



**ST. PETER'S**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WONDER

*Signs & Wonders*

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

*\*(Stand as you are able.)*

## GATHERING MUSIC

*Greeting      Announcements      Birthdays      Anniversaries*

PRELUDE: *“Come, Savior of the Nations”*, Walther

\*CALL TO WORSHIP: *\*(Stand as you are able.)*

Leader: Come apart to this place of rest and renewal;  
Let your spirits rejoice in the presence of God.

**People: We will sing of God’s steadfast love for all people.  
We will proclaim God’s faithfulness to all generations.**

Leader: God looks with favor on the humble and lowly.  
God’s covenant does not focus on rank or position.

**People: God strengthens those who are weak. The proud  
are scattered in the thoughts of their hearts.**

Leader: Blessed are those who walk in God’s light.  
Blessed are all who say ‘yes’ to God’s call.

**People: Let the heavens proclaim the wonders of God.  
Let all the earth rejoice in Christ’s coming.**

\*HYMN OF PRAISE: #155 *“Once in Royal David’s City”*

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY:

Leader: How do we find “Joy” in a weary world?

**People: We find joy in our hearts and minds as we  
celebrate Christ’s presence in our lives.**

Leader: Are there times when “Joy” is not present with us?

**People: NO! Joy is always present when we choose to  
follow Christ.**

Leader: So, our “Joy” isn’t dependent on our moods?

**People: No! Our “Joy” comes from a deep well of gratitude within us.**

Leader: Today we light the candle of Joy to let the world know how grateful we are to have Christ in our lives.

**People: May this light of Joy burn within in all people so that the world may know God is with us! Amen.**

Choral Response: *“A Thousand Candles” #159 vs. 1-4 (sung by choir)*

### LIGHTING CANDLES OF REMEMBRANCE *(Blue Christmas)*

Each of us comes bearing our own challenges, feeling sorrow for loved ones gone or far away, and struggling to mend our broken places. This is a time for each of us to offer up these challenges, sorrows, and struggles to the God who loves and offers hope when all hope seems lost.

Feel free to pray silently at your seat or come forward and share your prayer silently with God as you light a blue candle.

To be anointed, come forward to the altar. Briefly, state your prayer request. This prayer will be held up to God and oil placed on your forehead or hand as you request.

### THE PRAYER OF JESUS *(Unison)*

**All:** Merciful God, we pray that we be comforted in our suffering and made whole. When we feel afraid, give us courage; when we feel afflicted, afford us patience; when we are lost, offer us hope; when we are alone, move us to stand beside one another. In the name of Emmanuel, Christ is with us, Amen.

\*HYMN OF MEDITATION: #160 *“Lo! How a Rose E’er Blooming”*  
*(Please be seated)*

### PASTORAL PRAYER THE LORD’S PRAYER

Choral Response: #126 *“A Nativity Prayer”*

### A TIME OF LISTENING TO GOD’S WORD

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: LUKE 1:26-38 #831

CHOIR ANTHEM: "O Holy Night" #148

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION: "WONDER"

## A TIME OF GIVING

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Doxology *\*(Stand as you are able.)* #625 unison prayer of dedication  
praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise God all creatures here below;  
praise God above ye Heavenly host; \*\*  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen. *(Please be seated.)*  
*(\*\*alternate: Creator, Christ and Spirit, One. Amen)*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

## A TIME OF GOING OUT

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

*(We offer one another the peace of Christ for the week ahead.)*

\*HYMN SENDING FORTH: #157 "Away in a Manger"

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: "Wachet auf!", Bach

*(Please remain seated "quietly" during the postlude.)*

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*Everyone is Welcome!*

**Feel at home, for Christ Jesus is our host. If you are visiting for the first time, we are delighted to have you here!**

The Psalmist sings: *“Worship the Lord with gladness; come into God's presence with singing... thanksgiving... and praise.”*  
We pray peace and joy to you, dear friend.

## WORSHIP TEAM

Senior Pastor	Pastor Chris Buckingham-Taylor
Organist	Allen Cadwallader
Zoom Director	Mary K. Kirsch
Worship Producer	Brian Schieferstein
Handbell Choir Director	Shelley Harmych
Choir Director	Jennifer Wasilk
Scripture Reader	Neil Wasilk
Ushers	Geoff Gatz, Linda Gatz, Betty Pekare, Karen Geduldig

# Church News

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Meet the Pastor | Sandstone Coffee House, Amherst  
**Wednesday from 9-11:00 a.m.**

## **Help Feed our Children!**



Needed items for **CHILDREN'S WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM**

- . Single Serving PB & Jelly
- . Mac & Cheese (Microwavable)
- . Oatmeal Packages
- . Peanut Butter Crackers
- . Individual Cereals
- . Small Bag Pretzels
- . Canned Soup (Pop top lids)
- . Granola Bars
- . Small Bag Chips
- . Spaghetti-Os (Pop top lids)
- . Fruit Cups & Jello Cups

We are also collecting 'regular food items' for families with food insecurities. Please leave your donations in the drop off boxes at the church. Pam Miskov will make sure donations are delivered.  
*Thanks to Pam and everyone who donates.*



**Please join us again this evening for our  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with  
Communion starting at 7 PM.**

Pastor Chris' Spiritual Reflection will be  
*"The Good Old Days"*.

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Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. Used together, they symbolize that Christians believe Jesus is the beginning and end of all things. **Can you find this ornament on our Chrismon Tree? If you find it see Linda for a treat!**

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**YOGA with Mary-K**

St. Peter's UCC, enter Chapel door to the lower level | Cost: \$10  
Wednesday Mornings | 8:30-9:45 AM (arrive by 8:25 AM)  
Thursday Evenings | 6:00-7:15 PM (arrive by 5:55 PM)

**No Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Thursday, Dec. 28th**

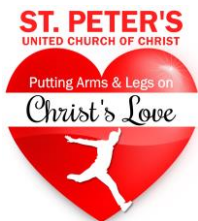
**Choir Rehearsal | Sunday, Dec. 31, 9 AM**

Please fill out the Participation cards and drop into the offering plate. *Cards should be filled out weekly.* Thank you!

Help us continue to move forward in faith by submitting your pledge card, if you have not already done so. Thank you.

“When leaving the church, please make sure to push the door closed. There have been times it’s left unlocked.” *Thank you!*

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At St. Peter's we work together in love to build strong foundations for our lives in Christ. This firm foundation allows us to put **“Arms and Legs on Christ’s love in the world.”** We believe that God is calling you to be embraced by God's radical love and to be a part of this foundation of faith.

Join us LIVE on **Facebook: St. Peter’s UCC Amherst, OH**

**Zoom: Meeting ID: 524 411 3917 | Passcode: 379205**  
(or call in with phone: 1 929 205 6099)

The service will be posted at a later date to view on our **YouTube channel: St Peters UCC Amherst**

**NEW!** Be sure to check out **“A minute with Pastor Chris”** on YouTube! Also, please Subscribe, Like and Share



## This Week's Events

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Mon., Dec.25	Christmas Day office closed
Tues., Dec. 26	Christmas holiday office closed
Wed., Dec. 27	YOGA with Mary-K, 8:30-9:45 AM Coffee Chats, Sandstone, 9-11 AM
Thurs., Dec. 28	YOGA with Mary-K, 6:00-7:15 PM No Handbell Choir Rehearsal
Sun., Dec. 31	Worship Service, 10 AM, Choir Rehearsal, 9 AM

## How To Reach Us

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**Office Hours:** Mon.–Fri. 8:30-12:30 PM *and* 1-2:30 PM  
Afternoons available by appointment with Pastor Chris

**Address:** 582 Church St. Amherst OH 44001

**Website:** [www.stpetersamherst.org](http://www.stpetersamherst.org)

**Phone:** 440-988-4965

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Christine Burman, Church Council President  
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Kaye Oswald, Church Office Administrator  
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Please visit our website, **[www.stpetersamherst.org](http://www.stpetersamherst.org)**  
*to make your donation electronically* via Breeze or Paypal.  
**Also, we now have the ability to accept donations by TEXT!**  
For more detailed information, contact the church office.

**ST. PETER'S**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Please remember St. Peter's UCC in your will.*