

# St. John's United Church of Christ

10 A.M. Worship

Dec 21, 2025

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR THE WORD OF GOD

## Ringling of the Chimes

## Welcome and Announcements

*(Please note the \* indicates when you should stand*

*Members and Visitors please make note of your attendance by signing in on the pew pads.)*

## \*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Peace be with you

**And also, with you**

Prelude	"Savior of the Nations, Come"	arr. Behnke
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## \*The Call to Worship

To love is the greatest gift bestowed upon us.

It is a surrender to God's holy power.

**God loves us, despite all our mistakes,**

**so we pray for the patience of hope!**

To be loved by God is the right of every living thing.

This love is the sun and the rain, it is the beginning and end of all.

**God loves us even when we neglect our neighbors,**

**so we pray for the strength to bring peace.**

God's love is always a promise and a responsibility,

and we are given this love freely.

God demands nothing from us, yet knows we are capable of greatness.

**God loves us in the midst of destruction and despair,**

**so we pray to share a vision of joy.**

Love is a sacred vow God has made to us,

a rainbow in the sky, a baby in the manger.

**God loves us just as we are,**

**and we give thanks and whisper amen.**

* Hymn	"Come, O Long-expected Jesus"	#125
Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free. From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be. You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart; dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.	Born your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king, born to reign in us for ever, born your gracious realm to bring. By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by your all-sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.	

## LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF LOVE

We relight the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy

Today, we come face to face with the scandal of Advent: Mary, the unmarried mother; God Incarnate growing in Mary's womb as a vulnerable baby; Joseph contemplating leaving Mary because of her pregnancy; God's love at work in ways that society and propriety could not understand; God calling Mary and Joseph to faithfulness despite the fear of disgrace.

**With Mary and Joseph, we choose to wait, watch, and listen for the way of Love instead of responding in fear to the world's judgment.**

We light this candle of love as a sign of our faithfulness as we seek, find, and follow Emmanuel, God with us.

<b>Time for the Child in us All</b>		<b>Pastor Katie Jo</b>
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*"Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"*  
**Child of God your loving parent,  
Learn to listen for God's call  
Grow to laugh and sing and worship,  
Trust and love God more than all.**

<b>Special Music</b>	<i>"A Baby in a Manger, Gloria"</i>	<b>Courtney</b>
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## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

### **Scriptures Matthew 1:18-25**

#### **The Birth of Jesus the Messiah**

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

*23 "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"*

which means, "God is with us." 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

**Message**

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask thee to stay  
close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

**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.

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD

**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 or mail. We are grateful for your support.)*

**Offertory***"Angels and Shepherds"***Mendelssohn arr. Hollander****\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly hosts; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

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

Love and Light of the world, we give you thanks for these gifts. We give you thanks for the ability to share your divine love in a tangible form. Help us to remember, as we await Christ's birth, to give more generously than we receive, knowing we will always be rich in your abundant love. Amen.

## WE GO FORTH TO SERVE

**\* Hymn**

*"Down to Earth"*

**#138**

**Down to earth, as a dove,  
came to light holy love;  
Jesus Christ from above  
bringing great salvation,  
meant for every nation.**

**Refrain:  
Let us sing, sing, sing,  
dance and spring, spring, spring.  
Christ is here,  
ever near!  
Gloria in excelsis.**

**This is love come to light,  
now is fear put to flight.  
God defeats evil's blight;  
giving for our sorrows  
hope of new tomorrows. [Refrain]**

**Jesus Christ comes to feed  
hungry ones in their need;  
in the house there is bread:  
Jesus in a stable,  
in the church a table. [Refrain]**

### **Benediction**

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Pastor: **Rev. Katie Jo Bielke**

Director of Music: **Ruth Notch**

Liturgist: **Carol Tindira**

Usher Team: **Larry Sontag**

Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**

Fellowship/Lockup: **Carol Tindira**

Handbells: **Norma Armstrong, Pastor Katie Jo Bielke, Jan Boehm, Lee Difani, Barb Nichols,  
Scott Nichols, Christine Norton, Ruth Notch, Jim Pisoni**

Choir: **Mary Bowers, Ellen Brandon, Rich Brandon, Jeanne Buchner, Don Duperrett, Mary  
Jane Duperrett, Carolyn Golfin, Susie Pisoni, Helen Stortz, Evelyn Weber**

## *Announcements*

Please pick up the small information card at the back of church and use it to invite family and friends  
to our Christmas worship and fellowship events.

We pray for: **Tyler Ackerman, Karen (Scooter) Beatty, Rev. Dwayne Dollgener, Andy Kissel,  
Anita Paz, Melanie Spangler and Carol Tindira.**

Please let us know your prayer concerns. Private prayer concerns speak with Rev Katie Jo Bielke.

**Global Ministries** request that we pray with **Nicaragua** this week

#### **12/28/25 Service**

Liturgist: **Todd Armstrong**  
Usher Team: **John Bartelt**  
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**  
Fellowship/Lockup: **Carol Tindira**  
Special Music: **Flute**

#### **01/04/23 Service**

Liturgist: **Ellen Brandon**  
Usher Team: **Phil Difani**  
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**  
Fellowship/Lockup: **Steve Hawkinson**  
Special Music: **Vocal Solo**

#### **01/11/23 Service**

Liturgist: **Carolyn Golfin**  
Usher Team: **Ken Ruff**  
Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**  
Fellowship/Lockup: **Steve Hawkinson**  
Special Music: **Violin**

#### **Join us on Sundays**

9:00 a.m. - **Fellowship** with coffee and donuts  
10:00 a.m. - **Sunday School**  
10:00 a.m. - **Worship**  
In-Person, Facebook Live, or Virtual

**15370 Olive Blvd.**

**Chesterfield MO 63017**

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**www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org**

## ... Looking Ahead

Sun	12/21/25	3:00 PM	Longest Night Service
Mon	12/22/25	10:00 AM	Voices of Advent Study
Wed	12/24/25	4 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
Wed	12/24/25	7pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
Sat	01/03/26	8:00 AM	Bimonthly Newsletter (subscribe)
Sun	01/04/26	10:00 AM	Communion Sunday
Sun	01/04/26	10:00 AM	Advent Blessing Boxes Due
Mon	01/05/26	9:00 AM	ECC Classes resume
Thu	01/08/26	11:00 AM	Senior Ministry Meeting
Sun	01/11/26	11:00 AM	Mission Meeting
Mon	01/12/26	9:00 AM	ECC Fall Registration Opens
Mon	01/12/26	1:00 PM	Exec Council Mtg
Mon	01/12/26	6:00 PM	Council Meeting
Tue	01/13/26	10:00 AM	Book Club "The Cuban Heiress"

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

<https://www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org/fellowship>

**Facebook:** Find the  
livestream here:



**YouTube:** View the  
video here:



**Website:** Find more  
Info here:



**Offering**



# Join Us

**CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24th**  
**4 PM Christmas Eve Service**  
**7 PM Christmas Eve Service**

both services will have communion for all  
 and  
 Candlelit Silent Night