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St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, PA
November 29, 2026

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - "KEEP AWAKE"

*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"

CONNECTIONS

CHIMING OF THE TRINITY

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP** *from "The Thrill of Hope"*

Come, listen.
A thrill of hope is calling.
Come, rejoice.
A weary world is healing.
Come, watch.
A bright star is shining.
Come, worship.
The Messiah is coming.

***HYMN #83** *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES Judy, Alahna, and Owen Hodges

In the midst of busyness, bustling, and buzzing, we pause to breathe and release our burdens. We surround ourselves with candles, lights, greenery, and beauty. May these sights and sounds remind us that we are people of faith, guided by the light of the world. Listen for the words of hope on this First Sunday of Advent. (Various readers) (All): **What can we do? Where is our hope?** (Various readers) (All): **May the hope of God-with-us thrill and inspire.**

CALL TO CONFESSION *from "The Thrill of Hope"*

Our hearts cry out for restoration. Our spirits plead for illumination. Let us come before God in confession and in trust. Our salvation is near.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *from "The Thrill of Hope"*

Before God and one another, we confess our love for power and control that separates us from one another and from you, O God. We cling tightly to wealth because we fear vulnerability. We insist on our own way because we fear change. We reject love and salvation when they come to us from outside our comfort zone. We follow our own paths instead of your own faithful leading. Forgive us through your endless grace and guide us into your truth. Lead us by the mercy of Jesus, who is our way and our life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE *from "The Thrill of Hope"*

From the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven, so great is God's mercy for us. You are forgiven, and you are held by a love that will never pass away. Receive this good news in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

PASSING OF THE PEACE *from "The Thrill of Hope"*

The one for whom we wait is our prince of peace and reconciler of the world. We share the peace with a weary world. We share the peace to offer God's grace. We share the peace to anticipate and recognize God's salvation in the world. May the peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

SCRIPTURE READING Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

ANTHEM *"Soon and Very Soon"* Andraé Crouch

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Judy Hodges

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

SCRIPTURE READING Mark 13:24-37

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 Thrill of Hope"*

Gracious God, in this season of Advent, as we wait for the Messiah, we offer not only ourselves but our tithes and gifts as well. May these offerings work to bring about healing, justice, belonging, and the thrill of hope to a weary world. Amen.

***HYMN #99** *"View the Present Through the Promise"*

***AFFIRMATION OF HOPE** *adapted from "The Thrill of Hope"*

Clinging to God's promises, let us affirm the hope that is in our hearts: **We believe God has named all things good. We believe God is still creative and active among us and in our world. We believe in the promise of Christ, for whom we wait. We**

believe in a future with hope. We believe Christ is transforming the world, here and now. We believe we will witness the in-breaking of mercy and justice. We believe the Spirit works through us to renew the world. In this season and always, we live with faith. **The thrill of hope persists.**

from "The Thrill of Hope"

***CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE (seated)

Please join us for a time of fellowship 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
Choir Director	Gary Crum
Deacon in Charge	Kara Alt
Lector	Henry Hopper
Children's Corner	Mindy Orndorff
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz and Neath Ham
Bulletin cover	© 2026 Illustrated Ministry

The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross are given in loving memory of Bob Keeney by Tena Keeney.

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.

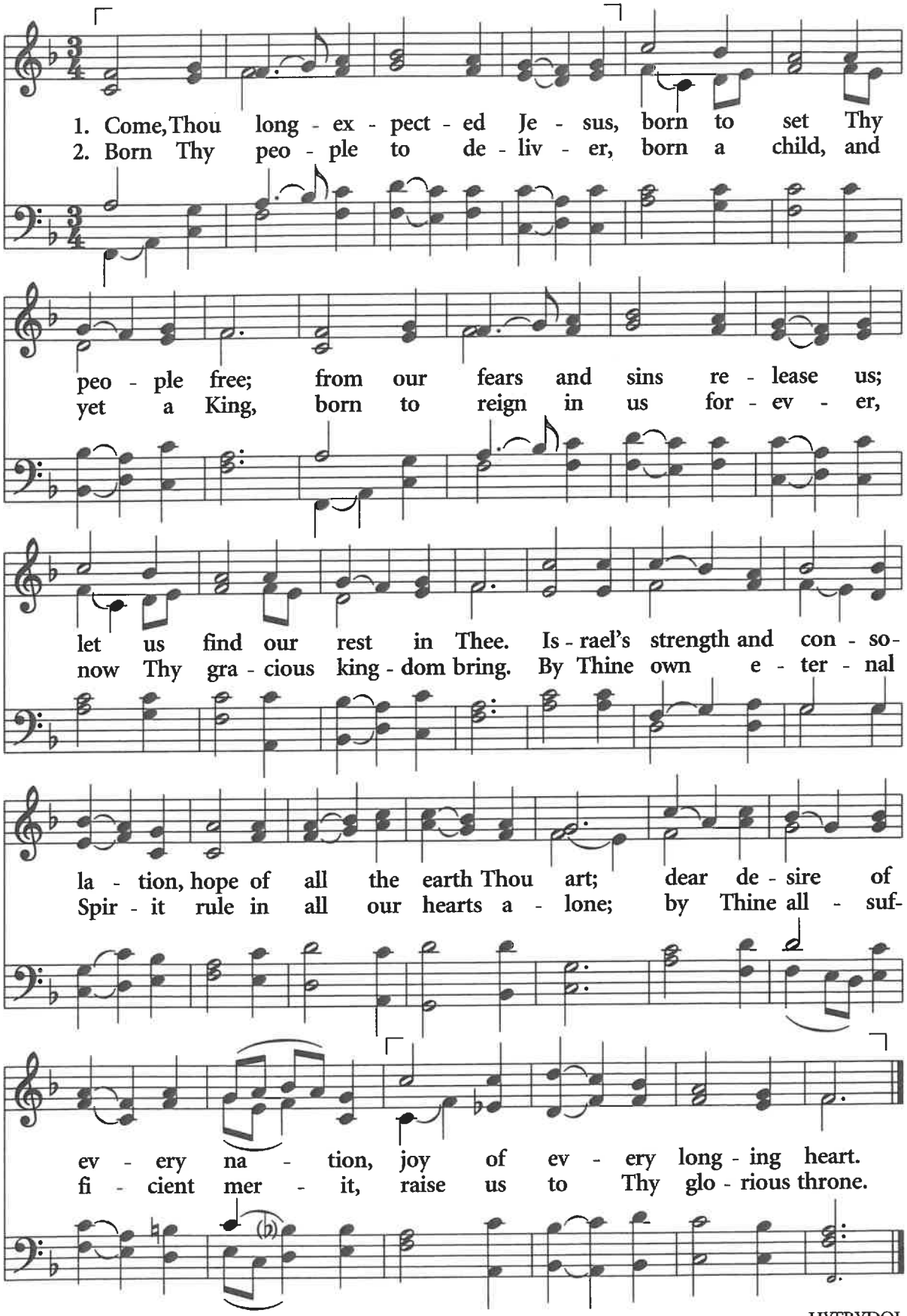
St. John's Mission

To grow in love of God and neighbor

Worship Resources:

"The Thrill of Hope" Advent liturgy © 2026 Illustrated Ministry
"All Creation Waits: The Advent Mystery of New Beginnings (Children's Edition)" written by Gayle Bass, illustrated by Sharon Spitz
Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship, edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 83

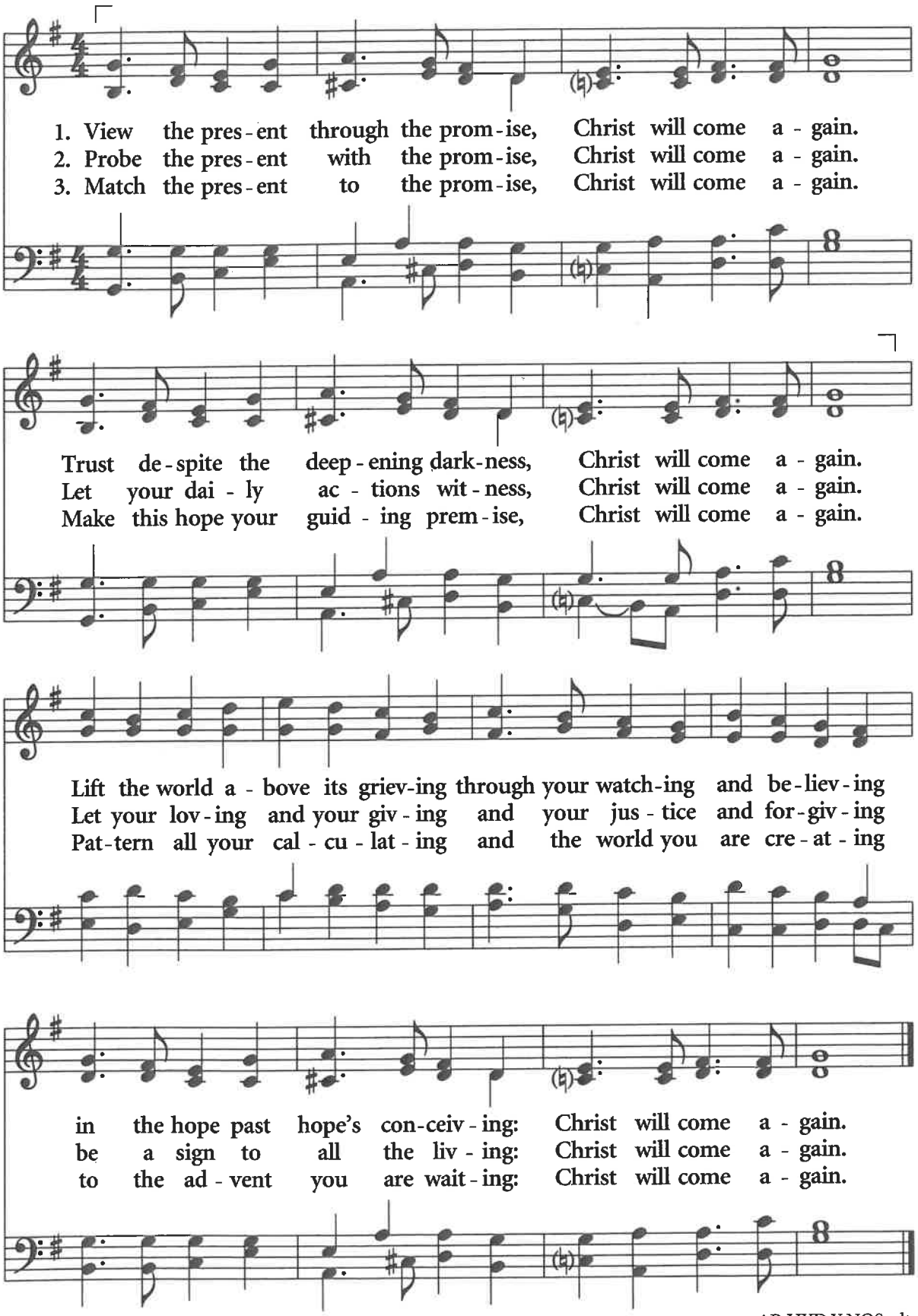


WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1744
MUSIC: Rowland H. Prichard, 1830

HYFRYDOL
8.7.8.7 D

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

View the Present Through the Promise 99



WORDS: Thomas H. Troeger, 1985 (Matt. 24:42-44)
MUSIC: Trad. Welsh melody, alt.; harm. Luther O. Emerson, 1906

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AR HYD Y NOS, alt.
8.5.8.5.8.8.8.5
Lower key, No. 376

NEWS IN THE PEWS November 29, 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:
NO Bible Study, will resume on December 6 on 1 Peter, Chapter 5, Zoom (link in Friday e-blast)

Monday, November 30
NO Book Study; will resume on December 7 "Good Soil" pages 101-126 - Conf. Room 111
7:00 pm Boy Scouts - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 1
5:30 pm Yoga - Room 202
6:00 pm Ladies Bible Study via Zoom
6:00 pm Cub Scouts - Blue and Gold Banquet - Fellowship Hall

Thursday, December 3
7:00 am Men's Breakfast - Held at Texas Lunch
6:00 pm Bell Choir Practice - Room 117
7:15 pm Choir Practice - Room 103

Friday, December 4
12:00 pm Mahjong - Library
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Christmas Cookies and Crafts Drop offs - Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 5
9:00 am Christmas Cookies and Crafts - Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 6
8:45 am Godly Play Church School Class (Ages 3-K) - Room 119
8:45 am SPARK! Church School Class (Grades 1-5) - Room 115
8:45 am Scripture/Contemporary Issues (Grades 6-12) - Room 206
8:45 am Wired Word Adult Church School Class - Library Room 106
8:45 am Upper Room Adult Church School Class - Conference Room 111
10:00 am Sunday Worship - Sanctuary
4:30 pm Holli Burton's Memorial Service and Reception (Sanctuary & Fellowship Hall)
8:00 pm Bible Study on 1 Peter, Chapter 5, Zoom (link in Friday e-blast)

Monday Afternoon Book Study We'll discuss pages 101-126 of Jeff Chu's book "Good Soil: The Education of an Accidental Farmhand" on Monday, December 7, 1:30 PM in Conference Room 111.

Sunday Night Bible Study Join Pastor Caroline on **Sunday, December 6** at 8 pm via Zoom for a Bible study on the letter of 1 Peter Chapter 5. Zoom Meeting ID: 836 0593 5961 and Passcode 277938. A hyperlink is included in the weekly e-blast.

Bell Fest is Sunday, December 13, 7 pm in the Sanctuary. Join us for beautiful music featuring the hand bell choirs of SJUCC, First Lutheran, Park Avenue UMC, and Messiah UMC (Ship).

"A Thrill of Hope" Advent devotional booklets are now available to help enrich your spiritual life during this special season of preparation. A donation of $3 per booklet is suggested. Copies are at the Welcome Center, in the Narthex, and by request from the Church Office.

Staff Christmas Gift It is the tradition at St. John's United Church of Christ to have a special offering envelope designated for Christmas Gifts for Church Staff. Our staff are a true blessing to our church and if you want take part in this please submit this to the church office and in the MEMO line of your check be sure to say "Staff Christmas Gift". We need this by **Sunday, December 6, 2026** in order for our staff to receive this by Christmas. Thank you!

Winter Quarter First Fruits Thank you so much for your generous support of the Salvation Army Angel Tree, Hoffman Homes Holiday Gift Program, and "Operation Christmas Joy." Hoffman Homes gifts will be dedicated in worship on November 29; Angel Tree gifts will be dedicated on December 6; "Operation Christmas Joy" boxes will be dedicated and delivered on December 6. We will be supporting United Way's Winter Warmth Drive as well. Please see the article in the December Spirit to learn more.

Christmas Cookies and Crafts on Saturday, December 5 from 9 am to 2 pm in Fellowship Hall. Buy homemade crafts and artwork to brighten your heart and home! Holiday treats to be sold by weight: Cookies $10/lb. and Candy $12/lb. Proceeds will benefit kinds in our community. Bring your baked goods to kitchen on December 4 from 6pm-8pm. Your crafts and artwork for sale should be priced and placed in Fellowship Hall. A sign-up sheet is at the Welcome Center.

Mahjong Fridays come join us on Friday, December 4 and Friday, December 18 from 12pm-2pm in the Church Library. All you need is to have basic knowledge of Mahjong. If you would like to learn Mahjong, please call into the church office 717-263-8593 or email Kristen - assistant@sjucc1811.org to sign up for classes.

Blue Christmas This service aims to provide a space for quiet, contemplative worship for us to bring our sorrow, pain, or loneliness to a place where we can recognize that this holiday season can bring grief as well as joy, despair as well as hope. At Blue Christmas, we come where we can share our burdens, sadness, and fears, and gather courage to move onward and forward. The service aims to help us experience hope and healing in the midst of darkness. This year's Blue Christmas service will be held here on Sunday, December 20, 3:00 pm.

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 21.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held at 6:30 pm on Thursday, December 24.