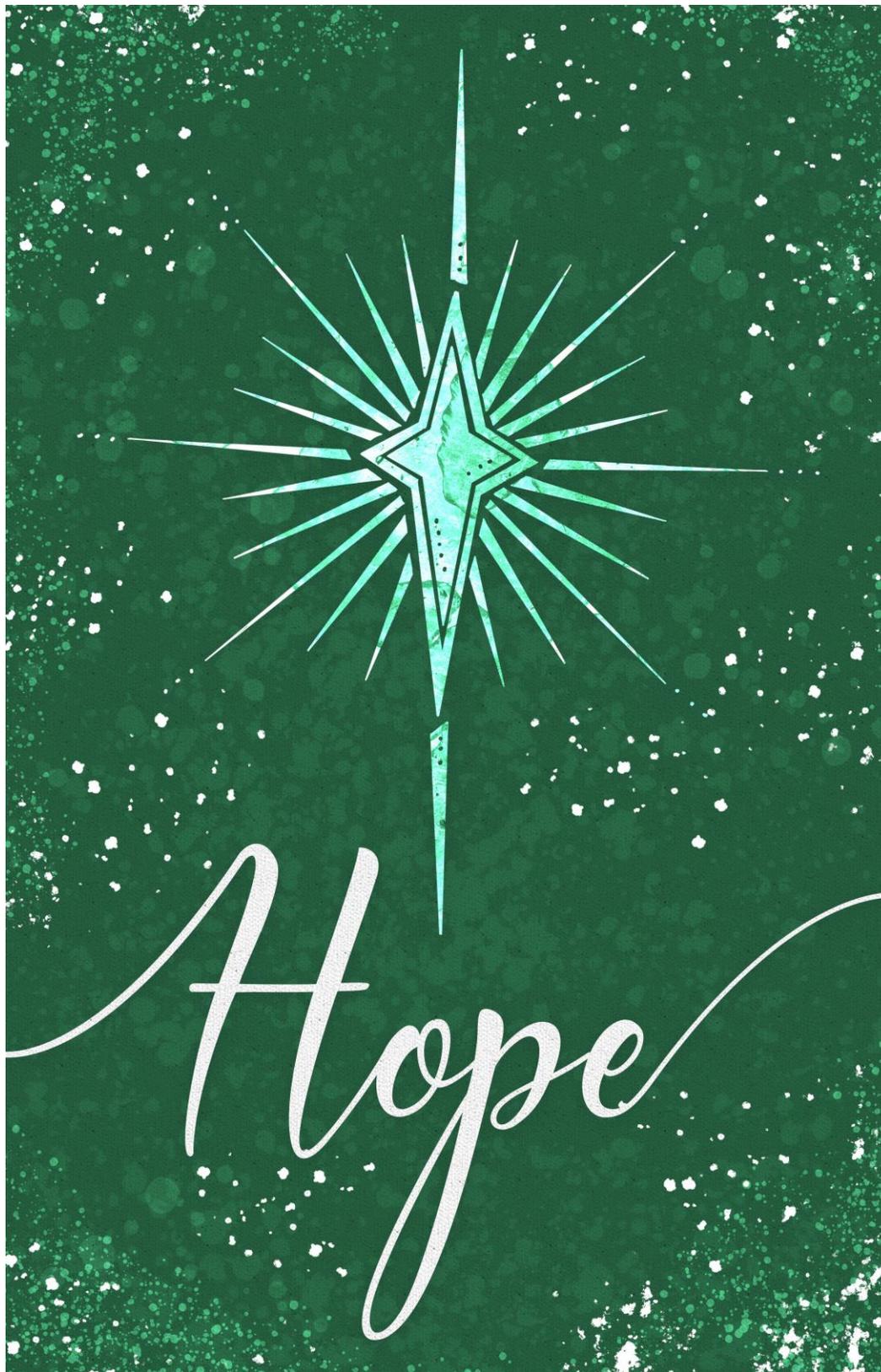


FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Rev. Dr. Bruce C. Stevenson, Pastor
Mr. Dennis J. Duda, Organist-Director of Music

**SERVICE OF WORSHIP
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
NOVEMBER 27, 2022**

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE: GO LIGHT YOUR WORLD

Darin Jellison

A PRAYER REFLECTION UPON ENTERING GOD'S HOUSE

It is ancient as old as the first word for it is the first word ever spoken by a God who was feeling the divine voice for the first time. Its sound has taken many forms through the ages, but it speaks still, the single truth it always has. Some hear it beating swords into ploughshares others hear it hammering spears into pruning hooks and still others hear the original word that shaped these others the first word: the word, love.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

*** OPENING HYMN: LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE 345**

**LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT WREATH CANDLE
THE HOPE CANDLE**

Scripture: Isaiah 60:2

Prayer: O God, we thank you that Jesus brought hope into our world. By the good news of the Bible you are still bringing hope to people. Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ so that we may think good thoughts and do good deeds so that we may be a people of hope in our world. Amen.

REJOICING IN GOD'S GRACE

*** CALL TO AND CONFESSION OF SIN:**

Gracious and Almighty God, you know that we fail to live as you would have us fully live, and we fail to love as you would have us fully love, and the result is a world where so many live in various kinds of conflict. Consumed by the worries of the world, we struggle to think about anything other than ourselves and our own. It seems our failings only fuel our bad habits of forgetting about you. We lay before you, Holy God, our broken promises, hurtful words, bad intentions, and sinful ways, that you might somehow love us into wholeness and help us take small steps towards your greatest peace. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

*** THE KYRIE**

750

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Congregation: Lord, have mercy upon us.

*** ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Pastor: O Lord, open our lips.

People: And our mouths shall show forth your praise.

*** THE GLORIA PATRI**

759

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three-in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

*** WE SHARE PEACE: PEACE ON EARTH – Paul Baloche**

We come before you with hardships and fears

We lay down our burdens, Lord draw us near

Blind to injustice, we've turned our eyes

Lord heal our brokenness, raise us to life

Peace on earth, Peace on earth

Lord hear our prayer Your peace on earth

Peace on earth, Peace on earth

**Lord hear our prayer Your peace on earth
Peace, peace, peace
Jesus our savior. You've made us one
Walls of division torn down by love
The cross has redeemed us, all penance paid
Love through forgiveness, we have been saved
Peace on earth, Peace on earth
Lord hear our prayer, Your peace on earth
Peace on earth, Peace on earth
Lord hear our prayer, Your peace on earth
Peace, peace, peace
Peace, peace, peace
Friend of the widow. Hope to the poor
Proof to the doubting heart, end of all wars
Mercy to sinners, Light of the world
All pow'r and authority
Lord speak Your Word
Peace on earth, Peace on earth
Lord hear our prayer, Your peace on earth
Peace on earth, Peace on earth
Lord hear our prayer, Your peace on earth
Peace, peace, peace
Peace, peace, peace**

LEARNING ABOUT GOD

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Old Testament: 2:1 – 5

New Testament: Matthew 24:36 – 44

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON: *An Audacious Thought*

DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL

*** AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:**

**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,
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!**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND INTERSESSION

Pastor: O God of new vision and hope, on this brink of Advent, as we start new steps towards the manger, we are acutely aware of your presence, but we are also aware of the echoes of gunfire, explosions of landmines, and roar of tank engines. War may feel far away sometimes, and other times it feels very close to home. How do you want us to manifest change? How can we take small steps and large steps to turn swords into ploughshares? How do we become people who crave peace and not war? How did we become complicit in such war? How did the world become strange? We don't know all the answers, but we do know to whom we may pray. We pray to you, creator God, redeemer God, loving and holy God. Healer of the nations and teacher of peace, save us from our power, save us from our violence, save us from our fear and hatred. We will hold vigil, stay awake, watching for how we might next act in peace, love in truth and live without fear. We pause now in silence, lifting up to you, aloud or in the silence of our hearts, those nations, those households, those workplaces, those marriages, those schools, where we know that conflict of some kind rages; places where your peace is needed.

(The names of specific people, places, and circumstances may be lifted up at this time)

Pastor: Gracious God, as you have promised, may it come to pass. We pray in Christ's name and offer the prayer He offered;

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.

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SHARING

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM: *AND WE REMEMBER*

*** OFFERTORY RESPONSE – THE DOXOLOGY**

780

*** PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

God, may our gifts to you – these ordinary gifts of the work of our lives – be used for extraordinary things. We dedicate what we receive to your work for peace, justice, and hope in the world. May our gifts, no matter how small, help us take small steps towards your greatest peace. Amen.

THE BANQUET OF HOPEFUL EXPECTATION

THE INVITATION

Pastor: God's Banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.

People: A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, "and the wolf will lie down with the lamb".

Pastor: Here at this table we get a foretaste of God's banquet. This is indeed God's table, not the church's, and so all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.

People: Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.

Pastor: This table is for all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: We are not alone, Christ is present here.

People: The Spirit moves within us.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God,

People: in memory and in hope.

Pastor: Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

People: Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.

Pastor: Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the song you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and justice that would surround the world.

People: They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.

Pastor: And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way.

People: Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus, promising her that in her son the world would be changed.

Pastor: And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Psalteriolum Cationum Catholicarum, 1710
Based on ancient antiphons from Advent Vespers
Transl. John Mason Neale, 1851, and others; alt.
St. 2, 7, transl. Henry Sloane Coffin, 1916; alt.

Unison

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and

ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly

ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.

Refrain

Re-joyce! Re-joyce! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

In the medieval Western church, seven "Great O" antiphons, the basis for this hymn, were sung consecutively on the seven days before Christmas, ending with what appears above as the first stanza.

Tune: VENI EMMANUEL L.M. with refrain
Melody from a 15th-century French "Processional"
Arr. Thomas Helmore, 1854

THE STORY REMEMBERED

Pastor: Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live.

People: **We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be as he ate openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.**

Pastor: And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.

People: **Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.**

Pastor: And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:

People: **Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.**

Pastor: After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:

People: **This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.**

Pastor: Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.

People: **We remember how he poured his love out to all he met and look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.**

THE MYSTERY OF OUR FAITH

Pastor: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

Unison: **Christ's death, O God, we proclaim. Christ's resurrection we declare. Christ's coming we await. Glory be to you, O God.**

THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMS

Pastor: God, you poured your Spirit on Mary and she sang words of defiance and hope. Pour out your Spirit upon Us gathered here. As we eat and drink may we know And feel your presence with us. As we eat and drink may we be opened to the possibilities of your hope and power and may we be strengthened in our time of waiting for peace and justice so that we will have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality.

Unison: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives forever. Amen.

THE BREAKING, THE POURING, AND THE SERVING

Pastor: The bread that we break is the Bread of Life.

The Cup we Share is the Cup of the Promise.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Pastor: Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

(The glasses in the center ring of the communion trays contain grape juice. The bread in the paper cups is gluten free.)

(After receiving the bread.)

Pastor: Take and eat, this is the body of Christ broken for you.

People: Amen!

(After receiving the cup.)

Pastor: Drink this, for it is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

People: Amen!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Unison: God of expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of child-like hope, we have eaten and drunk from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. Amen.

COMMISSIONING

Pastor: You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. May your light so shine before all people, that they may see your good works and give glory to God who is in heaven.

GO IN GOD'S NAME

- * **CLOSING HYMN: *WATCHER, TELL US OF THE NIGHT* 103**
- * **BENEDICTION AND THREEFOLD AMEN**
- * **MEDITATION**
- * **POSTLUDE**

*Would those who are able please stand.

PRELUDE: GO LIGHT YOUR WORLD – *Chris Rice*

There is a candle in every soul
Some brightly burning, some dark and cold
There is a Spirit who brings a fire
Ignites a candle and makes His home

Carry your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the helpless, confused and torn
And hold out your candle for all to see it
Take your candle, and go light your world
Take your candle, and go light your world

Frustrated brother, see how he's tried to
Light his own candle some other way
See now your sister, she's been robbed and lied to
Still holds a candle without a flame

So carry your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the lonely, the tired and worn
And hold out your candle for all to see it
Take your candle, and go light your world
Take your candle, and go light your world

'Cause we are a family whose hearts are blazing
So let's raise our candles and light up the sky
Praying to our Father, in the name of Jesus
Make us a beacon in darkest times

Carry your candle, run to the darkness
Seek out the hopeless, deceived and poor
Hold out your candle for all to see it
Take your candle, and go light your world
Take your candle, and go light your world

CHOIR ANTHEM: AND WE REMEMBER – D. E. Wagner

In this holy place the Lord is with us. By the Word made flesh we die no more. Born to vanquish sin, heaven's gate to win, as new life begins, And we remember.

In the upper room they met together. (Alleluia) Bread was broken, and the cup was passed. Symbols of a love, sent from God above, to partake thereof, And we remember.

In our hearts we know His pain and passion. Still our hands reach out for mercy's sake. Christ the sacrifice, opened paradise, bought at such a price, And we remember.

He who gave his life, gave us the promise. Never to forsake or turn away. Death upon the tree, won the victory, Christ has made us free, And we remember. *WE* remember.

Welcome to Faith Church this First Sunday of Advent. We are glad to have you worshiping with us. May our time together serve as an inspiration for the days and weeks ahead. Please sign and pass the Friendship Pads provided for you in the pews.

The altar flowers this morning are presented by a Friend.

Special thanks to Darin Jellison for sharing his gift of music this morning.

TODAY is the last day to order Poinsettias. Order forms are available in the narthex.



News From the Fundraising Committee

(Just in case you missed it last week:)

The Fundraising Committee has been busy the last month raising some much needed money for the general fund.

October 19th - Boscov's Friends Helping Friends ticket sales, we earned a profit of \$150.00.

November 8th - Election Day food sales, we earned a profit of \$319.00.

November 13th - Penny Party, we earned a profit of \$3989.16 for a total of **\$4,458.16** going to the general fund.

Thank you to everyone who bought tickets for Boscov's Friends Helping Friends. We hope you all got a head start on your Christmas Shopping.

Thank you to those who helped with the kitchen on election day, the bakers, and to the Keelers for making and donating the soup.

Lastly, the Fundraising Committee would like to send out a great **BIG THANK YOU!!** to everyone who came out and helped with the Penny Party. This was a huge success and couldn't have been possible without all of your help. From the bakers, raffle baskets makers, the people who helped sort and price all the items, the people who went out and collected donations from local businesses, the people who donated food items for the kitchen or money to purchase food items, the kitchen workers, the tray pushers, raffle basket workers, change makers, ticket sales people, the youth who helped be runners during the penny party, and lastly all of you who were able to attend and participate in the penny Party. We are so very lucky and thankful to be working among all of you.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!!!!!!

Please make note of the following dates...

- **12/4 – 18 – Coat Drive for The Caring Place (new or gently used items – coats, hats, scarves, mittens, boots)**
- **12/18 – Christian Education Christmas Program during worship**
- **12/24 – 6:00 pm Christmas Candlelight Service**
- **12/25 – NO Sunday School; Worship at 10:15 am**

CALENDAR

OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Thursday, 9 am - 4 pm; **Closed Fridays**

- TODAY** -9:00 Sunday School
 -10:15 Worship
 -Communion
- MONDAY** -Sandy works away from office
- FRIDAY** -Office Closed
 -Pastor's Day Off
- SATURDAY** -10 am Encore Hall Rental
- SUNDAY** -9:00 Sunday School
 -10:15 Worship
 -Mainstreet Brass
 -Adams Baptism

Special Thanks To Those Who Will Serve:

	November 27	December 4
Head Usher:	Cindy Talaber	Tom Hovis
Usher(s):	Diane Neidermeier Deb Herstine	Karen & Chuck Talboo
Advent Wreath	Jane Van Horn Michele Keeler	Mim Allison Joan Hassler
Lay Reader:	Joan Hassler	Donna Schoenberger
Altar Flowers:	A Friend	Roberts
Fin. Sec.:	Tom Hovis	Tom Hovis

Faith United Church of Christ

5992 Route 378, Center Valley, PA 18034

Office: 610-282-3939; faithchurchcv@gmail.com

Pastor: 484-893-0698; pastorbruce@faithchurchucc.org

Director of Music: 215-361-8641; ddduda@verizon.net