



ST. PETER'S
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



CHRISTMAS EVE

Candlelight

SERVICE

December 24, 2024

7:00 PM

ORDER OF WORSHIP

**(Stand as you are able.)*

GATHERING MUSIC

HANDBELL CHOIR: *“Go, Tell It on the Mountain”*, spiritual, arr. by Susan E. Geschke *“Westminster Chimes”*, by Douglas E. Wagner, *“Joy to the World”*, ANTIOCH, George Frederick Handel, 1685-1759, arr. Bill Ingram

PRELUDE: *“Come O Savior of the Nations”*, Bach

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

Leader: God reigns; let the earth rejoice.
God saves; may all human kind respond with joy.

**People: We are the people of God, rescued and redeemed.
God sends light to guide us on our way.**

Leader: Give thanks to God’s holy name.
Praise God’s goodness and loving kindness.

**People: We are called to prepare the way for others;
We have good news to share with the world.**

Leader: A child comes as God’s sign of peace.
Glory to God in the highest.

**People: We have come to see what God is doing.
Let us glorify and praise God in our worship.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE: #145 *“O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

CHRIST CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY: Neil Wasilk

Leader Rejoice, people of God! The light has come into the world. O God, now we light the candle of your nativity! With the company of heaven and with sounds of great joy, you come to us. This is the time of light and resplendent joy. God has been born among us. We remember...

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed a time when those who walked in the shadows would see a great light. A light would shine and a child would be born to us. The evangelist Luke painted the nativity sky and repeated the heavenly song of the angels, "Glory, peace on earth and goodwill!" John declared that this great light is Christ, the Word made flesh. This great light lives among us. By it we behold God's glory—full of grace and truth. At Christ's nativity, we now rejoice.

People: God, our Life and Light, thank you for coming this night to us. Thanks for touching all heaven and earth with your splendor. In every corner of the world, shine this night with your peace. In every corner of our hearts, shine this night with your grace. Amen.

Leader: We now light the candle of the Christ Child.

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

***EVENING PRAYER/INVOCATION** (*Unison*) Neil Wasilk

Come, righteous God, to the forsaken corners of our cities, to the ghettos of self-protection we erect around us, to troubled lives focused on things that do not satisfy. We cling to the story that you have acted in human history to bring light and hope and joy, even in the midst of fear, oppression, and suffering. You have offered to humankind the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. May this gathering awaken hope and open us to the gifts you are even now waiting to give us. Amen

Choral Response: *Gloria Patri* #623

***HYMN OF MEDITATION: #140 "Communion Hymn for Christmas"**
(*Please be seated*)

PASTORAL PRAYER

Gracious and almighty God, we give you thanks and praise for the gift of your son Jesus Christ and the message of hope and

truth that he shared with all your children on earth. Bless us now as we rejoice in His coming and His precious word that has blessed our souls. We ask a special blessing as we remember those who have departed from this mortal life this past year. Comfort us as we remember the void in our lives that was left

in their departing. In this season of giving we remember the special gifts provided by the lives of Fred Beiswenger, Donald Flock, Don Krueck, Beverly Mischka and Mary Ann Sterna. These humble children of God have now returned to you in Heaven as gifts from those of us on earth. We thank you for allowing them to be part of our lives for so many years. Receive now the gift of our gratitude. Inspire us to share the good news of Jesus Christ through our words and deeds. We pray this all in the name of the one whose birth we celebrate and who taught us to pray in this way, saying:

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"*

A TIME OF LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD Neil Wasilk

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: ISAIAH 9:6 #555

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: LUKE 2:1-21 #832

CHOIR ANTHEM: *"O Holy Night"*

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION: "What if..."

A TIME OF GIVING

PASTOR: OFFERING INVITATION

Glorious God, we rejoice with the angels to celebrate the gift of your Son Jesus! We rejoice with gladness. You give us the

blessings of joy and peace through our Savior. May we exult in your goodness. As we bring our offerings, we ask that our lives reflect your joy and generosity. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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)*

PASTOR: OFFERTORY PRAYER

Gracious God, accept these gifts, and with them our lives, to be used in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A TIME TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the gospels tell us that on the first day of the week, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples in the place where they were gathered and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Come, then, to the joyful feast of the Lord.

The Thanksgiving

Pastor David: Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor David: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Congregation: It is right to give our thanks. It is our joy and our salvation at all times and in all places to give thanks to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, through Christ, our Lord.

Pastor David: Because the light of your glory has shone with splendor in our world. For you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son, to be born for us of Mary that we might have power to become

your children through him: who existed before the world was called into being, but came down to save us by being born of a humble virgin, lying in a crib, walking on earth as a man; who became poor that by his poverty we might become rich; who was humbled that we might be exalted; who gave us peace and joy when we were without hope and without God. Therefore, with the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth we proclaim and celebrate the birth of our Savior.

The Institution

Judy McCurdy: We give thanks to God the Father that our Savior, Jesus Christ, before he suffered, gave us this memorial of his sacrifice, until his coming again. For on the night of his arrest he took bread and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you; do this as a memorial of me." In the same way, he took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

The Memorial

All: Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free. Glory be to you, O Lord.

Prayer of Consecration

Pastor David: Heavenly Father, be present with your life-giving Word and Holy Spirit, that we may be nourished and strengthened through this supper. Grant that all who share the communion of the body and blood of your Son may be united in him. And may we remain faithful in love and hope until we feast joyfully with him in his eternal kingdom.

Preparation of the Elements

(as the Leader breaks the bread and pours the cup)

Judy McCurdy: The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

All: We who are many are one body for we all share in the same loaf. The cup for which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

The Invitation

Pastor David: Come, all you who are thirsty. Come to the waters and drink. All who are hungry come to the table and eat this bread.

The Dedication

Judy McCurdy: We praise you, Lord, for these your gifts of bread and wine. We offer you ourselves in your service. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Pastor David: We will receive the bread of heaven. We will drink the cup of salvation. The gifts of God for the people of God.

The Communion

(when the people are ready to eat the bread)

Judy McCurdy: Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for a complete remission of all our sins.

(when the people are ready to drink the cup)

Pastor David: Take, drink, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

The Thanksgiving

All: Brothers and Sisters in Christ, since the Lord has fed us at his table, let us praise his holy name with thanksgiving.

A TIME OF GOING OUT

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

(Now let us share with each other the Peace of Christ.)

Choir Leads 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 #147 “*Silent Night! Holy Night!*”
Sing Verses 1, 2, & 3

Accompanied by the Handbell Choir

The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration.

Bells play one time through

before the congregation sings.

Then the **congregation sings vs. 1, 2, 3**
accompanied by the bells.

Then after singing vs. 3, the bells will play one last time alone.

BENEDICTION: May the Grace of God and the Fellowship of
the Holy Christmas Spirit be with you all.

POSTLUDE: “*Unto Us Is Born a Son*”, Willlocks
(Please remain seated “quietly” during the postlude.)

The Hymnal For Worship and Celebration ©1986 Word Music. Used by/with permission
CCLI No. 2411660 / 20182679. Used by/with permission One License # A-724594.



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

Guest Minister	Rev. David Rogers
Organist	Allen Cadwallader
Zoom Director	Mary K. Kirsch
Zoom Assistant	Tom Hollstein
Worship Producer	Brian Schieferstein
Handbell Choir Director	Shelley Harmych
Choir Director	Jennifer Wasilk
Scripture Reader	Neil Wasilk
Ushers	Geoff Gatz, Linda Gatz, Lewis Zeller, Vicki Zeller

Church News

If you are visiting for the first time, we would *love* to have you join us each Sunday at 10 AM. The avowed purpose of this church shall be to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments: to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward mankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

Merry Christmas to all, and a very Happy New Year!

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

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 regularly.*



Flowers on the Altar

Flowers on the altar are given by Terry Deliman *in loving memory* of his beloved mother, Bev Mischka, and sister Susan



Deliman. May God continue to comfort the hearts of family and friends during the holidays.

"Perhaps they are not stars in the sky, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy." -Eskimo Saying

The other two vases of white flowers were from the funeral of **Sherry Spratt** from her family. Please keep her family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.

Front Steps will be closed January & February

For safety reasons the front steps to the sanctuary will be closed for the months of January and February. The elevator and west Walker lobby doors will be open.

A VERY BIG THANK YOU

From the bottom of my heart, thank you to all my St. Peter's friends. I love each one of you! -Kaye

YOGA with Mary-K

St. Peter's UCC, enter Chapel door to 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)*

Mary-K is a RN/BSN, with over 12 years of yoga teaching experience, and 30 years of personal practice. Cost is \$10 per class.

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.



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

Wed., Dec.25	Christmas Day office closed
Thurs., Dec. 26	Christmas holiday office closed YOGA with Mary-K, 6-7:15 PM
Fri., Dec. 27	The office will be open
Sun., Dec. 29	Worship Service, 10 AM, Choir Rehearsal, 9 AM

How To Reach Us

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

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 440-988-4965

Kaye Oswald, Church Office Administrator
admin.ofc@stpetersamherst.org 440-988-4965

Please visit our website, **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.