

# St. John's United Church of Christ

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

10 A.M. Worship      Dec 22, 2024

*Love, 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

*"People Look East"*

**Beckstrand**

## \*The Call to Worship

It's Advent 4. How quickly this time has come upon us!

**We are breathless. Still so much to be done.**

Calm your spirits. Take time to hear the wondrous news.

**Open our ears to hear Mary's Story**

Believe in the good news!

**We believe and rejoice! God's love is here with us! AMEN.**

## \* Hymn

*"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"*

**#119**

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 Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.  
(Refrain)

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)

## Advent Candle

When the people were looking for deliverance, the prophet Micah declared, "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah...from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient day." (Micah 5:2). But what if Micah is also talking to us, proclaiming, "But you, O St. John's, from you shall come forth for me..." What? What might God be calling forth from us?

**God invites us to receive the promise of God's salvation and the sustenance of God's mercy and grace, enabling us to live the promise as God-bearers to the world. As Christ was born in Bethlehem, so too we answer God's invitation to have Christ born among us today and every day.**

We light this candle of love as a sign of our commitment to live as people of God's promise, a promise of salvation and flourishing for all people that springs forth from God's love for all creation.

**Hymn**

**"We Light the Advent Candles"**

**We light the Advent candles  
against the winter night,  
to welcome our Lord Jesus  
who is the world's True Light,  
to welcome our Lord Jesus  
who is the world's True Light.**

**Four candles burning brightly  
announce that Love has come,  
prepare, my heart, believe it,  
and give the Christ child room,  
prepare, my heart, believe it,  
and give the Christ child room.**

**Gathering Prayer (*In Unison*)**

**Lord, be with us this morning as we encounter Mary and hear of the wondrous news that she received. Remind us that, like Mary, each one of us is a bearer of your Good News. We are called to proclaim hope, peace, joy, and love in your name. Open our hearts and our spirits today to receive with great joy the love that you have for us. Amen.**

**Time for the Child**

*"Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"*

**Rev Katie Jo Bielke**

**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.**

**Special Music**

*"O Little Town of Bethlehem"*

**arr. Raney**

**WE HEAR GOD'S WORD**

**Scriptures: Luke 1:39-55**

**Mary Visits Elizabeth**

<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

**Mary's Song of Praise**

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name;

<sup>50</sup> indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones

and lifted up the lowly;  
<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things  
 and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup> He has come to the aid of his child Israel,  
 in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

**ALL: Thanks be to God.**

## Message

| Hymn                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>“My Soul Gives Glory to My God”</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | #130 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <p>My soul gives glory to my God,<br/>         My heart pours out its praise.<br/>         God lifted up my lowliness<br/>         In many marvelous ways.</p> <p>My God has done great things for me:<br/>         Yes, holy is her Name.<br/>         All people will declare me blessed,<br/>         And blessings they shall claim.</p> <p>From age to age to all who fear,<br/>         Such mercy love imparts,<br/>         Dispensing justice far and near,<br/>         Dismissing selfish hearts.</p> | <p>Love casts the mighty from their thrones,<br/>         Promotes the insecure,<br/>         Leaves hungry spirits satisfied;<br/>         The rich seem suddenly poor.</p> <p>Praise God, whose loving covenant<br/>         Supports those in distress,<br/>         Remembering past promises<br/>         With present faithfulness.</p> |      |

## 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, by text at 833-502-0657, or mail. We are grateful for your support.)

## Offertory

*“Sussex Carol”*

**Crisafulli**

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

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*)

Holy One, we delight in living in your ways as we create your Realm here on earth. These offerings of talents, treasures, and time are not to appease you but to collaborate with you. As co-creators, we seek your intentions and celebrate your love for us and our neighbors. Amen.

**WE GO FORTH TO SERVE**

**\* Hymn**

*"My Soul Proclaims with Wonder"*

**Refrain:**

My soul proclaims with wonder  
the greatness of the Lord,  
rejoicing in God's greatness,  
my spirit is restored.

To me has God shown favor,  
to one the world thought frail,  
and ev'ry age will echo  
the angel's first "All hail." [Refrain]

God's mercy shields the faithful  
and saves them from defeat,  
with strength that turns to scatter  
the proud in their conceit. [Refrain]

The mighty have been vanquished,  
the lowly lifted up.  
The hungry find abundance,  
the rich, an empty cup. [Refrain]

To Abraham's descendants,  
the Lord will steadfast prove,  
for God has made with Israel  
a covenant of love. [Refrain]

**Benediction**

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**Pastor: Rev. Katie Jo Bielke**

**Advent Candle: Nora and Anthony Amato**

**Liturgist: Mary Polt**

**Usher Team: Phil Difani**

**Technology: Steve Hawkinson**

**Fellowship/Lockup: Phil Difani**

**Flautist: Jennifer Adams**

**Join us Tuesday for Christmas Eve Candle Light Service offered at both 4 and 7 p.m.**

***Announcements***

We pray for

**Karen (Scooter) Beatty, Kevin Beatty, Rev. Dwayne Dollgener,  
Elizabeth Hart, Cherie Messina and Gloria Vaclavik.**

Please let us know your prayer concerns.

If you have private prayer concerns please speak with Rev Katie Jo Bielke.

**Global Ministries** requests that we pray with **Afghanistan** this week

**12/29/24 Service**

Liturgist: **Mike Kelly**

Usher Team: **Jim Pisoni**

Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**

Fellowship/Lockup: **Phil Difani**

Special Music: **Chancel Choir**

**01/05/25 Service**

Liturgist: **Craig Bielke**

Usher Team: **Larry Sontag**

Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**

Fellowship/Lockup: **Helen Stortz**

Special Music: **Vocalist, Meher Arora**

Communion Service:

**Donna Switzer & Helen Stortz**

**01/12/25 Service**

Liturgist: **Helen Stortz**

Usher Team: **John Bartelt**

Technology: **Steve Hawkinson**

Fellowship/Lockup: **Helen Stortz**

Special Music: **Flautist**

## ... Looking Ahead December

|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |            |          |                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/22      | 9:20 AM  | Loaves & Fishes                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |            | 10:00 AM | Love; Fourth Sunday of Advent & GM Pray for Afghanistan |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |            | 11:00 AM | Mission Meeting                                         |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                               |            | 10:00 AM | Christmas Fund Offering (for the veterans of the cross) |
| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/22      | 3:00 PM  | Hart/Spahr Open House                                   |
| Mon                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/23      | 11:00 AM | Advent Bible Study                                      |
| Tue                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/24      | 4:00 PM  | Christmas Eve Candle Light Service                      |
| Tue                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/24      | 7:00 PM  | Christmas Eve Candle Light Service                      |
| Tue                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/24 & 25 |          | Christmas (office closed)                               |
| Wed                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/25      |          | Merry Christmas                                         |
| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12/29      | 9:20 AM  | Loaves & Fishes                                         |
| Fri                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1/3/25     | 8:00 AM  | Bimonthly Newsletter                                    |
| Sun                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1/5/25     |          | Communion Sunday                                        |
| Thu                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1/9/25     | 5:00 PM  | Newsletter Articles Due EOD                             |
| Thu                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1/16/25    | 1:00 PM  | Movie Day "The Ultimate Gift" (rsvp)                    |
| Please check your News Notes/Website for specific information around upcoming activities<br><a href="https://www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org/fellowship">https://www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org/fellowship</a> |            |          |                                                         |



online giving



St. John's News & Events

**Join us on Sundays**  
 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](mailto:stjohnsuccconolive@gmail.com)  
[www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org](http://www.stjohnsuccchesterfield.org)

***Poinsettias Given to the Glory of God ...***

**In Celebration of the season given by Mel & Ruth Kohl.**

**In Celebration of Andrea & Chris Vinyard Family given by Carolyn & Byron Golfin.**

**In Celebration of blessings given by Laura & Brock Ayers.**

**In Celebration of Christmas given by Donna & Paul Switzer.**

**In Celebration of Diana & Jason Flower Family given by Carolyn & Byron Golfin.**

**In Celebration of holidays with family and friends given by Todd Armstrong.**

**In Celebration of members of St. John's congregation given by the Warren Stemme Family.**

**In Celebration of my family, the Baumans given by Barbara Golland.**

**In Celebration of our family and friends given by Charles, Nora & Anthony Amato.**

**In Celebration of Poppa & BGE given by Laura & Brock Ayers.**

**In Celebration of the gift of life, wonderful family & friends  
given by Rev Carleton & Marilyn Norton.**

**In Celebration of the Gronefeld family given by the Warren Stemme Family.**

**In Celebration of the Stemme family given by the Warren Stemme Family.**

**In Honor of Angelina Amato & Leitha Macalady given by Charles, Nora & Anthony Amato.**

**In Honor of Betty Wagner given by Lynn Potts.**

**In Honor of children, grandchildren & great grandchildren  
given by Rev Carleton & Marilyn Norton.**

**In Honor of Mike & Kathy Scherr "for all you do!" given by Lynn Potts.**

**In Honor of my family given by Janis Boehm.**

**In Honor of my wonderful family given by Phyllis Freiberger.**

**In Honor of our family given by Ken & Jackie Ruff.**

**In Memory of Barry W Maddox given by Mark Strothmann & Shari Maddox.**

**In Memory of Brenda & Joe Hart given by Monica & Brian Spahr.**

**In Memory of Daniel Switzer given by Donna & Paul Switzer.**

**In Memory of Dottie & Bernie Spahr given by Monica & Brian Spahr.**

**In Memory of Gene Clauson given by Jeanne Clauson.**

**In Memory of George & Lynn Hudson given by Larry, Angie & Corryne Sontag.**

**In Memory of George Tindira given by Carol, John & Matt.**

**In Memory of Harold Freiberger, my wonderful husband given by Phyllis Freiberger.**

**In Memory of Jim Amato & Francis Macalady Sr. given by Charles, Nora & Anthony Amato.**

**In Memory of Jim Pisoni Sr given by The Pisoni Family.**

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

**In Memory of my husband David Golland given by Barbara Golland.**

**In Memory of My Parents, Charles ('Lindy') & June Ackerman given by Barb Ackerman.**

**In Memory of parents, sister, brother-in-law, cousin & friends  
given by Rev Carleton & Marilyn Norton.**

**In Memory of Philip B Difani Sr given by Lee & Phil Difani.**

**In Memory of Raymond & Ruth Sontag given by Larry, Angie & Corryne Sontag.**

**In Memory of Roy & Irene Aldrich given by Lee & Phil Difani.**

**In Memory of Wesley, Arland and Jay Stemme given by the Warren Stemme Family.**