



Christmas Eve Late Service

God Incarnate Taking Place

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.

It was considered common knowledge that God chose or "adopted" particular individuals, such as kings, to convey the essence of the divine kingdom. But with the birth of Jesus, something radical and unprecedented was revealed. The entirety of God's message, the Word became Flesh, came to live among us. Tonight, we celebrate the birth of our Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. Good news of great joy for all the people.

December 24, 2023
10:15 pm

Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

500 W. Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446

10:15 pm—December 24, 2023—Christmas Eve Late Service

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

CAROL PRELUDE

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Infant Holy with He Is Born, the Divine Christ Child

What Child Is This?

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Settings by David Cherwien, Mark Sedio, Brant Adams, and Marshall Ocker

JOYOUS WELCOME

PROCESSIONAL CAROL & ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

The candles of love, hope, joy, and peace are lit while the carol is sung.

**Of the Father's Love Begotten*

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



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!

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Isaiah 9:2-7

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood shall be
burned as fuel for the fire.

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

Elizabeth Poston, adapted by Carl Schalk

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
laden with fruit, and always green:
The trees of nature fruitless be
compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel:
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell
the glory which I now can see
in Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
and pleasure dearly I have bought:
I missed of all; but now I see
'tis found in Christ the apple tree.

Psalms 96

Read Responsively

O sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**Sing to the Lord; bless his name;
tell of his salvation from day to day.**

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.

**For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.**

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.

**Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**

Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

**Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come into his courts.**

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

I'm weary with my former toil,
here I will sit and rest awhile:
Under the shadow I will be,
of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
it keeps my dying faith alive:
Which makes my soul in haste to be
with Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Worship the Lord in holy splendor;
tremble before him, all the earth.
**Say among the nations, "The Lord is king!
The world is firmly established;
it shall never be moved.**

He will judge the peoples with equity."
Let the heavens be glad,
and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar and all that fills it;
let the field exult and everything in it.
**Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the Lord, for he is coming,
for he is coming to judge the earth.**
He will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with his truth.

**Joy to the World*

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive her King;
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs em - ploy;
 3. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions prove

Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him room,
 While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 The glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness,

And heav'n and na - ture sing, And heav'n and na - ture sing,
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing joy,
 And won - ders of his love, And won - ders of his love,

And heav'n and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 And won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Luke 2:1-7

The Christ Candle is lit while the passage is read.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

**Away in a Manger*

1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a bed,
 2. The cat - tle are low - ing; no the poor ba - by to wakes,
 3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head;
 But lit - tle Lord Je - sus no cry - ing he makes.
 Close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 I love you, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky care
 Bless all the dear chil - dren in your ten - der care

The lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
 And stay by my cra - dle till morn - ing is nigh.
 And take us to heav - en to live with you there.

Luke 2:8-14

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

*Hark! The Herald-Angels Sing

1. Hark! the he - rald - an - gels sing Glo - ry to the new - born King;
2. Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,
3. Hail the heav'n - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Right-eous-ness!

Peace on earth and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners re - con - ciled:
Late in time be - hold him come, Off - spring of a vir - gin's womb:
Light and life to all he brings, Ris'n with heal - ing in his wings;

Joy - ful all ye na - tions rise, Join the tri - umph of the skies,
Veiled in flesh the God-head see, Hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty!
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, Born that man no more may die,

With th'an - gel - ic host pro-claim, Christ is born in Beth - le - hem.
Pleased as man with man to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - ma - nu - el.
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them se - cond birth.

Refrain

Hark! the he - rald - an - gels sing Glo - ry to the new - born King.

Tonight's offering will be brought forward and dedicated during the singing of the carol. If you didn't get a chance to drop your offering in the plates by the entrances, you are welcome to place your offering in a plate up front after the service or scan the QR code found in the bulletin insert to give electronically.

Luke 2:15-16

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger.

Still, Still, Still

Traditional Austrian Carol, Setting by Anne Krentz Organ

Luke 2:17-20

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

See, amid the winter's snow

John Goss, Arranged by Dan Forrest

Alleluia...

See, amid the winter's snow,
born for us on earth below,
See the tender Lamb appears,
promised from eternal years.

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn,
Hail, redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Alleluia...

Alleluia...

Lo, within a manger lies
He who built the lofty skies,
He, who, throned in light sublime,
sits amid the cherubim.

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn,
Hail, redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Alleluia...

Alleluia...

Sacred infant, all divine,
What a tender love was Thine,
Thus to come from highest bliss,
Down to such a world as this.

Hail, thou ever-blessed morn,
Hail, redemption's happy dawn,
Sing through all Jerusalem:
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Alleluia...

FROM WORD TO SACRAMENT

COMMUNION

Christ's table is open to all. Everyone is welcome to participate in the sacrament of communion. The outer circle of the communion plate contains wine, all of the inner circles contain grape juice. Gluten-free bread and individually packaged elements are available upon request.

CANDLE LIGHTING

**Silent Night*

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, All is calm,
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Shep - herds quake
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God,
all is bright; Round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,
love's pure light; Ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face
Ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly
Heav'n - ly hosts sing Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Sav - ior is
With the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy
peace, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
born, Christ the Sav - ior is born!
birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

INVITATION TO SHARE THE LIGHT

*O Come, All Ye Faithful

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri -
2. God of God, Light of
3. Sing, choirs of an - gels, Sing in ex - ul -
4. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this hap - py

um - phant, O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
Light, Lo! he ab - hors not the Vir - gin's womb;
ta - tion, Sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heav'n a - bove;
morn - ing, Je - sus, to thee be glo - ry giv'n;

Come and be - hold him Born the King of An - gels:
Ve - ry God, Be - got - ten, not cre - a - ted:
Glo - ry to God, In the high - est:
Word of the Fa - ther, Now in flesh ap - pear - ing:

Refrain
O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,
O come, let us a - dore him, Christ the Lord!

*COMMISSION & BENEDICTION

*CHORAL RESPONSE

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light from Christmas Oratorio

J.S. Bach

Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light, and usher in the morning.
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright, but hear the angel's warning.
This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be,
The power of Satan breaking, our peace eternal making.

POSTLUDE

Trepak from The Nutcracker

P.I. Tchaikovsky

Thank you for joining us for worship! Merry Christmas!

Worship Leaders

Rev. Dale Davis, Interim Senior Pastor

Rev. Addie Stong, Associate Pastor

Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music

United Ringers: Grace Bruen, Amy Faga, Susan Popjoy, Rickie Lee Sands

Chancel Choir:

Don Atkiss, Sumiko Booraem, Matt Braun, Grace Bruen*, Mark Bruen, Bill Cagney, Marie Carota, Deborah Dayton, Kay Fiala, Michael Formica, David Furniss, Bonnie Hales, Ken Hales, Debby Hendricks*, Jill Hendricks*, Leslie Hendricks*, Rachel Hendricks, Steve Hendricks, Leroy Horst, Ron Huisenga*, Vern Hunsberger, Anne Kinsey, Eric Kinsey, Abbie Lampe, Bill Leslie, Alan Malachowski, Kyle McConville, Cindy Reese, Jon Sands*, Susan Sands, Liz Vanderburg*

String Quartet:

Rebecca Ansel (violin), Yoori Kim Williams (violin)

Marjorie Goldberg (viola), Susan Lerner (cello)

Percussionist: Cindy Reese

Readers: Deborah Dayton, Peter Conver, Jon Sands

Communion Servers: Chancel Choir Members*

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

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Of the Father's Love Begotten

Stanza 3 Transl. The New Century Hymnal
© 1993 The Pilgrim Press

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

Text: Elizabeth Poston
© 1967 Elizabeth Poston

See, amid the winter's snow

Text: Edward Caswall, Arr. Dan Forrest
© 2016 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.

December 24, 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.

Tonight's worship service will be available later online on St. John's Facebook Page, Website or YouTube Channel: youtube.com/stjohnsucclansdalepa

Please ask a Hospitality Team member for an audio device if you are having difficulty hearing the service.

CDs of this evening's service are available by contacting the church office.

Wheelchairs and first aid kits 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.

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>

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

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

Dec	24	Sun	<div>10:15 am</div> <div>10:15 pm</div>	Fourth Sunday of Advent/Christmas Eve Morning Worship, Communion @ 10:15am Prelude begins @ 10am Music from the Children's Choir, Piano, and Organ Fellowship Evening Worship, Communion @ 10:15pm Prelude begins @ 10pm Music from the Chancel Choir, United Ringers, String Quartet, Piano, and Organ Candle lighting
Dec	25	Mon		Christmas Day – Office Closed
Dec	26	Tue	7:00 pm	AA
Dec	27	Wed		NO Wednesday Night Live
Dec	31	Sun	<div>9:00 am</div> <div>10:15 am</div>	First Sunday after Christmas NO Connect ³ , Activity Room Morning Worship, Sanctuary Fellowship
Jan	1	Mon		New Year's Day – Office Closed
Jan	2	Tue	7:00 am	AA, NAMI
Jan	3	Wed	<div>5:00-7:00 pm</div> <div>5:30 pm</div> <div>6:00 pm</div>	Wednesday Night Live Community Meal, Assembly Hall Evening Worship, Fireside Room Adult Education, Library NO ensemble rehearsals. Ensemble rehearsals resume on January 10.
Jan	5	Fri	<div>6:00 pm</div> <div>7:00 pm</div>	Chess Lansdale Montessori School Open House
Jan	6	Sat	9:30 am	Unhanging of the Greens
Jan	7	Sun	<div>9:00 am</div> <div>10:15 am</div>	Epiphany Sunday Praying Hands Connect ³ , Activity Room Morning Worship & Communion, Sanctuary, Fellowship

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.

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

Scan here for online giving



2023 Poinsettias

In memory of my loving husband, Alan Johnston, from Judy Johnston

In memory of Warren & Lorraine Badger from John & Susan Hendricks

A thank you to my loving church family who have supported me through challenging times from Judy Johnston

In memory of Lois Detweiler, Dennis Moyer, Ruth Moyer and Theodore Smith from Jean & Tom Beggs

In memory of my family, Mom, Dad & Glenn, from Margie Jewell

In memory of Dr. Bill & Polly Hartzell from Dee Reedman & family

In memory of June Hendricks from John & Susan Hendricks

In memory of Anna & Daniel Henninger from Lyn & Don Huntsinger

In memory of Blanche & Archie Huntsinger from Lyn & Don Huntsinger

In memory of loved ones from the Keim/Baker family

In memory of loved ones from James, Fran and Siobhan Morris

In memory of loved ones from Judy Koenig

In memory of Charles R. May from Connie May

In loving memory of our son, Shane R. Morcom, from Merle Anne Morcom & Walter Hawkins

In memory of my parents, Catharine & Albert Munzinger, from Kay Fiala

In memory of our parents from Judy & Chuck Neidhardt

In memory of my special friend, Jim Stevenson, from Cliff Kneipp

In memory of Emma, Earl, Alma and Bertha Swartley from John & Susan Hendricks

In memory of Thomas Timko and Tobi Timko from Vada Timko

In memory of Bob & Bette Trevorah from the Trevorah family

In memory of Alberta Walsh from the Trevorah family