

# PEACE



*Prepare the way before me*

**TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
2340 State Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520  
717-569-1632

Website: [www.trinityeastpete.org](http://www.trinityeastpete.org) E-Mail: [secretary@trinityeastpete.org](mailto:secretary@trinityeastpete.org)

The Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Rankin, Pastor

The Rev. Harry G. Royer, Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Carolyn Call, Covenanted Minister of Mission

Mr. Michael Slechta, Director of Music/ Sounds of Trinity Choir Director

Mrs. Christine Oetama, Organist

Mrs. Carmen Richards, Pianist

Mrs. Carol Kratz, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Sean McKelvey, Preschool Director

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## **SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

### **8:00 A.M. SERVICE**

**Today's Theme:** Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

**Prayer:** *Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **MISSION MOMENT**

**Rev. Jack Esbenshade**

**"U.C.C. CHRISTMAS FUND"**

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

### **AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

We turn to you, O God, in the midst of our lives.

**We gather at your table to remember your mighty works of old.**

Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

# CONFESSION OF SINS

## CALL TO CONFESSION

John the Baptist calls us to repent, to prepare for the coming of God's reign.

**Let us heed John's call and confess our sins in silent prayer.**

*(SEATED OR KNEELING)*

## SILENT CONFESSION OF SINS

### CONFESSION OF SIN

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

**God for whom we wait, in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend to your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

### KYRIE

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

### ACT OF PRAISE

O God, open my lips.

**And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.**

**Amen.**

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE/TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

We gather around the Advent wreath today knowing that we are not perfect—that we all make mistakes and do bad things.

**Only Jesus obeyed God fully. Jesus helps us to live as God wants us to live. Jesus gives us peace.**

We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is peace, for Christ is called the “Prince of Peace.” Christ’s name is also Emmanuel, “God with us.” The presence of Christ with us gives peace day by day.

Let us pray together.

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ’s advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.

## THE WORD OF GOD

### **THE FIRST LESSON** Malachi 3:1-4

*God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) shall prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined*

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

### **THE PSALTER** The Canticle of Zechariah – Luke 1: 68-79

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. **He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David,**

As he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, **that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.**

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, **to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, **to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.**

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, **to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’**

## THE SECOND LESSON

Philippians 1:3-11

*The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.*

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

St. Luke 3:1-6

*John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by “repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.*

*Glory be to You, O Lord.*

## THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD

*Praise be to You, O Christ.*

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

## SERMON

“Walking in the Way of Peace”

Pastor Rankin

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## PEOPLE’S OFFERING

### OFFERING DEDICATION

How good you have been to us, gracious God! How meagerly you have responded. You have restored our fortunes when we felt all was lost. You have filled our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. We give thanks, not only with a portion of our income, but also through renewed commitment to righteous living. By your grace, we share in the work Christ came to accomplish among us. May love abound in and through us. Amen.

## THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord!**

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

It is very right and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star. We thank you for your constant love and for all you have made. We thank you for all that sustains life, for all people of faith in every generation who have given themselves to your will and especially for Jesus Christ, whom you have sent from your own being as our Savior. Born of your servant Mary, Jesus shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it. As we now await the birth of the Christ child, we offer you our hymn of praise.

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God, Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

### **THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD**

**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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.**

### **COMMUNICATION**

As this grain was once scattered in the fields, and has come together in one bread, so we, with different needs and hopes, come together as one, for we share one bread.

**The Bread of Life, broken for us.**

The cup which we share is the cup of the New Covenant written in our hearts and witnessed by Jesus.

**The Cup of Blessing, poured out for us and for the many.**

(You are invited to partake of the elements)

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## POST COMMUNION PRAYERS

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all peoples and places that yearn for God's presence.

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our conference ministers, pastors, elders, deacons, and lay leaders confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely or ill. Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Let us pray together.

**Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and guest. Amen.**

## CLOSE OF WORSHIP

### BENEDICTION



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Chancel Flowers** are given by **John & Sarah Paulukow** in honor and remembrance of all our loved ones as we continue to go forward to find PEACE.

**The Worship Aids** are given by **Kathy McCarty** with love, to my husband in honor of our 50th wedding anniversary on December 11.

**Money Counters:** Nevin Cooley, John Bailey, Pat & Joan Sensenig

**Building Trustee:** Pat Sensenig

**Lector:** Rev. Jack Esbenshade

**Happy Birthday!**

Today – Theodore Slechta

Tuesday – Steve Shenk, Diane Summers

Wednesday – Ronda Hartenstine

<b>Attendance for Sun., Nov. 28</b>	8:00–26	10:30–52	<b>TOTAL – 78</b>
<b>Sunday School</b>	15		

**This Week at Trinity Church**

**(Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-2 p.m.)**

Monday Secretary Out of Office

Wednesday 7:00 PM – Preschool Board/Finance Committee

Thursday 10:00 AM – Mercersburg Study Group

6:30 PM – Cub Scouts

Saturday 7:00 PM – Alanon

8:00 PM - AA

Sunday 8:00 AM – Eucharist

9:00 AM – Sunday School

10:30 AM – Worship

**THE DECEMBER PARISH POST** is available on both floors of the church building.

**DEVOTIONALS:** The October-December edition of *These Days* can be found on both floors of the church building.

**ADVENT DEVOTIONALS & CALENDARS:** There are devotionals available for adults & children and Advent calendars for children on the table across from the church office.



**CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTMAS CARD:** Don't forget to sign the congregational Christmas card on the table across from the church office. There is a box for you to put a monetary donation for the Hempfield Power Packs Project.

**PRAYER CONCERNS:** Patrick & Mel (nephew of Marianne Gible & his wife), the family of Don Huber, the family of Joyce Becker, Denny Eberly, Robert Richards (brother of Jerry Richards), Hillary Brennan (mother of John Brennan), Ann Wolf (neighbor of George & Sandy DeLong), the Brennan family, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, David & Ann Potts (friends of Brenda & Harry Himelwright), Pete & Nora Petrosky (friends of Dr. Cathy Hoshauer), Lynn Dull, Jill Otthofer, Paul Zirkel (son of Donna Zirkel), Ronald Himelwright (grandson of Brenda & Harry Himelwright), Barry Richards (son of Jerry & Carmen Richards), Tyler Miller (grandson of Iris DeMaio), Joan Kalbach (mother of Dr. Cathy Hoshauer), Donna Denlinger, Cathy Hoshauer, Pat Miller, Nancy Patton, Gary Reynolds (friend of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Rev. Bob & Nancy Musser, Phyllis Zimmerman, Donna Zirkel, Jose Arroyo (husband of Sandy & George DeLong's niece), Chris Rice (nephew of Diane Rice & Karen Olley), Jaimie & Aurora Commero (friends of Sarah Paulukow), Mark Zody (friend of Denise Huggins), Jim & Kathy Long (friends of Jerry & Carmen Richards), John Siebern (Bob Siever's brother-in-law), Carl Roth (Gretchen Leinbach's brother), Scott Summers, Rev. Frank Lantz, Lainie Christensen, Sandra Englert (niece of Betty Tyndall), Charles & Betty Booraem, Betty Tyndall and family, Dorothy Fasnacht, Jo Jo Richards & family (Carmen & Jerry's granddaughter-in-law), Bob & Marlyn Wible, Lily Kilgore & family, Barry Moore (Donna & Ron Denlinger's brother-in-law), Sam & Rosemary Minder, Jordan Sensenig (grandson of Pat & Joan Sensenig), Judy Wisniewski (sister of Chuck Husted), Elaine Sturgis (friend of Sue Husted), Rev. Jere & Judy Chapman, Doris Leaman, Kelsey (Minnich) and Tom Burgo, Judie Bistline, Hilma Slechta, and the Bonilla-Rodriguez family (friends of Trinity Church).

**THE CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE NORTH WINDOW** is given in memory of Leon L. & Ethel Gruber by son Greg, daughter Sharon Armstrong, and granddaughter Jessica.

**THE CHRISMON TREE:** The Chrismons on the small tree in the stairwell were made by the late Edythe Geib. Several people have asked about the Chrismon tree. The term "Chrismon" comes from the Latin "Christi monnogramma" which simply means "monogram of Christ". Therefore, a Chrismon is a Christian symbol that represents Christ. There is a descriptive list of the various Chrismons next to the tree.

**THE ADVENT CANDLES AND CHRIST CANDLE** are dedicated to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Grace M. Dodson (mother) and Dolores A. Dodson (aunt) of Donna Wolf, given by the family and friends. The candle stand and wreath are in memory of S. Leona Wolf, mother of the late John Wolf.

**THE PEW CANDLE HOLDERS**, made by John Barr, were given by John and Dolly Barr.

**THE NATIVITY SCENE ON THE FRONT LAWN** was made by Mike Wagner.

**THE CRECHE ON THE LOWER LEVEL BY THE ELEVATOR** was made by Mike Wagner.

**NEW ADDRESS:** Roger & Mary Ann Bradley's address update was mistakenly left out of Parish Post. New address is: 3952 Columbia Avenue, St. Anne's Retirement Community, Apt. 85, Columbia, PA 17512, (717) 285 -6509

**2022 BUDGETS** are available on both floors of the church building. This was approved at the November 14 congregational meeting.

**CHILDREN'S MONEY BOXES:** The children's Sunday School class has been learning about sharing God's gifts with others. They created boxes to collect coins to support a mission project or the work of our Christian Education ministry. Look for the boxes on the table across from the church office. Talk to Anne Rankin for more information.

**ADVENT ENVELOPES:** The Board of Deacons decided to give all contributions from the Advent Envelope to the U.C.C. Christmas Fund. We will learn more about the Christmas Fund next week.

**PINOCHLE FELLOWSHIP:** Mark your calendars now because the Pinochle Fellowship will meet again on January 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. There is no December meeting. Look for more information in the December Parish Post. You can respond using the electronic version that Carol already sent via e-mail or on the website under Ministries! Speak with Karen Olley for more information!



**WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS:** We are looking for worship volunteers at the in-person worship services:

**Greeters/Ushers:** To welcome worshippers at the door and to seat them in the sanctuary (10:30 a.m. service only)

**Lectors:** Assist with the worship service or to just read the scripture lessons at the 8:00 a.m. and/or 10:30 a.m. services.

Please contact Pastor Chris or Carol Kratz if you are willing to volunteer.

## **ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION**

The Rev. Robert G. Hunsicker was ordained on December 4, 1966 at St. Peter's U.C.C., Hilltown, PA. Rev. Hunsicker has served as a lector in worship at Trinity Church and is a member of the Lancaster CROP Walk Planning Committee.

He served the following pastorates:

**Pastor Emeritus, St. Andrew U.C.C.**

1981-05 Pastor, St. Andrew U.C.C., Lancaster

1974-81 Associate Pastor, Salem U.C.C., Doylestown

1968-74 Pastor of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, Germany

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. (2 Timothy 4:1-2 NRSV)

## **LUNCH WITH THE PASTOR**

Pastor Rankin is inviting members to take a break during the holiday rush and have lunch in Isenberg Hall on **Monday, December 20 from noon-1 p.m.** You bring your own lunch and enjoy the fellowship with your fellow church members. We will end our time with a brief devotional service.

**HARVEST HOME UPDATE:** Thanks to the congregation for your very generous donations of 426 pounds of food for the Food Hub. Thanks also to Tobe Rohrer for supplying the bales of straw, buckets of corn, baskets of apples and potatoes for our Harvest Home display. Your contributions help to feed our neighbors in need in the community.



## CHURCH COVENANT IN THE MIDST OF THE PANDEMIC

As an individual who attends Trinity United Church of Christ I covenant to work with my fellow church members, family and friends to keep our community safe and healthy.

I covenant to . . .

*Wear a face mask as a symbol of love and care for others.*

*Sit six feet apart from others, leaving room for God to work in the in-between spaces.*

*Clean up after myself in the spaces I use because germs are everywhere I go too!*

*Honor and respect the sacredness of each person in this space and to stay home if I don't feel well or have been around someone who is waiting the results of a COVID test, knowing God is with us wherever we are, whether inside or outside the walls of the church.*

*Work together with my church family in creating a safe and healthy space to gather for worship, fellowship, or church activities as one body, united in God's love.*

*Acknowledge the hard work ahead, and the commitment to care for one another.*

Together, we as the church, covenant to care and love one another in new and different ways as we:

- Share God's love with our community
- Serve God's children
- Bring healing and wholeness to those in need
- Share the Gospel in liturgy, music and study

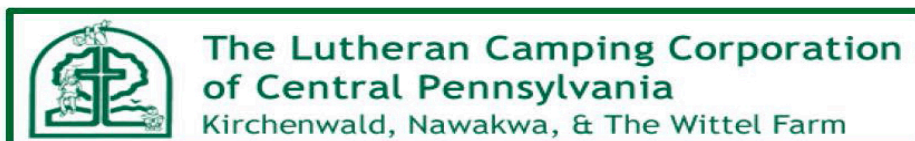
**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES:** Christian Education classes will be held for all ages at 9:00 a.m. Here are the locations for the classes:

1. **Children's Class** will meet in the classroom on the first floor.
2. **Middle School/High School Class** will meet in the classroom on the second floor.
3. **The Combined Adult Class** will meet in Isenberg Hall.

**There will be no Koinonia at this time!**

## 2022 CHANCEL FLOWERS AND WORSHIP AIDS SPONSORS

Contact Carol in the church office to sign-up for chancel flowers and worship aids for 2022. We recently changed florists and so the new price for flowers will be \$60. The price for worship aids will remain at \$26. If you have any flower cans from recent chancel flowers, please return them to the church!!!



*For more information about upcoming events and to register, go to: <https://www.lutherancamping.org/upcoming-events/>*



### **ADVENT/CHRISTMAS**

#### **IN A BARN**

**December 19**

**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**At The Wittel Farm**

*Join us at the farm for our*

*4th annual*

*Advent/Christmas night.*

*Come gather around the*

*outdoor fire and have*

*cookies and cocoa in the*

*barn.*

*Lights and decorations!*

*For more information & to register, go to:*  
**<https://www.lutherancamping.org/event/christmas-in-the-barn-2021/>**

# 2021 HOLIDAY SEASON @ ZION LUTHERAN (LANDISVILLE)

**Holiday Concert at Zion**  
**Sunday, December 19**  
**3:00 p.m.**  
...  
Featuring the Hempfield High School  
Chamber Singers



**Hershey Handbell  
Ensemble**  
*Christmas*  
**Concert**  
AT ZION  
Sunday, December 12  
at 3:00 p.m.

Come enjoy the sounds of the season!  
Music will feature 7 ½ octaves of handbells  
played by the 15 member ensemble!

A free-will offering will be collected to help support the Zion Musik Concert Series.  
info@hersheyhandbellensemble.org - (717) 298-7071 - hersheyhandbellensemble.org



**Connecting with others**  
**Connecting with God**  
**Connecting others with God**  
*All are welcome!*



85 E. Brandt Blvd.  
(Off Main St. in Landisville)

717-898-2911



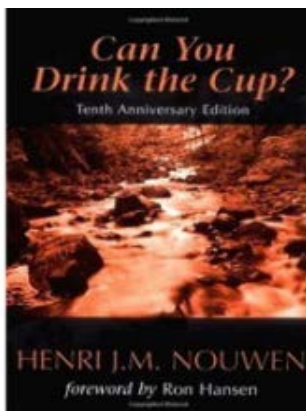
adminzelc@comcast.net



Zion Lutheran Hempfield



## JANUARY BOOK STUDY



Pastor Rankin will be leading a book study via Google Meet on January 17, 24, and 31 from 7-8 p.m. We will be reading Henri Nouwen's *Can You Drink the Cup?* *This question---one that Jesus asked his friends James and John---"has the power to crack open the hardened heart and lay bare the tendons of the spiritual life," explains world-renowned spiritual writer Henri Nouwen.*

*The cup, a powerful image in the human experience, a symbol used to celebrate a wide range of human endeavors, becomes for Nouwen a doorway opening on the spiritual horizon. "Drinking our cup to the bottom is seen as the expression of the full freedom of the sons and daughters of God," he writes. His goal is to make the question Jesus posed pierce our hearts so that a personal answer can emerge from it.*

Please sign-up by contacting Carol in the church office. The deadline to order books through the church is December 27.

# Save The Date!

## The Twenty Third Annual MS Benefit Holiday Concert

### Friday, Dec. 17, 2021 at 7:30pm

First Reformed Church U.C.C.  
40 East Orange Street, Lancaster, (717) 397-5149

In Person  
(masks suggested)  
or Livestream at  
[www.QEBlive.com](http://www.QEBlive.com)

A free-will offering  
will be taken to benefit  
the National Multiple  
Sclerosis Society.



Quint Essentially  
**BRASS**

Doug Albert *trumpet*  
Gene Clark *trumpet*  
Kristen Albert *horn*  
Andy Walls *trombone*  
Geoff Davis *tuba*

## Come, Follow Me Retreat

Come  
Follow  
Me



Mark your calendars for a church retreat to be held at Trinity Church February 18-20, 2022. The retreat will be led by Pastor Rankin and Rev. Dr. Dave Bushnell, Pastor Emeritus of Hamilton Park U.C.C. and author of the retreat.

Here is what Dr. Bushnell says about the retreat:


*The Come Follow Me retreat seeks to invite people to experience being the body of Christ in our own time and place. This corporate identity, this “we”, can open us up to others, even to all creation. It invites us to experience others as I/Thou relationships (to use the Jewish scholar Martin Buber’s language).*

*In order to experience being the body of Christ today, the Come Follow Me retreat uses worship as its basic paradigm. The retreat follows the essential elements of worship from being called, to confession, then moving on to a unique experience of Jesus Christ, exploring how Jesus’ spirituality can help shape our own. The retreat includes a time of sharing deeply with one another remembering the waters of baptism. Then, after seeing the church as a community of abundant Christian practices, we will work to envision what our incarnational ministry will be like. Finally, we are sent out into the world, into “the long emergency” with solid “next steps” to follow.*

Contact the church office to register for this retreat!!!



***You are invited!***




The SOT Choir would like to  
invite the congregation to join them

in the church parking lot

on



***Dec 19 at 2:00 PM***



for a Christmas Carol Sing-along/Concert,  
weather permitting.





# Christmas Eve Services

December 24th

2:30 PM

6:30 PM

10:30 PM

We will have three in-person services this year.

2:30 p.m.--Traditional Service with Holy Communion

6:30 p.m.---Family Service

10:30 p.m.--Traditional Service with Holy Communion

We will consider streaming one of the services on our Facebook page. Look for more information in the weekly bulletins and emails from the pastor.

**DECEMBER 5, 2021**

**(C)**

**SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT**

**FIRST LESSON. Malachi 3:1-4**

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

**SECOND LESSON. Philippians 1:3-11**

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**GOSPEL. Luke 3:1-6**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

From the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible Copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

