



December 20, 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**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**December 20, 2020**

## **GATHERING**

### **Meditation**

*Be near me Lord Jesus I asked you to stay  
Close by me forever and love me I pray  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care  
and fit us for heaven to live with Thee  
there*

### **Chimes**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

### **Opening Hymn**

*Carol Medley*

#### *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord.**

#### *Away in a Manger*

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little lord Jesus lay down his sweet head;  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,  
The little lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

#### *The First Noel*

**The First Noel, the angels did say,  
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;  
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,  
On a cold winters night that was so deep.  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

## ✠ Lifting up Our Joys

## ✠ Passing of Peace

## ✠ Call to Worship

**People: Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and hope.**

**Leader:** Look out; keep alert! The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

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## ✠ Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pause now this Sunday morning to thank you for all you have given us. And we wait patiently for the arrival of the baby Jesus. You could have sent a knight on a white horse in armor to be our Savior, but you chose to send a baby who would be called wonderful counselor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Today we worship you through the words and actions of our children. For Jesus said let the little children come to me and do not hinder them. For the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. Praise be to God.

## ✠ Prayer of Confession

**Holy God, we confess that it is not easy to wait for you. Our world worships the power that acts quickly through force. We take part in the ways of war, hatred, greed, and injustice. We ignore the needy, defend our advantages and neglect our prayers. Forgive us and show us how to prepare for you. Come to us in Christ; Renew our lives; and reveal your Reign on earth, Amen.** *Silent pause for reflection*

## **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. In this time of Advent and at all Times this is God's gift to us and the world, so that we may know abundant life.

## **Lighting of the Advent Candle**

The Machamer Family

**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. Fill us with hope, peace, joy, and love as we welcome Jesus Christ; for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **Bible Readings**

*Isaiah 9: 6-7; Luke 1-2, selected*

## **Nativity Pageant**

Video 1 - Mary and Gabriel (Lola and Christian Machamer)

Video 2 Elizabeth, Mary, and Zachariah (Katherine, Mollie, and Porter Sarnes)

Video 3 - Roman soldier and people (Austin, Amy and Gianna Marrongelle)

Video 4 No Room- (Calmina and Demetri Kuktas)

Video 5- Mary and Baby Jesus (Penelope Miller)

Video 6 - The shepherd and the angels (Mollie, Macey, Alton, and Arlo Stone)

Video 7- The wise men (Ava, Claire and Ella Miller)

## ✠UCC Statement of Faith

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify: He calls the worlds into being, creates man in his own image and sets before him the ways of life and death. He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. He judges men and nations by his righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to himself. He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races. He calls us into his church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be his servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory. He promises to all who trust him forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, his presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.

## ✠Prayers of the People

✠**Lord's Prayer** (*unison*) ("*debts*" and "*debtors*")

**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**

### **†Dedicating Our Gifts to God**

### **†Sending Forth and Final Blessing**

### **†Closing Hymn                      Angels We Have Heard on High**

Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly, singing o're the plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echo back their joyous strain  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
Say, what may the tidings be  
Which inspire your heavenly song?  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing,  
Come, adore on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

## ***Worship Leader: Jamie Barton***

### ***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](mailto:kjones8022@aol.com) to participate. The day and time will be set by those who join.*