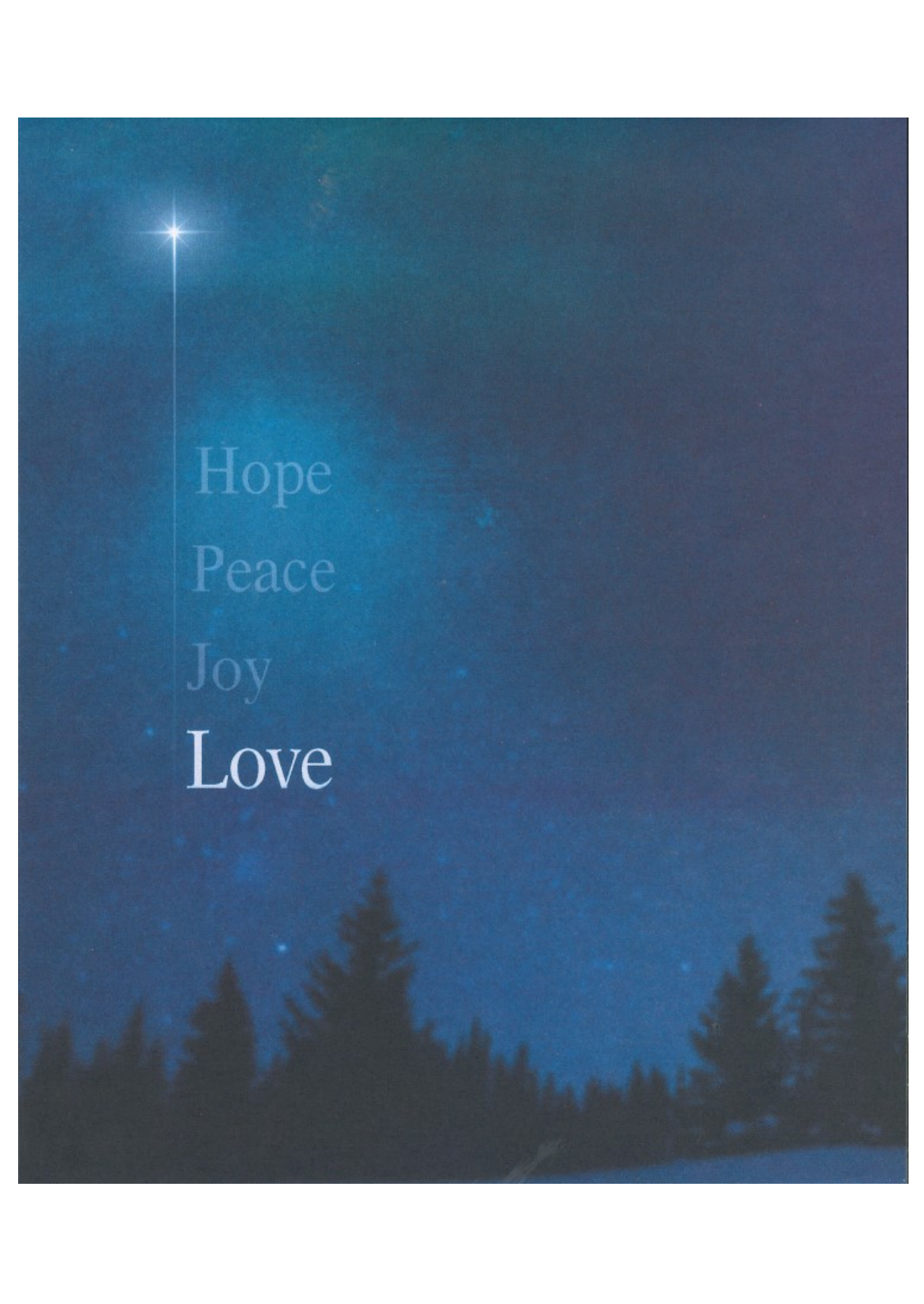


A vertical photograph of a night sky. A bright star with a four-pointed diffraction pattern is in the upper left. The sky is a deep blue with faint stars. The bottom of the image shows dark silhouettes of evergreen trees against the horizon.

Hope
Peace
Joy
Love

St. John's United Church of Christ

10 A.M. Worship December 18, 2022

Third Sunday of Advent - Love

Prayer in Preparation

Ferocious love, fierce love, unending love, everlasting love – We gather with gratitude for the ways your love has called us out of hopelessness. We know of your renown, and we stand in awe of your work. In our own time revive it; in our own time make it known. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel. Stir up your might in this time. Give us life, and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

Welcome and Announcements

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

Passing the Peace Greet one another spreading the news of God's love.

Prelude

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!"

arr. Sherman

*The Call to Worship

One: The advent of Christ brings the love of God's presence into our midst!

All: We sing praises to God for the salvation Christ brings to us!

One: Because of Christ, the weak are strengthened, the fearful are encouraged, and the unrighteous are redeemed!

All: Love came down when God came down to us.

One: God has come to us in Christ to walk with us in the paths of righteousness!

All: As we continue our preparations for Christmas, may our celebrations renew our faith and fill us with God's love. Amen.

*Hymn	"People, Look East"	#142 verses 1, 3, 4
People, look east the time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table. People, look east and sing today: Love, the guest, is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim One more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look east and sing today: Love, the star, is on the way.	Angels, announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming. People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.	

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

Present One, today we gather with hearts full of joy. Yet this season can also bring stress and anxiety. Many of us are busy making plans with family and friends while others struggle with loneliness. We ask that you help all of us free our hearts and minds of the worry, stress, and anxiety that takes our focus away from the coming of Christ. During this time of worship let your Spirit flow through this place. May the Spirit empower us to open our hearts and minds so that we will hear your Word and know what you call us to do. Amen.

LIGHT OF LIGHT

Fourth Sunday of Advent LOVE

Soloist 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 let go of anger and fear.

All: God of love fill our hearts with true compassion.

One: Advent is a time to look for the best in others.

All: God of love help us speak truth with kindness.

One: Advent is a time to share with those in need. celebrate the earth we all share.

All: God of love, remind us that in giving, we receive.

One: Advent is a time to notice and appreciate the good around us.

All: God of love, help us see the world through loving eyes.

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 love, we open our hearts to you today and ask that you fill us with the power of your love take away our bitterness, greed and jealousy. Remind us that we are brothers and sisters all sharing the wonderful gift of life. Help us treat others with respect and love and help us care for the world you have given us with loving heart and gentle hands. Amen.

	"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.		

Scripture: **Psalm 80 and Matthew 1:18-25**

One: This is the Word of God for the People of God.
All: Thanks be to God.

Message

Hymn	"Gentle Joseph"	
"Gentle Joseph, Joseph dear, stay with me, for the baby's near; God will surely your goodness hear, as you will love this new-born child," says Mary. "Gladly Mary, Mary mine, I will cradle the child divine; Here will heaven and earth combine, for you will bear God's child, O dearest Mary."	"Peace to all and God's good-will," heaven and earth with this song will fill; Soon will God, in the evening still, be born in Bethlehem, the child of Mary.	

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.**

Special Music

"I Wonder as I Wander"

Lowry/Greene

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)*

Creator God, we thank you for everything that you have given us, especially for the hope that Emmanuel brings to us. Help us to use our blessings in a way that brings honor and glory to you, and brings hope to a people that so desperately need it. We ask that you take our gifts--great or small, money, time or talent—and use them to continue the work that you have called us to. Amen.

*Hymn:	"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"	#119 verses 1, 3. 4
O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Refrain: Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things, far and nigh; to us the path of knowledge of show, and cause us in her ways to go. (Refrain)	O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. (Refrain)	

Benediction

Postlude

"Carol of the Bells"

arr. Mokolbust

Preaching:	Pastor Lisa Hart
Director of Music Ministry:	Ruth Notch
Advent Candle Lighting:	The Nichols Family
Liturgist:	Todd Armstrong
Soloist :	Meher Arora
Usher Team:	Ken Ruff
Technology Team:	Steve Hawkinson
Fellowship & Lockup:	Helen Stortz
Handbells:	Norma Armstrong, Jan Boehm, Lee Difani, Lisa Hart, Matthew Hart, Barb Nichols, Ruth Notch, Scott Nichols

<i>Announcements</i>		
12/25/22 Service Liturgist: virtual Usher Team: virtual Technology: Steve Hawkinson Fellowship & Lockup: virtual		01/01/23 Service Liturgist: need Usher Team: Larry Sontag Technology: Steve Hawkinson Fellowship & Lockup: Jan Boehm
We pray for Shirley Carmack, Betty Gschwind, Arland Stemme, A.J. Switzer and Paul VanDriest Please let us know your prayer concerns.		
A Look Ahead		
December		Christmas Fund (veterans of the cross) TODAY
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).
12/25/22		No Sunday School
12/27/22		Bunko Women's Fellowship
12/31/22		New Year's Eve
01/01/23	10 AM	New Years' Service with communion
01/01/23		No Sunday School (resume Jan 8)
Please check your News Notes/Website for specific information around upcoming activities		
Ushers and are needed for the 7 pm services on Christmas Eve. Volunteers contact the office at 636.532.0540 or stjohnsucconolive@gmail.com .		
Global Ministries requests that we pray with the Palestine this week		



Thank You!

13th century mystic Meister Eckhart wrote: "If the only prayer you ever said was, 'Thank you,' that would suffice."

The United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross aims to be that prayer in our midst. The Christmas Fund supports retired clergy and lay staff and surviving spouses in need through regular gifts to supplement their (often very limited) retirement incomes, through once-a-year "Thank-you" checks. It also provides individual grants to clergy in crisis or acute need.

The Christmas Fund is one of the Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, and this congregation supports it with our gifts, because we believe that while the sacrifices clergy and church workers make for their ministries are good for our churches, they can be bad for those professionals' bottom lines. We do it because clergy are as likely to need help as the rest of us, maybe for different reasons, maybe not. We do it because their service is valuable to us. We do it to say, "Thank you."

You may not be able to write checks to rescue retirees from poverty. But you can help anyway. By giving to the Christmas Fund, you will make sure that your pastor has a place to go for help if she needs it, make sure that retirees have support when they need it, make sure that this season, our church can be the church for those who need it throughout the UCC.

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

Join us for the following services

Christmas Eve

Family Christmas Eve Service — Saturday, **December 24, 4:00 p.m.**

This is for the young and young-at-heart. A simple service, about 45 minutes long. Hear the Christmas Story, sing favorite carols, and enjoy the excitement of this holy night!

Traditional Candlelight and Communion Service —Saturday, **December 24, 7:00 p.m.**, We hear and reflect on the story of Christ's birth, sing familiar carols, light candles and celebrate together the great gift of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us!

Sunday Service December 25th virtual only service at **10:00 a.m.**

Sunday Service January 1st service with communion at **10:00 a.m.**

St. John's United Church of Christ

prayers ■ promises ■ possibilities

Worship Services

9:00 a.m. - Fellowship in Fellowship Hall

10:00 a.m. –Sunday School

10:00 a.m. –Worship, In-Person, Facebook Live, or Virtual

15370 Olive Blvd.

Chesterfield MO 63017

(636) 532-0540

stjohnsuccconolive@gmail.com

www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org

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.

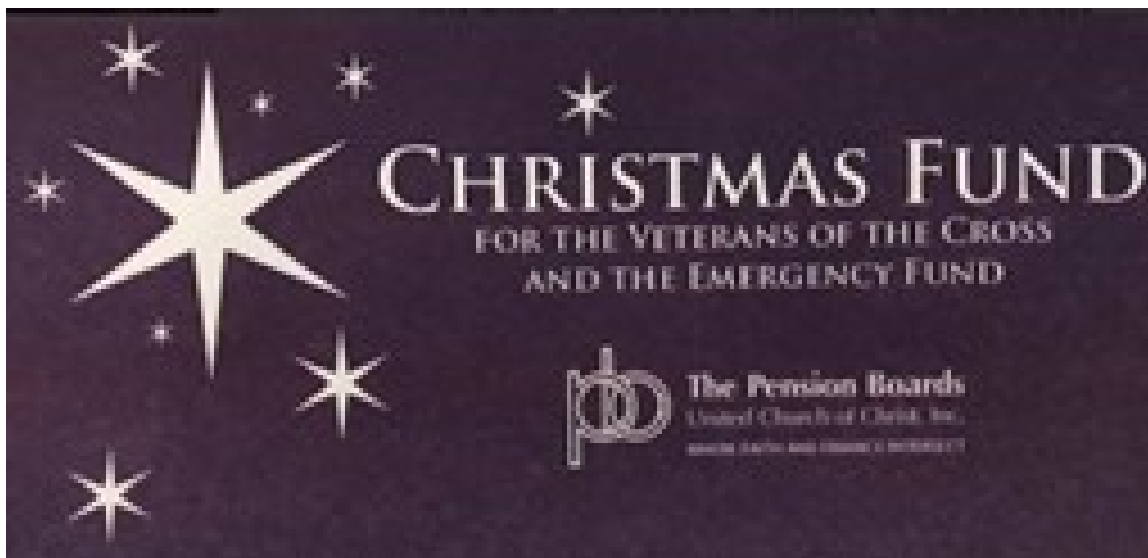
Memory of my red hat sister, Lydia Dauster-Rombach, given by Rosemarie Spray.

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.

Feel free to take your plants home anytime after the Christmas Eve services



Please give to the Christmas Fund Offering today
Sunday, **Dec 18**
(aka: veterans of the cross)

This offering provides direct **financial assistance** to **retired** and **active** United Church of Christ authorized **ministers** and **lay employees** and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks. A ministry of the Pension Boards, the offering is received annually on the Sunday before Christmas. Place your offering in the basket