

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST EAST GOSHEN

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Hospitality, Grace, and Hope are Offered to All!

December 22, 2024 – 10 AM

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: JOY



Rev. Homer Royer, Bridge Pastor

Lindsay Woessner, Music Director

Carolyn Scherer, Office Administrator

Church House, 1066 South New Street, West Chester, PA 19382

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www.ucceastgoshen.org

THANK YOU to ALL helping with Worship Today:

: Greeter/Offering Collection
: Tech Support
, Eva Yost: Lay Readers
Candice Keith and Andy Grim: Counters

Worship volunteers for Christmas Eve, 12/24/24, 3PM

:Greeter/Offering Collection
: Tech Support
: Lay Reader
: Counters

Living In God's Love Together, We Gather

**Please stand as you are able.*

Bold type = Congregation P = Pastor

PRELUDE

Special Music:

Breath of Heaven

Amy Grant and Chris Eaton

(Performed by Catherine and Eva Yost)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE SINGING BOWL

WE CENTER OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP

(All Sing Verse 1)

ADVENT

O How Shall I Receive You

102

Paul Gerhardt, 1653

Transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, and others; alt.



1 O how shall I re - ceive you, how meet you on your way,
2 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you un - to me;
3 You come, O Christ, with glad - ness, in mer - cy and good - will,



blessed hope of ev - ery peo - ple, my soul's de - light and stay?
your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.
to bring an end to sad - ness and bid our fears be still.



O Je - sus, Je - sus, give me now by your own pure light,
O love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace
In pa - tient ex - pec - ta - tion we live for that great day



to know what-e'er is pleas - ing and wel - come in your sight.
in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our lost and fall - en race.
when a re - newed cre - a - tion your glo - ry shall dis - play.



As a German Lutheran pastor serving during the Thirty Years' War, Paul Gerhardt's trials were legion. In the midst of it all, he composed more than a hundred hymns, among them some of the finest and most beloved in Christian hymnody.

Tune: ST. THEODULPH 7.6.7.6.D.
(VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN)
Melchior Teschner, 1615

*OPENING PRAYER

Holy Convenor of the Ages,
As memories of happiness sweep into our minds, we delight in the Advent blessing of joy. Such blissfulness turns our spirits from nights that are too deep, dark, and long to God's Divine Light which will be arriving soon. Like the saints of yesteryear, we celebrate together, rejoicing in the season, and knowing the best is yet to come! Amen.

WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP

Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!
We seek time to embrace the joy.
Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!
We Create opportunities to embody joy.
Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!
Singing songs that announce joy.

*HYMN

Come O Long Expected Jesus

NCH 122

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

Loving God, Creator of Wonder and Delight,
We have fallen into the crevices of worry. We have allowed the preoccupation of what was said in the past, and will happen in the future, to distract us from embodying joy in the present. Clear a pathway to our souls so that we can find

levity and delight again. May we find ways from chasms of concern to the daylight of hopefulness. Amen.

Words of Grace

The blessedness of God's grace fills our hearts with a peace-filled joy as we move about this season and follow the light ahead!

***PASSING THE PEACE** (*in a safe manner*)

***WE REGATHER IN SONG**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

NCH 116 vs 6

O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
our spir-its by your ad-vent here;
Love stir with-in the womb of night,
and death's own shadows put to flight.

Refrain

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-u-el shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!

CONVERSATION FOR ALL AGES

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – JOY:

Introductory: God's Promises

John 15:9-11:

⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love,

just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Lighting of the Candle

Prayer:

O Holy One,

As Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. We can feel joy in our lives and see it in those around us. Still, for some of us this is a sad time because of unhappy things that have happened in our lives. Help us to have the joy that does not depend on earthly happiness, but on you. Help us to be filled with your joy so that we may share it with a joyless world. Amen.

Response:

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn NCH 107
All sing verses 1-4

PASTORAL PRAYER

Silent Prayers

P: Next, we share out loud our prayers of concern for family, friends, and our community, for wounded places and people burdened with care.

[You are invited to offer your prayers of concern.]

P: Lord, in Your Mercy
Hear our prayers.

P: Now we share our joys and gratuudes, the ways in which God has blessed us this week, and the moments we felt God's presence.

[You are invited to offer your prayers of thanksgiving, celebration, blessings, and gratitude.]

P: Lord, in Your Mercy
Hear our prayers.

P: Having shared our prayers of concern and our prayers of gratitude, we now recommit ourselves to following the Way of Jesus who taught us to pray saying...

**Our Creator/Mother/Father/Spirit,
who is in Heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kin-dom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our faults, as we forgive the faults of others.
Prevent us and deliver us from evil.
For yours is the realm, power, and glory, forever. Amen.**

~ *Healing: Service Prayers for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost* was written by Rev. Roberto Ochoa, the Minister for Ethnic Inclusion, & Congregational Support for Rural and Small Churches for the National Setting of the United Church of Christ. He is a member of Mt. Zion Congregational UCC in Cleveland, OH.

WE PREPARE TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

ALLELUIA

765

Text and music: Jerry Sinclair, 1972; alt.

1 Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

ALLELUIA

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

WE LISTEN TO OUR SACRED TEXT

Micah 5: 2-5a

The Ruler from Bethlehem

² ^[a] But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time

when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth,

⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

Luke 1: 39-46a

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be ^[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

Mary's Song of Praise

⁴⁶ And Mary^[b] said,

THE MAGNIFICAT

Eva Yost

Luke 1: 46b-55

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48 for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
50 indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

MEDITATION/SERMON

Rev. Homer Royer

[In the silence after the sermon, we allow the sacred text and dialogue of the sermon to settle in our hearts, bones and bodies, and soul. We do this by opening our hearts and inviting God to settle the message we each needed to receive.]

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

John 1: 1-4:

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All

things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life,^[a] and the life was the light of all people.

WE ARE INVITED TO GIVE

WE GIVE GENEROUSLY

The King is Coming Soon (Choral anthem)

Jon Paige

EASY OFFERING OPTION

If you prefer to give electronically, please use your cell phone camera to scan this QR code.



*DOXOLOGY *(sung)*

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

*WE DEDICATE OUR OFFERINGS

God of Holy Darkness and Returning Light,
We give of our full hearts, knowing that you will bless this world with love. We give of our full minds, knowing that you will bless this world with peace. We give of our full souls, knowing that you will bless this world with hope. May the joy of your gifts encourage us to share the best we have, creating your Realm here on earth. Amen.

***HYMN**

We Hail You God's Anointed

NCH 104

***BENEDICTION**

***SUNG BENEDICTION**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

NCH 116 vs 7

O come, De-sire of Na-tions, bind
all peo-ples in one heart and mind;
Make en-vy, strife, and quar-rels cease;
fill the whole world with heav-en's peace.

Refrain

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-u-el shall come to you, O Is-ra-el!

POSTLUDE

Joyful, Joyful

L.V. Beethoven, adapted for piano solo by Edward Hod

Our worship has ended, and our service has just begun...

Please join us for fellowship in the Fellowship Hall.

UCCEG Worship & Events	Community Meetings
<p>December 24 – 3 PM – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE</p>	<p>No community meetings this week.</p>
<p>December 29 – 10am Worship</p> <p><i>Choir Rehearsals:</i> <i>Dec 27: No practice</i> <i>Dec 29: 9am - 9:40am</i></p>	

Church Office Hours This Week

	<u>Pastor Homer</u>	<u>Office</u>
<i>Monday</i>	10 AM – 12 PM	---
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>Christmas Eve</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Christmas</i>	<i>Christmas</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	---	9 AM – 1 PM
<i>Friday</i>	---	9 AM – 1 PM
<i>Saturday</i>	---	---

Prayer Requests

Please fill out a **prayer request form** (on the table in the Foyer) or email office@ucceastgoshen.org for any updates or additions to our prayer list.

We pray for the following members and friends of UCCEG:



Susan Morey, Cliff Keljikian, George Litzke, Nancy Remy, Mary Ann Meacham, Louise and Jim Elkins, Patty Berkheimer, Don & Carol Beideman, Amy, Jose Francisco, Charlene, Mary Ellen, Blakelyn, Roy Garlisch, Don B., Eileen, William Walker, Nancy Walker, Roxanne, Michelle Meisten, Steve Jurcyk & family, Suzanne Emmas, Erik, Family and friends of Donald van Krieken Sr., the father of Beth Anne Keates, Lurch Hill, Rev. Suzanne Spaulding,

Avery, Family and friends of Ray Onyx, Pam Onyx in her new home, Greg Baskerville, Ruth Steele & family, the Gaynor family.

Year End Message from the UCCEG Financial Secretaries

We would like to thank you all for your financial support of our wonderful church through your pledges and giving in 2024!

As we come to the end of the year, we remind you that **our pledging year runs from January to December**, so would like to encourage you to reach out if you have concerns or questions about your 2024 giving. We will be preparing year-end financial statements early in 2025.

Also we have prepared **pledge cards for 2025** as we work with our Treasurer, Beth, to prepare a budget for next year. As you can imagine, there are many changes and uncertainties compared to last year, so we would like to encourage you to review and reflect on your pledged giving for next year as we move toward the end of 2024. It is important that we understand and acknowledge that our annual deficit is not going to disappear 'overnight'. The draft budget for 2025 will be available for your review in the coming weeks.

Pledge cards and envelopes are available on the Welcome Table in Church House. It is ESSENTIAL to the work of our church that we are able to understand our expected income and expenses to be able to plan just how we can "Be The Church" we hope to be in 2025!

Please feel free to leave your pledge cards in the collection plate or to mail them in the supplied addressed envelope. All Pledges are confidential, and information is held only in the Financial Team. All pledge cards will be acknowledged and blessed in a service in January, before we have our congregational meeting to vote on the Draft Budget for the year. If you have any questions about pledging please contact us!

With thanks once again,
Lucy and Candice, Co-Financial Secretaries UCCEG
Lucy Barber barberfamilydownunder@hotmail.co.uk, Candice Keith
ceskeith@yahoo.com

Music during Advent Season

Anyone who has an interest in providing a special musical offering during Advent is encouraged to contact Lindsay Woessner, Music Director, via email (or in person) at musicdirectorucc@gmail.com and she will follow up with you. Thank you!

The Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

As we continue to participate in UCC 5 for 5, we will be collecting donations for The Christmas Fund of PSEC from December 1st through December 22nd. Please use the purple envelopes or mark your regular envelope with "Christmas Fund."

Thank you from UCCEG Congregational Life.

Church House WiFi:

Please note: The WiFi name has been changed--The network name is 'UCCEG wifi' and the password can be requested from the office.

Reminder from our Treasurer:

Please note: If you use a bill paying system for donations to UCCEG, please notify your banks of the church's new address. It may take a few weeks for it to go through the bank's system. If you have not already notified your bill payers, now's the time!

Thank you for your generosity!

UCCEG's new address:

**United Church of Christ East Goshen, Church House,
1066 S. New Street, West Chester, PA 19382**

Financial Update

As we enter into the final month of 2024, following the sale of our property we have new financial challenges ahead. The proceeds of the sale are in our Edward Jones money market account. The PSEC loan of \$75,000 was repaid. The Finance Task Force is looking into where and how to invest the balance of the sale money.

Budgeted Monthly Expenses: \$13,234

Available in checking at start of December: \$ 489

Total December income: \$7,266.01

Offerings:

December 1: \$2,080

December 8: \$1,620

December 15: \$1,190

Christmas Fund Gifts: \$725

Giving Tree Gifts: \$175

OCWM Gift: \$200

Amount of PSEC Bridge Loan used: \$35,000

This loan has been repaid, and this now represents the amount we have used from the sale of our property.

At last year's annual meeting, the congregation agreed to reduce our budgeted giving to OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission), which helps fund both the Penn Southeast Conference and the national UCC church. We agreed to hold special appeals during the year to help offset our reduction. We welcome any gifts you are able to give to OCWM. Please write "OCWM" on the memo line of your check or envelope if giving cash. Thank you.