

The Worship Service

Sunday, December 24, 2025

Shenkel United Church of Christ

1580 Shenkel Road, Pottstown, PA 19465

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Shenkel's UCC's Vision Statement

Shenkel United Church of Christ extends a heartfelt welcome to all unbound by physical structure or geography and grounded in creative worship, active spirituality, community action, love and service.

Welcome to Shenkel United Church of Christ!
An Open and Affirming congregation since 2018

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Prelude Celebrating the Child around the World

England: Prelude on Coventry Carol (arr. F. Moyer)

Island Medley:

Sheep Fast Asleep (from Japan)

As Shepherds Filled with Joy (from Puerto Rican)

Let Us Even Now go to Bethlehem (from the Philippines)

Glad Tidings (from Hawaii)

Italy: Sicilian Mariner's Hymn (arr. Fedak)

Poland: Variations on a Polish Carol (arr. Ritter)

France: The Holly and the Ivy (arr. R Miller)

Germany: Stille Nacht (arr. V Fox)

With Evie Grim on bells

Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Light a candle bright and tall
For the Christ we greet today.
Christ has come, our all in all.
With the angels, let us say:
Shine within our hearts today
Come, O Christ, to us, we pray.

Prayer

Call to Worship

L: Through lush farmland and bleak alleys

C: sweeps good news of great joy!

L: Through empty wants and desperate needs

C: blazes a star to light our way.

L: Through pounding turmoil and dazing fear

C: sounds an angel chorus:

**Glory to God in the highest;
peace to God's people on earth!**

L: Receive the news! Follow the star! Heed the angels!

C: Through song and silence, word and wonder, let us make our way to Bethlehem.

L: Let us worship the Holy One

who beckons in an infant's cry.

Carol: "O Come All You Faithful" (NCH#135)

Isaiah 52:7-10

Carol: "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" (NCH#131)

Psalm 98

Carol: "Joy To The World" (NCH#132)

Luke 2:1-20

Meditation Rev. Suzanne M. Spaulding

Carol: "O Little Town Of Bethlehem" (NCH#133)

Pastoral Prayer

Special Music: Welcome The Babe (Natalie Sleeth) (c) 19844 Cloisters Guild in the Cloristers Guild LETTERS [CCLI #705531] Music arrangement & additional material (c) 2000 First Run Muzik Psalter (ASCAP)

Offering

Offertory Carols for Quiet Stops (French Carol)

Offering Response

To God, all glorious hean'ly Light,
to Christ revealed in earthly night.
to God the Spirit now we raise
our joyful songs of thankful praise.
(Charles Coffin, 1736; trans. John Chandler, 1837, alt.)

Prayer of Dedication

Special Music: Lullaby (Ron Cadmus & Dan Wolgemuth) (c) 2000 First Run Muzik Psalter (ASCAP)

Celebration of Holy Communion

Invitation

P: Even as we celebrate tonight the incarnation and the beginning of Jesus' human life, we also remember the closing days of his earthly life. We are reminded of what great lengths God has gone to in order to be with us and to show to us the depth of Divine Love. We recall that when Jesus shared that last meal with his disciples, that he shared it with all of them; those who betrayed and denied him; those who ran away and those who stayed at the foot of the cross in his dying. So all are welcome at this table to which Christ invites us.

P: God be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to God.

P: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, gracious and merciful God. In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to

love the God whom we cannot see. And so with all the faithful of every time and every place, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

All: Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

P: As brothers and sisters in faith we recall that on the night of Jesus' betrayal and desertion that he had shared a meal with his disciples. At the meal he took break, blessed and broke it and gave it to them saying, "This is my body, given for you. Eat this for the remembrance of me." In the same way after supper he took the cup and gave it to all of them saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." We remember Christ's promise not to drink of the fruit of the vine again until the heavenly banquet at the close of history, and we say boldly what we believe:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: Come, Holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread, and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other, and in all for whom Christ died. Amen.

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Sharing the Elements

(Ushers will pass trays of bread and then wine and juice to the congregation seated in the pews. Once all have been served we will all commune together.)

Prayer after Communion

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Carol: Silent Night

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright
Round your virgin mother and child. Holy infant so tender
and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven a far heavenly host sing Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night, Child of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from your holy face bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Christ at your birth, Jesus Christ at your birth.

Benediction

Postlude

Good King Wenceslas (arr. V Fox)

Pastor: Rev. Suzanne M. Spaulding
Email: shenkelpastor@gmail.com
Sexton: Stacy Keim
Ministers: All Members of the Church

Music Director: Dan Wolgemuth
Organist: Susan Royer
Secretary: Danielle Petersen

Luminaries

Carol and Ronnie Pearson (2) – for a blessed and peaceful Christmas
Barry and Susan Miller (4) – in honor of our grandchildren and memory of Ethel Miller
The Hartzell Family (2) – in honor of our Children (Lucy and JJ) and in memory of Ethel Miller, our Nana
Randy and Brenda Berriker (2) – in memory of Harold and Mary Lou Smith, Dottie McCan and Calvin Berriker
Sandy Rowe (2) – in celebration of family
Louise and Tootie Hine (4) – in celebration of the Christ Child's birth
Gloria Mest (2) – in memory of Lewie Mest and in celebration of my sons, spouses and 5 grandchildren
Dan Jenkins (3)



Poinsettia Sunday Dedications

December 14, 2025

Connie Arbruster - In memory of Sam
Randy & Brenda Berriker - To our family
Louise & Tootie Hine - In celebration of the Birth of Jesus
Dan Jenkins - Shalom
Pat Kuestner - For our Amazing Musical Team
Brian & Pam McShane - In celebration of our Shenkel Friends
Ron & Carol Pearson - In memory of our parents John & Caroline Yearick and Nancy Delp
Sandy Rowe - In memory of Loved Ones
Homer & Susan Royer - In memory of Betty Kreiger
Pastor Suzanne Spaulding
Gary & Sue Stultz - Loved Ones
Barbara Sweinhart - Loved Ones
Dan & Rose Wolgemuth - In honor of Jeannie



“Go to the Limits of Your Longing”

by Ranier Maria Rilke

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,
then walks with us silently out of the night.

These are the words we dimly hear:

You, sent out beyond your recall,
go to the limits of your longing.
Embody me.

Flare up like a flame
and make big shadows I can move in.

Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.
Just keep going. No feeling is final.
Don't let yourself loose me.

Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its earnestness.

Give me your hand.