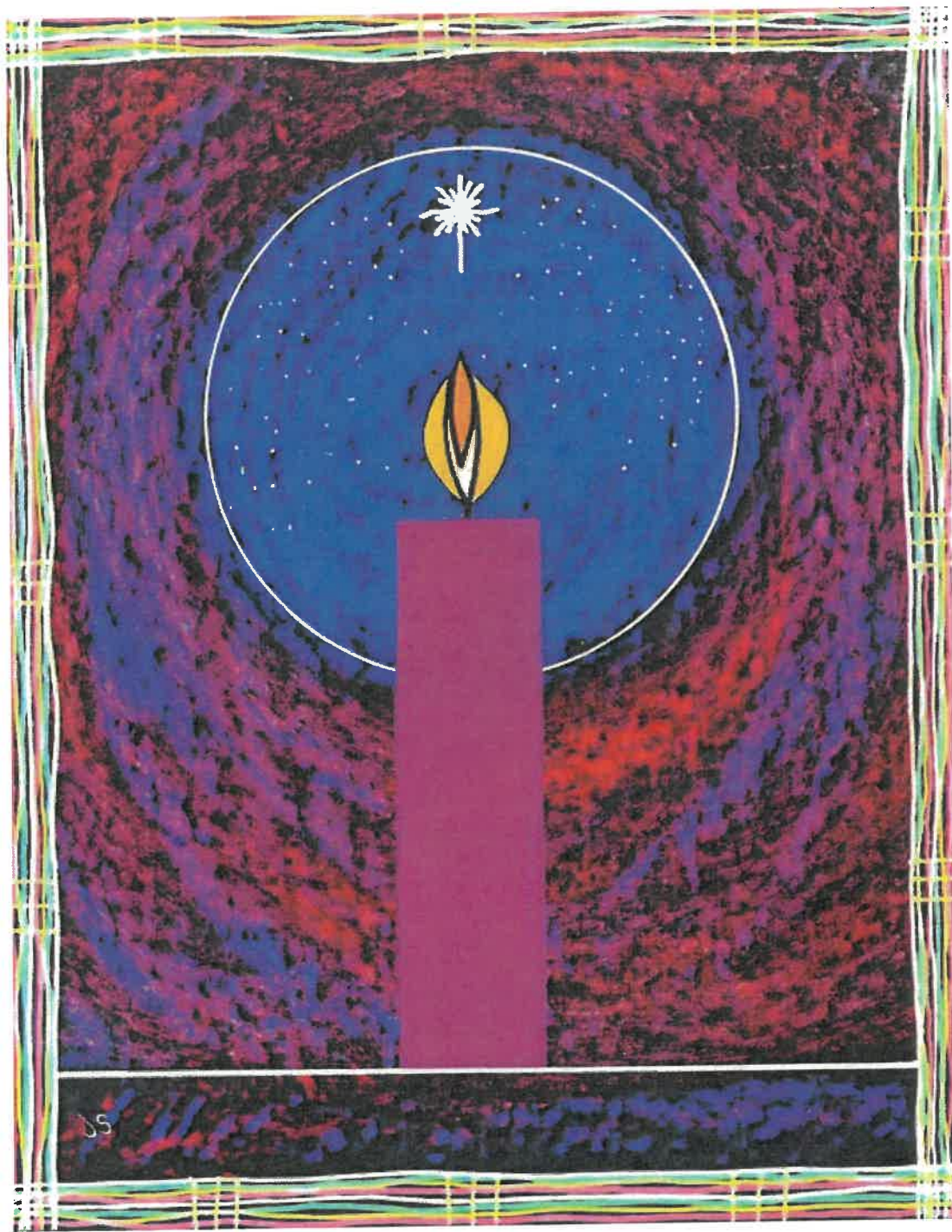




***St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, PA
November 30, 2025***

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT – “VIGILANT HOPE”

*Please stand in body or in spirit

GATHERING SONG

“This is the Day”

UNISON WELCOME

“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

from “The Will to Dream”

We gather together in this place:

prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,
we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

we who dare to dream God’s dream.

We proclaim expectation with Isaiah!

God’s redemption is near!

Through tears and through trials,

we hold fast to our hope.

Do not fear, for God is faithful.

Our redemption rises with the dawn.

Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.

We have come to wonder and praise.

***HYMN #83**

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times in a thousand ways.

Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. The element of the story we focus on changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, and how we experience it.

(Various Readers) (All): **We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

from “The Will to Dream”

Heeding Jesus’ call to keep awake, let us be humble and bold in confessing the truth of the brokenness in our hearts, our actions, and our systems.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

from “The Will to Dream”

God of hope, we confess that we too often seek salvation from that which will not save us. We cling to our own comfort, rather than being generous with our gifts and privilege. We are complicit in systems that benefit us, rather than challenging the exploitation of neighbors and creation. We act from fear rather than faith.

Transform our hearts with your mercy. Forgive us and renew us. Make us restless for justice. Teach us again to be people of courage and hope. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

from "The Will to Dream"

Heaven and earth may pass away, but God's faithfulness is sure. You are forgiven and forever claimed as beloved of God, through the saving love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

from "The Will to Dream"

Where two or three are gathered, the prophetic Spirit is among us, inspiring our imagination and creating peace in our midst. Greet your fellow travelers now with the peace of Christ, and let these small doses of repair and reconciliation ripple out into a world in need of transformation. May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 13:24-37

ANTHEM

Concertato on "*Alleluia, Sing to Jesus*"

arr. Robert Lau

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Roxanne Davenport

Children's Corner will be offered following the Children's Message

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 2:1-5

SERMON

Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

DEDICATION OF THE HOFFMAN HOMES GIFTS

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (DEBTS)

INVITATION TO GIVING

OFFERTORY

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

from Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship

**Hope in the God who reigns above,
who holds us all in steadfast love;
whose spirit blows across the earth,
preparing us for second birth. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

from "The Will to Dream"

Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you because the voices of the prophets remind us of something bigger, something greater than any system this world offers us. We believe when we trust you with our resources, the kin(g)dom of God comes much closer to reality on earth. Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love. Amen.

***HYMN #86**

"Now the Heavens Start to Whisper"

***AFFIRMATION OF HOPE**

from "The Will to Dream" (on screen)

***CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

from "The Will to Dream"

POSTLUDE (seated)

The "Nursery Nook in the Narthex" quiet area and infant/toddler space in the Parlor are available for children and families to use during worship. Age-appropriate activity bags are also available. See the deacon for assistance.

Please join us for coffee hour after worship!

Birthdays this week: 12/03 Jeanne Welch; 12/04 Stephanie Brown; 12/05 Mary Moyer and Chani Wolfe.

Worship Participants:	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Deacon in Charge	Cathy Kinton
Lector	Lloyd Beers
Children's Corner	Scot and Melinda Orndorff
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz, Muneath Ham, Heidi Ramos
Bulletin cover	John (traqair57) on Flickr

The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross are given to the Glory of God.



St. John's Vision

We are called to love, to learn, to worship and to witness in Christ
as a congregation that welcomes everyone,
and seeks service that will advance God's realm on earth.

St. John's Mission

To grow in love of God and neighbor

Worship Resources:

"The Will to Dream" Advent liturgy © 2025 Illustrated Ministry

Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

83

1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set Thy
 2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and

peo - ple free; from our fears and sins re - lease us;
 yet a King, born to reign in us for - ev - er,

let us find our rest in Thee. Is - rael's strength and con - so -
 now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring. By Thine own e - ter - nal

la - tion, hope of all the earth Thou art; dear de - sire of
 Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone; by Thine all - suf -

ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
 fi - cient mer - it, raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744
 MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830

HYFRYDOL
 8.7.8.7 D

Higher key, No. 607; lower key, No. 422

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

1. Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is
 2. Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to
 3. Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of

grow - ing thin. Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten
 drift a - way. Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness
 wis - dom's seed, come to bless with fire and fra - grance

to the stir - ring, faint with - in: seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed,
 shines the hope of com - ing day. Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor,
 hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need. In the lone - ly, in the stran - ger,

child to spring from Jes - se's stem! Like the soil be -
 gleams with - in a world grown dim. Heav - en's em - ber
 in the out - cast, hid from view: Child who comes to

WORDS: Mary Louise Bringle, 2005

MUSIC: Alexander Johnson's *Tennessee Harmony*, 1818; harm. *Lutheran Book of Worship*, 1978Words © 2006 by GIA Publications, Inc. Harm. © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*.

JEFFERSON

8.7.8.7 D

86
cont.

ADVENT

neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come Him.
fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come Him.
grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come You.

Council Congregational Survey

December 2025

Greetings! As we look toward the future, we want to be responsive to the needs of our congregation. A short 3-question survey has been developed by the Council to help garner feedback in three areas of our ministry together: Community Engagement, Congregational Care, and Spiritual Life. Please, review the descriptions/responsibilities of each standing committee and the question they pose (this sheet is double sided to provide ample space to respond to each question). Your ideas and feedback are incredibly value as we move forward. Please return this survey to the church office by December 30, 2025. This survey will also be sent out electronically.

–The Council of St. John’s UCC and Pastor Caroline

Community Engagement: The Community Engagement Committee is responsible for building relationships and maintaining engagement with our community, overseeing outreach to our local and global communities, and partnering with other churches and organizations as we remain faithful to our mission to grow in love of God and neighbor.

With many options and great needs in our community, where are the needs of our community most apparent to you? Who are the community partners, churches and/or organizations we may include in our efforts?

Council Congregational Survey

December 2025

Congregational Care: The Congregational Care Committee works to nurture and promote a loving and caring culture to ensure a healthy and supportive congregation and live into our vision as a Christian church.

What kind of support do you need from your church family?

Spiritual Life: The Spiritual Life Committee, with the help of the Worship Support Team, is responsible for worship, education, spiritual formation, and communion. The Spiritual Life Committee ensures our congregation establishes and lives a covenantal relationship with one another while nurturing a welcoming culture for visitors and members of the community.

Beyond the classes currently being offered, what adult Christian education/faith formation opportunities would you like to see, and participate in, if offered at St. John's?

NEWS IN THE PEWS November 30, 2025

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton, pastor@sjucc1811.org (641) 260-1868 (cell)
Tonya Schwartz, Office Administrator, manager@sjucc1811.org (717) 263-8593 (office)
Gary Crum, Music Director | Barbara Motichka, Organist
Roxanne Davenport, Director of Children & Youth
The Rev. Stephen W. Hoffman, Pastor Emeritus

THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

TODAY: November Birthday Celebration

No Bible Study on the Book of Acts –We'll resume with Chapter 23 on December 7.

Monday, December 1

10:00 am Chi Gong/Zazen silent body energy and soulful meditation – Parlor Room 104
1:30 pm Monday Afternoon Book Study (Ch. 11) – Conference Room 111
5:00 pm Craft Night – Christmas Ornaments – Room 202
7:00 pm Boy Scouts – Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 2 (Church Office Closes at Noon)

5:30 pm Yoga – Room 202
6:00 pm Ladies' Bible - Zoom
6:30 pm Cub Scouts – Fellowship Hall/then break into smaller groups

Wednesday, December 3

7:00 pm Midweek Advent Services- Mont Alto UMC (10 S. Main Street Mont Alto, PA 17237)

Thursday, December 4

7:00 am Men's Breakfast – Texas Lunch
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice – Bell Room 117
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room 103

Friday, December 5

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Cookies for Kids drop off – Kitchen

Saturday, December 6

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Cookies for Kids – Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 7

8:45 am Godly Play Class – Room 119
8:45 am SPARK! Elementary Church School Class – Room 115
8:45 am Teen Discussion Class – Room 206
8:45 am Wired Word Church School Class – Room 116
10:00 am Sunday Worship – Sanctuary
1:00 pm Christmas Caroling (potluck to follow ~4:15 pm in Fellowship Hall)

Angel Tree and Hoffman Homes Gift Tags Hoffman Homes' gifts will be dedicated in worship on November 30; Angel Tree gifts will be dedicated on December 7.

Pastoral Coverage Pastor Caroline will be away December 2-6. Rev. Julia Brown of Solomon's UCC in Chambersburg and Rev. Irene Pouliot of Trinity UCC in State Line are "on call." In the event of a pastoral emergency, please contact the church office and they will get your message to the pastor on call. Pastor Caroline will return to lead worship on Sunday, December 7.

Cookies for Kids (aka the "Cookie Walk") will be held Saturday, December 6. Sign-up sheets to provide homemade cookies or candy are located in both lobbies. All proceeds from this event will go to support kids in our community by partnering with local organizations. Contact Roxanne Davenport or Harold Collier with any questions. Thanks for your support of this terrific event!

Church Directory Update As we work to finalize our new photo directory, we need your updated contact information. If your address, phone number or email address has changed, please share this with the church office. Thank you!

Bell Fest is Sunday, December 14, 7 pm in the Sanctuary. Join us for beautiful music featuring the handbell choirs of SJUCC, First Lutheran, Park Avenue UMC, and Messiah UMC (Ship).

Welcome, Rochelle Moyer! Rochelle is St. John's new Office Assistant, joining Tonya Schwartz, our Office Administrator. Rochelle is here M-F from 9 am-1 pm. Stop by and say hi!

Reverse Advent Calendar Mission Challenge helps us to share God's love through giving to others as we prepare to receive the gift of Jesus. Wrapped boxes with a calendar of desired items are available in both lobbies. These gifts of food will be dedicated on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Caroling to our shut-in church family members will be Sunday, December 7, leaving at 1:00 pm. We'd love you to join us! We will end ~4:15 pm with a potluck in Fellowship Hall.

Silent Night, Holy Night Sign up on the youth bulletin or see Roxanne if you would like to help dramatize the Christmas story during the Christmas Eve service at 6:30 pm.

December First Fruits will go to support Salvation Army and continuing their work of helping those in our community who are struggling. Thank you for your generosity in supporting the Angel Tree and the many other ways they serve children and families in Chambersburg.

Staff Christmas Gifts are a way we at St. John's honor our talented staff at Christmas. If you would like to participate, please designate "Staff Christmas Gift" on your envelope or check; contributions should be submitted by Sunday, December 7.

United Way Winter Warmth Drive is currently underway through January 16. Please see the December Spirit for a full list of desired items to donate in the boxes in both lobbies. Thank you for supporting these efforts to care for our neighbors, feeding the hungry and clothing the cold.

November/December Upper Room devotionals are currently available at the Welcome Center. We suggest a donation of \$1 for small print/\$2 for large print copies. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.

Bible and a Beer is an opportunity to talk about our faith in public. Join us on the 3rd Monday of the month at the Trojan Diner at 6:30 pm. Our next gathering will be December 15.