



***St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, PA
January 4, 2026***

EPIPHANY – "COURAGEOUS DEFIANCE"

*Please stand in body or in spirit

"This is the Day"

GATHERING SONG

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 listen with Joseph,

guided by faith and dreams.

In fear or in flight,

God is our refuge.

By the light of a star,

God guides us on the way.

Come and worship, all you who dream and imagine.

We have come to wonder and praise.

***HYMN #150**

"As with Gladness Men of Old"

***OPENING PRAYER**

from "The Will to Dream"

God of starlight, sunrise, and new beginnings, we praise you for the gift of a fresh perspective. At this time, when many of us try something new, commit to a habit, release an old behavior, or reinvent our lives in some way, we are reminded that we are perfectly loved by you. Speak to us, as you did to Joseph, in our dreams and goals for the future. Show us the way forward and empower us to act. When we feel discouraged or have failed to accomplish the mission we set out to achieve, remind us of your unconditional love and help us to keep walking the narrow path of love and justice. Amen.

CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING

Jesus is born! Immanuel! God is with us! (Various) (All): Immanuel, God-with-us, thank you for being present when life unravels and giving us the strength to keep going toward your blessings.

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

Exodus 1:8-2:10

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Roxanne Davenport

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 2:1-15

SERMON

Rev. Peter Emig

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

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

INVITATION TO GIVING

OFFERTORY

INTRODUCTION TO STAR WORDS

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

from Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship

O God, may we who bear your name
by gentle love your grace proclaim,
Christ's gift of peace on earth declare
and your anointing Spirit share.

***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

Hymnal Companion C-72

We celebrate communion this day by intinction, coming forward to the altar to receive the bread and cup. Pre-packaged elements are also available.

***HYMN #87**

"Arise, Your Light Is Come"

***CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

from "The Will to Dream"

Through the work of Christ in the world and on the cross, we see empire, fear, violence, and cruelty replaced with courage, wisdom, protection, and the will to dream of so much

more. May we go forth from this place and be God's hands and feet, offering courageous defiance against those who would seek to oppress. May our eyes see what is beautiful before us. May our ears hear God's voice. May our mouths share the gospel with others. Go out into the world, embracing the world to dream, knowing that God will not hide from you. God guides and leads, helping us to care for the least of these as if they were God.

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.

Join us for a time of fellowship after worship!

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.

Birthdays this week: 01/07 Ruth Ann Cuesta; 01/10 Thomas Harrison (Echo); 01/11 Deborah Olson.

Worship Participants:	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Guest Pastor	Rev. Peter Emig
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Deacon in Charge	Chris Willman-Bunge
Lector	Judy Hodges
Children's Corner	Roxanne Davenport
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz
Bulletin cover	John (traqair57) on Flickr

The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross are given in loving memory of John Gaal by his wife Nancy.



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

As with Gladness Men of Old

1. As with glad - ness men of old did the guid - ing
 2. As with joy - ful steps they sped to that low - ly
 3. As they of - fered gifts most rare at the man - ger
 4. Ho - ly Je - sus, ev - ery day keep us in the

star be - hold; as with joy they hailed its light,
 man - ger bed, there to bend the knee be - fore
 rude and bare, so may we with ho - ly joy,
 nar - row way; and when earth - ly things are past,

lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright, so, most gra - cious
 Christ whom heaven and earth a - dore, so may we with
 pure and free from sin's al - loy, all our cost - liest
 bring our ran - somed souls at last where they need no

Lord, may we ev - er - more be led to Thee.
 will - ing feet, ev - er seek the mer - cy seat.
 trea - sures bring, Christ, to Thee, our heaven - ly King.
 star to guide, where no clouds Thy glo - ry hide.

WORDS: William C. Dix, 1861 (Matt. 2:1-11)

MUSIC: Conrad Kocher, 1838; adapt. William Henry Monk, 1861

DIX

7.7.7.7.7

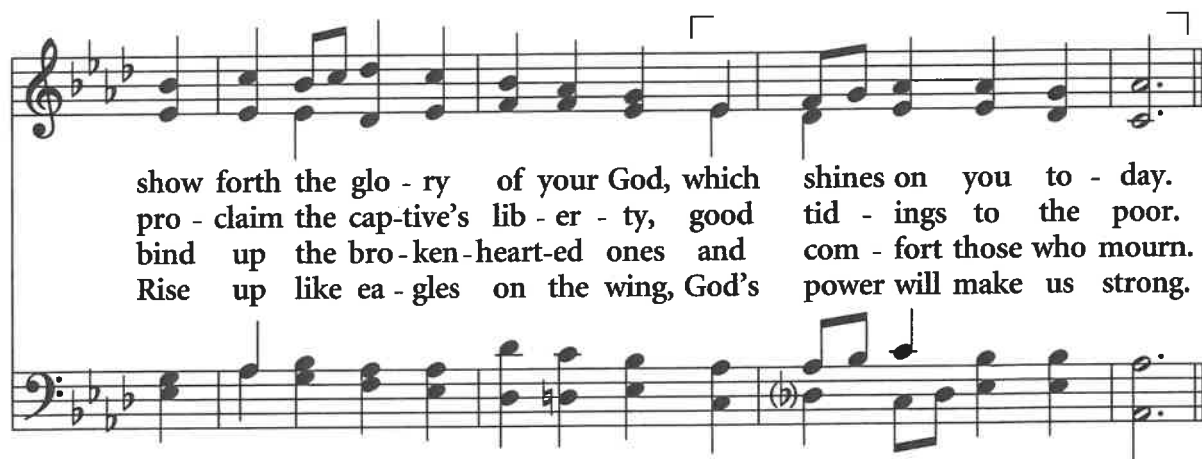
Lower key, No. 341

Arise, Your Light Is Come

87



1. A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
 2. A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
 3. A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
 4. A - rise, your light is come! The moun-tains burst in song!



show forth the glo - ry of your God, which shines on you to - day.
 pro - claim the cap-tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.
 bind up the bro-ken-heart-ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
 Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's power will make us strong.

WORDS: Ruth Duck, 1974 (Isa. 60:1-2; 61:1)

MUSIC: William H. Walter, 1872

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FESTAL SONG

SM

Higher key, No. 228; lower key, No. 437

NEWS IN THE PEWS January 4, 2026

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: Choose your Star word after worship, a word to guide your year!

Monday, January 5

10:00 am Chi Gong/Zazen silent body energy and soulful meditation – Parlor Room 104
1:30 pm **NO** Monday Afternoon Book Study – will resume January 12
7:00 pm Boy Scouts – Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, January 6

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

Thursday, January 8

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

Sunday, January 11

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 Upper Room Church School Class – Conference Room 111
8:45 am Wired Word Church School Class – Room 116
10:00 am Sunday Worship – Sanctuary
11:15 am Behavioral Covenant Discussion/Feedback Session – Room 116
8:00 pm Sunday Night Bible Study resumes on Zoom

Pastoral Coverage Pastor Caroline will be on vacation December 25-January 5. Rev. Peter Emig will preach and preside on Sunday, January 4. 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 on January 6, 2026.

Behavioral Covenant (aka "Holy Manners") Pick up a copy of the draft "Holy Manners for our St. John's United Church of Christ Faith Community" and read the article on page 18 of the January Spirit to learn more about our proposed Behavioral Covenant. Congregational discussion and feedback sessions will be held after worship on Sunday, January 11 and again on Sunday, January 18, in Room 116. Please contact Pastor Caroline or Lloyd Beers with any questions.

The Upper Room: Sunday School Restart Beginning January 4, 2026, the *Upper Room* Sunday School class will begin meeting in Conference Room 111 on Sundays at 8:45 am. For the first meeting, participants will re-read the seven Bible passages and the authors' comments, found in the Upper Room booklets, for December 29, 30, 31, and January 1, 2, 3, and 4. These booklets are on the table inside the main entrance of the Church. Conversation will include the Bible verse, the authors' messages, the *Thought for the Day*, the prayer focuses, and your personal thoughts of the content. For more information, contact Harold Collier or Connie Strunk.

Little Free Pantry is located by parking lot B to help feed those in our neighborhood who are hungry. Donations of cash and/or nonperishable food items can be dropped off at the church office. Due to the cold temperatures, dry goods are preferable to canned goods. To learn more, please see the article in the January Spirit. Thank you for your support of this initiative!

Sunday Night Bible Study will be on hiatus until after the holidays. We will resume with Acts chapter 25 on Sunday, January 11, 2026.

Monday Afternoon Book Study finished "A People's History of Christianity" on 12/15. We will start our next book ("Love's Braided Dance" by Norman Wirzba) on Monday, January 12, 2026.

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!

January First Fruits As we move into a quarterly focus of seasonal giving through physical donations and First Fruits, donations for First Fruits this month will be split between the United Way Winter Warmth Drive and the Little Free Pantry. Please designate on your envelope or check if you have a preference on how your donation is to be used.

Winter Weather If worship is canceled due to winter weather; a special e-blast will be sent out. M-F activities follow the CASD school district. Specifics are in the January Spirit. Safety first!

United Way Winter Warmth Drive is currently underway. Among the requested items to donate are healthy food and winter gear. A full listing of desired items can be found in the December Spirit. 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.

January/February 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 January 19.

Want to Stay in Touch? Contact the Church Office to be added to our email list! You can sign up to receive our regular weekly emails, Diana's Devotionals, and/or be part of the Prayer Chain.