



December 27, 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**

**First Sunday after Christmas**  
**December 27, 2020**

## **GATHERING**

### **Meditation**

*“Arise, shine, for your light has come.” Isaiah 60:1*

### **Chimes**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

### **Prelude**

*What Child is This - arr. Christopher Phillips*  
Tracey Holler, flute

### **Opening Hymn**

*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 winter's night that was so deep  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star  
Shining in the east beyond them far  
And to the earth it gave great light  
And so it continued both day and night  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!

This star drew nigh to the northwest  
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest  
And there it did both stop and stay  
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay  
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel  
Born is the King of Israel!

## ✠ Lifting up Our Joys

### **Birthday Blessings**

## ✠ Passing of Peace

## ✠ Call to Worship

Leader: The world was once in darkness

**People: Now we have God's Light, Jesus to shine on us.**

Leader: The words and promises of God are all true!

**People: God has given us the best gift of all!**

Leader: Rejoice! God is with us! Let we who live with faith in  
God proclaim,

**People: "Lord, you are my refuge and my fortress, my God I will  
trust forever."**

Leader: Let we who trust in the Lord know that holy love surrounds us.

**People: God's protection will follow us throughout our days.**

Leader: When we call out to the Lord,

**People: We know that we are heard.**

Leader: As the wise men were assured, let us be warmed by the light of  
the Lord.

**People: We will rejoice in the salvation of the Almighty! Amen**

## ✠ Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we are still in awe over the birth of your Son, our Savior, Jesus. We ask that you refresh our memory of your love every month, not just December. We ask that you instill in each of us the spirit of giving of ourselves for all the seasons and not just the Christmas season. We ask that you fill our hearts with joy every day, not just Christmas day. Let the light of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ shine bright every day for all of our days. Amen.

## ✠ Prayer of Confession

**Gracious God, you have sent your Son to show us the way. Even when we have turned our backs, followed our own paths, you offer us Light. Forgive us when we are so willful and stubborn. Forgive us when we think more about ourselves and our comforts than we think of reaching out to others. Remind us again that Jesus witnessed to us the light of love that serves, guides, and heals. Thank you for loving us so much that you would give us this most precious gift. And when we again falter and fail, lift us with your gentle touch. Pour the light into our lives once more, that, we may fully understand the power and depth of your love for us. 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.

**Bible Readings**      *Micah 5:1-4 & Matthew 2:1-12*

## Children's Message and Blessing

**Today's Message**

*"The Guiding Star"*

Jamie Barton

## ✠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**      *Go Tell it On The Mountain*

Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching  
O'er silent flocks by night  
Behold throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light

Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! Above the Earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior's birth

Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere

Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger  
Our Humble Christ was born  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn

Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born!

***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.*

