



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



When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.

MATTHEW 2:10-11

**Third Sunday in Advent**

**December 15, 2024**

# ORDER OF WORSHIP

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

## GATHERING MUSIC

*Greeting      Announcements      Birthdays      Anniversaries*

PASTOR: *“This is the day the lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

PRELUDE: *“Sussex Carol”, Willcocks*

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

One:      Faithful people have always trusted God  
to restore and renew their lives.

Many:      **The psalmist stated, “The Lord has done  
great things for us, and we rejoiced.”**

One:      Today we light the candle of joy, remembering  
those who found cause to rejoice as God’s promise  
of salvation unfolded.

Many:      **We share the sacred story with angels,  
shepherds, a baby in a stable and experience  
once again the joy of this season.**

\*HYMN OF PRAISE: #124 *“Come Thou Long-expected Jesus”*

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY:      Walter Beale

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.**

Leader: We now light the candle of JOY.

Choral Response: *"A Thousand Candles" #159 vs. 1-3 (sung by choir)*

**\*MORNING PRAYER/INVOCATION** *(Unison)* Walter Beale

As we sing songs of the season, O God – songs of hope, peace, and love – we hear you echoing the joy that is part of it all. We sing in your choir, and we hear your voice singing back to us. All of creation rings with the joy of your presence, your love, your promise, your hope. And we desire to sing - Joy to the world!

Choral Response: *Gloria Patri #623*

*(Please be seated)*

HYMN OF MEDITATION: #151 *"Good Christian Men Rejoice"*

**PASTORAL PRAYER      LORD'S PRAYER**

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, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Choral Response: #126 *"A Nativity Prayer"*

**TIME OF LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD**      Walter Beale

LESSONS FROM SCRIPTURE: Philippians 4:4-7 & Luke 3:7-18

CHOIR ANTHEM: *"O Come O Come Emmanuel"*

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION: *"Ignited by Fire"*

# 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.)*

Choir leads the Congregation in *"We Wish You a Merry Christmas"*

*We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
And a Happy New Year!  
Good tidings to you wherever you are.  
Good tidings for Christmas and a Happy New Year!  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
We wish you a Merry Christmas,  
And a Happy New Year!*

\*HYMN SENDING FORTH: #132 *"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: *"A Virgin Most Pure"*, Wood

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

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*Everyone is Welcome!*

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**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**

Guest Minister	Rev. Gary Halstead
Organist	Allen Cadwallader
Zoom Director	Mary K. Kirsch
Zoom Assistant	Tom Hollstein
Worship Producer	Brian Schieferstein
Handbell Choir Director	Shelley Harmyach
Choir Director	Jennifer Wasilk
Scripture Reader	Walter Beale
Ushers	Fred Helyes, Lynda Helyes, Don Ramsey, Karen Geduldig

# Church News

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**Rev. Halstead** comes to us this morning from Berea, Ohio, where he lives in retirement with his wife Suzanne. His last position was as the Interim Associate Association Minister with the Living Water Association. His first pastorate was as the Associate at Olmsted Community Church in the 80's and his last was as the Pastor at First Congregational Church in Berea. He has served congregations in Syracuse, Boston, NE Ohio, Chicago, and SE PA. He has served as the Director of Outdoor Ministries here in NE Ohio and SE PA. He is also a therapist working with individuals and couples since the mid 80's. In retirement he is focusing on helping churches with their Legacy as they decline, and working with NPO's working to mitigate climate change.

# St. Elizabeth Homeless Shelter

2726 Caroline Ave., Lorain

On **Wednesday, Dec. 18** we need volunteers to serve starting at 4:30 PM, or to bake cookies or cupcakes. If you want to help, please see **Betty Pekare**. Thank you for your help!

## Help Feed our Children!



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

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

They will also be making up **Christmas Care Packages** that will include food, plus a gift card. They're asking for donations of stuffing, instant potatoes, gravy (bottled or canned), and canned pumpkin pie mix or puree. Thank you for your help!

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## Christmas Fund Offering

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to UCC ministers, church workers, and their families in their moment of deepest need. Last year, over 1,800 congregations, including St. Peter's, joined together to secure the physical, financial, and spiritual health of those engaged in the life of the Church. Thank you for your support! **We will take up our offering next Sunday.**

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## Preschool Christmas Program

The children's Christmas program will be held on December 18 at 6:30 pm. in the Sanctuary. Refreshments to follow in the fellowship hall. *Everyone is welcome!*

## Circle Six Christmas Cookie Sale today!



Circle Six will be holding our annual Christmas cookie sale in Fellowship Hall today after worship. Make sure to stop by to purchase some delicious holiday cookies. Thank you!

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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)

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

### The office will be closed Thursday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>

I'll be taking a vacation day. If you need anything, please leave me a message and I'll return your call on Friday.

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Are you *being* the church, or are you *going* to church?



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**



## This Week's Events

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- Mon., Dec.16    Communion Visits, 1-4 PM  
                    Church Council Meeting, 7 PM Zoom
- Tues., Dec. 17    Preschool starts Christmas vacation  
                    Bible Study, Zoom, 7 PM
- Wed., Dec. 18    YOGA with Mary-K, 8:30-9:45 AM  
                    Coffee Chats, Sandstone, 9-11 AM  
                    St. Elizabeth Meal, 4:30 PM  
                    Preschool Christmas Program, 6:30 PM
- Thurs., Dec. 19    *Office closed for a vacation day.*  
                    YOGA with Mary-K, 6:00-7:15 PM  
                    Handbell Choir Rehearsal, 7 PM
- Sun., Dec. 22    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

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

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

**Phone:** 440-988-4965

*We are currently searching for a new pastor. If you need help, please contact either Christine or Kaye at the phone numbers below.*

Christine Burman, Church Council President  
[president@stpetersamherst.org](mailto:president@stpetersamherst.org) 440-988-4965

Kaye Oswald, Church Office Administrator  
[admin.ofc@stpetersamherst.org](mailto:admin.ofc@stpetersamherst.org) 440-988-4965

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 estate planning.*