

St. John's United Church of Christ
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St Johns UCC Allentown

**Personal hearing devices are available
from an usher.**

***Indicates that people may stand as they
are able.**

December 1, 2024

11:00am

Tower Chimes

Sarah & Danny Collier

**Music to Gather: "Wake, Awake, for Night Is
Flying"**

J. G. Walther

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* **Welcome**

Call to Worship by Rev. Nancy Townley

One: Lord of hope and light, shine into our darkness and bring hope to our souls.

All: Remind us again of the wonderful ways you have cared for us when we were lost.

One: Open our hearts to receive your loving spirit.

All: Refresh our minds with knowledge of your everlasting power and compassion.

One: We offer this prayer in Christ's name.

All: Let us praise the Lord our God!

Hymn #104.....“We Hail You God’s Anointed”

Profession of Faith

One: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Let us come before the Lord of hope so that we might proclaim that Christ is where our hope comes from!

All: Holy Lord, we gather today to recognize that our hope is found in you. Even in the tension of uncertainty, we can take a deep

We Hail You God's Anointed

James Montgomery, 1821; alt.

1. We hail you God's a-noint-ed, the long-a-wait-ed One!
Hail in the time ap-point-ed, your reign on earth be-gun!
You come to break op-pres-sion, to set the cap-tive free;
to take a-way trans-gres-sion, and rule in eq-ui-ty.
2. You shall come down like show-ers up-on the fruit-ful earth;
and joy and hope, like flow-ers, spring in your path to birth.
Be-fore you on the moun-tains shall peace, the her-ald, go,
and righ-teous-ness, in foun-tains, from hill to val-ley flow.
3. The wise shall bow be-fore you and gold and in-cense bring;
all na-tions shall a-dore you, and praise all peo-ples sing;
To you shall prayer un-ceas-ing and dai-ly vows be said,
your realm is still in-creas-ing, with you, O Christ, as head.
4. O'er ev-ery foe vic-to-rious, you on your throne shall rest;
from age to age more glo-rious, all-bless-ing and all-blessed:
The tide of time shall nev-er your cov-e-nant re-move;
your name shall stand for-ev-er, your change-less name of Love.

Ps. 72

centering breath and feel your presence with us. Help us to remember on our darkest days that there is still light and love found in the hope of your promise. Fill us with your spirit so that we may be agents of your love, moving in the world. Amen.

Confession Response 🎵 Hymn #133, Verse 4

**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!**

Assurance of Grace

One: When we gather together to profess our belief in the hope of salvation through Christ Jesus we find that we are already blessed and filled with hope and love.

All: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” -Romans 15:13

Response to Words of Assurance: Hymn #125,
Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath- Hope, The Finance Team

Today we celebrate the first Sunday in advent and light the candle of Hope! Hope can be difficult to find these day, but the apostle Paul reminds us that hope is the destination of our faith; “Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don’t see.” First

Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 3 calls us to remember that our hope is found firmly planted in our faith in Christ. “We remember before our God and father your work produced by faith,

your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” Jesus gives us hope for the journey and hope for a future in which everyone born has a place at the table, and enough to eat.

One: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Many: Indeed, our faith was passed down to us by the people who taught us hope and love.

One: By faith we understand that the world was prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

All: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of our savior Jesus Christ this Advent season!

Kindle the flame of hope,

May it burn bright and true.

Lighting the Way that is of God,

**The journey we pursue.
God's realm is our desire,
Where peace and justice reign.
Heaven and earth combined as one,
When Christ shall come again.**

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Scriptures

Bill Falla

Jeremiah 33:14-16 (Page 636)

Luke 21:25-36 (Page 852)

Congregational Response 🎵 (aka prayer for
grace)

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Children's Moment

Sermon: "Hope" Rev. Becky Sausser

Hymn #101 "Comfort, Comfort O My People"
(Note: Ushers will collect "Prayer Cards" during this time. Prayer cards are in the pews. We invite you to fill one out if you have a joy or prayer request to share.)

Morning Prayer and 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

Comfort, Comfort O My People

Johannes Olearius, 1671

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.

1. “Com-fort, com-fort O my peo-ple,
tell of peace,” thus says our God;
Com-fort those whose hearts are shroud-ed,
mourn-ing un-der sor-row’s load.
Speak un-to Je-ru-sa-lem
of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cov-er,
and their war-fare now is o-ver.

2. For the her-ald’s voice is call-ing
in the des-ert far and near,
Bid-ding us to make re-pen-tance
since the realm of God is here.
Oh, that warn-ing cry o-bey!
Now pre-pare for God a way;
Let the val-leys rise in meet-ing
and the hills bow down in greet-ing.

3. Straight shall be what long was crook-ed,
and the rough-er pla-ces plain!
Let your hearts be true and hum-ble,
for Mes-si-ah’s ho-ly reign.
For God’s glo-ry ev-er-more
shall be known o’er all the world;
And all flesh shall see the to-ken
that God’s word is nev-er bro-ken.

Isa. 40:1–8

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evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Prayer Response 🎵 Hymn #124, Verse 3

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender
care,**

And fit us for heaven to live with you there.

Chancel Choir: "Advent Celebration" Jon Paige

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A CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Invitation

Communion Prayer

Pastor: God be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to God.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Almighty.

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

Pastor: Eternal God, you created the heavens and earth, giving breath to every living thing. We thank you for the gift of creation and for the gift of life itself. We thank you for making us in your own image, for forgiving us when we act as though You have no claim on us, and for keeping us in your steadfast care.

We rejoice in Jesus Christ, the only one eternally begotten by you, who was born of your servant Mary and shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it. We remember Christ's death, we celebrate Christ's resurrection, and in the beloved community of your church, we await Christ's return at the end of history.

We take courage from the abiding praise of men, women, and persons of faith in every

age who stand as witnesses to your love and justice. With all the prophets, martyrs, and saints and with all the company of heaven, we glorify you singing...

People (Singing the Sanctus Hymn #795)

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.

Hosannah, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

Pastor: We remember that on the night He was betrayed and deserted, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my

body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, Jesus also took the cup after supper, and gave thanks for it, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

People: By eating this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ’s death, we celebrate Christ’s resurrection, and we await Christ’s coming again.

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, we ask you to meet us where we are today in your mercy; we ask you to bless this bread and this cup and all of us with the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Through this meal, make us the body of Christ, your church, your servant people, that we may be salt, light, and leaven in this world that you so deeply love.

Receiving the Elements

Pastor: Through the broken bread, we participate in the body of Christ. Through the cup of blessing, we participate in the new life that Christ gives. The gifts of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

(At this time our ushers will bring the bread representing the body of Christ into the congregation. If you prefer to receive individually wrapped elements, there will be wrapped communion cups on this tray that have both the bread and juice.)

Pastor: The body of Christ. (At this time, partake of the bread.)

Pastor: The blood of Christ. (At this time partake of the juice.)

Pastor: Let us join together in prayer.

People: As one body, we lament with those who lament. We hope with those who hope. We live with suffering. We live with beauty. Let us go from this table as a renewed community, doing

the radical work of Jesus that calls us to live justice-making lives of faith. We are followers of God's way. We give thanks and praise! Amen!

Announcements

Jeff Rissell

Offering

Offertory "Veni Emmanuel" Andrew Moore

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*Doxology 

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen.

* **Hymn #110** "Now Bless the God of Israel"

* Commission and Blessing

***Threefold Amen**

Amen, Amen, Amen

Now Bless the God of Israel

Ruth Duck, 1985

1. Now bless the God of Is-ra-el,
who comes in love and power,
who rais-es from the roy-al house
de-liv-erance in this hour.
Through ho-ly proph-ets God has sworn
to free us from a-larm,
to save us from the heav-y hand
of all who wish us harm.
2. Re-mem-ber-ing the cov-e-nant,
God res-cues us from fear,
that we might serve in hol-i-ness
and peace from year to year;
And you, my child, shall go be-fore
to preach, to proph-e-sy,
that all may know the ten-der love,
the grace of God most high.
3. In ten-der mer-cy, God will send
the day-spring from on high,

Music to go forth: "Lift Up Your Heads"

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***The Altar flowers are in honor of St.
John's UCC!***

Special Announcements/Reminders:

You can give ELECTRONICALLY from your mobile device using the VancoMobile app. You can download this app from the Apple and Google App stores. The church's name is - stjohnsuccallentown - exactly as shown. You can also give on our homepage www.stjohnsuccallentown.org by clicking on the "Donate" button.

In emergencies, please use exits found to the left and right of the altar, to the right of the front pew, and at the rear of the sanctuary. Follow **EXIT** signs.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

God is still speaking, ...

Serving St. John's...

Rev. Becky Sausser.....Pastor
Elda Pittre.....Administrative Assistant
Lois Mease... Music Director and Organist
April Riddick.....Custodian
Jim Saylor.....Sunday Sexton

And too many volunteers to list!

Office Hours

Sunday: 9am-2pm

Monday-Thursday: 9am-3:30pm

Closed on Fridays and Saturdays