

St. Paul United Church of Christ

119 North Franklin Street
New Bremen, Ohio 45869
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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 Erb 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, welcome to this time of worship. We are blessed to have you with us today.

December 11, 2022 Advent Three: Joy

Worship Leaders

Ministers
Rev. Becky Erb Strang
Sunday School/Youth
Katie Brautiguam
Tracy Oldiges
Jim Strang

The Congregation
Senior Pastor
Worship Leaders
Accompanist
Sr. Deacon
Music Director

PRELUDE

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

No Matter



CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Kneeling in Bethlehem by Ann Weems. The Westminster Press. 1980)

Leader: The Christmas spirit is that hope which clings to the hearts of the faithful and announces in the face of any Herod the world can produce,

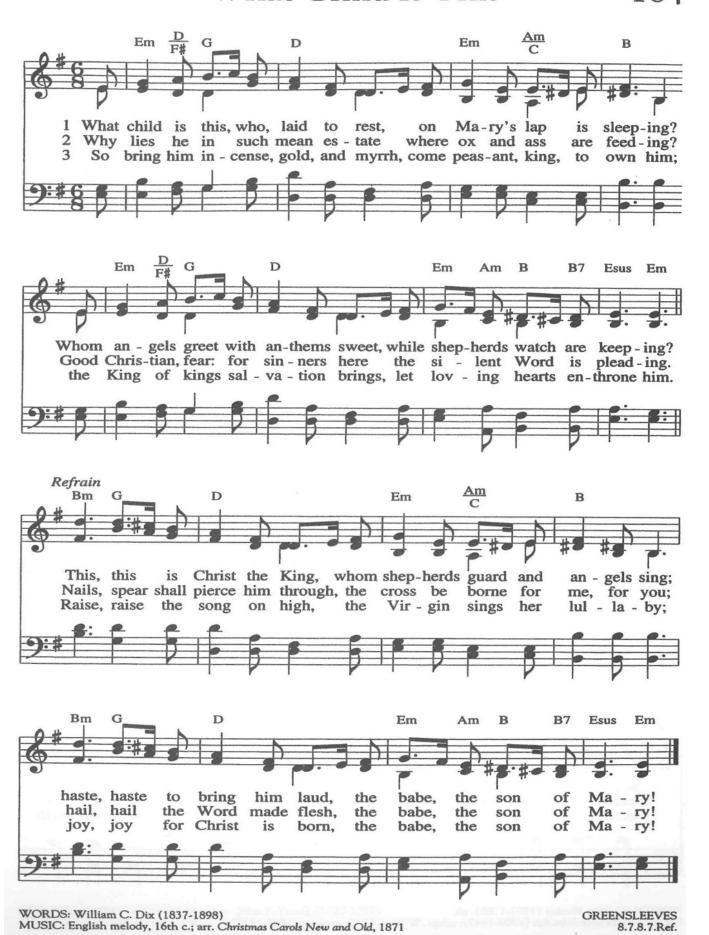
People: And all in the inn doors slammed in our faces,

Leader: And in the dark nights of our souls that with God all things still are possible,

People: That even now unto us a Child is born!

ADVENT CAROL What Child Is This

What Child Is This



INVOCATION (in unison)

With joy in our hearts, O God, we celebrate that you come to us as a tiny baby. We thank you for the gifts of hope, peace, and joy you give to us this season. Be with us as we worship you with love. Amen.



ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: JOY

Leader: Soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus. We worship God with joy in our hearts as we are reminded of the words the angel said on that first Christmas Day, "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people."

Leader: Let us hear John 15:9-11. Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Leader: Today we light three candles. One for hope. One for peace. One for joy. The third candle we light to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light, there is joy, joy that is ours not only at Christmas, but always. Let us pray.

People: Holy One, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. We can feel a joy in our lives and we see it in those around us. Help us to have the joy that does not depend on

earthly happiness, but on you. Help us to be filled with your joy that we may share it with others. Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING CAROL

When God Is a Child

verse 3

ADVENT

When God Is a Child



PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Children leading today's worship.

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Hannah Shellabarger, Monica Bushman, Betty Bushman, Rob Paul, Greg Maurer, Bart Maurer, Karen Vornholt, Shannon Shupp, and Dee Schroer.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND SILENT PRAYER

O God, our hope, we rejoice that you became flesh and made your dwelling among us, even as we long for your return.

As we wait, our hearts overflow with gratitude:

For the beauty of creation...

For your work in the world...

For signs of peace and reconciliation...

For our community and its leaders...

For your work accomplished through your church...

For all these reasons and so much more we give you praise.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son as a helpless child, we also yearn for his return, for the day in which there will be no more sorrow, pain, or death.

Today, we remember in prayer:

The nations of the world...

Those in positions of authority...

The needs of our community...

The cries of the poor, the hungry, the hurting...

St. Paul Church as we live into your call to see Jesus in others...

Hear us now as we lift up to you the prayers of our hearts.

SILENCE

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our source of hope. 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!

ADVENT LESSON: Luke 2:1-20

(NRSV)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ 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 in the guest room.

⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

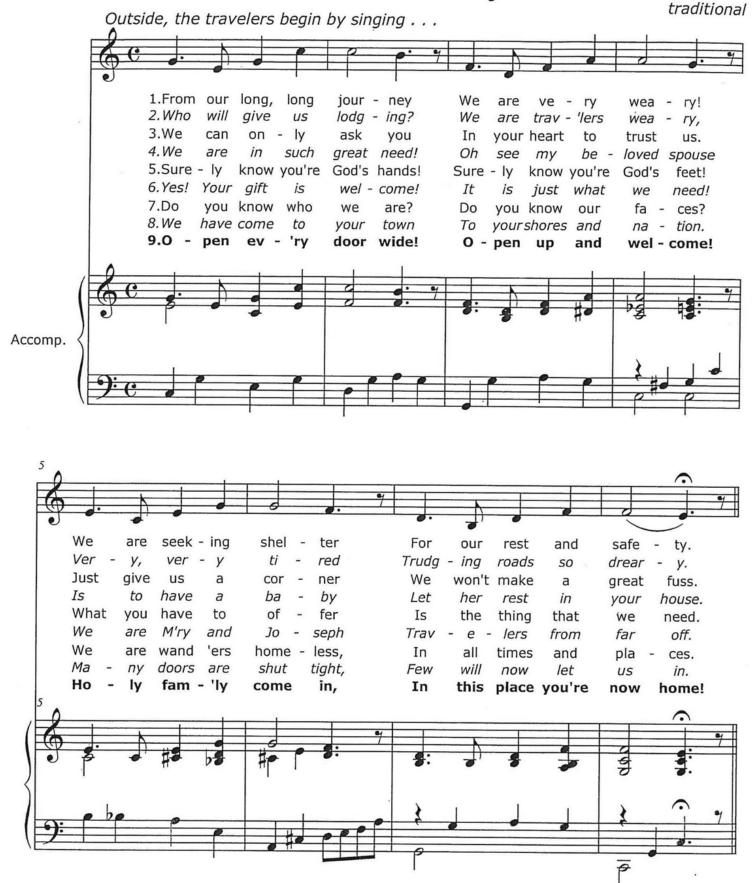
SUNG RESPONSE

Thankful Heart

Paul Williams



The Posadas Song





LAS POSADAS: THE JOURNEY BEGINS

ACT ONE: THE NATIVITY

NARRATOR: Posada is a Spanish word for "inn" or "lodging. The tradition of Las Posadas began in Mexico in 1587 by an Augustinian priest to help introduce the New World to Christianity. The celebration takes place during Advent for 9 days as a way to prepare for the birth of Jesus. The nine days are to commemorate the nine months in which Mary was pregnant with Jesus.

NARRATOR: Traditionally, during each of the "posada" evenings, communities travel from house to house led by Mary and Joseph, asking for lodging. Children often dressed as shepherds and the Magi follow. At many of the homes, Mary and Joseph are rejected—there is no room for them there. There is one host house each night which invites the Holy Family and the accompanying shepherds and Magi in for the celebration. (Mary and Joseph Walk up the center aisle and stand in front of the Innkeeper)

MARY AND JOSEPH: Knock! Knock! Do you have a place for us to stay? Mary is about to have a baby!

INNKEEPER: I have no room for you here!

(Verses 1 and 2 of Las Posadas song are sung) (as we sing, the congregation lifts up their lanterns to give light to the Holy Family) (Holy Family circles to the back of the sanctuary and picks up shepherds.)

NARRATOR: In some villages in Mexico, instead of people playing the part of Mary and Joseph during the "posadas", two children lead the procession of travelers carrying clay figures of Mary and Joseph. On the final evening—Christmas Eve—the travelers gather at church and place the figurines on the altar.

ACT TWO: POINSETTIAS

MARY AND JOSEPH: Knock! Knock! Do you have a place for us to stay? Mary is about to have a baby!

INNKEEPER: I have no room for you here!

(Verses 3 and 4 are sung). (Mary, Joseph, and shepherds circle the sanctuary and pick up angels.)

NARRATOR: There is an old story told about a little Mexican girl on Christmas Eve. She was so poor she had no money to take to offer at the manger in the church. Sadly, she stood outside the church door and watched the other people carrying in their gifts.

NARRATOR: A stone angel statue stood nearby, almost hidden by tall weeds. The little girl started to clear them away. Suddenly, she heard a voice saying, "Take these weeds into the church and the Christ Child will bless them and you."

The girl gathered an armful of weeds. She went into the church and up to the manger. As she walked, the leaves at the top of each stem turned bright red, just as if they had burst into flame.

NARRATOR: Since that time many years ago, these flowers have been grown especially for Christmas. Americans have given the flower the name "Poinsettia" after the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico who first brought the flowers to the U.S. in 1825. But many in Mexico still call these bright red flowers "Fire Flowers of the Holy Night" in memory of the miracle many years ago. (A child places a poinsettia on the altar)

ACT THREE: BELLS

MARY AND JOSEPH: Knock! Knock! Do you have a place for us to stay? Mary is about to have a baby!

INNKEEPER: I have no room for you here! (Verses 5 and 6 are sung). (Holy Family circles around the sanctuary and picks up the Magi.)

NARRATOR: At midnight on Christmas Eve, while the largest Posada is taking place at the church, the church bells ring to announce the birth of Jesus. (Place a bell on the altar)

ACT FOUR: PINATA

MARY AND JOSEPH: Knock! Knock! Do you have a place for us to stay? Mary is about to have a baby!

INNKEEPER: I have no room for you here!

NARRATOR: A piñata is broken each of the evenings of the Posadas at the hosts' houses. The piñata represents the devil who cannot be recognized (so the children wear blindfolds). The children are fighting

against evil with the rod of virtue (the stick to break the piñata). When the evil is broken, God's glory will come down on everyone, as shown by the gifts hidden within the piñata. (Pinata is placed on the altar).

(verses 7 and 8 are sung). (Holy Family circles around the sanctuary and picks up the sheep.)

ACT FIVE: CELEBRATION!

MARY AND JOSEPH: Knock! Knock! Do you have a place for us to stay? Mary is about to have a baby!

INNKEEPER: I have room for you here! Come in! You are welcomed here always!

(Sing last verse of Las Posadas song).

LITANY OF LAS POSADAS (adapted from <u>Gifts of Many Cultures</u> by M. Tirabassi and K. Wonson Eddy; United Church Press; 1995)

Leader: From Revelation 3:20, we hear: Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you and you with me.

People: Who will give lodging to these pilgrims who are weary of traveling roads? We have come exhausted from Nazareth.

Leader: From John 1:10, 12 we hear: He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God.

People: Who are the children of God?

Leader: We find the answer in Romans 8:14. All who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

People: Lodging we will give you with much happiness. Enter Mary! Enter Joseph! Come, Baby Jesus! Come into our hearts! Amen!

WE RESPOND WITH GIFTS

OFFERTORY SENTENCES: In this season of gift giving and gift receiving, let us offer our gifts, our lives, and our hearts to Jesus through the ministries of St. Paul Church. Let us be people of generosity and hope. Amen.



PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Advent God, you have planted us to bear fruit for your kingdom. Receive and bless all that we have put forth. Receive and bless the full portion of all we have become. You have decreed that we will become a sign of your hope. Receive and bless us to be a living sanctuary of hope in this day and in the time to come. Amen.

ADVENT CAROL

like a child

like a child



BENEDICTION (from Liturgy Link; Submitted by Rev. Susannah DeBenedetto, Christ Congregational Church & Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, Takoma Park MD)

Be people of joy.

Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet.

Share joy by seeing the good in each other.

Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.

Share joy by praying for our world.

In this Advent season, we need to see, feel, and share joy.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creations, share joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE Bless Us All



PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: With hope in our hearts and joy on our lips, let us pass the peace of Christ to one another.

POSTLUDE

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are in loving memory of Raymon, Anna, and Eugene Plattner by Bev Plattner

Sundays in December-Worship will be in person and via Facebook Live at 10:15am.

Daily Devotions-Please join us, Monday-Thursday, online via Facebook Live. These will air on our Facebook page: St. Paul United Church of Christ-New Bremen, OH. They will be saved to our Facebook page.

Widow and Widower Luncheon-The next Widow, Widower Luncheon will be at 11:30 am on Wednesday, December 14. All are welcome to come for a time of eating, sharing and laughter. Immanuel Church Fellowship Hall, Kettlersville.

2023 Offering Envelopes-are available in the Southwest corner of the sanctuary in front of the pews. Only members who are currently using their offering envelopes and/or who have indicated they wish to continue to have an offering box have been assigned an offering envelope box for 2023. All other members who are giving online or giving without using envelopes have been assigned a "Giving" number that is not linked to an envelope box. If you do not receive an "Envelope Box" but wish to, please contact the church office 419-629-2502, stpaulnb@nktelco.net or Janet Eilerman. A box number will be assigned and you may pick up your

envelopes in the church office. Thank you, Janet Eilerman Financial Secretary.

Blue Christmas Service-The Advent and Christmas seasons are often very difficult for folk who are mourning the loss of loved ones. To acknowledge these losses and our grief, St. Paul UCC, Immanuel Church, and Gilberg & Hartwig Funeral Home are hosting a Blue Christmas Worship Service on Wednesday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul. The Blue Christmas service will include scripture readings, music, a message and the opportunity for you to light candles in memory of loved ones. Each year, this service has provided comfort and hope for people in our community and beyond. All are welcome.

Christmas Eve at St. Paul Church-Christmas Eve Open House 5:00-7:00 p.m. Open House will include Christmas music, Christmas scriptures, prayer and quiet communion. You are invited to come and stay for as long as you'd like or as short as you need. All are welcome.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service. 11:00 p.m. Christmas carols, scripture, message, lighting of candles, dedication of the Light, Sacrament of Holy Communion. All are welcome.

December Monthly Mission-UCC Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas thank you gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Your continued support and generosity is greatly appreciated.

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-Toilet Paper, Kleenex, Dish Soap, Laundry Detergent, Softener Sheets, Deodorant, Shampoo, Conditioner, Body Wash, Toothpaste, Razors, Shaving Cream, Diapers (sizes N, 5 & 6), Baby Wipes, Tampons, Food Storage Bags, Garbage Bags, Bleach, All Purpose Cleaner, Disinfectants. Thank you! There is a container outside the East and North Educational Building doors for donations.

St. Paul Church Nursery-is fully staffed during the entire Sunday worship service. Please spread the word to let young parents know this is available. If you would like to volunteer in the nursery, please contact Justine Homan, Nursery Champion.

2023 Altar Flower Chart has been posted in the Narthex. Please sign up for the date(s) you would like. You may also call the church office Monday-Thursday to sign up. 2023 altar flower price will increase to \$40.00. Thank you.

Bulletin Availability-weekly bulletins are available for download on our website **stpaulnb.org**. Just click the yellow **BULLETINS** box in the upper right hand corner.

Want to be part of the Prayer Chain? Please contact Prayer Chain Champion, Jeff Paul. The St. Paul Prayer Chain has two formats: texting and email. All are welcome.

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.

Calendar-Week of December 11, 2022

Caleffual-Week of December 11, 2022					
Sunday	9:00am	Sunday School			
-	10:15am Worship-In Person & via Facebook Li				
	11:15am	190 th Anniversary Team			
Monday		Devotions via Facebook Live			
	2:00pm-4:00pm	Coffee Shop @ NB Coffee			
Tuesday		Devotions via Facebook Live			
-	5:30pm-7:30pm	Blessing Pantry Open			
	7:00pm	Church Council			
Wednesday		Devotions via Facebook Live			
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open			
	5:30pm-6:30pm	Splash			
	6:00pm-8:00pm	Jr/Sr High Youth Group			
	& Confirmation-Do Good Restaurant				
	6:00pm	Bell Choir Rehearsal			
	7:00pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal			
Thursday		Devotions via Facebook Live			
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open			
Friday	Noon	Office Closed			

E-Giving @ St. Paul

Online – Make a donation on our website: 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)

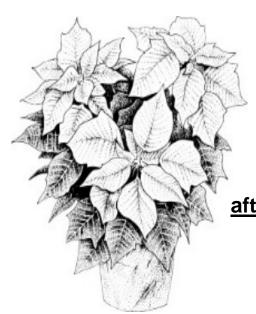
➤ For Blessing Pantry: Send 25 space pantry (hit send)

> 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



It is time to place your orders for the poinsettia plants that grace our sanctuary during the Christmas season. The poinsettias are 8-inch wrapped in foil with a drip pan. We are offering the choice of Red or White and the cost per plant will be \$15.00.

The plants may be picked up after the 10:15am Christmas Day worship service.

(<u>Please</u> be sure to pick up the color you ordered so that everyone will be able to enjoy the color of the plant that each chose.)

Poinsettia color choice and quantity:

Red0	Qty	White	Qty	
In memory/honor of				
A gift for				
Ву				
I wish to contribute \$	to the	Christmas	Decorating	Fund.

Please place payment along with the order form in the offering plate or drop off in the church office. Checks should be payable to St. Paul UCC. Please have poinsettia order in by December 10.

Every year at this time we also ask for and accept donations to the Decorating Fund. This money will be used toward decorations for the Church and Educational Building.

Please include payment with this order form.

Thank you for helping make our sanctuary even more beautiful as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.