

**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**

**January 4, 2026 11:00am**

**Tower Chimes Janet Cook**

**Music to Gather: Prelude on “Dix”  
Lani Smith**

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# Welcome

## **\*Call to Worship from Ministry Matters**

One: The Magi waited and watched,  
knowing something wondrous would be  
happening.

**All: We waited for the birth of Jesus; now  
something wondrous is about to take  
root.**

One: The darkness that invaded all lives  
was banished by the light of that star.

**All: The darkness that surrounds us is  
gone!**

One: Let us celebrate the bright shining of  
God's love in our lives.

**All: Let us become those who will bring  
the light of God's love to others. AMEN.**

**Hymn #157....."Brightest and Best"**

Reginald Heber, 1811; alt.

1. Bright-est and best of the stars of the morn-ing,  
dawn on our mid-night and lend us your aid.  
Star of the East the ho-ri-zon a-dorn-ing,  
guide where our in-fant Re-deem-er is laid.
2. Cold on the cra-dle the dew-drops are shin-ing,  
God's ho-ly Child with the beasts of the stall;  
An-gels a-dore while this ba-by lies sleep-ing,  
Mak-er and Mon-arch and Sav-ior of all.
3. Shall we not of-fer our cost-ly de-vo-tion,  
fra-grance of E-dom and of-ferings di-vine,  
Gems of the moun-tain and pearls of the o-cean,  
myrrh from the for-est or gold from the mine?
4. Vain-ly we of-fer each am-ple ob-la-tion,  
vain-ly with gifts would we fa-vor se-cure;  
Rich-er by far is the heart's ad-o-ra-tion,  
dear-er to God are the prayers of the poor.

Matt. 2:9–11; Luke 2:10–14

## Profession of Faith

One: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here! Today we celebrate the epiphany and remember that the Holy Spirit is our guide and advocate.

**All: Today we gather in this beloved community to celebrate that the miracle of Christ's birth was revealed to us. Like the wisemen followed a star, we were guided to this relationship with Christ through faith and by the example of incredible representatives of God's love. We take comfort in knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us, serving as our advocate and guide. Thank you, Lord Jesus!**  
**Amen!**

## Confession Response Hymn #159, v 2

**Led by the star, the Magi sped  
To that lowly manger bed,**

There to bend the knee before  
One whom heaven and earth adore;  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek your mercy seat.

## Assurance of Grace

One: Beloved community, let us continue our celebration as we remember the day that the good news of great joy was shared with the whole world!

**All: “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.”      Romans 8:9**

# Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son  
and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the  
beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end, Amen, Amen.**

Scriptures

Jeff Rissell

Reading 1: Matthew 2:1-12 (p 777-778)

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: “Epiphany” Rev. Becky Sausser

**Hymn #584..“I Am the Light of the World”**

*(Note: Ushers will collect “Prayer Cards” during this time. Prayer cards are in the pews.)*

## I Am the Light of the World

584

Jim Strathdee, 1969; rev. 1981

In response to a Christmas poem by Howard Thurman

*Refrain:*

“I am the light of the world!  
You peo-ple come and fol-low me!”  
If you fol-low and love you’ll learn the mys-ter-y  
of what you were meant to do and be.

1. When the song of the an-gels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the sag-es and the shep-herds have found their way home,  
the work of Christ-mas is be-gun:

*Refrain:*

2. To find the lost and lone-ly one,  
to heal the bro-ken soul with love,  
To feed the hun-gry chil-dren with warmth and good food,  
To feel the earth be-low, the sky a-bove!

*Refrain:*

3. To free the pris-oner from all chains,  
to make the pow-er-ful care,  
To re-build the na-tions with strength of good will,  
to see all God’s chil-dren ev-ery-where!

*Refrain:*

4. To bring hope to ev-ery task you do,  
to dance at a ba-by's new birth,  
To make mu-sic in an old per-son's heart,  
and sing to the col-ors of the earth!

*Refrain:*

John 8:12

## Morning Prayer & 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 evil. For  
thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## Prayer Response ♫ Hymn #508 Verse 1

**Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,  
Uttered or unexpressed;  
The motion of a hidden fire  
That trembles in the breast.**

**Chancel Choir     “Three Wise Kings”**

**Douglas E. Wagner   Copyright 1977**

**Choristers Guild**

# **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

“Kings of Orient”

Noel Rawthorne

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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 #148.....“What Child Is This”**

**\* Commission and Blessing**

**\* Threefold Amen**

*Amen, Amen, Amen*

**Music to Go Forth**

“I Saw Three Ships” Richard Proulx

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William C. Dix, 1865; alt.

1. What child is this, who, laid to rest,  
on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
Whom an-gels greet with an-thems sweet  
while shep-herds watch are keep-ing?  
This, this, the an-gels sing,  
is Christ, God's ho-ly of-fer-ing;  
Haste, haste your praise to bring  
the babe, the child of Mar-y!
  
2. Why lies the Child in man-ger bare  
where ox and ass are feed-ing?  
Give heed, draw near; for sin-ners here  
the si-lent Word is plead-ing.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,  
the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
the babe, the child of Mar-y!
  
3. Bring gifts of in-cense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, join in ju-bi-la-tion;  
The Ho-ly Child, though meek and mild,  
has come with God's sal-va-tion.  
Raise, raise the song on high,  
the moth-er sings her lul-la-by;  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born,  
the babe, the child of Mar-y!

Luke 2:7–14, 25–32; Matt. 2:11; John 1:14; John 19:16b–18, 34

***The Altar flowers are in memory of our daughter, Valerie, on what would have been her 57th birthday, Jan 4. By Dick and Jeanette Schmoyer.***

**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](http://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  
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-3pm

Closed on Fridays and Saturdays

