



December 13, 2020

St. John's United Church of Christ

As believers in Jesus Christ, we strive with unconditional love and selflessness – using our God given gifts – to provide a nurturing shelter for those seeking a Christian home. We offer opportunities for spiritual growth through worship, education, fellowship, prayer and Christian action throughout our community and the world.

**Called by God
Sharing with the World**

† All who are able shall stand

December 13, 2020
Third Sunday of Advent

Gathering

Meditation

*I wonder as I wander out under the sky, how Jesus the Savior did come
for to die for poor ordinary people like you and like I, I wonder as I
wander out under the sky When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's
stall, with wise men and farmers and shepherds and all,
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall, the promise of ages
it then did recall.*

Appalachian carol

Chimes

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Hymn

Joy to the World

Lifting up our Joys

Passing of the Peace

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† Call to Worship

Leader: Joy to the world, the Lord is come

People: Let earth receive her King

Leader: Let every heart prepare Him room

People: And Heaven and nature sing

Leader: And Heaven and nature sing

People: And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing

Leader: He rules the world with truth and grace

People: And makes the nations prove

Leader: The Glory of His righteousness

People: And wonders of His love

Leader: And wonders of His love

People: And wonders of His love

† Opening Prayer

Leader: We wait in wonder and hope each year in this time of expectation and promise. It feels like we can start anew. We can bring all our hopes and fears to the stable and witness the miracle again of the birth of the baby who is to save us all. We can offer ourselves and our lives to the babe in the manger. We can offer the promise of a new year dedicated to living out the life he came to give us; a life of compassion, generosity and love.

All: we bring our lives to the manger and offer them as our gift to the new born babe, the Son of Man. Amen

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†Prayer of Confession

(from *Immersed in the Splendor of God*, F. Russell Mitman)

O holy and hidden God, you come knocking for us to receive you, yet we close tight the doors of our minds and hearts. O Lord and Christ, you come disguised as the Christ of all children, yet we fail to find room for your manger in our crowded world. O overwhelming and empowering Spirit, you come breathing new life into our tired beings, yet we are content with our old selves and our worn-out ways. O come, Emmanuel, and set our feet again on Bethlehem's road. Open our ears to listen for angels' songs, our eyes to watch for heavenly light, and our hearts to greet your presence. Amen. *Silent Prayer*

†Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends in Christ if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive Our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This is God's gift to us and the world so that we can know abundant life.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Stone Family

Let us pray together the Advent Prayer.

God of all hope, at the beginning of creation you made the light that scatters all darkness. May Christ, the true light, shine on us and free us from the power of sin and death. Grant us peace as we welcome Jesus Christ; for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

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Bible Readings *Isaiah 6: 1-4; John 1: 6-14* Mollie Sarnes

Prophecies of Jesus

Narrators - Alison and Christopher Holler

The Christ will be born in Bethlehem

Song - *O Little Town of Bethlehem* Christopher Brossman, solo

The nations will be blessed through Abraham's lineage

Song - *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* Ally Murphy, solo

The scepter will come through Judah

David's offspring will have an eternal kingdom

Song - *Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming* Bill Miller, solo

Christ's ministry will destroy the devil's work

Song - *Sweet Little Jesus Boy* Bill Miller - solo

Jesus will have a sinless, blemish-free life and ministry

Song - *O Holy Night* Christopher Brossman, solo

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Order for Confirmation

Assurance of Qualification of the Candidate

Leader: We invite any presiding elders of the Spiritual Council who are present to stand.

Presiding Elders:
Kay Jones, Jamie Barton

Leader: Elders, you have reviewed the Candidate for confirmation. Are you able to declare before this congregation that the candidate understands the meaning of confirmation and is ready to affirm their baptism?

Elders: We are.

Invitation

Leader:

Mollie Sarnes

to come forward and to affirm their baptism by being confirmed.

Leader: In the sacrament of baptism God accepts us into the eternal covenant of forgiving grace and initiates us into the body of Christ. Through this sacred sign and seal we are

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marked and identified as ones who bear
Christ's name and are welcomed as brothers
and sisters into Christ's church.

Through confirmation, we affirm our baptism,
we are commissioned by the Holy Spirit,
and we renew our commitment to life together
as the body of Christ.

† All who are able shall stand

Questions of the Candidate

† **Affirmation of Faith** (*congregation please stand*)

Leader: Do you believe in God?

All: **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

All: **I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

All: **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy
catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the
body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayer of the Candidate

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Prayers of the Congregation

Leader: Let us pray together.

***Unison:* Almighty God, in baptism you received these sons and daughters into the church. You forgave their sins, and promised them eternal life. Increase in them the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Grant love for others, joy in serving you, peace in disagreement, patience in suffering, kindness toward all people, goodness in evil times, faithfulness in temptation, gentleness in the face of opposition, self-control in all things. Strengthen them for ministry in the world through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

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Act of Confirmation

Leader: I invite to come forward as a witness, the presiding elders and the parents of these candidates who are now to be confirmed.

(The leader and presiding elders confirm the Candidates through the laying on of hands.)

Prayer of Confirmation

Welcome

Leader: People of God, let us offer our welcome

**All: We receive you joyfully into our common life.
We enfold you in our care.**

**We pledge to grow with you in the knowledge
and love of God.**

**Grace and peace to you through Jesus
Christ whom we love and serve.**

Greeting in Christian Love

Presentation of the Certificates

Sending

Leader: Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,

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**People: to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
to all generations, forever and ever. Amen**

*(The participants may return to their places in the
congregation.)*

Prayers of the People

Prayer of Our Savior *(unison)*

**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**

† Giving our Gifts to God

† Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

† Sending Forth and Final Blessing

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Closing Hymn

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful, all ye nations, rise;
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

Chorus

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

Chorus

Hark! the herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!

Worship Leader: Kay Jones

Blessings to you from St. John's United Church of Christ in Orwigsburg.

Make Handwashing a Time of Prayer: Washing our hands for 20 seconds is one of the ways to reduce the spread of the COVID virus. How long is 20 seconds? That is sometimes hard to track. However, there is a way that combines adequate handwashing and praising God. The Doxology that we sing during worship, (it starts with "Praise God from whom all blessings flow....") takes approximately 20 seconds to sing. By choosing to sing the Doxology each time we wash our hands we mentally shift our focus from the challenge of living within a pandemic to thoughts of gratitude and the blessings God has bestowed. Focusing on these positives in the midst of our challenges improves our health and wellbeing. Thanks be to God.

The Bible Study for women: "Tis well: walking away from anxiety and into God's world" will now be done as an email study. We will post some readings and reflections once a week and people can respond to all on the email list for discussion. We have heard from a number of people who do not do zoom but who are interested. Please email Kay Jones at kjones8022@aol.com to participate. The day and time will be set by those who join.