

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18018

Hours: Mon, Tues and Thurs. 9:00-1:00

Church Office: 610-868-4441

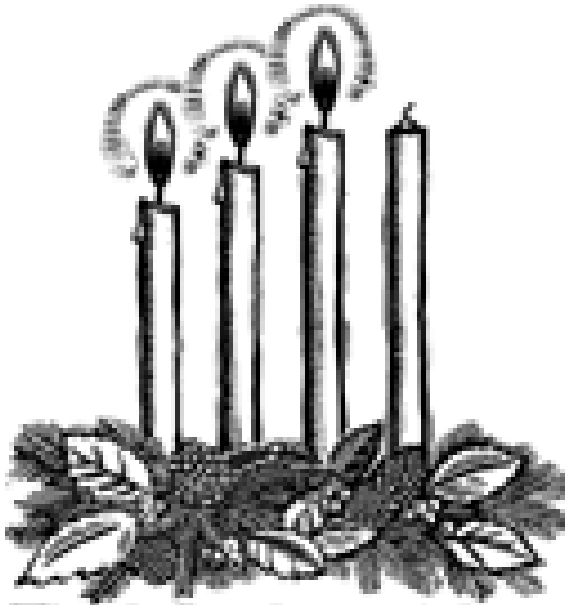
E-Mail: bethanyunitedchurch@rcn.com

Web address: www.uccbethany.org

Pastor Todd Fennell

Matt Miller, Consistory President

Susan Wright, Director of Music



Third Sunday in Advent

December 17, 2023

Second Sunday in Advent

“Moving Forward United in Faith”

“Committed to Christ, United by Love. We are about God, Christ, the Word, and the Future. No matter who you are or where you are on Life’s journey, you are welcome here. We are Bethany United Church of Christ.”

BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

December 17, 2023

10:45 AM

If you are looking for a church home, we invite you to become part of the community of faith and mission here at Bethany.

**(*) PLEASE STAND AS YOU ARE ABLE
(Bold Text is said or sung by everyone)**

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: Wake, Awake for Night Is Flying...Wachet Auf, harm...J.S. Bach

Handbell Choir with Trombone - Tim Rumble

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: O magnify our God with me and let us exalt God's name together.

C: Our souls magnify the Lord. Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!

L: We will bless the Lord at all times; God's praise shall continually be in our mouths.

C: Our souls magnify the Lord. God's mercy endures from generation to generation.

L: Let our souls make their boasts in the Lord; Let the humble hear and be glad.

C: Our souls magnify the Lord for the Mighty One has done great things.

*HYMN: # 156. On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry. Vs. 1,2, & 5

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God of Mary, Mother of Jesus – and all of the lowly who seek to be lifted – God of Isaiah, who felt the Spirit upon

him calling him to bring Good News— Let your Spirit fall upon us in this hour. Out of the ruins, remind us of your everlasting covenant. Anoint us as we seek to share and experience your Good News. Bind our broken hearts. Awaken us to the liberation within and among us. Embolden us to proclaim your favor As we seek you more deeply. Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (unison): #159 The King of Glory Comes Refrain Vs. 1 refrain

The King of glory comes, the ancient rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices. Who is the King of glory: what shall I call him? He is Emmanuel, the promised of ages. The King of glory comes, the ancient rejoices. Open the gates before him, lift up your voices.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: Something New: "A New Commandment: Love" John & Zach Talijan

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE: #175 Vs. 3

Three candles now are gleaming and show us the true way, rejoice the Baptist cries out, your Lord has come today, rejoice the Baptist cries out, your Lord has come today.

READING OF SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

I Thessalonians 5: 16-24

* Luke 1: 39-56

Leader: This is the Good News

People: Thanks be to God

SERMON: "Our World Upside Down"

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERING OF OUR TITHES and GIFTS

OFFERTORY: "Praise Ye the Lord" from The Christmas Oratorio...Camille Saint-Saens

Chancel Choir

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE: #196 In the Bleak Midwinter vs.4

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wiseman, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of Justice and Love, transform these offerings, that they may be gifts of justice and love for a world in need of hope and help. Let love flow through these offerings, that they may become gifts of love for the world. Amen

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CALL TO PRAYER – PASTORAL PRAYER

THE 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*HYMN: #153 Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

*BENEDICTION

***CHORAL BENEDICTION: #178 Emmanuel, Emmanuel
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called
Emmanuel.**

POSTLUDE

Our worship ends, our service begins!



FLOWERS and BULLETINS: are placed in honor and reverence of the anticipation of the coming of the Christ Child, the Savior of the world by Len and Rebecca Kesselring.

GREETERS: Bob Ruhe

USHERS: Bob Ruhe, Volunteer

LAY READER: Mike Reiniger

Scriptures

Isaiah 61: 1 – 4, 8 - 11 NRSV

61 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations;

they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸ For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my whole being shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

I Thessalonians 5: 16 – 24 NRSV

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies, ²¹ but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²² abstain from every form of evil. ²³ May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Luke 1: 39 - 56 NRSV

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her

womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." ⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; ⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." ⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

End of the Year Sale

While cleaning out the office I came across the ends of items that were sold in the past here @ Bethany. They are on a table in the Narthex and may be purchased by placing a donation in the jar. Think stocking stuffers or mementos.

The Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross is an annual UCC offering that expresses our thanks to retired and active UCC pastors and lay church workers and their families that are facing financial need and other emergency needs. An envelope is attached to your bulletin. Thank you!

THIS WEEK AT BETHANY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 Third Sunday of Advent

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary, last day for
Christmas greetings and Poinsettia orders

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18

9:00AM 1:00PM Office Hours

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19

9:00AM 1:00PM Office Hours

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

5:30PM Handbell Rehearsal
6:30PM Brass/Instrumental Rehearsal
7PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

9:00AM 1:00PM Office Hours

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 Fourth Sunday in Advent Christmas Eve

10:45AM Worship in the Sanctuary
8PM Candlelight Service Prelude
8:30PM Candlelight Service

Donations to be credited for 2023 need to be turned in by Sunday
December 24th.

Sponsor a Bill

On December 19th we have having both pianos tuned. If you
are interested in helping defray the cost, please let the office
know. They are approximately \$125 each.

We also received the bill for Newsletter, Newsletter an online
Resource that I use weekly. If you are interested in helping
with that the cost is \$90 for the year.

156 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounce - es straight the
 2 Let ev - ery heart be cleansed from sin, make our ref - uge
 3 For you are our sal - va - tion, Lord, our make the
 4 To heal the sick, stretch out your hand, and whose ad - vent
 5 To you, O Christ, all prais - es be, whose ad - vent

that the Lord is nigh: a - wake and lis - ten to
 way the for God with - in, and so pre - pare we
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace let your
 fall - en sin - ner stand; shine out, and let your
 sets your peo - ple free; whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings.
 be the home where such a might - y guest may come.
 waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.
 light re - store earth's own true love - li - ness once more.
 we a - dore and Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more!

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 153

1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.

Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

dear De - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

WORDS: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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