

# **The Worship Service**

## **Sunday, December 28, 2025**



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### **Shenkel United Church of Christ**

1580 Shenkel Road, Pottstown, PA 19465

610-326-3535 ~ [www.shenkelucc.org](http://www.shenkelucc.org) ~ [shenkelucc@aol.com](mailto:shenkelucc@aol.com) ~

### **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.

### ~Gathering Together~

Prelude                    "Masters in this Hall" (Traditional French Carol, arr Renfrow)

Welcome

Call to Worship

L: Praise the Lord!

**C: Praise the Lord from the heavens!**

L: Praise the Lord, sun and moon and shining stars!

**C: Praise the Lord, you highest heavens!**

L: Let all things God has created praise the name of the Lord!

**C: Men and women alike, young and old together!**

L: For God has done great things for us, for God has sent God's Son for us!

Let all God's people praise the Lord!

Opening Hymn            "Gentle Mary Laid Her Child"            (See insert)

### ~Coming Alive in Community~

Call to Confession

Into a dark and hurting world, Jesus came. Let us acknowledge the darkness so that we may see and receive Christ's light.

Prayer of Confession

**God with us, we confess that we have not embraced your love. Christ has come into the world and yet we do not recognize him. He has encountered us on our way, and we have walked on by. He has called us to be his own, and yet we do not accept him. Forgive us, loving God. Show us your grace. Help us to act with mercy. May we live our lives with joy as people who have received your good news in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

Silence for Prayer and Meditation

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, arise and shine, for your light has come! May the glory of the Lord shine on you and around you, for God is with us, renewing and redeeming us day by day.

**Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.**

Sharing the Peace of Christ

L: As God has shared God's peace with us in Jesus Christ, we are invited to share that peace with one another. May the peace of Christ be with you!

**C: And also with you!**

Special Music

Joseph's Song

(Michael Card)

**~We Hear God's Word~**

Scripture Lessons

Susan Royer

Isaiah 63:7-9

Matthew 3:13-23

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

A Story for Christmas "The Other Wiseman" Abridged from the story by Henry Van Dyke

Hymn for Reflection: "The First Nowell" (See insert)

Giving of Star Gifts

**~Sharing Blessings with Others~**

Prayers of the People

**Our Mother/Father, who are in heaven, hallowed by the 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.

December's Special Offering – The Christmas Fund

Offertory "Welcome to our World" (Rice)

Offering Response "Doxology Old Hundredth"

To God, all glorious heav'nly 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

**~Going out in Joy~**

Sending Hymn

"There's a Star in the East"

(See insert)

Benediction

Postlude

"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"

(Arr. Alexander)

Ministers: All Members of the Church

**Announcements:  
Sunday, December 28, 2025**

**~This Sunday at Shenkel UCC~**

Sun, 12/28/25 ~ One service at 9:00 am with Rev. Pam McShane after breakfast in the Social Hall.

**~Upcoming events at Shenkel UCC~**

Mon, 12/29/25 ~ Qigong Class at 1100 am in the Social Hall.

Sun, 1/4/26 ~ Reflective Worship service with Communion at 8:30 am in the Sanctuary.

~ Traditionalish Worship service with Communion at 9:45 am in the Sanctuary.

Sat, 1/10/26 ~ New Year Reboot from 10:00 – 12:00 pm in the Social Hall.

Please feel free to scan this code to donate through our online giving page.



**Scripture Reading for January 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Lori Scharneck**

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

**Cluster donations for December:** Peanut butter and jelly

**Qigong classes at Shenkel!:** Thursday mornings 11AM-noon. No experience necessary--All are welcome! Cost is \$12/class, cash or check payable to Shenkel UCC. Hope you'll join us!

**Qigong Holiday Schedule:** New Years Week will be held on Monday, 12/29 at 11AM.

**Carol Lykens Giving Challenge:** We're receiving gifts for our Carol Lykens Fill-The-Hat Challenge! You're encouraged to make an additional contribution to the Current Fund beyond your usual giving. Contributions can be made to Shenkel UCC with "Carol Challenge" in the memo line, or donate online through our website. Thank you!

**Congregational Meeting:** Will be held immediately after worship today, to take action on the 2026 Current and OCWM Budgets. Watch for information and proxies in advance of the meeting. Thank you, Randy Berriker Consistory President.

**PSEC - Sunday January 4<sup>th</sup>:** Rev. Bill Worley and Rev. Cean James will take their vows of release along with the rest of the staff at Reformed Church of the Ascension, Norristown at 2:00 pm. The staff have worked with faithfulness, skill, and grace through a demanding and transformative time. We hope you will find ways to express your gratitude by attending this service, as they have been the hands and heart of this ministry in countless ways seen and unseen.

**Grocery run? Consider using Giant and Redner's cards for your grocery store purchases:** Shenkel earns \$5 for every \$100 on Giant and Redner's gift cards – which are available every week at church.

**Stewardship:** Stewardship Committee will meet next on December 3rd at 5:30 pm. The charge of the committee is to: find ways to increase much needed revenue, attract new members, and identify new ways to provide ministry. Please contact members of the committee with your thoughts. Committee members: Chris Gray, Dan Jenkins, Kim Yocom, Julie Zachesky, and Brenda Berriker.

**Church School:** Children from 3 years through grade 6 are invited to participate in church school on the third Sunday of the month at 11:00 AM. Our next church school is on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Shenkel Prayer Group:** Meets at 9:00 am on the first Thursday of the month. All are welcome to participate. Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and celebrate the Spirit of God moving among us as we pray together.

**Prayer Lottery:** Shenkel will be praying for:

Ben Mocarski  
BJ Peterman  
Eric Klein  
Roberta Peterman  
Betty Bortz

#### **Birthdays in the month of December**

Isabelle Chidawu	12/4/25
Mari O'Drain	12/4/25
John Jonides	12/8/25
Abigail Dise	12/9/25
Analexis Foss	12/15/25
Judith Gergle	12/20/25
Betty Bortz	12/21/25
Bonnie Cox	12/21/25
Jim Faust	12/22/25
Josh Palubinsky	12/23/25
TJ Augustine III	12/24/25

## ***Star Gifts***

Today you received a "star gift". This word is God's gift to you for the year ahead.

As you receive this gift, reflect on all the gifts God has given you, and give thanks.

Take a moment and look at the word. What significance might it have in your life now?

Take the star home and put it somewhere you'll see it every day - maybe on the refrigerator or the bathroom mirror. Each day as you see it, remember that this is God's gift to you. How have you received this gift today?

You may want to look the word up in a dictionary just to be clear about what it means.

As your gift takes root in your life, it will show, both to you and to others. Gifts aren't meant to be kept to yourself. They are meant to be shared. How can you share the fruits of your gift with others?

# Gentle Mary

JOSEPH SIMPSON COOK \*

LEWIS M. KIRBY, JR.

The musical score consists of four staves of music in common time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is divided into four sections, each with a different melody line. The lyrics are integrated into the music, appearing below the corresponding melody line. The lyrics are as follows:

Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;  
An - gels sang a - bout His birth; Wise men sought and found Him;  
Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child Low - ly in a man - ger;

There He lay, the un - de - filed, To the world a stran - ger.  
Heav - en's star shone bright-ly forth, Glo - ry all a - round Him.  
He is still the un - de - filed, But no more a stran - ger.

Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Sav - iour?  
Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, Heard the an - gels sing - ing;  
Son of God, of hum - ble birth, Beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;

Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His fa - vor.  
All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ring - ing.  
Praise His name in all the earth, Hail the King of Glo - ry!

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## The First Nowell

Luke 2:8-20; Matt. 2:1-12

Traditional English carol; alt.

Descant

1 The first Nowell, the an - gel did say,  
 2 They looked a - bove and saw a star  
 3 And by the light of that same star  
 4 This star shone bright in the north - west,  
 5 Then en - tered in those ma - gi three,

was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay;  
 shin-ing in the east, be - yond them far,  
 three sag - es came from coun - try far;  
 o'er Beth - le - hem it seemed to rest,  
 and bend - ing low up - on their knee,

In fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep,  
 And to the earth it gave great light,  
 To seek for a king was their in - tent,  
 And there it did both stop and stay,  
 They of - fered there, in great rev - erence,

on a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
and so it continued both day and night.  
and to follow the star where ever it went.  
right over the place where Jesus lay.  
their gold and myrrh and frankincense.

*Refrain*

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,

ell, born in a manger, Emmanuel.

*M*uch perhaps of earlier origins, this anonymous English carol first appeared in print in the nineteenth century. "Nowell" is from the Latin *novellae* (news) and is used as a joyous song to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Tune: THE FIRST NOWELL. Irr. with refrain  
Traditional English melody  
Harm. Christmas Carols New and Old, 1871  
Descant, Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937

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## There's a Star in the East



1 There's a star in the East on Christ-mas morn, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.  
 2 If you take good heed to the an - gel's words, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.



It will lead to the place where the Christ was born, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.  
 You'll for-get your flocks, you'll for-get your herds, rise up, shep-herd, and fol-low.



Fol - low, fol - low, rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low,



fol - low the star of Beth-le - hem, rise up, shep-herd, and fol - low.

