

December 20, 2021

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

May the Peace of Christ be yours as we celebrate his birth!

Christmas Eve is coming quickly. These are the offerings for worship at St. Paul that night:

5:00-7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Open House. We will have pre-recorded music (from our own musicians) and readings. Pastor Becky will provide Quiet Communion. The Open House format allows you to attend for any length of time that works for you and your family.

11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight/Communion Worship. We will worship both in the sanctuary and via Facebook Live at 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve. All are welcome.

As 2021 nears its end, we offer a gentle reminder about your end-of-year giving. We ask that your 2021 financial support arrive at the church office by noon on Tuesday, December 28 so it can be counted and recorded. Thank you for your ongoing generosity.

**Pastor Becky will be on vacation beginning December 25. She will return to the church office on Monday, January 3. She will not answer her phone while she is away, so please contact the church office if you are in need of immediate pastoral care. Thank you for your understanding.**

We end with a reminder about Covid19 transmissions. Incidences of positive cases are going up in our congregation and community. **If you have been in contact with someone who either tests positive for Covid19 or have been in contact with someone who soon after you've been with them tests positive, you need to quarantine yourself from St. Paul Church, its building, and its staff.** It is our goal to keep one another (and our neighbors) as healthy as possible. What's more, if essential staff become infected, we will be forced to shut down worship, weekly mailers, and all programs for two weeks. We thank you for your attention and care. We know it is difficult to stay home. Isolation is hard. And yet, it is our Christian calling to care for one another in the best way possible.

We thank you for your faithfulness. We thank you for your generosity. We thank you for your love for God and neighbor.

Blessings,



Roland Dicke    Myra Hanenkratt    Rev. Becky Erb Strang  
Council President    Council VP    Senior Pastor

## Financial Information as of December 20, 2021

### Operating Fund

Beg. Balance \$0.00  
Giving Income \$4,004.69 (weekly)  
Endowment Transfers \$25,672.00(ytd)  
Income \$299,472.62 (ytd)  
Expenses \$296,808.25 (ytd)  
Balance \$2,664.37(ytd)

### Building Maint & Property Care

Beg. Balance \$73,644.37  
Income \$47,694.50 (ytd)  
Endowment Income \$3,720.37(ytd)  
Expenses \$89,235.88 (ytd)  
Balance \$35,823.36 (ytd)

### Local Aid

Beg. Balance \$6,250.20  
Income \$26,121.15 (ytd)  
Expenses \$21,267.31(ytd)  
Balance \$11,104.04 (ytd)  
BP Beg Balance \$7,881.15

Bless Pantry Inc. \$30,875.88(ytd)

Bless Pantry Ex. \$15,837.16(ytd)

BP Balance \$22,919.87

### Our Church Wider Mission

Pledge \$25,000.00  
Income \$213.00(weekly)  
Income \$24,890.50 (ytd)

### Project of the Year

Income \$29.00(weekly)  
Balance \$4,708.00(ytd)

**December 19 Altar Flowers** were inadvertently listed incorrectly. They were given in loving memory of Loved Ones by the Dan Nedderman Family. We apologize for this mistake.

### E-Giving @ St. Paul

**Online** – Make a donation on our website: [stpaulnb.org](http://stpaulnb.org)

**Text** – Make a donation to our Number: 833-308-0048

**How To Give by Text (Example - my amount for the example is \$25 (minimum amount is \$5.00))**

- For general fund giving: Send 25 space gl (hit send)
- For building & property fund giving: Send 25 space bp (hit send)
- For Blessing Pantry: Send 25 space pantry (hit send)
- For project of the year giving: Send 25 space poy (hit send)

### Once a text amount is sent:

**Registration Link-** Sent via text the first time a donation is made. Thank you! Please visit (link) to register.

**Donation Confirm-** Sent via text each time a donation is made.



A Voice in the Wilderness

December 26, 2021

Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions.



**Pray:** Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

**God of proclamation, you sent John into the world to prepare the way for Jesus. Jesus prepared the mission for us. Give us courage to carry the mantle and proclaim your word to the world. Amen.**



**Read:** Read the key verse from Sunday's reading.

*<sup>23</sup>He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. (John 1:23)*



**Reflect:** Reflect on the scripture summary.

**John had an important role to play—to prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah, to enter the scene.**



**Connect:** Connect in conversation with others in your household.

**What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?**

**There are so many competing voices in our world. In what ways do celebrities (entertainers, sports figures, politicians, etc.) compete to be heard? How does their contending affect the rest of us? How do you know whose voice to listen to?**

**What was it like to live as a prophet in Jesus' day? If you were a prophet today, what would you eat? What would you wear? How would you make your voice heard?**

**For the littles: Are you more loud or quiet?**



**Bless:** Close your devotion with a blessing.

**May God be the loudest voice in your head. Amen.**



**Do:** By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

**Tune out the voices of the world this week. Limit your exposure to social media, TV, and the internet. Immerse yourself in positivity, and in God's word.**



**Go Deeper:** Go to [clergystuff.com/daily-devotions](http://clergystuff.com/daily-devotions) for devotions on the daily readings.

Sunday, John 1:19-34, A Voice in the Wilderness

Monday, Psalm 32:1-2, The Joy of Forgiveness

Tuesday, Psalm 32:3-4, The Joy of Forgiveness

Wednesday, Psalm 32:5, The Joy of Forgiveness

Thursday, Psalm 32:6-7, The Joy of Forgiveness

Friday, Psalm 32:8-9, The Joy of Forgiveness

Saturday, Psalm 32:10-11, The Joy of Forgiveness



Birth of Jesus  
(Christmas Eve)

December 24, 2021

Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions.



**Pray:** Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

**God the parent of the Christ child, today we celebrate the birth of the king! Fill us with joy and hope, as Jesus' birth offers new life for all! Amen.**



**Read:** Read the key verse from Sunday's reading.

*'And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)*



**Reflect:** Reflect on the scripture summary.

**Jesus was born into the family of David at a time when David's family was gathered for a census. His birth brought people together and continues to do so.**



**Connect:** Connect in conversation with others in your household.

**What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?**

**What emotions does Christmas evoke in you at this time of the year? How can you turn positive emotions into action for the benefit of others? If the holidays are hard for you, who could you turn to for help getting through this tough time?**

**For the littles: What smells, sights, sounds, and emotions can you imagine at Jesus' birth?**



**Bless:** Close your devotion with a blessing.

**May God bless you now and forever. Amen.**



**Do:** By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

**Return to the store one gift that is given to you this Christmas. Use the money to bless someone who has little. If you are the recipient of aid this Christmas, accept the help with gratitude and your head held high. It takes courage to accept help from others.**



**Go Deeper:** Go to [clergystuff.com/daily-devotions](http://clergystuff.com/daily-devotions) for devotions on the daily readings.

Friday, Luke 2:1-20, Birth of Jesus

Saturday, Luke 1:26-38, Birth of Jesus Foretold



Shepherds Visit  
(Christmas Day)

December 25, 2021

Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions.



**Pray:** Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

**Proud parent God, your son, Jesus, is certainly a reason to celebrate! We rejoice with you the birth of your son, and we recognize the birth is for us, too! Amen.**



**Read:** Read the key verse from Sunday's reading.

*"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15)*



**Reflect:** Reflect on the scripture summary.

**Jesus' proud parent offered the most extravagant birth announcement—this baby is for everyone to celebrate!**



**Connect:** Connect in conversation with others in your household.

**What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?**

**Tell of a time God's blessing interrupted the flow of your life.**

**What might the shepherds and Mary have talked about as they cooed over the baby Jesus?**

**For the littles: What would you say to the baby Jesus at the manger?**



**Bless:** Close your devotion with a blessing.

**May God walk with you every day of your life. Amen.**



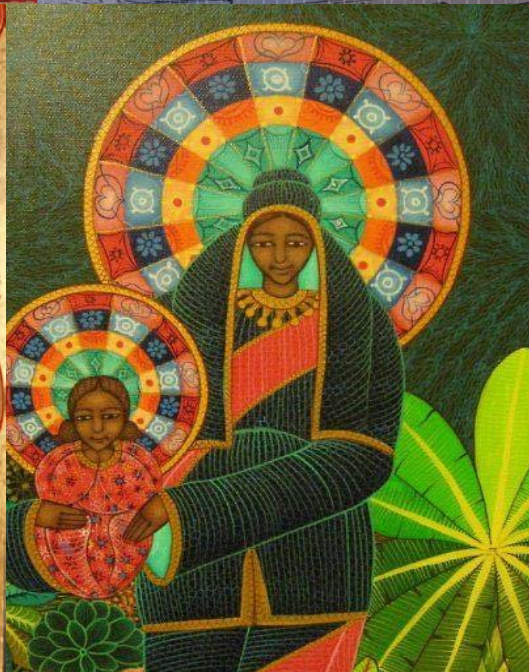
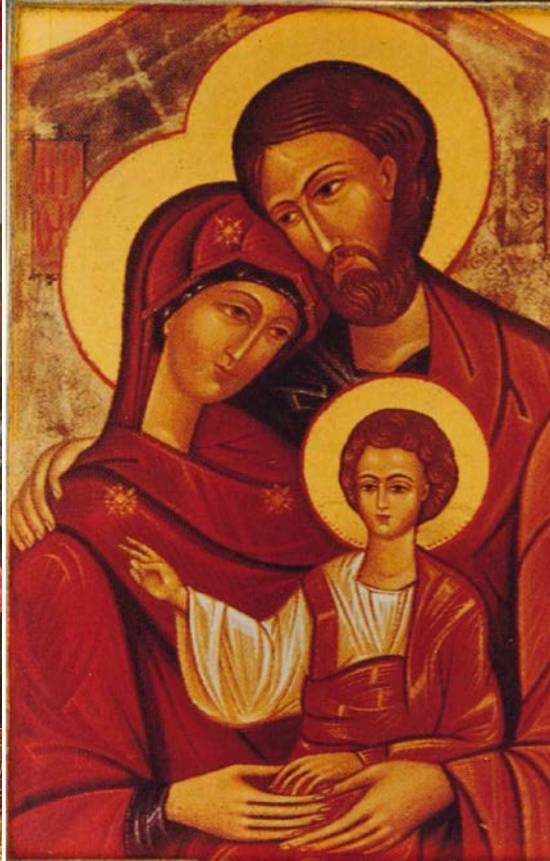
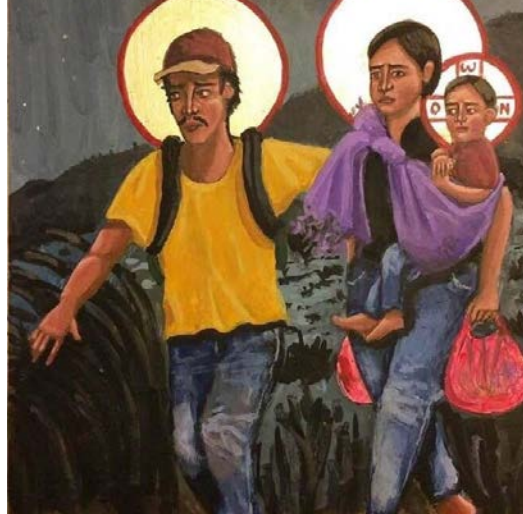
**Do:** By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

**Visit someone who you know will be alone this Christmas.** (Perhaps someone in a nursing home, who cannot travel, or who is hospitalized.) Bring them Christmas cookies this afternoon and stay for a brief visit.



**Go Deeper:** Go to [clergystuff.com/daily-devotions](http://clergystuff.com/daily-devotions) for devotions on the daily readings.

Saturday, Luke 1:26-38, Birth of Jesus Foretold



## **St. Paul United Church of Christ**

119 North Franklin Street

New Bremen, Ohio 45869

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Email [stpaulnb@nktelco.net](mailto:stpaulnb@nktelco.net) or [stpaulnb@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulnb@gmail.com)

Visit our website at <https://stpaulnb.org>

Like and follow our page St. Paul United Church of Christ – New Bremen, Ohio on Facebook

Rev. Becky Strang-Senior Pastor

Roland Dicke-Council President

### **Welcome to St. Paul UCC, we are glad you are here!!**

Whether you are worshipping online or in person, this is the house of the Lord, and all are welcome to enter and praise our loving Creator.

May God's love fill you with kindness, mercy and joy.

**December 24, 2021**

**Christmas Eve**

### **Worship Leaders**

Ministers

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Roland Dicke

Connie O'Neill

Myra Hanenkratt/Megan & Chad Whetstone

The Congregation

Senior Pastor

Liturgist

Organist

Advent Candle

PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF CANDLES: You are invited to light a candle or candles at home in preparation for worship.

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Come and gather, for the Christ Child has been born!

**People: We celebrate Jesus' birth along with choirs of angels,**

Leader: Shepherds and bystanders,  
**People: Friend and family! Welcome!**

WELCOME CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful

verses 1 & 2

CHRISTMAS

O Come, All Ye Faithful

182

G Am G D F# G D F# G C G D D Em

1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O  
 2 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,  
 3 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,

A7 E D A D G B D F# G D A A7 D

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;  
 sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven - a - bove;  
 Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

G B Am G D7 A G D F# G Em Am C D

come and be - hold God, him, born the King of an - gels;  
 glo - ry to the Fa - ther, all glo - ry in the high - est;  
 Word of the now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

Refrain

G D G D7 G D G D7 G D

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

G D7 A G D F# A7 E D G B C G D D G

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord.

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: We confess our sins before God and one another.

## SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

## UNISON CONFESSION OF SIN

**Forgiving God, these past two years have been extremely challenging. We have not always risen to the occasion as we might. Sometimes we hid when we should have reached out. Sometimes we have lashed out when we should have calmed down. Forgive us for all that we have done and failed to do, and restore us by your grace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Baby King. Amen.**

## WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Leader: God does not remember our sin. God forgives us and makes us new daily. Receive God's merciful forgiveness, and celebrate all that God has given to us: restoration, redemption and new life.

**People: Thanks be to God tonight and always!**

## SUNG RESPONSE

### *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some phrases marked with slurs and ties. The lyrics are: 'Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!'.

## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Reader One: The shepherds watched their flocks in the field by night.

*Reader Two: Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood before them and the shepherds were terrified at the glory shining all around.*

Reader One: But the angel brought good news...

*Reader Two: A message of new hope, new peace, new love, new joy to be given...*

Reader One (light the Christ candle): Behold, today a sign has been given; a Son has been given:

*Reader Two: A Baby wrapped in bands of cloth, lying in a manger. Hope, peace, love and joy have taken on flesh and live among us, forever!*



## CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray. Holy and loving God, on this sacred night we lift up to you in prayer this congregation, our community, our nation and the world. We lift up to you all who are in need and alone. SILENCE

Leader: On this holy night, we behold your glory made flesh in a tiny baby. Show us the ways in which you favor and lift up the meek and lowly for your mighty purposes, and use us also, despite outward appearance or weakness. Precious God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: On this holy night, all creation awaits the fulfillment of your peace on earth—a true and lasting peace which binds up all who have had their hearts broken by war, disease, suffering and injustice. Break into our world with your uncommon grace. Precious God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: On this holy night, angels hushed the stunned herdsmen with words of assurance, telling them not to be afraid. So, let us lay aside our fear and disbelief at what you are asking us to do, and to trust that your promises are coming to fruition through us. Precious God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: On this holy night, a mother comforted her newborn child. Comfort us as a parent would, when we cry out in pain, want, or grief. Heal us and hold us close. Heal our neighbors. Heal those who are strangers to us. Heal those we would call our enemies. Precious God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: On this holy night, faithful caretakers brought your son into the world. Add us also to the long line of saints who heard your word and followed, risking the loss of safety, comfort, and reputation. Precious God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: On this holy night, we let go of our hearts' concerns and place them in your loving and capable hands. Bless us, O God, and keep us in your grace. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. (sung to the tune of *Away in a Manger*)

**Creator in heaven, all praise to your name!**

**Your kingdom among us, your will done the same.**

**By mortals and angels, come, Lord, reign alone!**

**O hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for, provide it each day**

**As we forgive others, our sins take away.**

**In times of temptation, to lead us be near.**

**From evil deliver your children most dear.**

**For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign;**

**And yours is the glory, all things you maintain**

**To you be the glory, resounding again**

**From all of creation, forever! Amen!**

CHRISTMAS EVE SCRIPTURE LESSON: Luke 2:1-20 (The Message)

*About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant.*

*<sup>6-7</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel.*

*<sup>8-12</sup> There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."*

*<sup>13-14</sup> At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: Glory to God in the heavenly heights,*

*Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.*

*15-18 As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.*

*19-20 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!*

## RESPONSE

Leader: The word of God for the people of God!

**People: God is still speaking! Thanks be to God!**

## SERMON

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

This past Sunday in worship, I told the story of how a little girl, scared of the potential monsters in her bedroom at night, was reassured by her mother that God was with her. Without missing a beat, the young girl basically said, "That's nice, but I would like someone with a little skin."

Dear ones, on Christmas Eve, that is exactly the message. God comes to us in human form. Enfleshed. Incarnate. An itty bitty baby with all the wonder and joy of a newborn.

This is good news for us tonight. Many of us have been isolated for nearly two years. Many of us have known grief and sorrow. Many of us are fearful. Many of us have lost our anchors and moorings. Christmas bursts into our lives and into the pandemic to remind us that God's love for us is so real, so tangible, that he became human. Christmas breaks open our isolation, grief and sorrow and offers us a new way: a deep interrelatedness/interconnectedness because God comes to us as Baby Jesus.

We arrive at worship on this Holy Night expecting comfort and familiarity. We know the Christmas Story inside and out. We come to hear the familiar text from the Gospel of Luke and to sing Silent Night with our candles raised.

Many of us have shown up at this service weary—the weeks leading up to Christmas have been filled with obligations and expectations. For some of us, our goal this evening is to not fall asleep **too noticeably** during the sermon. 😊

But tonight I'm going to take us in a different direction. I'm asking you to try on a new pair of glasses with sharper lenses for tonight's birth miracle. I'm asking you to set aside what you think you know about Christmas in order to hear the birth of the Christ Child in a new way.

About five years ago, the Rev. Ian Paul of the United Kingdom wrote a blog post before Christmas arguing that we English-speaking Christians have been misreading the Christmas story because of a fundamental mistranslation from the original Greek to English.

I invite you to hear me out. Rev Paul argues that Jesus was probably NOT born in a stable—isolated and alone with only his parents, farm animals and shepherds as witnesses. For centuries, we have mistranslated the story and in the misreading we have banked our Christmas theology and messages: that, from the very beginning, Jesus' birth in an isolated stable put him on the margins of society.

Ian Paul points to the Greek word *kataluma* which is often translated into English as “inn.” And yet, it actually translates as a guest room in a home. Interestingly, the same word *kataluma* is used near the end of Jesus' life to describe the upper room (guest room?) where he and his disciples had the Last Supper. If we were to follow the Greek, “inn” would be *pandocheion*—a place where strangers were welcomed.

This might sound a bit knit-picky on Christmas Eve, but it is vitally important to our understanding of Jesus' birth AND his role in our lives. Here's the deal: we know from the Gospel of Luke that Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem for a census since Joseph descended from King David. Joseph was required by law to return to the hometown of his ancestors.

In other words, Joseph was going home. He and his very pregnant wife were traveling to his ancestral home where presumably many others of David's lineage both lived AND traveled to the sleepy hillside village for the census. In all likelihood, Joseph and Mary would have not sought out a *pandocheion*—an inn—to spend the night. Instead, they would have stayed with relatives.

We also know this about first century Judaism: hospitality was of upmost importance. Joseph and his young wife would have been welcomed into a home of his kinsfolk—even if they were not closely related. When families poured into Bethlehem for the census, we can conclude that the Bethlehem villagers who traced their bloodlines to King David would have thrown open their front doors to welcome any of their kin needing a place to stay.

Here's something cool: First century Palestinian homes were built for family, guests, AND their livestock. The family would live together in a single room that had an area for animals to be brought in at night. Most of these homes had a separate room for guests or room on the roof for guests. The family living area/room had space for both humans and animals alike.

According to Rev. Paul, this means that Jesus would **not** have been born in a detached stable, but in the lower floor of a peasant house, where the animals were kept and where the family lived and ate. Jesus would have been born in the living room (which, by the way, probably also held the family's livestock).

When our English translation says there was no room in the inn or hostel, it is really saying there was no space in the guest room. We can presume that other relatives had claimed the guest room or guest roof. Mary may very well have given birth surrounded by relatives and support. Add the noise of the goats, sheep and chickens and suddenly our vision of Jesus' birth shifts radically.

This argument is really nothing new. Way back in 1584, Spanish priest Francisco Sanchez de las Brozas argued the exact same thing. The difference between now and then is that man was denounced to the Inquisition for his beliefs. Yikes!

So what does all this mean for us on Christmas Eve 2021? This I believe: in the midst of these years of isolation and sickness, Jesus is born right in our living rooms! We don't have to go out to the barn to greet the Christ Child. Jesus is with us tonight: in our sanctuary and in our homes, breaking into our melancholy, our sorrow, and our isolation to remind us that we are not alone.

What's more, God is born among us this night as a tiny baby. He probably both cried and cooed. Like all newborns, Jesus most likely, by

his very presence, became the center of attention in the living room that holy night.

It's the same for us now: Jesus needs to be at the very center of our attention, at the very center of our lives. We cannot, must not, push him outside to the barn or shed or outbuilding. He is born right here in our midst, demanding that we pay attention to what God has done for us in Jesus.

For unto us is born a Savior who is the Messiah, who is the Christ, who is the Lord—right here, right now and for always. For this, we lift up our voices in song! Amen.

CAROL OF RESPONSE *Joy to the World* verses 1 & 4

CHRISTMAS

179

*Joy to the World!*

D Em G D A A7 D D# F# G A

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth re - ceive her  
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; let all their songs em -  
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions

D G D D G D D

King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,  
 play; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow  
 prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,

D A

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his  
 (1) and heaven and na - ture sing,

A7 D G D D Em G D A A7 D

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the sound - ing joy.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his found.  
 heaven and na - ture sing, love.

# WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: Let us give as we are able on this holy night: joyfully and generously!

## OFFERING CAROL

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "What can I offer poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what can I offer: all of my heart." The guitar chords are indicated above the vocal line.

Chords: F, E/A, F, Dsus, Dm, Gm/Bb, Dm7/A, Gm7, C7, F, E/A, F, Dsus, Dm, Gm7/Bb, C7, F, Bb/D, F, Bb/D, F7/C, Bb, Dm, E/A, Am, Gm/Bb, Bbmaj7, C, F, E/A, F, Dsus, Dm, Gm7/Bb, C7, F.

WORDS: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)  
MUSIC: Gustav T. Holst (1874-1934)

CRANHAM  
Irregular

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

**Birth God, you have given Jesus as a gift to the world. We return to you some of what you have given, so that the whole world may know God's grace, forgiveness and love. Receive these gifts and use them to your glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## A SUNG COMMUNION LITURGY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

(text by the Rev. Beth Quick, 2013; Sung to the tune of Greensleeves)

Em  $\frac{D}{F\#}$  G D Em  $\frac{Am}{C}$  B

Lift up your hearts unto the Lord. Sing unto God your praises.  
 God called us from age to age through messengers and prophets,  
 The Word-made-flesh, Emmanuel; God, come to live among us!  
 And on the night he was betrayed. Christ took the bread and broke it.  
 He took the cup and raised it up. "My life I pour out for you.  
 Pour out your Spirit, Holy God, upon these gifts, and bless them.

Em  $\frac{D}{F\#}$  G D Em Am B B7 Esus Em

We gather on this holy night. We gather at this table.  
 When we would not our hearts give way, the Word-made-flesh God sent us.  
 He preached good news: the kingdom come! A light shone in the darkness.  
 Thanking God, he shared this gift. "Remember, when you eat it!  
 From sin, set free! Remember me! We covenant anew."  
 Make them for us the Bread of Life, the Cup of our Salvation!

*Refrain*  
 Bm G D Em  $\frac{Am}{C}$  B

Lift, lift your hearts up high! Sing praise to God and glorify!  
 This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
 This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through! The Cross be born for me and you.  
 Raise, raise, the song on high! The Virgin sings her lullaby:  
 Raise, raise, the song on high! The Virgin sings her lullaby:

Bm G D Em Am B B7 Esus Em

Praise, praise the Prince of Peace, the Babe, the Son of Mary.  
 Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.  
 Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.  
 Hail! Hail, the Word made flesh; the Babe, the Son of Mary.  
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.  
 Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.



*Lift up your hearts unto the Lord. Sing unto God your praises.  
We gather on this holy night. We gather at this table.  
Lift, lift your hearts up high! Sing praise to God and glorify!  
Praise, praise the Prince of Peace, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*God called us from age to age through messengers and prophets,  
When we would not our hearts give way, the Word-made-flesh God sent us.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*The Word-made-flesh, Emmanuel; God, come to live among us!  
He preached good news: the kingdom come! A light shone in the darkness.  
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*And on the night he was betrayed, Christ took the bread and broke it.  
Thanking God, he shared this gift. "Remember, when you eat it!  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through! The Cross be born for me and you.  
Hail! Hail, the Word made flesh; the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*He took the cup and raised it up. "My life I pour out for you.  
From sin, set free! Remember me! We covenant anew."  
Raise, raise, the song on high! The Virgin sings her lullaby:  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

*Pour out your Spirit, Holy God, upon these gifts, and bless them.  
Make them for us the Bread of Life, the Cup of our Salvation!  
Raise, raise, the song on high! The Virgin sings her lullaby:  
Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.*

## SHARING THE ELEMENTS

### PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

**We give you thanks, O God, that you have come to us through Jesus Christ, both in the midst of time and history in the town of Bethlehem, and in the timeless presence of Christ's Spirit as we receive the gifts of bread and wine. Send us out into the world rejoicing, ready to share your love with the people we meet; through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

# CELEBRATION OF THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

(As we sing the first carol, we invite you to light your Christmas Eve candles if you are worshipping with us at home. In the sanctuary, Pastor Becky will begin the candle lighting from the flame of the Christ candle. The ushers will bring the light to you. Please tip your unlighted candle as you receive the light from your neighbor's candle. Please do not tip the lighted candle!.)

## CAROL FOR LIGHTING CANDLES (seated) *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

CHRISTMAS

### Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

221

G D7 A G B G D A E D# D G C E G B C Bm Am G

1 In - fant ho - ly, in - fant low - ly, for his bed a cat - tle stall;  
2 Flocks were sleep - ing: shep - herds keep - ing vig - il till the morn - ing new

G G B G D7 A G D G C E G B C D G

ox - en low - ing, lit - tle know - ing Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
saw the glo - ry, heard the sto - ry, ti - dings of the Gos - pel true.

G B C Am D Bm Em Am7 D

Swift are wing - ing an - gels sing - ing, no - els ring - ing, tid - ings bring - ing:  
Thus re - joic - ing, free from sor - row, prais - es voic - ing greet the mor - row:

G C E G B Am D Em D C G B C G D D7 G

Christ the babe is Lord of all. Christ the babe is Lord of all.  
Christ the babe was born for you. Christ the babe was born for you.

## OFFERING THE LIGHT

Leader: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light; and there was light." ***As we raise our lights***, we dedicate ourselves to the newness of creation—the new life born among us this night.

Leader: You are the light of the world; a city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor does one light a lamp and hide it under a bushel, but place it on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before others, that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ***As we raise our lights***, we dedicate ourselves to doing the works, which show forth not our glory, but God's glory.

Leader: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What came into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it...And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...full of grace and truth. ***As we raise our lights***, we dedicate ourselves to be bearers of the light, with the confidence and courage that darkness will never overcome the light we share.

CAROL

*Silent Night! Holy Night!*

First verse in German than verses 1 & 2 in English

**Stille Nacht, heil'ge Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht  
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.  
Holder Knab'im lockigen Haar,  
Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh! Schlafe in himmlischer Ruh!**

# Silent Night! Holy Night!

186

B $\flat$  F7 B $\flat$

1 Si - lent night! ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright  
 2 Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Shep-herds quake at the sight,  
 3 Si - lent night! ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light,

E $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$  B $\flat$

'round yon vir - gin moth-er and child; ho - ly in - fant, so ten - der and  
 glo - ries stream from heav-en a - far, heav-en-ly hosts sing al - le - lu -  
 ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing

F7 B $\flat$  B $\flat$ / $\overline{F}$  F F7 B $\flat$

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 ia; Christ, the Sav - ior, is born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.

WORDS: Joseph Mohr (1792-1848); tr. John F. Young (1820-1885)  
 MUSIC: Franz Gruber (1787-1863)

STILLE NACHT  
 Irregular

**BENEDICTION:** Go with God into this night  
 May the Spirit guide your sight  
 Offer love to all you greet  
 Like Christ, see God in all you meet. Amen.

**POSTLUDE**



*2021 Poinsettia  
Memorial and Gifts*

In memory of Robert Wilson by Carol Wilson and Family (1 red)

In memory of Janice Schroer by the Lloyd Schroer Family (1 red)

In memory of Clarence and Esther Schroer by the Lloyd Schroer Family (1 red)

In memory of Leo and Luella Topp by the Lloyd Schroer Family (1 red)

In memory of Shirley Schaefer by Craig and Brenda Sieftring and Family (1 white)

In memory of Barb Snyder by Jeff and Lindsay Quellhorst Family (1 red)

In memory of Ned Niemeyer by Jeff and Lindsay Quellhorst Family (1 red)

In memory of Mervin Quellhorst by Jeff and Lindsay Quellhorst Family (1 red)

In memory of Grandma Kuest, Richard and Irene Quellhorst by Dale and Wilma Quellhorst (1 white)

In memory of Viola and Fred Bruns by Dale and Wilma Quellhorst (1 red)

In memory of Don R. Miller, Rodney Miller and Ralph Plattner by Bev Plattner (1 red)

In memory of Jesse and Verona Miller and Verdella Schaefer and a gift for Dale Schaefer by Bev Plattner (1 red)

In memory of Edgar, Vilma and Edward E. and Mamie Rump and a gift for Mim Donnerberg by Bev Plattner (1 red)

In memory of Raymon, Anna, Eugene and Richard Plattner and a gift for Betty Plattner by Bev Plattner (1 red)

In memory of Loved Ones by Vernon and Julia Paul (1 red)

In memory of Paul and Viola Headapohl by Rob and Diane Paul (1 white)

In memory of Hilgard and Esther Paul by Rob and Diane Paul (1 red)

In memory of Levi Oaks and my parents, Stan and Dorothy Hertenstein by June Oaks (2 red)

In memory of Loved Ones by Cindy and Jerry Newman (1 red)

In memory of Doug Nedderman by Dan and Kathy Nedderman, Bryn and Chris Bright, Brook and Bryce Schmitmeyer, Dana and Keith Bornhorst (1 red)

In memory of Kermit and Katherine Schmieder by Dan and Kathy Nedderman, Bryn and Chris Bright, Brook and Bryce Schmitmeyer, Dana and Keith Bornhorst (1 red)

In memory of Virgil and Loree Nedderman by Dan and Kathy Nedderman, Bryn and Chris Bright, Brook and Bryce Schmitmeyer, Dana and Keith Bornhorst (1 red)

In memory of Robert Wilson by Jim and Kathy Naylor Family (1 white)

In memory of Maurer and Mraz Families by Greg and Cathy Maurer and Family (1 red)

In memory of Kenneth Henschen by Kathy Manbeck (1 white)

In memory of Erin Rammel by Kathy Manbeck (1 red)

In memory of James and Irene Jarvis by the David Jarvis Family (1 white)

In memory of Bud and Louise Hay, Herb, Irene and Doris Jean Imwalle by the Steve and Kris Imwalle Family (1 white)

In memory of Casey Hoelscher, Zac Gossette and Ken Jutte by the Steve and Kris Imwalle Family (1 red)

In memory of Ron Hittepole and Andrea Hittepole by Marlene Hittepole and Family (2 red)

In memory of Linda Bushman by James and Diane Gilberg (1 red)

In memory of Greg Bushman by James and Diane Gilberg (1 red)

In memory of Wilbur and Enola Greber by Ty, Lori, Cooper, Kennedy Fortman (1 red)

In memory of Loved Ones by Burt & Jan Fiser (1 red)

In memory of Don Dicke, Harry Ingram, Herb and Dorothy Berning, Mike Dicke by Lois Dicke and Family (1 red, 1 white)

In loving memory of Angela Lynne Bushman by Dennis Bushman Family (1 red)

In memory of Loved Ones by Dennis Bushman Family (1 red)

In memory of Loved Ones by the Allen Bushman Family (1 red)

*Christmas Decorating Fund Donors*

Allen Bushman Family

Burt and Jan Fiser

Marlene Hittepole Family

Greg and Cathy Maurer Family

Lloyd Schroer Family

James and Diane Gilberg

Ty and Lori Fortman Family

David Jarvis Family

Dale and Wilma Quellhorst

Craig and Brenda Siefring Family

In memory of Tyler James Kuhn, by Grandparents Larry and Ann Kuhn

We would like to express our gratitude to all who have donated to the beautification of our sanctuary by purchasing poinsettias or contributing to the decorating fund. We would also like to remind all who purchased poinsettias that they may be claimed after the 11:00pm Christmas Eve worship, December 26, 28, 29 and 30. The building will be locked December 25, 27 and 31. Thank You!





## **St. Paul United Church of Christ**

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Visit our website at <https://stpaulnb.org>

Like and follow our page St. Paul United Church of Christ – New

Bremen, Ohio on Facebook

Rev. Becky Strang-Senior Pastor

Roland Dicke-Council President

### **Welcome to St. Paul UCC, we are glad you are here!!**

Whether you are worshipping online or in person, this is the house of the Lord, and all are welcome to enter and praise our loving Creator.

May God's love fill you with kindness, mercy and joy.

**December 26, 2021**

**First Sunday after Christmas**

### **Worship Leaders**

Ministers

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Cheyenne Olt

Diane Gilberg

Becky Quellhorst

Jim Strang

The Congregation

Senior Pastor

Guest Worship Leader

Liturgist

Organist

Music Director

PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF CANDLES: You are invited to light a candle or candles at home in preparation for worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

# WELCOME SONG

## No Matter

$\text{♩} = 120$

No mat-ter who, no mat-ter what no mat-ter where you are on the  
jour-ney of life; you're wel-come, wel-come in this place. No mat-ter  
who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the  
jour-ney of life: ac-cept-ed, wel-comed by God's grace. grace.

To verses | Last time, Fine

# CALL TO WORSHIP

(From Kneeling in Bethlehem by Ann Weems. The Westminster Press.)

Leader: Christmas comes every time we see God in other persons.

**People: The human and the holy meet in Bethlehem or in Times Square,**

Leader: For Christmas comes like a golden storm on its way to Jerusalem—determinedly, inevitably...

**People: Even now Christmas comes in the face of hatred and warring—no atrocity too terrible to stop it, no Herod strong enough, no hurt deep enough, no curse shocking enough, no disaster shattering enough.**

Leader: For someone on earth will see the star; someone will hear the angel voices; someone will run to Bethlehem; someone will know peace and goodwill:

**People: The Christ is born!**

# CHRISTMAS CAROL

*Joy to the World*

## Joy to the World!

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth re - ceive her  
 2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; let all their songs em -  
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest the  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions

King; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,  
 ploy; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow  
 prove the glo - ries of his right - eous - ness,

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his  
 (1) and heaven and na - ture sing,

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na - ture sing,

## CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

**Loving God, over these past weeks our worship and praise have focused on what you have done for us in Jesus. Forgive us if we think today that Christmas is over. Prompt us, Holy God, to continue your work of Christmas in our acts of care and compassion that express your love shown in the Christ Child, a love that continues to flow to us, and through us, to all people. Amen.**

## SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

## ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: This is the good news of Jesus Christ. We can stand before God, not through our own goodness, but through God's great kindness to us. Rejoice and be glad. God promises the gift of new life!

**People: Thanks be to God!**

## SUNG RESPONSE

## *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests. There are several fermatas (curved lines) placed over the notes for 'Em-man', 'u-el', and 'Is-ra-el'.

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT

(adapted from <https://sermons4kids.com/joy-of-christmas.html>)

I brought a Christmas gift with me to church today. I'm guessing most of you had presents underneath your Christmas trees. I'm also guessing that those of you who have children and grandchildren in your house may have found that, over the weeks leading to Christmas, the gifts under the trees got mysteriously rearranged.

I heard about a little boy who checked the presents under the tree every day. As he checked to see if any new presents had been added, he grouped the presents together according to the names on the gifts. Then, after he had arranged them, he counted the gifts.

One day when it was almost Christmas, after counting the gifts, the boy discovered that his sister had more gifts under the tree than he did. He became very upset and ran into the kitchen where his mother was preparing supper.

“Katie has more presents under the Christmas tree than I do!” the little boy cried. Then, he turned and ran to his bedroom, closed the door and sat pouting. After that, the little boy did not enjoy the days leading up to Christmas because he was so upset that someone had more gifts than he did.

What that little boy did not understand was that the real joy of Christmas is not how many gifts we receive. Christmas joy comes from sharing what we have with others.

In today’s scripture lesson, we hear of John the Baptist—a man who was sent to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. He told the people to repent/turn away from their sins and to prepare their hearts for the promised Messiah.

In the Gospel of Luke, we hear this: “What then should we do?” the crowd asked. John answered, “The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.” (Luke 3:10-11)

This is the same message we need to hear today. In the United Kingdom, December 26 is Boxing Day. The day after Christmas is set aside to collect food and other necessities for those who are in need. After a day of celebrating the birth of Jesus, December 26 reminds us that we find our joy in sharing with others.

Let us pray: Dear God, help us to learn that it is in giving that we receive the greater gift—the gift of joy. Amen.

CAROL

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

CHRISTMAS

185 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C  $\frac{F}{A}$  F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C  $\frac{F}{A}$  Am Bb2  $\frac{Gm}{Bb}$   $\frac{F}{C}$  C F

1 Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King:  
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Right-eous-ness!

F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C Dm  $\frac{F}{C}$   $\frac{G9}{B}$   $\frac{G7}{B}$  Am  $\frac{G}{B}$  C  $\frac{C}{E}$  Fmaj7 G7 C

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled!"  
late in time be - hold him come, off-spring of the Vir - gin's womb:  
Light and life to all he brings, risen with heal - ing in his wings.

N.C.  $\frac{F}{A}$   $\frac{C7}{E}$  F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C N.C.  $\frac{F}{A}$   $\frac{C7}{E}$  F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C

Joy - ful, all ye na - tions, rise, join the tri - umph of the skies;  
veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty,  
Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

Bb Bbmaj9  $\frac{Gm}{Bb}$  D7 Gm  $\frac{C}{Bb}$   $\frac{F}{A}$  F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C F

with th'an - gel - ic host pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el.  
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

WORDS: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), alt.

MUSIC: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847); adapt. William H. Cummings (1831-1915)

MENDELSSOHN

7.7.7.7.D.

Bb Bbmaj9  $\frac{Gm}{Bb}$  D Gm  $\frac{Gm}{F}$   $\frac{C}{E}$   $\frac{C}{Bb}$   $\frac{F}{A}$  F  $\frac{F}{C}$  C7 F

Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born King."

## PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

**Joys:** The birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

**Concerns:** We are continuing to pray for Carol Mohrman, John Tostrick, Julia Paul, Susan (Topp) Wicker, Greg Maurer, Bart Maurer, Jan Dammeyer, Scott Kuenning, Shannon Shupp, and Dee Schroer.

## PASTORAL PRAYER AND SILENT PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray. Holy and Life-Giving God, we pause today to thank you for the gift of Jesus. We pause today to remember that we experience joy when we share your love, your light, with others. In this holy season, we pray for Christians throughout the world. We pray for our community and our nation. We pray for all who are in need. SILENCE

Leader: God With Us, John came that you might be revealed in Israel. Use us to further his proclamation, one that speaks of holy fire and the blessings of your redemption—one that points not to ourselves, but to the One who created and delivered us. Transforming God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: This world cannot help but be changed at the coming of your Messiah. This is the One for whom we have been waiting. This is the One on whom all our hopes have rested. May this joyous news reach all corners of the earth, through your faithful servants in all places. Transforming God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We have come to the last days of the year, O God. We give you thanks for the blessings of these past twelve months and thanks for bringing us through this year's challenges and grief. Restore your joy within us as the clocks turn over on a new moment, a new year, a new day to rise in praise to you. Transforming God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Heal your wounded people, O God, longing for relief and aching for your presence. We offer prayers for those who are sick, those who are recuperating, those who are grieving, those who are lost or alone. Transforming God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: With John and with all your trailblazing saints, we dare to proclaim one who comes to shake the very foundations of the earth, and



yet gladly gathers us together and calls us brothers and sisters.  
Transforming God,

**People: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: All that we pray, O God, you have heard. All that we need you have provided. Join us in spirit with those for whom we pray, and make us one people, in your holy name. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER. (sung to the tune of *Away in a Manger*)

**Creator in heaven, all praise to your name!**

**Your kingdom among us, your will done the same.**

**By mortals and angels, come, Lord, reign alone!**

**O hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for, provide it each day**

**As we forgive others, our sins take away.**

**In times of temptation, to lead us be near.**

**From evil deliver your children most dear.**

**For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign;**

**And yours is the glory, all things you maintain**

**To you be the glory, resounding again**

**From all of creation, forever! Amen!**

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: John 1:19-34 (The Message)

*When Jews from Jerusalem sent a group of priests and officials to ask John who he was, he was completely honest. He didn't evade the question. He told the plain truth: "I am not the Messiah."*

<sup>21</sup> *They pressed him, "Who, then? Elijah?"*

*"I am not."*

*"The Prophet?"*

*"No."*

<sup>22</sup> *Exasperated, they said, "Who, then? We need an answer for those who sent us. Tell us something—anything!—about yourself."*

<sup>23</sup> *"I'm thunder in the desert: 'Make the road straight for God!' I'm doing what the prophet Isaiah preached."*

*24-25 Those sent to question him were from the Pharisee party. Now they had a question of their own: “If you’re neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, why do you baptize?”*

*26-27 John answered, “I only baptize using water. A person you don’t recognize has taken his stand in your midst. He comes after me, but he is not in second place to me. I’m not even worthy to hold his coat for him.”*

*28 These conversations took place in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing at the time.*

*29-31 The very next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and yelled out, “Here he is, God’s Passover Lamb! He forgives the sins of the world! This is the man I’ve been talking about, ‘the One who comes after me but is really ahead of me.’ I knew nothing about who he was—only this: that my task has been to get Israel ready to recognize him as the God-Revealer. That is why I came here baptizing with water, giving you a good bath and scrubbing sins from your life so you can get a fresh start with God.”*

*32-34 John clinched his witness with this: “I watched the Spirit, like a dove flying down out of the sky, making himself at home in him. I repeat, I know nothing about him except this: The One who authorized me to baptize with water told me, ‘The One on whom you see the Spirit come down and stay, this One will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ That’s exactly what I saw happen, and I’m telling you, there’s no question about it: This is the Son of God.”*

## RESPONSE

Leader: The word of God for the people of God!

**People: God is still speaking! Thanks be to God!**

## SERMON

Cheyenne Olt

## LITANY OF RESPONSE

Leader: We see them sometimes, on city street corners, these modern-day prophets.

**People: They have their big signs emblazoned with bold messages. They shout and yell.**

Leader: The messages are jarring and off-putting.

**People: Something is definitely wrong with them.**

Leader: But once in a while, one of them catches our attention.

**People: And though the big sign is still there, and the noise,**

Leader: We feel compelled to stop and listen.

**People: Maybe, just maybe, there is a message meant just for us.**

Leader: Jarring and off-putting as it may be.

**People: It may be exactly what we need to hear, right now.**

Leader: The messenger is not the Messiah: he tells us.

**People: But then, we ask him, who are you?**

Leader: He quotes the prophet Isaiah: He is a voice in the wilderness.

**People: Preparing the way of the Lord.**

Leader: But we say, the Lord has come. We know it.

**People: Come and gone and returned to earth.**

Leader: We know about Jesus, we say. "What are you preparing?" we ask.

**People: He says, "I am preparing the Lord's coming THIS day, and tomorrow and tomorrow.**

Leader: He says, "The Lord comes again and again, into every human heart.

**People: I am just here to remind you."**

Leader: We feel we don't need a reminder; we know that Christ lives in us always.

**People: But when was the last time we really thought about it?**

Leader: Maybe the wild-eyed prophet has a point.

**People: Maybe we do need a reminder that the Word still dwells among us.**

Leader: Maybe we, too, are called to carry big signs—signs calling for justice and peace.

**People: Signs reminding everyone that God is right here, right now.**

Leader: Right beside us as we care for the poor, the sick, the lonely, the refugee.

**People: And if most people call us wild-eyed prophets, what of it?**

Leader: There is someone in the crowd that we will reach with our message of hope and love,

**People: Someone who, in turn, will take up a big sign and shout:**

Leader: Prepare the way of the Lord! The way of truth and compassion! Now is the time!

**People: And this, right here, is the place. Amen.**

## WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: On Boxing Day, this day after Christmas, let us give joyfully and generously that all might have their needs met.

## OFFERING CAROL *In the Bleak Midwinter*

What can I offer poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;  
yet what can I offer: all of my heart.

WORDS: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)  
MUSIC: Gustav T. Holst (1874-1934)

CRANHAM  
Irregular

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

**Holy God, you sent John into the world to prepare the way for Jesus. His selflessness helped make it possible for Jesus to change the world. Receive these gifts, given with selflessness, to help change the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## CAROL

*Go, Tell It on the Mountain*

## Go, Tell It on the Mountain

*Refrain (Unison)*

F B $\flat$  F Dm Gm  $\frac{B\flat}{C}$  C F  $\frac{B\flat}{C}$

Go, tell it on the moun - tain, o - ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

F B $\flat$  F Dm B $\flat$ 6  $\frac{B\flat}{C}$  C7 F

go, tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born.

*Parts*

F  $\frac{C7}{G}$   $\frac{F}{A}$  F  $\frac{F}{A}$  Gm  $\frac{B\flat}{C}$  C7 F

1 While shep - herds kept their watch - ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep - herds feared and trem - bled when, lo! a - bove the earth  
3 Down in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born,

F  $\frac{Am7}{E}$  Dm7 G G7 C  $\frac{C7}{E}$  *to Refrain*

be - hold, through - out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless - ed Christ - mas morn.

# BENEDICTION

## ADVENT RESPONSE

CHRISTMAS

### 188 Angels We Have Heard on High

*Refrain*

Chords: F, Dm, Gm7, C, Fmaj7, Bb, C/E, C, F/A, C, F, Bb, F/C, C, F, Dm, Gm7, C, Fmaj7, Bb, C/E, C, F/A, C, F, Bb, F/C, C7, F

Lyrics: Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

WORDS and MUSIC: French carol, 18th c.

GLORIA  
7.7.7.7.Ref.

## PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

## POSTLUDE

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Altar Flowers** are given in loving memory of Lois Dicke by the Dennis Dicke Family.

**Attendance**-Daily Devotions-56, December 12-Sunday Worship Online-304, In Person-128, Sunday School-In Person-29, Teachers-7, Splash-11, Confirmation-6, Leaders-13.

**Office/Building Closed**-So our staff can enjoy their Christmas and New Year's holidays, we will be closing the office/building Monday, December 27 and Friday, December 31.

**Sundays in December and January-Worship** will be in person and via Facebook Live at 10:15am. **No Sunday School** December 26 and January 2.

**Daily Devotions**-Please join us, Monday-Thursday at 11:30am, online via Facebook Live. These will air on our Facebook page: St. Paul United Church of Christ-New Bremen, OH.

**2022 Altar Flower Chart** has been posted in the Narthex. Please sign up for the date(s) you would like. Dates available-January 16, 23, 30, February 6, 20, April 3, 24, May 8, 22, 29, June 19, 26, July 3, August 14, 21, 28, September 18, 25, October 23, 30, November 20. You may also call the church office Monday-Friday to sign up. Thank you. Price is \$30.00.

**2022 Council Positions**-2022 will be here before we know it and we still need to fill the **Jr. Deacon** council position. Please prayerfully consider serving. Questions or willing to serve, please contact Roland Dicke or Myra Hanenkratt. Thank you!

**Blessing Pantry**-is accessible during these hours - **Tuesdays 5:30pm-7:30pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays 1:00pm-3:00pm**. The Pantry will be closed Mondays and Fridays. **All Donations Welcome – Blessing Pantry Needs- Diapers (size 1, 2, 4, 5) Baby Wipes, Diaper Cream, Tampons, Bandages, Toilet Paper, and Paper Towels. Thank you!** There is a container outside the East and North Educational Building doors for donations.

**Bulletin Availability-weekly bulletins** are available for download on our website [stpaulnb.org](http://stpaulnb.org). Just click the yellow **BULLETINS** box in the upper right hand corner.

**January/February Upper Rooms**-are available at the East entrance to the education building and on the round tables in the sanctuary. Or please call the church office if you would like one and we will gladly mail one to you.

**Mailbox**-There is a mailbox outside of the East Educational Building door for any correspondence you may have for the church and would like to drop off. Please lift the flap and drop through the slot on the top. Thank you!

### **Calendar-Week of December 26, 2021**

Sunday	10:15am	Worship in person & via Facebook Live
Monday	All Day	Building Closed
	2:00pm-4:00pm	Coffee Shop-New Bremen
Tuesday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live
	5:30pm-7:30pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Wednesday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Thursday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Friday	All Day	Building Closed
Saturday	All Day	Building Closed

**Wednesday night youth/confirmation** are off until Wednesday, January 5, 2022. Hours-**Splash** 5:30pm-6:30pm, **youth dinner** 6:30pm, **Jr/Sr high youth group** 7:00pm-8:00pm, **confirmation** 7:00pm-8:30pm.