

December 21, 2025  
10:15 AM  
Fourth Sunday in Advent  
Children's Christmas Program

THEME PARAGRAPH for bulletin cover:

Throughout Advent, we've read the stories of God's invitation over and over again. God goes to Elizabeth and Zechariah and says, "You." God goes to Mary and says, "You." God goes to Joseph and says, "You." As the church prepares to remember Jesus' first advent in the past even as it anticipates his second in the future, this Sunday affords the opportunity to remember that God is actively inviting us to share in God's work in the present. God is coming to us now and saying, "You." You personally. You specifically. It is you whom God has been waiting for, you whom God is inviting into the turning points that, right now, only God can see.

+ GATHERING +

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

WELCOME AND GREETING

PRELUDE    He Comes to Us - Gilbert M. Martin

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 272   Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

GREETING

Peace to you  
and welcome,  
from the God who has always known you,  
the Savior who is already born,  
the Spirit who already knows what you'll ask.  
**And also with you**

## ADVENT HYMN    God of the Starlight and Moon



## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

There is a moment when we no longer need a light in the darkness.

**Perhaps dawn has come to fill every corner of the room with sunlight.**

Or, we have grown so familiar with our surroundings that we can find our way without sight.

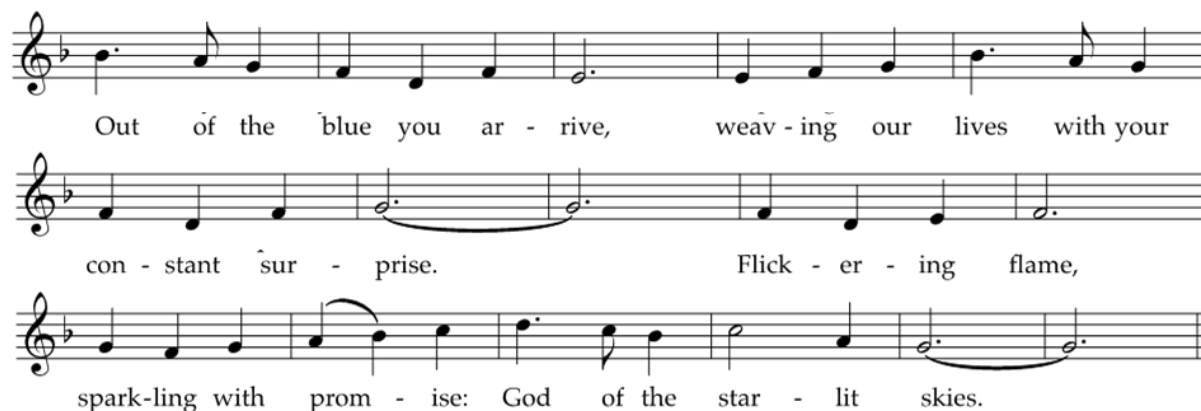
**Or, the person we have longed to know now rests by our side, peacefully breathing.**

God's goodness has always grown quietly in our midst, like the infant who has grown just out of sight, just beyond our touch.

**This final candle represents the moment we see and hold God's promise for ourselves.**

*The fourth candle is lit.*

## ADVENT HYMN    God of the Starlight and Moon



## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

+ WORD +

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

READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

*At the conclusion of the reading:*

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION - same as last week

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

*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.**

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel vs. 1-4

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.**

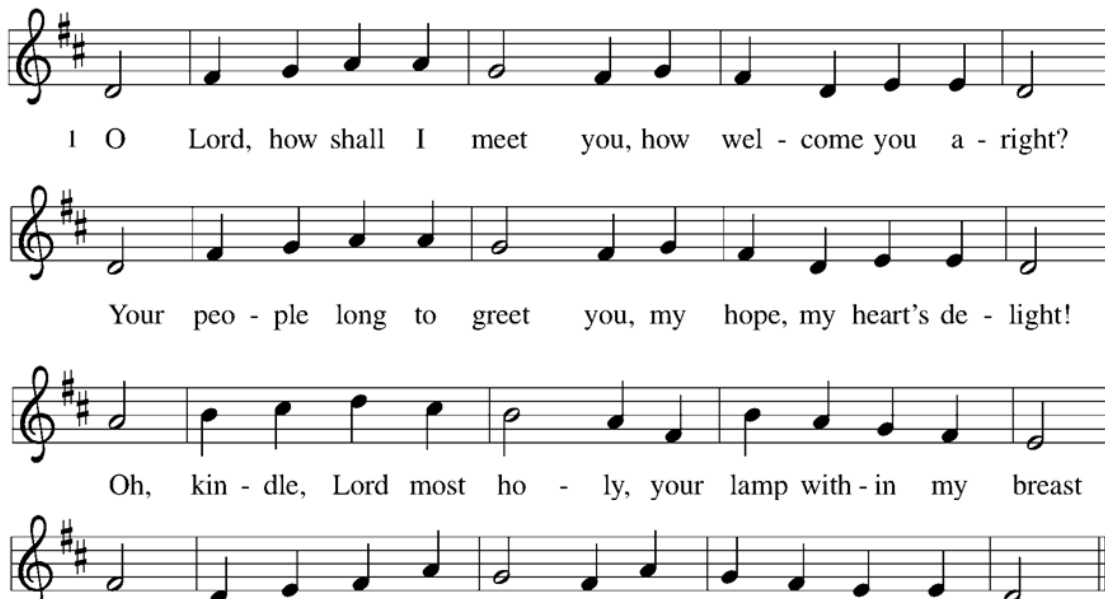
**The Holy One is coming,  
to make holy once again  
all that was, is, and ever will be.**

**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



I 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.**

+ 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 267 Joy to the World

### DISMISSAL

Go in peace to wait and watch.  
**Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE Sicilian Mariners - Douglass E. Wagner

*The liturgy for today's worship service was reprinted by permission from Sundays and Seasons.com, copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #45176. The hymns and songs unless otherwise noted, are covered under copyright licenses; CCLI 1490857, OneLicense.net A-709256, or are Public Domain. Copyright 2025. Seasonal Advent worship resources taken from Out of the Blue © 2025 Barn Geese Worship. Used by permission. Some pieces have been adapted by Pastor Becky Schanely. Statement of Faith written by Rev. Rebecca F. Harrison, adapted by Pastor Becky Schanely.*

## Mark Your Calendar

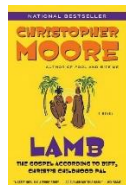
Monday, December 22	7:30pm Exec Meeting
Wednesday, December 24	10am Set up Luminaries 3pm Family Service 7pm Traditional Service 10pm Traditional Festival Service
Friday, December 26	10am Pick up Luminaries 12-5pm Red Cross Blood Drive
Sunday, December 28	10:15am Lessons & Carols Worship

**Donate Blood** St. John's is sponsoring a Red Cross Blood Drive Friday, December 26 from 12-5pm **Sign up today at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)**

### **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#/>



### **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 January 25, 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.

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



3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays from 6-7 PM

Jan 21 – Friedens UCC, Sumneytown

The poster for "Longest Night Services" has a dark blue background with white stars and a large yellow star in the upper right. The title "Longest Night Services" is written in a white cursive font. Below it, the text "WORSHIP CENTERED ON PEACE HOPE AND HEALING" is in white capital letters. The date "SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21" is in yellow capital letters. Two service times are listed in yellow: "2:00 PM - ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN" with the address "1244 St. Paul's Church Road, Pennsburg, PA" and "6:00 PM - ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN" with the address "3104 Main Street, Green Lane, PA".

*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

The poster for Christmas Eve and Christmas Season has a blue background with white snowflakes and yellow stars. The text "Join us at St. John's" is in a white cursive font. The title "Christmas Eve" is in large white capital letters, followed by "Wed, December 24" in white capital letters. Three service times are listed in white: "3:00 PM - Family Christmas worship with carols, communion and special children's message", "7:00 PM - Traditional Christmas worship with candlelight and communion", and "10:00 PM - Traditional festival Christmas worship with choirs, candlelight and communion". The title "Christmas Season" is in large white capital letters, followed by "Sun. December 28" and "Service of Lessons and Carols at 10:15 AM" in white capital letters. At the bottom, "Sun. January 4" and "Service of Epiphany at 10:15 AM" are listed in white capital letters.

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