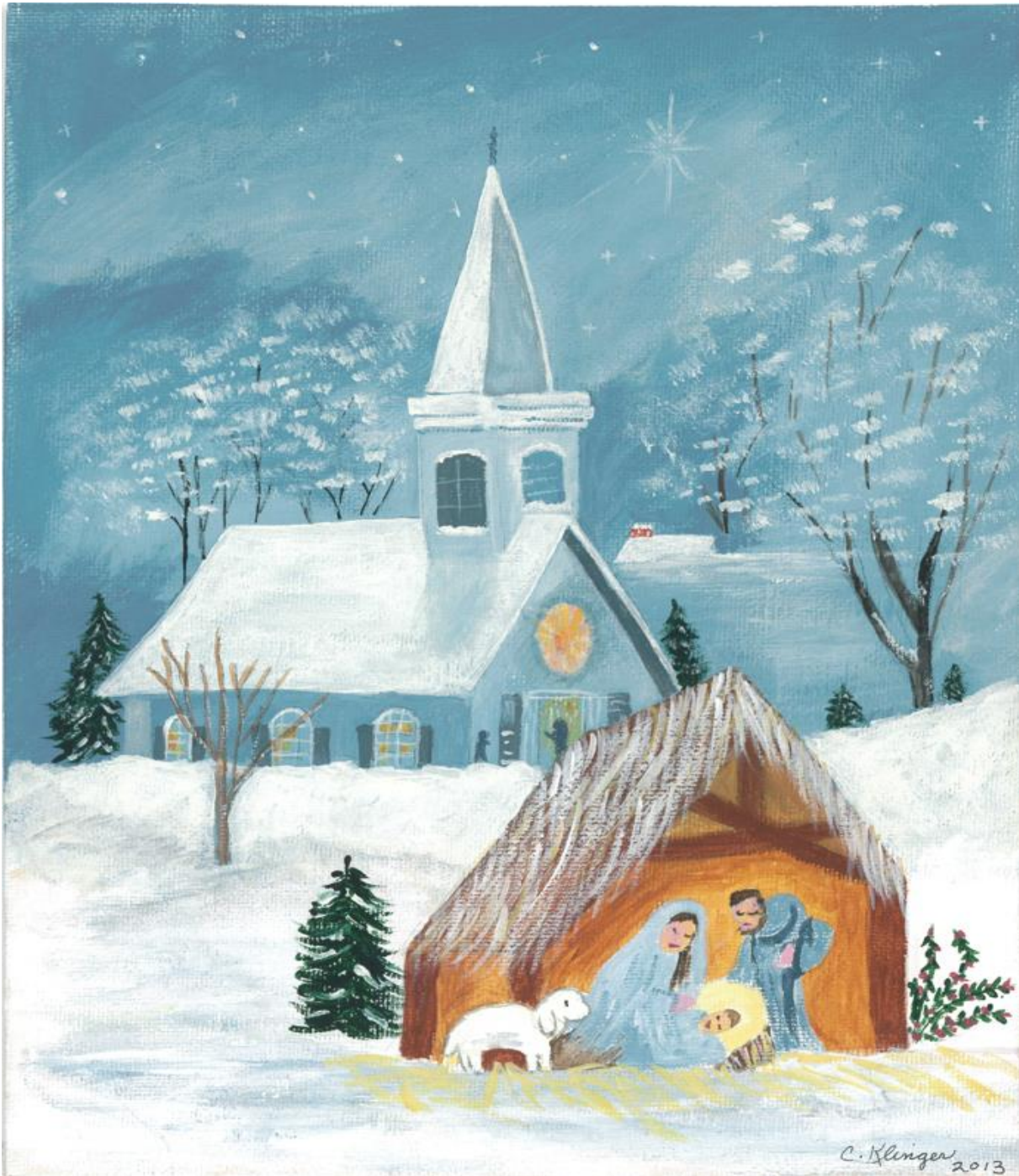


ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, December 24, 2023
Christmas Eve 11pm



1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922
Church Office: 570-754-7225
Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor: 610-207-4783
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday; 9am–2pm
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Christmas Eve Service / Candle Lighting / The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Berger

We welcome all visitors with us this evening.

Please sign our guest book in the narthex.

We hope you will come back and worship with us again.

You may place your Tithes and Offerings in the offering plates at the rear of the sanctuary either before or after the service, or anytime in the offering box located in the narthex. Thank you!

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WELCOME

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

INVOCATION

The congregation may stand.

GATHERING HYMN NO. 153.....Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear Desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.*

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung "Amen"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: The night was dark.

People: A baby lay in a manger.

Pastor: The night was still.

People: Angels sang to shepherds.

Pastor: The night was expectant.

People: God's glory shone brightly.

Pastor: On this night,

People: Let us rejoice in the gift of love. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLESRichard, Linda and Christopher Clauser

Advent Scripture - Isaiah 9:2-7 (Page 593)

HYMN NO. 180....."O Little Town of Bethlehem" (Verses 1 & 4)

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

Advent Prayer

ENGAGING THE WORD

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Gospel Lesson 1 - Luke 2:1-7 (Page 889).....Lector: Brook Koch Guers

HYMN NO. 205..... “Away in a Manger”

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

*The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky, and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee 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.*

Gospel Lesson 2 - Luke 2:8-14 (Page 889).....Lector: Brook Koch Guers

HYMN NO. 228“While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” (Verses 1 & 6)

*While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground,
an angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around, and glory shone around.*

*"All glory be to God on high, and to the earth be peace;
good will henceforth from heaven to all, begin and never cease, begin and never cease!"*

Gospel Lesson 3 - Luke 2:15-20 (Page 889).....Lector: Brook Koch Guers

HYMN NO.188“Angels We Have Heard on High”

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply, echo back their joyous strains.*

Refrain: *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? [Refrain]*

*Come to Bethlehem, and see, him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee, Christ the Lord, the newborn King. [Refrain]*

MEDITATION

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE.....Richard, Linda and Christopher Clauser

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

SPECIAL MUSIC.....Ray Riegel

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation

Communion Prayer

Pastor: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to God

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God most high.

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

The Seraphic Hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of Thy glory, Hosanna, Hosanna, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

Words of Institution

Prayer of Consecration

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

Breaking of the Bread

Lifting of the Cup

The Sharing of the Elements

The congregation may stand.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison)

We thank you, O God, for feeding us at your table and assuring us of your presence with us. Grant that the angels' song continually be on our lips and Christ's light in our lives, as we share your love to a dark and waiting world. Amen.

GOING WITH THE WORD

THE CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

(Please note: Please tip the unlit candle to the candle which is lit, so as to prevent any injuries from hot wax. Candles will be lit during the singing of "Silent Night" and remain lit throughout the singing of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." Please extinguish your candle at the conclusion of the worship service.)

Candle Hymn No. 186 "Silent Night! Holy Night!"

*Silent night! holy night! All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child; holy infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night! holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!*

*Silent night! holy night! Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

GOING WITH THE WORD

COMMISSION

Pastor: A child has been born for us.

People: God’s grace has been given to us.

Pastor: From a stable in Bethlehem our savior has come.

People: We have seen the glory of the Lord, revealed in the face of the Christ child.

Pastor: Go and tell the world. Treasure the story. Ponder it in your heart.

People: We will Glorify and praise God, for all we have heard and seen!

PARTING HYMN NO. 185.....“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!"*

Refrain: *Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."*

*Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity,
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. [Refrain]*

*Hail the heaven born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. [Refrain]*

BENEDICTION

SILENT MEDITATION

POSTLUDE

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Portions of today’s worship resources were reproduced or adapted from the UCC’s Book of Worship, Worship Connection by Nancy C. Townley on MinistryMatters.com, Worship Elements by Mary Petrina Boyd and the 2023 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. Communion Liturgy is from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/the-great-thanksgiving-for-christmas-eve-day-or-season>.

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- The altar flowers are in honor of a “Happy Birthday to Jesus” by Mr. and Mrs. Brian Clauser and family.
- The bulletins are in honor of Bill and Bonnie Reber’s Anniversary by Dylan, Kaitlyn, Jenna, and Kelly.
- The rose is in memory of Aaron Kreager by Amy Clauser and Amy Crouse.
- The Christmas tree in the Sanctuary is presented in loving memory of John & Dolores Halabura, and Wilma, Marvin, and Charles Eckert by John & Mae, Matthew & Madeline Halabura and Michelle, Pete & Mila Ellison.
- A very special thank you to the Halabura Family for the donation of the tree.

Merry Christmas and Wishes for a Happy New Year!