



## *St. Paul's United Church of Christ*

*We are a welcoming, Christ-centered community called to embody, nurture and share God's Loving Light both within St. Paul's and our wider community.*

[www.stpaulsbirdsboro.org](http://www.stpaulsbirdsboro.org)

### **We're Glad You are Here!**

**Welcome:** Inspired by Christ and his ministry of God's invitation, we proclaim, "No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!"

**Restrooms:** These are located on the basement level of the church. Either go through the double doors in the front of the sanctuary and turn right to go downstairs, or use the stairwell in the back of the sanctuary and then walk through the fellowship hall.

**Children:** Children of all ages are welcome within our worship services, so that they may learn how to worship God. (We readily expect to hear their presence and recognize their occasional need for a "break" from the worship space.) Children's activity bags, for use during the service, are available by both entrances to the sanctuary. A nursery, located beyond the double doors in the front of the sanctuary, is also available for children up to 5 years old. Please see a greeter for assistance.

**Pew pads:** Found along the center aisle, these are a great way for us to get to know you, and to share our welcome and thanks for your presence. Please fill out the pew pad and pass it along to your neighbor, before returning it to the center aisle.

**Hearing amplification devices:** These personal devices are available for your use. Directly connected into our sound system, they make it possible to hear those leading worship without amplifying background noises. Please see our sound person for assistance.

**Remember:** As we enter into worship, turn off or silence your cell phone, pager, or watch chime. Your presence is a blessing to God and to us! Please feel free to share with us any ways in which we might be a blessing to you in this journey of faith and life.

**Get Connected:** To become involved in the ministries of St. Paul's, to grow in discipleship, or just to learn more, signup online for the weekly E-news or monthly Cornerstone Newsletter, like us on Facebook, give us a call, or send an email. It is our joy to journey with you!

### **Today's Scripture Readings**

Isaiah 40:1-5 + Psalm 85 + 2 Peter 3:9-14 + Mark 1:1-8

# Order of Worship



## Welcome & Announcements

### Prelude

*(Prayer: Still me, O God. Still me that I may hear of your heart's desire – the gift you long for me to receive as I give myself to your worship.)*

### First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5 (p. #1119)

*Isaiah proclaims that the time is at hand for freedom and life, for God will provide a way for all those who are lost and scattered that they might be redeemed in the Lord.*

*(Please rise in body or in spirit)*

### Processional Hymn: “Comfort, Comfort O My People”

*Bulletin Insert*

### Call to Peace

Leader: Come, sisters and brothers.  
Come you who are young and you who are of much age.  
Come and lift your voice, proclaiming the God who comes in peace.

**People: As one people we gather in this place for worship  
as we watch and wait for our Lord -  
the One whose coming establishes Peace upon all the earth.**

Leader: Here we light the second candle of Advent,  
kindling anew the Peace of God that is for all people and all nations.

**People: In Christ God has showered this world with the Peace of Shalom,  
that shatters the power of darkness,  
that breaks the bonds of oppression,  
establishing compassion, justice, and wholeness for all of creation.**

Leader: God's Shalom dispels the power of sin and evil,  
restoring God's goodness for all the world.

**People: In God is our peace, for this life and the life to come.**

Leader: Thus within a world so easily brought to violence and war,  
we light a candle so that our eyes can see and our hearts be warmed  
by the peace of Christ, which surrounds us even now.

**People:** May the light of your Peace pierce our every darkness, O God,  
so that we, like Christ, can shine your peace within this world,  
bringing life and healing of your reign to all your people.  
Through the Lord of Peace, we pray. Amen.

*(The candle of Peace is lit)*

### **Hymn: "We, Hail You God's Anointed"**

You shall come down like show-ers, up-on the fruit-ful earth,  
And joy and hope, like flow-ers, spring in your path to birth.  
Be-fore you on the moun-tains shall peace, the her-ald go,  
And righ-teous-ness, in foun-tains, from hill to val-ley flow.

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### **Call to Confession**

*(Please be seated)*

### **Corporate Confession**

**All:** Gracious God, all too easily we have turned from your peace,  
to the fear that grips us, the uncertainty that overwhelms us,  
and the anxiety that continually tempts us to turn in toward ourselves.  
There is no hiding our sin from you,  
nor the scars we have inflicted upon your people or ourselves,  
as we have lived in the shadows of the lives you have created us for.  
Turn us toward your peace, O God,  
so that we may live within the beauty and life  
to which we have been saved, through Christ Jesus our Lord.

### **Silent Confession**

*(A time of personal prayer for God's healing and redeeming peace.)*

*(Sung four times increasing in tempo and volume each successive time.*

*1st – Pastor, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> – Congregation, 4<sup>th</sup> – All Standing, as able.)*

*Music: Jacques Berthier, 1982*

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!  
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!

3 Dm Gm C F 4 Dm Gm C F

Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
 Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

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### Assurance of Pardon

Leader: God's grace pierces the darkness of this world and of our lives.  
 The Light shines, so that we may live in peace and wholeness as ordained by God.  
 For you and for me, this gift has been, and continues to be given  
 for all who call upon the name of the Lord.

People: **O Come, O Come Emmanuel!**

### Hymn: "Comfort, Comfort O My People" (verse 1)

*Bulletin Insert*

### Passing of the Peace

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

*(After passing Christ' Peace, you may be seated. Children up to 9<sup>th</sup> grade are dismissed to participate in age specific Christian Education classes for the rest of worship. Parents/guardians of first time students are invited to follow children to their classroom to complete registration information before returning to worship. Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and younger, must be picked up from their classes.)*

### Psalm: Psalm 85

Leader: You showed favor to your land, O Lord; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

People: **You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.**

Leader: You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger.

People: **Restore us again, O God our Savior,  
 and put away your displeasure with us.**

Leader: Will you be angry with us forever?

Will you prolong your anger through all generations?

Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

People: **Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.**

Leader: I will listen to what God the Lord will say;

he promises peace to his people, his saints – but let them not return to folly.

People: **Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,**

**that his glory may dwell in our land.**

**Leader:** Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

**People:** **Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,  
and righteousness looks down from heaven**

**Leader:** The Lord will indeed give what is good, and our land will yield its harvest.

**People:** **Righteousness goes before him and prepares the way for his steps.**

**Epistle Lesson: 2 Peter 3:9-14 (p. #1896f)**

*As uncertainty grows over Jesus' return, Peter encourages the people to see the world from God's perspective and in doing so discover the wisdom to remain faithful to Jesus' teachings.*

1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God. My heart pours out its praise.  
God lift - ed up my low - li - ness in man - y mar - vel - ous ways.

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God. My heart pours out its praise. God lift - ed up my low - li - ness in man - y mar - vel - ous ways." The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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**Gospel Lesson: Mark1:1-8 (p. #1551f)**

*As John calls in the wilderness, inviting people into a baptism of repentance, Isaiah's prophesy of the Messiah's coming begins to be fulfilled.*

**Hymn: "My Soul Gives Glory to My God"**

My God has done great things for me: yes, ho-ly is God's name.  
All peo-ple will de-clare me blessed, and bless-ings they shall claim.

**Sermon**

**"Birthing Anew the Gospel of Christ"**

*(Please rise in body or in spirit)*

## **Statement of Belief – Nicene Creed**

**All: We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.**

**He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Hymn: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” #120**

*(Please be seated)*

## **Prayers of the People**

*(Believing in God’s truth, we open ourselves as God’s servants through prayer.)*

## **The Lord’s Prayer**

**All: 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, for ever. Amen.**

### **Receiving of Tithes and Offerings**

*(We give as an act of worship, tangibly offering ourselves to God's service.)*

### **Offertory**

*(Please rise in body or in spirit to sing glory to God)*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A-MEN.

### **Offertory Prayer**

#### **Hymn: "All Earth Is Waiting"**

**1** All the earth is waiting to see the Promised One,  
And open furrows, the sowing of our God.  
All the world bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;  
It cries out for justices and searches for the truth.

**2** Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,  
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel":  
One whose name is "God with us", our Savior shall be,  
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.



**3** Mount-ains and Val-ley will have to be made plain;  
O-pen new high-ways, new high-ways for our God.  
Who is now com-ing closer, so come all and see,  
And o-pen the door-ways as wide as wide can be.

**4** In lowly stable the Promised One appeared,  
Yet feel the presence throughout the earth today,  
For Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;  
Again, on arriving Christ brings us liberty.

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## Commissioning

### Benediction

#### Three Fold Amen

Musical score for 'Three Fold Amen' in 4/4 time, G major. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The lyrics 'A - men, A - men, A - men.' are written below the notes. The melody is simple and repetitive, with the word 'Amen' repeated three times.

### Postlude

*(As the acolyte carries the Light of Christ out into the world, so too are we to carry Christ's light from this sanctuary into the world, our communities, and our homes. May the presence of the Spirit go with you until we gather again in the shared joy of God's worship.)*

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## Worship Leaders

Minister – All Members  
Pastor – Rev. Joseph A Motz  
Organist – Grace Griffith  
Worship Steward – Mary Motz

Advent Liturgists – Nuss Family  
Acolyte – Victoria Nuss  
Ushers – Sandi Swavely & Wanda Druzba

## Announcements

**Shop with Scriptures / Today is the Last Day to Submit an Order** - A list of all participating vendors can be found on the table at the side door entrance of the church (popular / local merchants are highlighted in yellow). If you have questions about the program, please contact Luwaina Baker at 610-582-8461 or [office@stpaulsbirdsboro.org](mailto:office@stpaulsbirdsboro.org) . Orders will be delivered Sunday, Dec 17.

**Congregational Meeting Packet Materials** - All submissions for the Congregational Meeting Packet are due in the office by December 15th.

**Sharing God's Loving Light / Today following worship** – Individuals will be sharing God's Loving Light by distributing 600 bags of Hershey Kisses and Christmas worship invitations to households right around the church. Please be in prayer for those among us who will be sharing the blessings of our congregation within the wider community.

**Blue Christmas: Service of Hope & Light / Thurs, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-7:30pm / Daniel Boone Library, 129 N Mill St, Birdsboro** – This service is for anyone whose heart longs for hope in the season. No matter who you are, we each carry anxiety, fear, hurt, or grief. This service reminds us that God not only meets us in our struggle, but God journeys with us – no matter the darkness. This service is a ministry of St. Paul's UCC & St. Mark's Lutheran.

**Sing and Share some Christmas Cheer! / Sunday, December 17, following worship** - You're invited to join in the fun of a pizza lunch, then to sing and share Christmas Cheer with our Home Congregants! Song sheets and travel directions will be provided. Carpooling is encouraged. Please join us! Contact Pat Babel at 484-366-6700 with any questions. Thank you.

**2018 Offering Envelopes** - Offering envelopes for 2018 will be available to pick up from the church starting Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. We ask all members to pick up their envelopes by the end of December and to assist in connecting envelopes with family members, friends, and neighbors as we no longer mail offering envelopes to individuals.

For tax purposes, any offerings postmarked 2017 will be included on your 2017 giving statement (unless you are using the new offering envelopes which will be held and counted as 2018 offerings). All offerings postmarked 2018 or received in the offering plate in 2018 will be recorded on your 2018 giving statement. January 7<sup>th</sup> is the first day to begin using your new, 2018 offering envelopes.

**Congregational Meeting / January 21<sup>st</sup>** - With a focus on building and strengthening relationships, we will also highlight some of our ministry transitions, the 2018 financial mission plan, an update to the coaching search process, and a pre-view of the April 21<sup>st</sup> 5K race. Thank you in advance for sharing in this work of being Christ's church!

**Confirmation Class / Beginning January** - Are you in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, or older, and looking to explore more deeply what it means to be a disciple of Christ and a member of the church? If so, Confirmation may be right for you. In addition to exploring the core components of the Christian

faith, our newly redesigned Confirmation class will have participants experientially learning how to be a leader within the church as they live out their discipleship. To learn more, contact Pastor Joe by December 17<sup>th</sup>, as the class schedule will be developed around participant needs.

**Weather Cancellation Policy for Worship** - Notice of cancellation, whenever possible, will be posted by Sunday morning at 7:30am on the website, Facebook page, church answering service message, 69news, and WFMZ.

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*Christmas Eve  
Worship Services*



**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve Worship Services:**

***9:30am – 10:30am***

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent worship filled with carols, stories, and Communion's love this celebratory service is designed for all seeking to rejoice in Christ.

***6:30pm – Family Service***

Specifically designed for youth and young families. With familiar carols, a children's message, blessings offered during communion, and a candlelight service, we joyously share the Christmas story.

***11:00pm – Midnight Watch***

Focusing on our hope filled anticipation of Christ's advent into this world, we intentionally move from darkness to light. Through word and song, Communion and blessings, we watch and wait for the Light of the world to shine within and through us.