail You God's Anointed*

Text: James Montgomery, 1821

Music: ELLACOMBE, Gesangbuch der herzoglichen  
Wirtembergischen katholischen Hofkapelle, 1784

*People, Look East*

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965

© Miss E. Farjeon Will Trust,

by permission of David Higham Associates

Music: BESANÇON, French carol, arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934

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## December 10, 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://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:** Mark Methlie, Team leader; Jen Gilbert, Sarah Hogan, Bonnie & Walt Weber

**Elder of the Morning:** Debby Hendricks

**CD Technician:** Griff Francis

**Chancel Flower Ministry:** Barbara & Robin MacMullen

**Driver:** Gale Linderman

**Umbrella Ministry:** Marcia Stacy

### Chancel Flowers

In memory of Ethel T. Kelsey from the Harrison 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](mailto:office@st-johns-ucc.org)

Dec	10	Sun	9:00 am 10:15 am	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> Connect <sup>3</sup> , Activity Room Morning Worship, Sanctuary Snyder Baptism Budget Vote Advent Celebration during Fellowship Soup Sale Enlightener due date 4:00 pm Artist Series Christmas Festival – <i>In the Stillness</i>
Dec	11	Mon	7:00 pm	Zoom Council
Dec	12	Tue	9:00 am 6:30 am 7:00 pm	Men's Breakfast Girl Scouts AA
Dec	13	Wed	5:00-7:00 pm 5:30 pm 6:00 pm 7:30 pm	<b>Wednesday Night Live</b> Community Meal, Assembly Hall Evening Worship, Fireside Room Children's Music, Music Room Adult Education, Library Chancel Choir, Sanctuary
Dec	14	Thu	1:00 am	Wrapping Presence at The Harborview Rehab & Care Center Lansdale
Dec	15	Fri	6:00 pm	Chess
Dec	17	Sun	9:00 am 10:15 am	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> Connect <sup>3</sup> , Activity Room Morning Worship, Sanctuary Fellowship



Weekly amount needed for Current Income 2023	\$7,788.46
Weekly amount needed for OCWM 2023	\$865.00
<b>A Look at the Week of November 26, 2023</b>	
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
<b>A Look at the Week of December 3, 2023 - Love Gift Sunday</b>	
Attendance: 10:15 am, December 3	161
Attendance: 5:30 pm, December 6	25
Offering For Current Income	\$9,575.68
Offering For Our Church's Wider Mission	\$2,107.00

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](mailto: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>

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.      Leroy Horst, Buildings & Grounds Supervisor      Bill Bergey, Custodian  
Liz Rivett, Council President

## Announcements

### Today's Events!

Soup sale and Advent Celebration in Assembly Hall following worship.  
Purchase delicious homemade soup and join the Board of Educators for  
caroling and a craft for kids/family.



### Volunteer Opportunity

Join us on Thursday, December 14, from 1-4pm at The Harborview Rehab & Care Center, Lansdale, to assist 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.

To volunteer as a "Wrapping Buddy," sign up 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).

Please contact Bill Cagney for more information or assistance in signing up:  
215.385.2882 (text)      215.641.4930 (home)      [Billcagney@verizon.net](mailto:Billcagney@verizon.net)

### 2023 Poinsettia Donation Form

Due Date 12/18/23

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Envelope # \_\_\_\_\_



### \*\*\*Important Notice\*\*\*

**All donations designated for 2023 must be received in the church office by Monday, December 25.** Donations received after that date will be credited to your 2024 donation account. Your contributions may be delivered in-person on Christmas Eve, mailed to the church, or placed in the drop box located at the entrance by the church ramp.

## **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 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.*