

December 14, 2025
10:15 AM
Third Sunday in Advent
Annual Congregational Meeting

THEME PARAGRAPH for the bulletin cover:

Isaiah 35:1-10 strikes a hopeful note. In the midst of a string of judgments and promises of divine retribution, this passage springs up like the desert blossoms it describes. It is sudden and unexpected. It is beautiful and refreshing. It sounds an Advent note in our hearts even as it speaks to seasons of life when grief, doubt, or the sheer impossibility of challenges call for hope and surprise, joy and refreshment. Isaiah reminds us that deserts are not devoid of life, waiting for something to begin. They are not fields of despair waiting to be interrupted. Even when the environment seems dry or dire, bits of life are already present. The flowers to come, foretold by Isaiah, will simply add to the vitality that is already there, drawing our attention in a way that can't be ignored.

+ GATHERING +

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME AND GREETING

PRELUDE Sanna, Sannanina (Holy, Most Holy Lord) -arr. Sandra Eithun
Handbell Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome to the season of Advent,
the time when we remember
that God is urgently waiting
to finally arrive.

God, we have been waiting for you, too.

**Yet you often arrive before we notice:
in the place we did not expect,
in the word we did not hear.**

Right before you change a life,
your angels always say,
“Do not be afraid.”

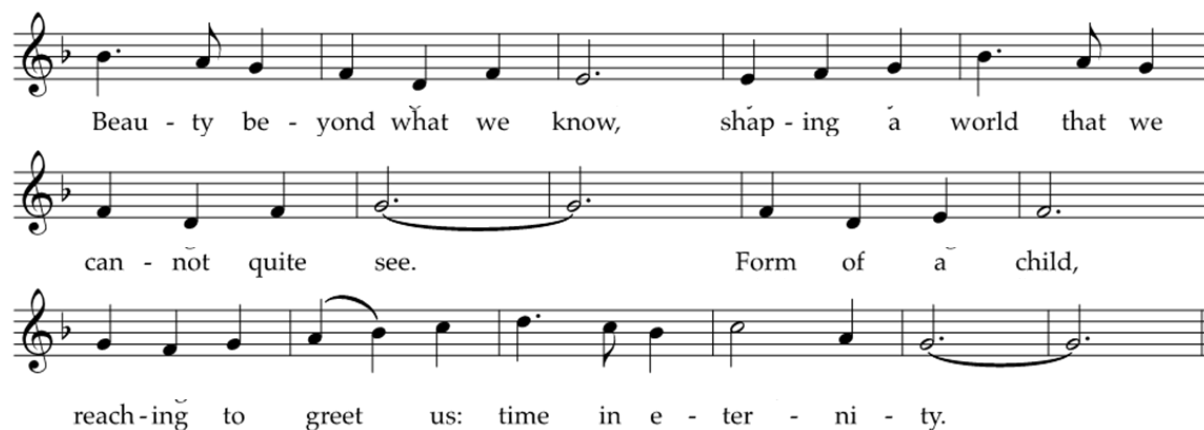
**You are here to change this place and us.
We are not afraid.**

HYMN ELW 244 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

GREETING

Peace to you
and welcome,
from the God who blossoms arid ground,
the Savior who rejuvenates barren relationships,
the Spirit who fills empty cups.
And also with you

ADVENT HYMN God of the Starlight and Moon



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

When deep blue darkness has unfolded its mysteries, we can measure our environment, understand it, recognize the signs of life we heard all around, and move with confidence.

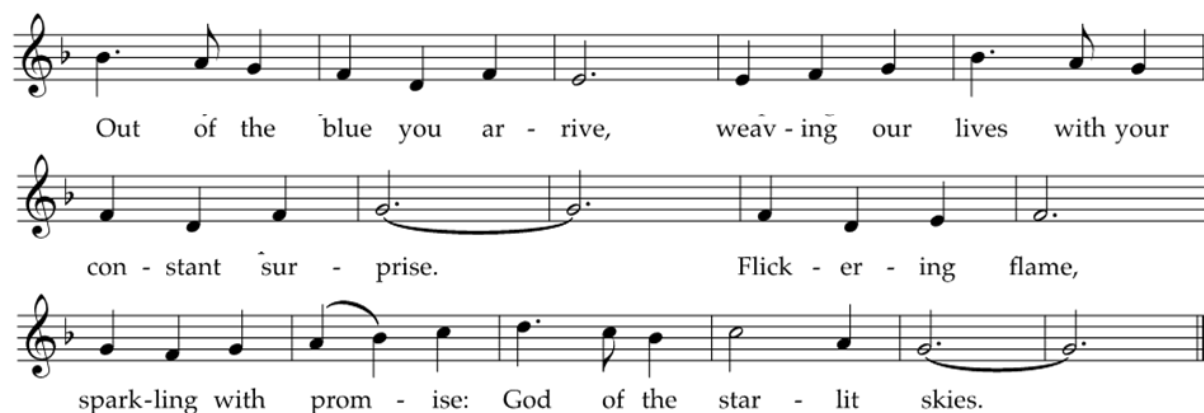
When we next return to deep darkness, we will know there is nothing to fear from the world beyond our senses.

This candle on our Advent wreath represents our growing familiarity with God's purposes, where the stories we have heard and the traditions we have inherited help us recognize the signs of life all around.

**In time we will move confidently forward into each new day,
unwavering in devotion, unswerving in direction.**
But not yet, not fully.

The third candle is lit.

ADVENT HYMN God of the Starlight and Moon



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Please be seated.

OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER – 2025

A review of 2025

Recognition of Outgoing Council Members

+ WORD +

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

At the conclusion of the reading:

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Word of God, come down on earth, liv - ing rain from
heav'n de-scend - ing; touch our hearts and bring to birth
faith and hope and love un - end - ing. Word al - might - y,
we re - vere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

At the beginning of the reading:

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the reading:

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY ACS 1078 There is a longing in our hearts

Refrain — All



There is a long-ing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to re -



veal your - self to us. There is a long-ing in our



hearts for love we on - ly find in you, our God.

Leader or All



1 For jus - tice,	for free - dom,	for mer - cy:
2 For wis - dom,	for cour - age,	for com - fort:
3 For heal - ing,	for whole - ness,	for new life:
4 Lord, save us,	take pit - y,	light in our



hear our prayer.	In sor - row,	in grief:
hear our prayer.	In weak - ness,	in fear:
hear our prayer.	In sick - ness,	in death:
deep - est night.	We call you;	we wait:



Refrain

be near; hear our prayer, O God.

OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER – The Business

Approve minutes from Annual Meeting 2024

Election of New Council Persons

2026 Budget Presentation and Vote

STATEMENT OF FAITH *for the season of Advent*

**We are an Advent people,
a people of hope.**

**For us, Advent is a time of waiting,
and so we wait.**

**We wait for the coming of the One
who is the fulfillment of God's promise,
the fulfillment of hope,
the declaration that we have been redeemed.**

Even so, we are not a naïve people.
We know that the world in which we live
will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow.
We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist.
We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives.

But because we are an Advent people,
we know that none of these things will win in the end.

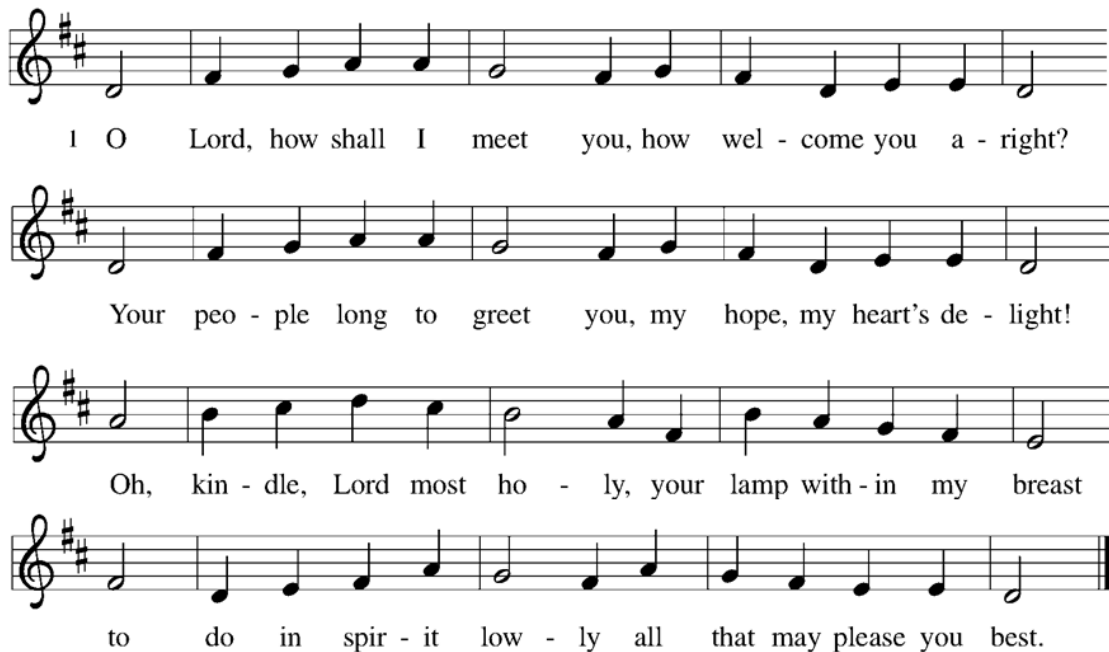
The Holy One is coming,
to make holy once again
all that was, is, and ever will be.

And in our waiting and our hoping,
we work and worship,
pray and play,
in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will show up,
out of the blue,
in our lives and in our world,
now and forever.
Amen

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING He shall come down - Sam Batt Owens
St. John's choir

OFFERTORY



1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right?

Your peo - ple long to greet you, my hope, my heart's de - light!

Oh, kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, your lamp with - in my breast

to do in spir - it low - ly all that may please you best.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

God, we cherished what we thought belonged only to us: our money and our time and our families and our freedom.

Yet in a moment, we recognize that every truly good thing was a treasure we had taken from your open hand. We thought such treasures were ours to earn and to own.

You grow what we give away. So we give you these gifts as a sign of your love and faithfulness. We pray in the name of the One for whom we wait, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass 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.

OUR MINISTRY TOGETHER – Looking Ahead

+ SENDING +

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

As you leave from this place, adjust your expectations to God's promises.

There is friendship after loneliness,
there is hope after every last breath.

There is already life in the desert.
There is even delight in decline.

**For we tell the story
of new life from the grave.**

In the world drained of color
God arrives out of the blue.

SENDING HYMN ELW 239 Hark, the Glad Sound!

DISMISSAL

Go in peace to wait and watch.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers - Roberta Rowland-Raybold

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PRAYER LIST

Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers: Bob Moran, Leonard Gibeon, David Mounts, Ed & Billie Schanely, Steve Keyser, Andrew Breuninger, Renee Fels, Rebecca Jellen, Richard Ditzler, Joy Miller, Alyson Harvey, Audrey Sell, Marie Wolfe, Erik Ockenlaender, Bob Ernst, Sr., Mary Eberle, Tom Gracie, Brandon Blanchard, Gladys Kazalonis, Elizabeth Brossett and family, Fred Orrik, Nem Nonkovic, John Moore and Paige Seasock.

Mark Your Calendar

Monday, December 15	5:30pm Advent Soup & Devotion
Wednesday, December 17	6pm Taize Worship @ New Goshenhoppen UCC
Thursday, December 18	10am Card Crew
Sunday, December 21	9am Sunday School 10:15am Worship with Sunday School Pageant following worship Happy Birthday Jesus celebration 2pm Longest Night Worship at St. Paul's in Red Hill 6pm Longest Night Worship at St. John's

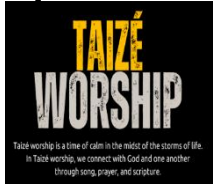
The Community Meal at Pennsburg UCC Monday, January 5, 2026 3-7:30pm

We will be serving Pork, Sauerkraut, Mashed Potatoes. Green Beans, Roll, Dessert, Iced Tea, Lemonade, Coffee

The sign up link will be in the weekly email or go to:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4EAEAC23A1F9C16-49971285-community#/>

This fall, the Reformed churches in the Upper Perkiomen Valley will offer a more contemplative, mid-week worship opportunity – all are welcome!



3rd Wednesdays from 6-7 PM

Dec 17 – New Goshenhoppen UCC, East Greenville

Jan 21 – Friedens UCC, Sumneytown

Worship Assistants for Christmas Eve

communion assistants, acolytes, readers and ushers will be needed. If you are interested in serving, please see the sign up sheet outside Pastor Becky's office or sign up online using the QR code.



ADVENT GATHERING

Soup, Devotions and White Elephant Gift Exchange

Monday, December 15

5:30 PM

All are welcome!

Dinner will be served at 5:30 PM,
followed by a brief Advent devotion and then the gift exchange

What is a white elephant? A white elephant gift is not a new gift that you purchase - it is something in your home that you no longer need, or were given and haven't used - that you would like to gift to someone else. Wrap it up and bring it with you for a fun gift exchange!

Longest Night Services



WORSHIP CENTERED ON PEACE
HOPE AND HEALING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

2:00 PM – ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN

1244 St. Paul's Church Road, Pennsburg, PA

6:00 PM – ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN

3104 Main Street, Green Lane, PA



Join us at St. John's

Christmas Eve

Wed, December 24

3:00 PM - Family Christmas worship with carols, communion and special children's message

7:00 PM - Traditional Christmas worship with candlelight and communion

10:00 PM - Traditional festival Christmas worship with choirs, candlelight and communion

Christmas Season

Sun. December 28

Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:15 AM

Sun. January 4

Service of Epiphany at 10:15 AM





Donate Blood

St. John's is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive

Friday, December 26 from 12-5pm

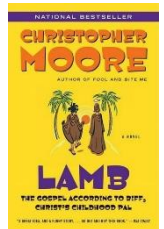
Sign up today at redcrossblood.org

Breakfast and a Book – Winter Book Club

We will gather on Saturday, January 17 at 9:30 AM at Friedens UCC Fellowship Hall to enjoy breakfast and discussion of the book *Lamb: The Gospel According to Biff, Christ's Childhood Pal* by Christopher Moore.

All are welcome!

A descriptor of the book: *The birth of Jesus has been well chronicled, as have his glorious teachings, acts, and divine sacrifice after his thirtieth birthday. But no one knows about the early life of the Son of God, the missing years—except Biff, the Messiah's best bud, who has been resurrected to tell the story in the divinely hilarious yet heartfelt work "reminiscent of Vonnegut and Douglas Adams" (Philadelphia Inquirer)*



Rise Against Hunger Meal Packaging Event coming in January 2026



The Reformation Sister Congregations in the Upper Perkiomen Valley are hosting another meal packaging event with Rise Against Hunger. The event is scheduled for Sunday, January 25 following morning worship. The event will take place at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Red Hill.

The total number of spots for each shift have been divided equally among the seven churches, so St. John's open spots are listed below:

- one person for set up shift (12 noon -1:30 PM) - *requires heavy lifting*
- five people for first meal packaging shift (1:30-2:45 PM)
- five people for second meal packaging shift (3:15-4:30 PM)

A sign up sheet for those 11 spots is outside Pastor Becky's office and will remain there until January 1 or until all spots have been filled. If you have any questions, please reach out to Pastor Becky.