



***St. John's United Church of Christ  
Chambersburg, PA  
December 7, 2025***

## **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – “PROPHETIC PEACE”**

\*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 watch with Malachi and John.

**God’s peace will soon appear.**

The hills and valleys will meet,  
**and all things will be at rest.**

We long for a world restored, renewed.

**The fire of God’s justice burns in our hearts.**

Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.

**We have come to wonder and praise.**

### **\*HYMN #89**

*“Comfort, Comfort Ye My People”*

### **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. We light the candle of hope because hope creates a path for a new, unknown story to unfold. (Various) (All): Today, we also light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us.**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

*from “The Will to Dream”*

Hearing John’s exhortation to repent, let us invite into our hearts the refining fire of God’s Spirit, trusting that God will hear us, forgive us, and refine us.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

*from “The Will to Dream”*

**God of peace, we confess the ways that we maintain “peacefulness” at the expense of seeking justice for our neighbors and our world. We turn our eyes away from human suffering to maintain false contentment in our own hearts. We settle for compromises that harm the vulnerable, rather than risk discomfort or loss. We ask**

**to be soothed rather than stirred up. Make us a holy and risk-taking people. Forgive and inspire us. Shape us into bold witnesses to your coming reign. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF GRACE**

*from "The Will to Dream"*

Hear this good news: God pours out mercy, rushing over you like a river. You are forgiven and forever claimed as beloved by 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**

Malachi 3:1-6

**ANTHEM**

*"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"*

arr. Donald McCullough

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Roxanne Davenport

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

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Matthew 3:1-12

**SERMON**

Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

**DEDICATION OF THE ANGEL TREE 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.**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

(liturgy on the screen)

**\*HYMN #95**

*"Prepare the Royal Highway"*

**\*AFFIRMATION OF PEACE**

*from "The Will to Dream" (on screen)*

**\*CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

*from "The Will to Dream"*

**POSTLUDE (seated)**

*All are welcome at Christ's table. To let the church office know that you communed today, please sign the black attendance pad found in each row. If you are communing from home, please contact the church office to let us know.*

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.

Please join us for coffee hour after worship!

**Birthdays this week:** 12/08 Judith Patterson; 12/09 Virginia McCright; 12/13 M. Alison Hopper; 12/14 Pete A'zary.

<b>Worship Participants:</b>	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Deacon in Charge	Peg Bryner
Lector	Henry Hopper
Children's Corner	Rebecca Pound
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz, Neath Ham, Heidi Ramos
Bulletin cover	John (traqair57) on Flickr

**The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross** are given in honor of our grandchildren Jayla and Atlas by Harold and Barb Wissinger.



**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*

## Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

89

1. Com - fort, com - fort ye my peo - ple, speak ye peace, thus saith our God;  
 2. Hark, the voice of one that cri - eth in the des - ert far and near,  
 3. Make ye straight what long was crook - ed, make the rough - er plac - es plain;

com - fort those who sit in dark - ness, mourn - ing 'neath their sor - rows' load.  
 bid - ding all to true re - pent - ance since the king - dom now is here.  
 let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits His ho - ly reign.

Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem of the peace that waits for them;  
 O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way;  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now o'er earth is shed a - broad;

tell her that her sins I cov - er, and her war - fare now is o - ver.  
 let the val - leys rise to meet Him, and the hills bow down to greet Him.  
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that His word is nev - er bro - ken.

## Prepare the Royal Highway

95

1. Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
 2. We wait our Sav - ior's com - ing, our own e - ter - nal King!  
 3. Come fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised King!  
 4. Christ's is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heaven a - bove.

Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
 Long prom - ised by the proph - ets, let heaven with prais - es ring.  
 All lands will bow be - fore Him, their voic - es join to sing  
 His rule se - cures our free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.

The hope of ev - ery na - tion, God's prom - ise of sal - va - tion.  
 Our hope is ev - er grow - ing, God's peace to all be - stow - ing.  
 of hope and peace a - bound - ing, of joy to heaven re - sound - ing.  
 Hope, peace, and joy our treas - ure, God's love a - bove all meas - ure.

Ho - san - na to the Lord, for He ful - fills God's word!

WORDS: Mikael Franzén; trans. Philip M. Young, 2005 (Isa. 40:3-4)

MUSIC: Swedish melody, 17th cent.; harm. David W. Music, 1998

English Trans. © 2005 The First Baptist Church, Henderson, North Carolina.

Harm. © 2000 Selah Publishing Co., Inc.

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain

Lower key, No. 84

# 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 December 7, 2025**

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton, [pastor@sjucc1811.org](mailto:pastor@sjucc1811.org) (641) 260-1868 (cell)  
Tonya Schwartz, Office Administrator, [manager@sjucc1811.org](mailto: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:** 1:00 pm Christmas Caroling (potluck to follow ~4:15 pm in Fellowship Hall)  
Bible Study on the Book of Acts, Chapter 23, 8 pm, Zoom (link in Friday e-blast).

### **Monday, December 8**

10:00 am **No Meditation** / We'll resume on Dec 15  
12:30 Pipe Organ Tuning – Sanctuary  
1:30 pm Monday Afternoon Book Study (Ch. 12) – Conference Room 111  
7:00 pm Boy Scouts – Fellowship Hall

### **Tuesday, December 9**

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 10**

11:15 am Ladies Luncheon – Chinaberry Room in Northgate at Menno Haven  
7:00 pm Midweek Advent Services- St. Luke Lutheran (2695 Luther Drive Chambersburg, PA 17202)

### **Thursday, December 11**

6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice – Bell Room 117  
6:15 Girl Scouts – Room 116  
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room 103

### **Sunday, December 14**

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  
7:00 pm Bell Fest – Sanctuary

**Angel Tree Gifts** will be dedicated in worship on Sunday, December 7. Thank you so much for your support of the Hoffman Homes and Salvation Army's efforts to make the holidays special.

**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.

**Parking Lot Progress** The trees and islands in parking lot A have been removed and the initial repaving work is complete. Please continue to use caution as the ground settles. Thank you!

**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. If you have not yet submitted a photo or would like to have your picture taken, please contact 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).

**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.

**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.

**Christmas Eve Worship** will be at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, December 24 in the Sanctuary. The musical prelude featuring the choir and Bells of St. John's will begin at 6:15 pm.

**Little Free Pantry** Tom Kinton is building a "Little Free Pantry" by parking lot B to help feed those in our neighborhood. Donations of cash and/or nonperishable items can be dropped off at the church office. We will also be inviting our scouts to help keep this pantry stocked.

**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. Among the requested items to donate are healthy food (whole grains, seasonings & cooking oils, boxed meals, canned goods, flour, sugar, and baking soda, condiments, peanut butter, shelf-stable milk, pasta and pasta sauce) and winter gear (mittens & gloves, winter hats, socks, first aid kits, deodorant, shampoo & conditioner, tissues & paper towels, toothpaste, laundry detergent, and hand soap, dish soap, and body soap). St. John's is a collection site; donation boxes are in both lobbies. Thank you for your support of 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 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at the Trojan Diner at 6:30 pm. Our next gathering will be December 15.