

**FAITH**  
**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**



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**Center Valley, Pennsylvania 18034**  
**610.282.3939**

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

**SERVICE OF WORSHIP  
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY  
SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION  
JANUARY 12, 2025**

**ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME**

**PRELUDE**

**A PRAYER UPON ENTERING GOD'S HOUSE**

*Holy One, awaken us again to Your outpouring Spirit of Love. Through this generous gift, stretch our souls wide and form us into channels of your healing grace. Gift us with an ability to recognize You in each other, all imprinted with Your beloved blessing. Clarify our intentions, purify our actions, fill our words with grace and our hearts with hope. Yes, soak our thinking, our praying, our hoping, our everything in You. Amen.*

**WORDS OF WELCOME**

**CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP**

\* **OPENING HYMN: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING 144**

\* **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Pastor: Come, beloved of God, to remember who you are and whose you are.

**People: God in Christ, has named us all "Beloved."**

Pastor: Yes, here and now, God's heaven of love is being poured out anew.

**People: May this motion of the Holy One, shape our hearts and minds.**

Pastor: May it brighten the Epiphany light in us and the whole creation.

**People: And may it shape our words and work into good news for the world!**

**REJOICING IN GOD'S GRACE**

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

**Loving God, let me enter again Your baptismal river of grace. Let it soak every stain attached to the fabric of my life and longings. Yes, Holy One, submerge me in You again and again and again. Cleanse every distracting impulse luring me away from You who are my heart's deepest desire. Let no urgency be more important than Your forgiving love, always transforming. Today, help me choose you above every temptation that lures me to worship lesser things. By this of You, forgive me, renew me, and grant me the grace promised by You in Jesus Christ. 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.*

**\* WORDS OF GRACE**

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: I HAVE CHRIST AS MY SAVIOR**

**478**

*I have Christ as my Savior*

*I have Christ as my Savior*

*I have Christ as my Savior everyday.*

*He gives Peace to my Soul*

*He gives Peace to my Soul*

*He gives Peace to my Soul all day long.*

## THE SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

Old Testament: Isaiah 43:1 – 7

New Testament: Luke 3:15 – 17, 21 – 22

## THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

**SERMON: *Our Baptism – Our Connection***

### **DEDICATING OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL**

#### \* **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: *RENEWAL OF BAPTISM***

Pastor: The Body of Christ continues to be renewed and refreshed. As members, we belong to the baptized and covenantal life in Christ. We gather today to affirm our faith and renew our commitments as followers of Jesus.

**People: O God, because you are the source of all life and love and being, we call you Creator.**

Pastor: Because we know the history of your presence among your covenanted people and honor their tradition, we call you Lord.

**People: Because our Savior, Jesus Christ, your obedient child, knew you intimately and spoke of you so, we call you Father.**

Pastor: Because you are present in each act of birth; and because you shelter, nurture and care for us, we call you Mother.

**People: Because you hold us up and give us strength and courage when we are weak and in need, we call you Sustainer.**

Pastor: Because we have known you in our pain and suffering, we call you Comforter.

**People: Because beyond pain lies your promise of all things made new, we call you Hope.**

Pastor: Because you are the means of liberation and the way to freedom, we call you Deliverer.

**People: Because you have chosen to come among us and share our common lot, making the hard choices, suffering**

**and dying; because you rose victorious, bringing new life, we call you Redeemer.**

Pastor: Confident that you will hear, we call upon you with all the names that make you real to us, the names which create an image in our minds and hearts, an image which our souls can understand and touch. And yet we know that you are more than all of these.

**Unison: Blessing and power, glory and honor be unto you, our God, Amen.**

Pastor: Do you believe in the One of Many Names, God, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit?

**People: We believe in the God of Many Names.**

Pastor: Do you reject the powers of oppression in this world, the systems that marginalize and degrade human beings and communities created by God, and the norms of the world at odds with the way of the kingdom?

**People: We do, with the help of God.**

Pastor: Do you embrace grace as God's gift, to be freely given and freely received?

**People: We do, with the help of God.**

Pastor: Do you recommit to the covenantal and baptized life, the cost and joy of discipleship, and the community of belonging as a member of the Body of Christ?

**People: We do, with the help of God.**

**Unison: Amen**

## **THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Pastor: On this day when peoples from afar came to worship Jesus the Lord, let our prayer be as wide as the world. Let us say to the Father:

**People: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

Pastor: That the light of Christ may shine on all nations far and near and that the Church may welcome them with the diversity of their cultures, let us pray to the Lord:

**People: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

Pastor: That in our day justice may flourish and peace come to all of the world, let us pray:

**People: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

Pastor: That God's people may hear the poor when they cry, have pity on the weak and open their hearts and hands to the needy, let us pray:

**People: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

Pastor: That those who persecute the Lord in those who try to follow him may see his light and be converted, let us pray:

**People: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

People: That all who look for a star to guide them may discover the goodness of the Lord in people full of faith and love, let us pray:

**People: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

Pastor: That in our Christian communities we may learn, like the wise men, to share the treasures of our goods and hearts, let us pray:

**Pastor: Let the light of Christ shine on all people.**

People: Lord our God, we rejoice that you have become near to us in Jesus your Son. Let him be the light of life now and for ever.

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

**People: Lead us to cherish, uplift and enjoy God – and each other – this day and always as we offer the prayer taught to us by your Son, Jesus Christ:**

**Unison: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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**

### **INVITATION TO GENEROSITY**

### **OFFERTORY**

**CHOIR ANTHEM: *I WAS TOUCHED AND I BELIEVE***

**\* OFFERTORY RESPONSE – THE DOXOLOGY 780**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures  
Here below; Praise God above, you heavenly host: Praise Father, Son,  
And Holy Ghost.*

**\* PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

**O Gracious God, we thank you for the invitation to grow through giving, made possible by Your outpouring spirit. May these gifts we bring be used to form ever-new blessings in this congregation and around the world. And may our lives be the instruments of love and joy you desire. Amen.**

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION HYMN: *BE KNOWN TO US IN BREAKING BREAD***

**342**

### **THE INVITATION**

**Pastor:** We have come asking for the child - wondering where that love might be born, seeking that joy that might satisfy our thirst, wandering through the darkness of so many mistakes.

We have come to this place where wise people and shepherds and young women meet. We have come to this place called Bethlehem. To this place where our hearts rise like yeast. To this place where we meet our newborn hope. To this place where we taste our deepest joy. In

Bethlehem, where we assumed the worst, imagining that no good can come, we somehow missed its name.

Bethlehem. Lethem meaning bread. Bethel meaning house. There is something here that will satisfy our hunger. No matter how long we have wandered, here our hearts arise. Our light has come. In this bread and in this cup, we celebrate something we can't quite understand. Because God has made a house at this table. Because God satisfies our hunger in the most unlikely places. Because God comes to be with us. Now and always. It is with this expectation that we come to the table to taste and see that God is here.

**People: This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and gather about Christ's table.**

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.

## COMMUNION PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: God be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**People: We lift them up to God.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

**People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Pastor: We give you thanks, O God, for making your love evident since the very beginning of time when you spoke the word which replaced the darkness of chaos with life-giving light. A light that has nurtured generations of people, and plants and creatures, great and small. A light which also revealed the fear and powerlessness caused by



corrupt and evil actions. And so you spoke the Word which would once and for all dispel the darkness of chaotic lives. Through your love for the world the Word became flesh and lived among us full of grace and truth. The angels sang glory to you in the highest heavens and peace to all people on earth, and we join with them and with all people to praise your holy name:

## O Morning Star, How Clear and Bright

*Isa. 60:19-20; Rom. 15:7-13**Philipp Nicolai, 1598**Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.*

1 O Morn-ing Star, how clear and bright, your beam shines forth in  
2 Come heaven-ly Bright-ness, Light di-vine, and deep with-in my

truth and light! My Sov-ereign meek and low-ly! O Root of Jes-se,  
heart now shine, there make your-self an al-tar! Fill me with joy and

Prom-ised One, my God and Rul-er, you have won my heart to serve you  
strength to be your mem-ber, joined e-ter-nal-ly in love that can-not

sole-ly! You are ho-ly, great and glo-rious, all-vic-to-rious,  
fal-ter; Long-ing for you does pos-sess me; turn and bless me;

Rich in bless-ing, rule and might o'er all pos-sess-ing.  
Here in sad-ness eye and heart long for your glad-ness.

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

**Pastor:** Holy God, as the travelers with their treasures were overwhelmed with joy on finding Jesus, so we also are overwhelmed on finding out the depth of His love for us. For Jesus showed just how beloved we are to Him, by loving us and giving himself for us. On that night when He gave himself up for us, as He sat at the table and broke bread with His friends, He said:

**People:** **“Take and eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Remember me each time you do this.”**

**Pastor:** After they had eaten, He took the cup, and said:

**People:** **“Remember me as you drink from this, for it is my life, poured out for you - the beginning of a new relationship with God.”**

**Pastor:** And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Unison:** **Christ has died  
Christ is risen  
Christ will come again.**

## PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

**Pastor:** Send the power of your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine, O God, that we may experience the presence of the Word-made-flesh - Jesus Christ. Breathe your Spirit in us that we may be one body with Him - living out his ministry in the world today and every day. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

## THE PRESENTATION OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

**Pastor:** The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

### **CALL TO THE SUPPER**

Pastor: The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

*(Juice in the cups in the center ring are filled with grape juice, bread in the cups are gluten free)*

### **SHARING THE ELEMENTS**

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

**People: Amen!**

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

**People: Amen!**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Let us pray.

**Unison: Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, so that we may travel from this place as your holy people, revealing your glory and light made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. 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**

**\* THE SENDING FORTH**

**\* CLOSING HYMN: O RADIANT CHRIST, INCARNATE WORD 168**

**\* BENEDICTION AND THREEFOLD AMEN**

**\* MEDITATION**

*Almighty God, grant that the words we have heard this day with our ears may be grafted into our hearts through your grace, that they may produce in us the fruits of a good life, to the praise and honor of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**\* POSTLUDE**

\*Would those who are able please stand.

## **CHOIR ANTHEM: *I WAS TOUCHED AND I BELIEVE***

*- J. Purifoy*

I believe the little Child born of Mary, meek and mild, came to touch my aching soul, and by His touch has made me whole. I believe He sent His Son, I believe the battle's won, I believe the pow'r of prayer, I believe that God is here. In awe, the shepherds spread His word, and told in wonder what they'd heard. "Let voices raise and praising sing! The little Child is Christ the King." And I believe He sent His Son, I believe the battle's won, I believe the pow'r of prayer. I believe that God is there. King's and shepherd's hearts were thrilled with joy and promises fulfilled No doubts remained and they believed, the Word of God had been received. I believe He has the pow'r to give me courage hour by hour; I believe He's always near, I believe that God is here. I believe that God is here.

**Welcome to Faith Church the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Epiphany. 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 Brenda and Tom Hovis in memory of Evelyn Hovis.**

**We will celebrate Epiphany Communion today during worship.**

**The new flower schedule for 2025 is posted in the Narthex. The cost of two flower arrangements remains the same at \$40.**

**A funeral service for Marilyn Bleam will take place here on Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> with visitation at 9:30 am followed by the service at 10:30 am.**

**The Budget & Finance Committee will meet this Tuesday at 7 pm.**

**Consistory will meet Thursday at 7 pm.**

**Next Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, the worship committee will be taking down the Christmas tree and other decorations. All help will be appreciated!!**

### **CALENDAR**

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|----------|--|
| Today    | - 9:00 am Sunday School<br>- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal<br>- 10:15 am Worship<br>- 11:30 am Choir Rehearsal |
| Monday   | - Sandy works Remotely   |
| Tuesday  | - 9:30 am Bleam Funeral<br>- 2:00 pm Faith in Stitches<br>- 7:00 pm Budget & Finance Meeting             |
| Thursday | - 10 am Samaritan Fund Meeting<br>- 7:00 pm Consistory Meeting   |
| Friday   | - Office Closed; Pastor's Day Off  |
| Saturday | - 9:00 am Christmas Undecorating   |
| Sunday   | - 9:00 am Sunday School<br>- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal<br>- 10:15 am Worship<br>- 11:30 am Choir Rehearsal |

***Thanks to our volunteers:***

	<b>January 12</b>	<b>January 19</b>
Head Usher:	Tom Hovis	Tom Hovis
Ushers:	George Rau Brenda Hovis	George Rau Brenda Hovis
Lay Reader:	Barb Maursky	Barb Maursky
Fin. Sec:	Tom Hovis	Tom Hovis
Altar Flowers:	Brenda & Tom Hovis	Jerry & Elaine Trexler

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