

Welcome to Shenkel United Church of Christ!

Sunday, December 18, 2022 – Traditional Service at 9:45 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

~Gathering Together ~

Prelude "How Far Is It to Bethlehem" Tune: Stowey

Welcome

Invocation

Silence for Centering

Call to Worship

Pastor: On clear winter nights, taut with cold and alive with grandeur of God,

People: We watch with faith's eyes for a star that will soon arise.

Pastor: Amid the wrappings and writings, the seasonal songs and glad gatherings,

People: We prepare ourselves for the One who reveals God's ways in the realm of everyday.

Pastor: During the days ahead, as wonder-filled children of our Creator,

People: We await the Christ-child's birth;

All: And with Advent hopes kindling our spirits, we come to praise and worship God.

Opening Hymn "Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear" NCH # 105

Gentle Joseph, Joseph dear, stay with me, for the baby's near;

God will surely your goodness hear, as you will love this new-born child," says Mary.

"Gladly Mary, Mary mine, I will cradle the child divine;

Here will heaven and earth combine, for you will bear God's child, O dearest Mary."

"Peace to all and God's good-will," heaven and earth with this song will fill;

Soon will God, in the evening still, be born in Bethlehem, the child of Mary.

~ Coming Alive in Community ~

Learnings from the White Privilege Curriculum

Dan Jenkins/Connie Armbruster

Call to Confession

John the Baptist called people to repentance, to prepare them for the coming of God's reign. Let us, too, repent, that we may be ready for God who comes to us.

Prayer of Confession

God, we confess that it is not easy to wait for you. Our world worships the power that acts quickly through force; how difficult it is for us to wait for the power of your rule which comes slowly through love. We admit, that while claiming to desire your reign of peace and justice, we take part in the ways of war, hatred, and injustice. We leave little room for you to act in our lives. We turn now to you in repentance and openness to your Spirit. Forgive us, and show us how to clear a path for you. Come to us in your Christ, and reveal your reign on earth. Amen.

Silence for Prayer and Reflection.

Assurance of Forgiveness

God says: Remember these things, O Israel, for you are my servant; you will not be forgotten by me. I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. I say to you in the name of Jesus the Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Lighting of the Advent Candles & Advent Song - "Light One Candle for Messiah"

Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.
He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!

~ We Hear God's Word ~

Scripture Lessons

The Reading of Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Tootie Hine

The Epistle Reading: Romans 1:1-7

The Gospel Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Suzanne M. Spaulding

Hymn for Reflection

"All Earth Is Waiting"

NCH # 121

All earth is waiting to see the Promised One,
and open furrows the sowing of our God.
All the world, bound and struggling, seeks true liberty;
it cries out for justice and searches for the truth.

Thus says the prophet to those of Israel,
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel,"
One whose name is "God with us" our Savior shall be,
Through whom hope will blossom once more within our hearts.

Mountains and valleys will have to be made plain;
open new highways, new highways for our God,
Who is now coming closer, so come all and see,
and open the doorways as wide as wide can be.

In lowly stable the Promised One appeared,
yet feel that presence throughout the earth today,
For Christ lives in all Christians and is with us now;
again, arriving Christ brings us liberty.

~ *Sharing Blessings With Others* ~

Prayers of the People

The Prayer of Our Savior

Minister: Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.

All: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offering our Gifts - Thank you for your faithful support of Shenkel's ongoing ministries
The Christmas Fund provides assistance dollars in situations of critical need, including Pension Supplementation, Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to lower-income retired UCC pastors.

Offertory/ Special Music "The Advent of Our King" Sandy Rowe, soloist
Charles Coffin/ Aaron Williams © music arrangement © 2022 First Run Music Psalter (ASCAP)

Offering Response

Hope in the God who reigns above, who holds us all in steadfast love;
Whose spirit blows across the earth, preparing us for the second birth.

Prayer of Dedication

~ *Going out in Joy* ~

Sending Hymn "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" NCH # 127
Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem has sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming As saints of old have sung.
It came a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.

Isaiah had foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, the virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
when half spent was the night.

Benediction

Postlude "Joyous Postlude" arr. Bumgarner

Announcements

The Prayer Community asks you to join with us this week in praying for:

Jen & David Braley
Drew Sweinhart
Lori & Kaya Skulski & Jordan Gerhardt-Skulski
Gary McDermit
Ruth Brewer

The bulletins are sponsored by Gary & Sue Stultz.

~ This week at Shenkel UCC ~

Sun., 12/18 ~ Reflective Worship service at 8:30 am in sanctuary.
~ Worship service at 9:45 am in sanctuary
~ Lunch Bunch 1 pm in sanctuary
Tues., 12/20 ~ Midday Dinner Club at St. Peter's Inn at noon
Wed., 12/21 ~ Longest Night service at 7 pm
Sat., 12/24 ~ Candlelight Christmas Eve service with Communion at 7 pm

~Upcoming events at Shenkel UCC~

Sun., 12/25 ~ Worship service at 9:45 am in sanctuary.

Office Closed from December 26 – January 2

Scripture Readings for December 25:
Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; John 1:1-14

There will be a Congregational Meeting immediately after the services TODAY to approve the proposed 2023 Current and OCWM Budgets.

Pottstown Cluster. This month's items are mouthwash, toothpaste (kids and regular). Please place your items in the bin marked for the Cluster.

Volunteers Needed for acolyte and scripture readers. If interested, please see Tootie.

Youth Group is selling luminaries again this year. Look for the envelopes in the narthex or see any youth or Gloria Mest. Cost is \$5 each or 3 for \$10. Today is the deadline.

FINAL LUNCH BUNCH EVENT

Please come and join us as we celebrate the end of an era – Lunch Bunch. Lunch Bunch's favorite storyteller, Pastor Dan Moser, will be sharing a Christmas story with us followed by Christmas Carols led by Shenkel's organist Susan Royer. We would also like to take this time to honor Lunch Bunch's founder, Ruth Klein.

Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 1:00 PM in the Shenkel Church Sanctuary

We invite Shenkel and Temple congregations to join us. We will begin our program in the church sanctuary followed by cookies, punch and coffee in the social room. Take an hour or two break from your busy Christmas preparations and celebrate the season with us "Lunch Bunch style."

New Year's Day service. We will be having service in the social hall at 9 am with a light breakfast. Please feel free to bring breakfast pastries or donuts to share. Drinks will be provided. Randy Berriker will be leading the service.