



**Saint Paul's United Methodist Church**  
"A Compassionate Community Led and Transformed by the Spirit."  
**Sunday, December 14th, 2025 - 10:30 AM Service**  
**Third Sunday of Advent ~ "Joy"**



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*We welcome you, trusting that this time of worship will open our hearts to experience the Spirit's movement among us. Together, we seek peace, health, and wholeness as we gather in God's presence.*

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*\*Indicates a standing portion of the service. Please stand as you are able.*

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**GATHERING**

**Gathering Music**

"Christmas Bells"  
(traditional German round)

*Molly MacMillan, piano*

"Gesu Bambino"  
by Pietro Yan, arr. by Ruby Shaw Ellis

*Festival Chimes*

**Greetings & Welcome**

**Centering Music**

"What Child is This?"  
arr. by Douglas E. Wagner

*Festival Chimes*

**Lighting of the Advent Candle**

*Katrina Carpenter, Olivia Haring*

**\*Opening Prayer** (unison)

**Here, at the nativity of your birth,  
give us the courage to face this moment  
with an uncanny joy.**

**Open us to new understandings of  
the unfolding story of your presence among us.**

**Show us how to praise you even when songs and carols feel empty.**

**We pray in the name of the Child,  
the One Who Uplifts our hearts and lives.**

**Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn**

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

*Molly MacMillan, piano  
Festival Chimes*

**\*Sharing Love & Peace with All**

**PROCLAIMING**

**A Message for All God's Children**

*Pastor Alicia Wood*

**Special Music**

"Antiphonal for Advent"

*Festival Chimes  
Chancel Choir*

**Scripture****Luke 1: 26-56***Joellyn Tuttle*

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!” Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel’s greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You’ll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus—‘Deliverance.’ His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?” The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.” Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.” With that, the angel left her.

Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!”

Mary said:

“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God, and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior. For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed. For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name. Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you. You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit; you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty. You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy—the promise you made to our ancestors—to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.”

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Church!

**Thanks Be to God!**

**Message**

“Finding Joy in The Moment”

*Pastor Alicia Wood*

**RESPONDING**

**\*Hymn of Response**

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

UMH #211

**Prayers of the People & The Lord’s Prayer**

*Jami Breedlove-Crouch*

**Offering Our Gifts to God**

**Offertory**

“Love Came Down to Us at Christmas”

*Molly MacMillan, piano  
Jackson Robinson, vocals*

**\*Doxology**

“What Gift Can We Bring” (*Verse 4*)

UMH #87

**\*Prayer of Dedication** (*in unison*)

**Gracious God, we thank you for sending us joy when we least expect it. We pray the gifts we bring may bring joy another person in need of your joy and grace. Amen.**

### SENDING FORTH

#### **Announcements & Closing Thought**

**\*Closing Hymn** "Joy to the World" UMH #246

**\*Dismissal with Blessing**

**Postlude** "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" *Molly MacMillan, piano*  
(Traditional Hymn)

#### -----PRAYERS-----

For **Prayer Chain Requests**, confidential concerns seen only by those who participate in the Prayer Chain, please contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch at [lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org) or Pastor Alicia at [pastor@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsithaca.org).

**Prayer Requests:** Family of Melissa Gould; Joan Reppert; Linda Yetter; Ruth Lovelace; Andrea Downing Zheng and family; Larry Roberts; Mary and Matthew Boardman. Pray for healing within the United Methodist Church as we live into the new reality of being a fully inclusive denomination.

Prayer requests will be published in the bulletin for four weeks. If you would like someone to remain on the list, Jami Breedlove-Crouch at [lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org) or 607-269- 5509. Please remember that we also need permission from the person listed.

### ***Our Giving Tree***

Local and World Missions Giving Tree The Local and World Mission "Giving Tree" in the Welcome Room has been adorned with tags for needed gifts to be distributed throughout our community. Gift tags for senior living centers, homeless shelters, and refugees and their families will be available. Gifts should be returned by Dec.18th. Your participation will warm the bodies and hearts of those who need it most.

### ***St. Paul's Ministries ~ Week of December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025***

#### **Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> – Third Sunday of Advent**

10:30am – Worship with – Sanctuary  
10:45am – Faith Explorers – Rm. 115, Main Floor  
11:30am – Coffee/Fellowship Time – Memorial Room  
12:00pm – Children's Ministry Cookie Decorating – Memorial Room

#### **Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

7:00pm – Advent Study Group – Memorial Room/ZOOM

#### **Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am – Staff Meeting – ZOOM  
7:00pm – Church Council – ZOOM/Memorial Room

#### **Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**

9:45am – Advent Coffee w/Pastor – Memorial Room  
7:00pm – Blue Christmas Service - Sanctuary

#### **Thursday December 18<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am – Crafters' Group – Durham Room  
6:00pm – Festival Chimes rehearsal – Sanctuary  
7:15pm – Chancel Choir rehearsal – Dining Room

#### **Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>**

Church Offices Closed

#### **Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>– Fourth Sunday of Advent**

10:30am – Worship– Sanctuary  
10:45am – Faith Explorers – Room 115, Main Floor  
11: 30am – Christmas Reception – Memorial Room

**Children and Worship** – Children are always welcome in worship! To help keep small hands busy, we have books and toys on the black cart near the main sanctuary door. **Children ages 4 to 11 are invited to participate in “Faith Explorers” following the “Message for Children” segment during worship (except on Communion Sundays).**

### ***Blue Christmas Service This Wednesday***

St. Paul's will be holding its annual Blue Christmas Service **this Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm**. This is a special service to acknowledge and remember those we have lost, which is important since the anticipation of renewed grief as Christmas Eve approaches can be hard to bear. Ritual helps us move through our sad feelings and funnel our heartbreak in ways that, while not alleviating it totally, gives space for a tangible remembering.

### ***It's Not Too Late to Join the Advent Study Group***

It's not too late to join the Advent Study Group as they discuss the book, "The First Advent in Palestine: Reversals, Resistance, and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope." To purchase a copy, please stop by the office and see Dee. The cost of the book is \$11. If paying by check, please make it out to "SPUMC" with "Advent Study Group" in the subject line. Please join us if you can!

### ***Coffee with the Pastor Continues***

Coffee with the Pastor meets again **this Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:45am**. We'll continue to discuss the Daily Journal for Advent that follows our Advent worship series, "What Child IS This? Beyond the Lullaby." Copies are available on the table outside the sanctuary; if you'd prefer to follow along online or download a copy at home, follow the link provided in the Friday email. Let's go deeper on our journey of faith this season.

### ***Christmas Reception Next Sunday***

Please join us after services next Sunday for our Christmas Reception in the Memorial Room. There will be snacks, drinks, and of course, a lot of glad tidings and cheer!

### ***Our Giving Tree***

Local and World Missions Giving Tree The Local and World Mission "Giving Tree" in the Welcome Room has been adorned with tags for needed gifts to be distributed throughout our community. Gift tags for senior living centers, homeless shelters, and refugees and their families will be available. **Gifts should be returned by Dec.18th**. Your participation will warm the bodies and hearts of those who need it most.

**\*Orders for poinsettias must be in by this Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. Order forms are available on the SPUMC website and in the office.**

#### **Our Staff**

**Rev. Alicia (Pastor Alicia) Wood** / Senior Pastor / [pastor@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Jami Breedlove-Crouch** / Loving Care Ministries Coordinator / [lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Dee Levine** / Church Administrative Assistant & Communications / [office@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:office@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Michelle Eells** / Business & Building Ministries Coordinator / [business@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:business@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Maia Finkel** / Choral and Ensembles Director / [choirdirector@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:choirdirector@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Molly MacMillan** / Pianist / [pianist@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:pianist@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**David Kingsley** / Technical Director / [dkingsley@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:dkingsley@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Dorothy Preston** / Festival Chimes Director / [dpreston@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:dpreston@stpaulsithaca.org)  
**Sue Orzel** / Custodian

#### **St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

402 North Aurora St., Ithaca, NY

Find us at [www.stpaulsithaca.org](http://www.stpaulsithaca.org), Facebook and Instagram

**Church Office Hours are 9:00 AM-12:00 PM Sunday – Thursday**

Office Phone: 607-273-5971 Pastoral Care Line: 607-269-5509

## Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee



1. Joy-ful, joy - ful, we a-dore thee, God of glo-ry, Lord of love;
2. All thy works with joy sur-round thee, earth and heaven re-lect thy rays,
3. Thou art giv-ing and for-giv-ing, ev-er bless-ing, ev-er blest,
4. Mor-tals, join the might-y cho-rus which the morn-ing stars be-gan;



hearts un-fold like flowers be-fore thee, open-ing to the sun a-bove.  
 stars and an-gels sing a-round thee, cen-ter of un-bro-ken praise.  
 well-spring of the joy of liv-ing, o-cean depth of hap-py rest!  
 love di-vine is reign-ing o'er us, bind-ing all with-in its span.



Melt the clouds of sin and sad-ness; drive the dark of doubt a-way.  
 Field and for-est, vale and moun-tain, flow-ery mead-ow, flash-ing sea,  
 Thou our Fa-ther, Christ our broth-er, all who live in love are thine;  
 Ev-er sing-ing, march we on-ward, vic-tors in the midst of strife;



Giv-er of im-mor-tal glad-ness, fill us with the light of day!  
 chant-ing bird and flow-ing foun-tain, call us to re-joice in thee.  
 teach us how to love each oth-er, lift us to the joy di-vine.  
 joy-ful mu-sic leads us sun-ward, in the tri-umph song of life.



## 211 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran-som cap-tive  
 2. O come, thou Wis-dom from on high, and or - der all things  
 3. O come, O come, great Lord of might, who to thy tribes on  
 4. O come, thou Root of Jes - se's tree, an en-sign of thy

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone-ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh; to us the path of knowl - edge show  
 Si - nai's height in an-cient times once gave the law  
 peo - ple be; be - fore thee ru - lers si - lent fall;

*Refrain*

un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 and cause us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-  
 in cloud and majes - ty and awe.  
 all peo-ples on thy mer - cy call.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

WORDS: 9th cent. Latin; trans. st. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab *The Hymnal*, 1940; st. 2, Henry SLOANE COFFIN, 1916; st. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd, Laurence HULL STOOKEY, 1986  
 VENI EMMANUEL  
 LM with Refrain  
 MUSIC: 15th cent. French; arr. and harm. by Thomas HELMORE, 1854

Sts. 1, 3, 5ab, 6cd, 7ab © 1940, 1943, renewed 1981 The Church Pension Fund; trans. sts. 4, 5cd, 6ab, 7cd; © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House; antiphons © 1962 Sisters of St. Benedict

5. O come, thou Key of David, come,  
and open wide our heavenly home.  
The captives from their prison free,  
and conquer death's deep misery.

*Refrain*

6. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thy justice here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

*Refrain*

7. O come, Desire of nations bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind.  
From dust thou brought us forth to life;  
deliver us from earthly strife.

*Refrain*

*Antiphons may be read before and between hymn stanzas.*

Antiphon 1 O EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver, the Expected of the nations and their Savior: **Come and save us, O Lord, our God.**

Antiphon 2 O WISDOM, who came forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, and ordering all things mightily and sweetly: **Come, and teach us the way of prudence.**

Antiphon 3 O ADONAI and Leader of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the flames of the bush and gave him the law on Sinai: **Come, and with your outstretched arm redeem us.**

Antiphon 4 O ROOT OF JESSE, who stands for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall keep silence and to whom the Gentiles shall make their supplication: **Come, and deliver us and tarry not.**

Antiphon 5 O KEY OF DAVID and Scepter of the house of Israel, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens: **Come, and bring forth from prison the captive who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

Antiphon 6 O DAYSPRING, Brightness of the light eternal and Sun of justice: **Come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

Antiphon 7 O KING OF THE GENTILES and their Desired One, Cornerstone that makes both one: **Come, and deliver us whom you formed out of the dust of the earth.**

## What Gift Can We Bring

Unison

1. What gift can we bring, what present, what to-ken?  
 2. Give thanks for the past, for those who had vi-sion,  
 3. Give thanks for to-mor-row, full of sur-pris-es,  
 4. This gift we now bring, this present, this to-ken,

What words can convey it, the joy of this day?  
 who planted and watered so dreams could come true.  
 for knowing what-ever to-mor-row may bring,  
 these words can convey it, the joy of this day!

When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,  
 Give thanks for the now, for study, for worship,  
 the Word is our promise always, forever;  
 When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,

what song can we offer in honor and praise?  
 for mission that bids us turn prayer into deed.  
 we rest in God's keeping and live in God's love.  
 this song we now offer in honor and praise!

## Joy to the World

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
 2. Joy to the world, the Sav - ior reigns!  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow,  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace,

Let earth re - ceive her King; let  
 Let all their songs em - ploy; while  
 nor thorns in - fest the ground; he  
 and makes the na - tions prove the

ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,  
 fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
 comes to make his bless - ings flow  
 glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness,

and heaven and na - ture sing, and  
 re - peat the sound - ing joy, re -  
 far as the curse is found, far -  
 and won - ders of his love, and

and re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is his  
 and won - ders of his

heaven and na - ture sing, and  
 peat the sound - ing joy, re -  
 as the curse is found, far -  
 won - ders of his love, and

sing,  
 joy,  
 found,  
 love,

and re - peat the sound - ing  
 far as the curse is his  
 and won - ders of his

heaven, and heaven, and na - ture sing.  
 peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 as, far as the curse is found.  
 won - ders, won - ders of his love.

sing,  
 joy,  
 found,  
 love,