

A warm, intimate photograph of a woman and a young girl decorating a Christmas tree. The woman, in the background, is smiling and holding a red ornament. The girl, in the foreground, is looking up at the tree with a joyful expression. The scene is filled with festive lights and decorations, creating a cozy holiday atmosphere.

Overwhelmed with
JOY!

Matthew 2:10

St. John's United Church of Christ

10 A.M. Worship December 11, 2022

Third Sunday of Advent - Joy

Prayer in Preparation

God of Mary, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Rahab—God of us all, your children here and your children afar—we enter this moment of worship with eager anticipation. We know that even before a child would come to lead the way, You were leading our way. From the valleys of the shadows of death to the tables in the presence of enemies, you have never left us nor forsaken us. You rod and your staff have guided us. Guide us now, O God. Make your presence known as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

Welcome and Announcements

*(Please note the * indicates when you should stand.)*

The Opening	"Prepare the Way of the Lord"	#121
Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord, and all people will see the salvation of our God.		

Prelude

"Glorious is Your Name, O Jesus"

Fryson

***The Call to Worship**

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

All: We come today with eager hope, awaiting God's new revelation.

One: The mighty One has done great things! God's mercy covers generations.

All: We come today with ready peace, trusting with anticipation.

One: The One who lifted up the lowly and filled the hungry, dwells with us.

All: We come today with fervent joy, we worship with great expectation.

*Hymn	"Glorious Is Your Name, O Jesus"	#118
Glorious is your name, O Jesus, praises to your name. Oh, glorious and righteous and holy is your name. Oh, glorious is your name. I feel your presence in this place, your Spirit makes me whole, I can feel your warm embrace and all the joy within my soul, Oh, glorious is your name, Oh, glorious is your name.		

***Opening Prayer (*In Unison*)**

James wrote: Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. God, as we gather this morning, waiting for your kingdom of hope, peace and joy, we ask for your patience and for your strength. Amen.

Special Music "Jesus, the Light of the World" Elderken arr. Larson

LIGHT OF LIGHT

Third Sunday of Advent JOY

Choir Sings:

Light of Light we humbly pray: shine in our hearts today.
Dispel the gloom and dark of light; fill all the world with love and light.

Everyone sings:

**Voices cry out from a world in grief:
Prayer of those who seek relief.
End their darkness, hear their call
For peace on earth, good will for all.**

Responsive Litany

One: Advent is a time to celebrate the joy of living.
All: Lord of Light we thank you for the gift of life.
One: Advent is a time to celebrate the joy of relationships.
All: Lord of Light we thank you for our friends and family.
One: Advent is a time to celebrate the earth we all share.
All: Lord of Light we thank you for providing for our needs.
One: Advent is a time to celebrate eternal life.
All: Lord of Light we thank you for sending a Savior.

Candle lighting

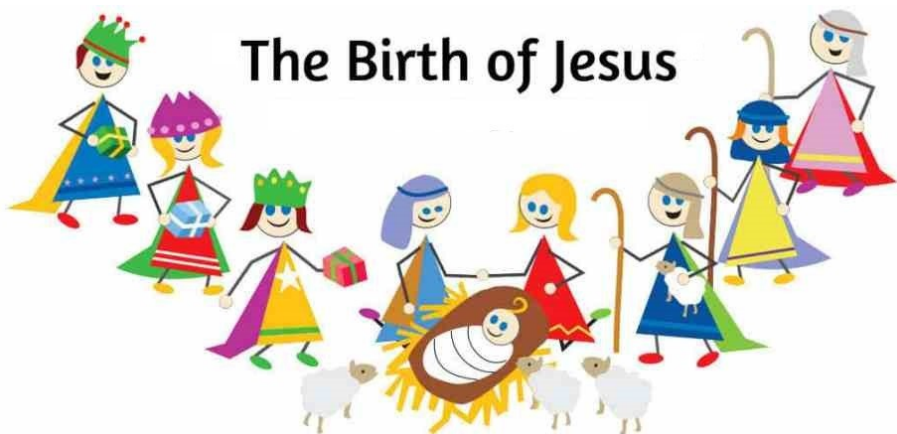
Everyone sings:

Voices cry out from a world in grief; prayers of those who seek relief. End their darkness; hear their call for peace on earth, goodwill for all. Peace on earth, goodwill for all.

Prayer: (*In Unison*)

God of light, we thank you for the many gifts you have given us, and we pray today that you will teach us to be truly joyful help us remember that you supply our needs and fill our lives with meaning fill our days with keen awareness of your presence, and fill our hearts with praise as we celebrate this joyful Advent season. Amen.

Passing the Peace May God show you joy.



Hymn	"O Little Town of Bethlehem"	#144 verses 1 and 3
O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight. How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the joys of highest heaven. No ear may hear Christ coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him still, the dear Christ enters in.		

Hymn	"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"	#153 verse 1
It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old, from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold; "Peace on the earth, good will to all from heaven's all-gracious King!" The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.		

Hymn	"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"	#150 verse 1
Hark! the herald-angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies; With the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem." Hark, the herald-angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King!"		

Hymn	"Away in a Manger"	(children sing)
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Hymn	"Joy to the World"	#143 verses 1 and 2
Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.		Joy to the world, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

Hymn	"We Three Kings"	#172 verse 1
We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.		O star of wonder, star of light Star with royal beauty bright Westward leading, still proceeding Guide us to thy perfect light.

Hymn	"Twinkle Twinkle Little Star"	(children sing)
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Narrator: All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:
"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means

All: **"God with us."**

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer *(In Unison)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Invitation to Give Generously

(Thank you for being so generous in your care of St. John's UCC and its mission, through your participation and giving. Your stewardship makes a difference. You may make your offering several ways including in church, online, by text at 833-502-0657, or mail. We are grateful for your support.)

***Doxology** *(In Unison)*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication** *(In Unison)*

**For the wondrous ways this offering will bless this community, we
dedicate our gifts. For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission we
dedicate our gifts. Let these gifts strengthen our call to do justice, love
mercy, and walk humbly. Amen.**

Benediction & Postlude

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Preaching:	Pastor Lisa Hart
Director of Music Ministry:	Ruth Notch
Advent Candle Lighting:	The Breitenbach Family
Liturgist:	David Leech
Song Leaders:	Kathy & Mike Scherr
Usher Team:	Phil Difani
Technology Team:	Steve Hawkinson
Fellowship & Lockup:	Helen Stortz
Bells:	Barb Nichols, Lisa Hart
Chancel Choir:	Mary Bowers, Ellen Brandon, Rich Brandon, Jeanne Buchner, Don Duperrett, Mary Jane Duperrett, Carolyn Golfin, Susie Pisoni, Helen Stortz, Evelyn Weber

The Birth of Jesus Christmas Program

Lynox Mueller Henry Breitenbach	Narrators	Helen Stortz	Innkeeper
Brittany Nichols	Mary	Mary Polt	Registrar
Nolan Breitenbach	Joseph	Richard Camp	King
Madison Billings	Main Angel	David Leech Don Duperrett Charlie Huber	3 Wise men
Spencer Jones Elise Wickenhauser Alexander Hart Hannah Skinner Claire Skinner Magda Matos Kate Jefferson	Angels	Tyler Nichols Harrison Mueller Easton Mueller Carlos Matos Charles Jefferson	Sheep
Henry Billings	Shepherd	Mary Jane Duperrett	Star Holder

... Any other young people who joined us today! We are grateful you are all here!

The creche in front of the altar is over 90 years old and was made in the 1930's by Rev. H. Rahn using scrap wood and has been used in many Christmas programs.

In keeping with another St. John's holiday tradition – the children are being given Christmas stockings with an orange, chocolate, and a small brass bell. Many of our members recall receiving these items as part of their participation in the Christmas program.

Thank you to our families for getting the children to Sunday School where they rehearsed the songs (and for practicing at home too!). Thank you to our Sunday School teachers for teaching and supporting the children. Thank you to Lori Nichols, Barb Nichols and Jackie Ruff for sewing the Christmas stockings.

**We couldn't have done this without Kathy Sellenriek, Stacia Bals, Jackie Ruff, Ruth Notch and Pastor Lisa. Special thanks to you! **

After the service, please join us in Fellowship Hall for a light reception. A special visitor (dressed in red!) will join us and there will be an opportunity to take a holiday photo.

Poinsettias

given to the glory of God in..

Celebration of family & friends given by Norma & Todd Armstrong.

Celebration of my church family given by Janis Boehm.

Celebration of our children given by Dean & Jean Goldenstein.

Celebration of my family, Sharon, Erick, Ava & Drew Bauman, given by Barbara Golland.

Celebration of Spencer & Brody Jones given by Amanda & Josh Jones.

Honor of Jennifer & Raymond Porter & John Boehm given by Janis Boehm.

Honor of our families given by Rich & Ellen Brandon.

Honor of our family given by Carolyn & Byron Golfin.

Honor of our family given by Ken & Jackie Ruff.

Memory of Dorothy & Roy Steiner given by Janis Boehm.

Memory of Pearl & George Hill given by Janis Boehm.

Memory of Joan Brandon & Dick Schnatmeier given by Rich & Ellen Brandon.

Memory of our grandparents given by the Breitenbach Family.

Memory of our parents given by Don & Mary Jane Duperrett.

Memory of my husband, David Golland, given by Barbara Golland.

Memory of Brenda & Joe Hart given by Monica Hart.

Memory of Robert Zier given by Amanda & Josh Jones.

Memory of Warren Busch given by Amanda & Josh Jones.

Memory of Leonard & LaVerne Haas given by Marjorie & Charles Neubert.

Memory of John Martin Boos given by Kathy Boos Sellenriek.

Memory of John & Katy Boos given by Kathy Boos Sellenriek.

Memory of Dottie & Bernie Spahr given by Brian Spahr.

Memory of my red hat sister, Arlette Mann, given by Rosemarie Spray.

Memory of my red hat sister, Lydia Dauster-Rombach, given by Rosemarie Spray.

Memory of Louise Templeton, sister of Richard Camp, given by Richard Camp

Memory of Frank & Wilma Stortz, parents of Helen Stortz, given by Helen Stortz.

Memory of George Tindira given by Carol Tindira.

Announcements

We extend our Christian **sympathy** to **Lorrie Thomason** and the entire **Thomason Family**.

Dave Thomason was taken into God's care on Tuesday, **December 6, 2022**.

We ask that God's presence will provide strength in this time of grief.

Our thoughts and prayers are with them.

If you would like to be a liturgist please contact Carolyn Golfin or Pastor Lisa

We pray for **Shirley Carmack, Rev Dwyane Dollgener, Betty Gschwind, Arland Stemme, A.J. Switzer** and **Paul VanDriest**

Please let us know your prayer concerns.

12/18/22 Service

Liturgist: **Todd Armstrong**

Usher Team: **Ken Ruff**

Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**

Fellowship & Lockup: **Helen Stortz**

12/25/22 Service

Liturgist: **virtual**

Usher Team: **virtual**

Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**

Fellowship & Lockup: **virtual**

A Look Ahead

December	Christmas Fund (veterans of the cross) Drive
12/11/22	Third Sunday of Advent
12/11/22	Christmas Program
12/13/22	10 AM Advent Bible Study
12/15&16	10 AM ECC Christmas Performances
12/18/22	9:15 AM Loaves & Fishes
12/18/22	10 AM Fourth Sunday of Advent
12/18/22	10:30 AM Christmas Fund (veterans of the cross) offering
12/20/22	10 AM Advent Bible Study
12/24/22	4 PM Christmas Eve Service
12/24/22	7 PM Christmas Eve Service
12/25/22	10 AM Christmas Day (virtual service).
12/27/22	Bunko Women's Fellowship
12/31/22	New Year's Eve
01/01/23	10 AM New Years' Service with communion

Please check your **News Notes/Website** for specific information around **upcoming activities**

Ushers and are **needed** for the 7 pm service on **Christmas Eve**.

Ushers **the office** at 636-532-0540 or stjohnsucconolive@gmail.com

Global Ministries requests that we pray with the **Columbia** this week



Understanding, Compassion, and Financial Relief

Each year, the Pension Boards receives cards, calls, and letters of thanks from grateful recipients of financial assistance from the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross—a UCC offering received each year by congregations across the country in recognition and love for retired servants of the church, their families, and survivors. Here are some excerpts from just a few of these expressions of gratitude:

“The Pension Boards is really helping me with a monthly annuity supplementation. It is so wonderful to know that I can now buy healthy food and not have to go to food banks—and will be able to buy Christmas presents for my grandchildren. There were many years when in order buy Christmas presents, I cut back on food spending.”

“I loved working in small churches. I remember a day in seminary when I overheard a couple of students talking, saying that the thing to do was get a small church to start and then that’s your stepping-stone to a bigger church. That’s when I decided I would always serve small churches. They deserve people with experience. But I didn’t stop to think about the tiny annuity I would have at the time I made the decision to work with small congregations. Help from donations to the Christmas Fund has been a Godsend. Thank you!”

“I’ve always been proud of the UCC that we’re open about all kinds of difficult things people face in life. I’m even more grateful for our wider church that expresses that openness by providing understanding, compassion, and financial relief when people really need it.”

In 2021, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled:

- Monthly pension supplementation for 231 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,104,479)
- Health benefits supplementation for 87 retired clergy and lay employees (\$177,600)
- Emergency grants for 53 individuals and families (\$150,338)
- Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 509 retired clergy and lay employees (\$254,000)

The Christmas Fund

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund
