



**St. Paul's United Church of Christ**  
*A welcoming Christ-centered community...*

Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024

9:30 am Worship

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

**Welcome:** *St. Paul's creates experiences of joyful fellowship where children, youth, adults, and the elderly build open and honest relationships of mutual support. In welcoming the ongoing transformative power of the Holy Spirit, we find freedom from social stigmas and shame. This in turn empowers us to address isolation and marginalization in ourselves and in our wider community.*

## **Today's Scripture Readings**

Baruch 5:1-9 + Luke 1:68-79

## **Worship Leaders**

Ministers of the Gospel – All Who Gather for God's Worship

Worship Leader – Janeen Adil

Reader – Lenette Wells

Ushers – Stuart & Lenette Wells

Accompanist – Barb Moyer

Acolyte – Dave Johnson

## **Flower Dedication**

“To the Glory of God by Anna Oister in memory of loved ones.”

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**Join us for Sunday Morning Music & Worship  
9:30 – 10:30am Sunday In-Person / Zoom Worship**

Connect online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86359317508>

Or by phone to listen to the service:

Call 1-646-876-9923 and when prompted, enter the meeting ID: 863 5931 7508

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610-582-8461 + [office@stpaulsbirdsboro.org](mailto:office@stpaulsbirdsboro.org) + [www.stpaulsbirdsboro.org](http://www.stpaulsbirdsboro.org)

Church wifi: StPauls / havefaith

## Welcome and Announcements

### Prelude

*(please rise, in body or in spirit)*

### Call to Worship

Leader: Joy is... the first flower of spring, the first snow of winter, a sun-ripened summer berry exploding on my tongue.

**People: Joy is... the crunch of vibrant autumn leaves, a warm puppy, a Christmas tree, the opening notes of my favorite song, an unexpected gift.**

Leader: Joy is... serendipity, waiting just around the corner to dance with our souls on angels' wings.

**People: Let us be open to holy joy.**

### Advent Candle Lighting

Reader: When the world seems overwhelming, when we try to escape and hide, the Holy invites us to confront fear that we may find Joy.

**People: Where in the world do we find Joy these days?**

Reader: We light this candle to symbolize our joy in Jesus, God-with-us, whose coming we always await.

*(lighting of the candle of joy)*

**Opening Hymn** “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

**WHM #121**

## Reading of Preparation: When I Am Among the Trees

When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.

I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.

Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile."  
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, "It's simple," they say,  
"and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine."

## Prayer of Confession

Leader: Because it is so hard to wait, it is not easy to live through Advent's days.  
But watch what God does during this time.  
God waits for us to turn from our old ways to find the right paths;  
God waits for us to admit what we have done, and failed to do,  
so we might be forgiven and graced with new life.  
Let us approach the One who waits—for us!

**All: It is never easy for us to confess our sins, Waiting God.  
There are the hurts we have caused to our families and friends,  
which we would like to forget.**

(cont)

There are those we believe are impossible to love,  
and so we don't try.

There are people who live on the edge of our society,  
and we ignore their cries for help.

Forgive us, God who comes near to us.

When we have lost our way, show us yours.

Lead us in humility down the streets of your kingdom.

Teach us your truth,

so we might be able to keep your Word,

revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

*(a moment of quiet reflection)*

## **Words of Grace**

Leader: God does not remember our sins,

but does remember the promises which have been made to us.

God does not shame us, but lifts us to new life.

**All: Lead us in your hope, O God, and teach us your love.**

**You are the God of our days,**

**we wait for you to come to us. Amen.**

## **Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## **We Listen For God's Word: Scripture**

**Baruch 5:1-9 (pg. 98) + Luke 1:68-79 (pg. 44 )**

**Hymn**

**"With Joy Draw Water"**

**NCH #109**

**Sermon: "Open to Joy"**

*(please rise, in body or in spirit)*

## **Affirmation of Faith for Advent**

Leader: Let us affirm the faith that we share:

**All: We believe in God,  
creator and lover of the earth,  
origin and destiny of us all.**

**We believe in Jesus the Christ—  
God coming to us  
in the fragile promise  
of a baby yet unborn—  
who emerges as the herald of hope,  
God's laughter in the face of despair.  
Plunged into death and hell,  
he broke free the captives,  
and is leading the way  
to the land of promise  
where justice and peace will flourish.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who implants the seed of truth,  
brings us to birth  
as the body of Christ,  
and empowers us  
to confront and transform  
all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.**

**We believe in the coming reign of God.  
Announced by the Baptist,  
it has drawn near to us in Jesus,  
and will be consummated  
in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven.  
when all who have passed through  
the world's deep sorrow**

**will be raised from the waters,  
(cont)  
robed in righteousness,  
and gathered into the joyous fulfilment  
of God's desire.**

**For the coming of that day on this day,  
we work and pray:  
Come, Lord Jesus, Come!**

## **Offering and Prayer of Dedication**

### **Gathering the Prayers of the People**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

**All: Our Creator, 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.**

*(please rise, in body or in spirit)*

#### **Sending Hymn**

**"People, Look East"**

**W&R #161**

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## People, Look East

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

year. Make your house fair as you are a-ble, trim the  
 there. Give up your strength the seed to nour-ish, that in  
 earth. shin-ing be-yond the frost-y weath-er, bright as  
 earth. Set ev-ery peak and val-ley hum-ming with the

Peo-ple, look east and sing to-day:

hearth and set the ta-ble. Peo-ple, look east:  
 course the flow-er may flour-ish.  
 sun and moon to-geth-er.  
 word, the Lord is com-ing.

Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
 Love, the Star, is on the way.  
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.

WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon (1881-1965)  
 MUSIC: French melody; arr. Martin Shaw (1875-1958)  
 Words © 1960 Pascal Michaux Acoust. Ent.

BESANÇON  
 8.7.9.8.8.7.



## Benediction

Leader: The blessing of God, the eternal goodwill of God, the shalom of God, the wildness and the warmth of God, be among us and between us, now and always.

## Postlude

parts of this liturgy adapted from:

in the big love living liturgies, 2nd Sunday of Advent, Year C, “Trees,” © 2015 Rev. Kathryn M. Schreiber, Living Liturgies.

“When I Am Among the Trees,” by Mary Oliver in Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver.

Prayer of Confession: Advent 1 C, by Thom Shuman, and posted on Lectionary Liturgies,

<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/>.

“Affirmation of Faith for Advent,” by Nathan Nettleton, posted on his Laughingbird website.

Benediction from Night Prayer: Friday, *The New Zealand Book of Prayer*.

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## Announcements

**Christmas Eve Service** – On Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate Christmas Eve at **4:00pm**. This is a new time for our church service. All are welcome!

**Christmas Poinsettias** –If you are interested in purchasing red or white poinsettias, please complete the enclosed order form or contact Barb Kerper at 484-638-4938. They will be used to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas Eve service and can be taken home following the service. Orders will be taken through **Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**.

**Our Daily Bread** for December/January/February 2024-2025 has arrived!

**St Paul's at Christmas in Birdsboro** – Saturday, Dec 14, 2024 – 4pm-8pm at Main Bird Park. St. Paul's will have a booth at Christmas in Birdsboro and 'Chef Puppet' will be there to show the children of Birdsboro how to make cookies. In order to provide enough cookies to share with the community, 'Chef Puppet' needs a little help. He also needs volunteers from 4pm-8pm to help him bake. Please contact a consistory member if you can help by making some cookies or volunteering your time.

**Daniel Boone School District Food Gift Cards** – In case you missed the opportunity to donate for this Thanksgiving event, it will be continued for the Christmas season. This week we received a thank you card from a family who received a gift card for Thanksgiving. It is posted on the bulletin board. It was very touching. The SE Berks Ministerium along with the support of the Daniel Boone Area School District, provide assistance for local families in need. We are continuing our request for donations to provide at least (6) \$100 grocery store gift cards (Redner's or Boyer's) to families in need (one card per family).

If you would like to help, donations can be made by noting "DBASD Food Gift Cards" on your offering envelope and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the office. Last day for donations is Dec 11<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for partnering with SE Berks Ministerium and the DBASD!

### **Caring Closet**

Ashley Griffith, the coordinator for the Daniel Boone School District's "Caring Closet" sent a flyer to the church asking for the following:

- \* Boys underwear for our Primary Center & Intermediate Center, S-XL & 4/5-12; & all sizes for Middle & High School
  - \* Girls underwear for our Primary Center & Intermediate Center, S-XL & 4/5-12; & all sizes for Middle & High School
  - \* Universal Items such as applesauce squeeze pouches & individual goldfish snacks; children's toothpaste & toothbrushes; deodorant; tampons & panty liners
  - \* Sweatpants of all sizes are always needed for Middle & High School
  - \* New food pantry items for Middle & High School: Peanut Butter; Jelly; Canned soups, Canned beans, Canned chicken, Canned tuna, canned meat (Spam), etc
- These are just a few items they are requesting. For more details, see **Caring Closet** flyer on bulletin board.



|               |   |   |
|---------------|---|---|
| Sun, Dec 8    | Hearts Ablaze Fellowship (CE)<br>Worship (C)<br>Meet & Greet<br>New Millennium (CE)                               | 9am-1pm<br>9:30am<br>following service<br>7pm-8pm |
| Tues, Dec 10  | Nancy Moyer Counseling (CE-LL)  | 5:30pm-7pm  |
| Wed, Dec 11   | Disciple Bible Study (CE)   | 9:30am-10:30am                                    |
| Thurs, Dec 12 | Nancy Moyer Counseling (CE-LL)<br>Currently Sober   | 5:30pm-7pm<br>6:30-7:30pm                         |
| Fri, Dec 13   | Beginners Meeting (CE)  | 7pm- 8pm  |
| Sat, Dec 14   | Nancy Moyer Counseling (CE-LL)<br>Christmas in Birdsboro(Mainbird Park)<br>Private Party (church fellowship hall) | 8:30am -2pm<br>4pm-8pm                            |
| Sun, Dec 15   | Hearts Ablaze Fellowship (CE)<br>Worship (C)<br>New Millennium (CE)   | 9am-1pm<br>9:30am<br>7pm-8pm                      |

This Week: Church Office Hours

|          |               |
|----------|---------------|
| Tues     | 9:00am-1:00pm |
| Wed      | 9:00am-1:00pm |
| Thursday | 9:00am-1:00pm |

This Week: Pastor Deb's Office Hours

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Tues/remote   | 9:00am-1:00pm |
| Wed/in office | 9:00am-1:00pm |
| Thurs/remote  | 9:00am-1:00pm |