

St. John's at Worship First Sunday of Advent

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting the First Advent Candle

The Bellew Family

*Answering God's Call to Worship

One: Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming.

**All: We wait filled with hope,
trusting that your light will shine in the darkness.**

One: Lord, we wait...

All: Come soon, Lord Jesus, and fill us with your light.

One: Let us worship God!

*Hymn 196

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

*Prayer of Invocation and The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Confessing Our Sin Together

**In this season when we celebrate your coming,
we confess that there are parts of this world and our lives
that we try to keep you from coming *into*.**

**There are things that we do not *want* to have changed;
grudges and anger and obsessions and pain
that we do not know how to let go of.**

**There is control over our lives
that we are not ready to put into your hands.**

**There are things about us that we try to keep hidden and secret,
even from you.**

**Free us, Lord,
from the ways that we try to keep you from being born
in us and among us.**

**Come among us again, especially when we resist,
and help us to trust more in *your* life that we do in *our own*.**

Confessing Silently

**Lord, thank you for your mercy!
Christ, thank you for your mercy!
Spirit, thank you for your mercy!**

The Promise of Forgiveness

*Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

*Affirming Our Faith

We believe in God, creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ – God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn – who emerges as the herald of hope, God's laughter in the face of despair. Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way to the land of promise, where justice and peace will flourish.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the body of Christ, and empowers us to confront and transform all that is corrupt, degrading, and deceitful.

We believe in the coming reign of God. Announced by John the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus, and will be consummated in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven, when all who have passed through the world's deep sorrow will be raised from the waters, robed in righteousness, and gathered into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire.

**For the coming of *that* day, on *this* day we work and pray:
Come, Lord Jesus, Come!**

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 9:2–7 (pg. 638, O.T.)

Bruce Phillips

As Pre-K–4th graders leave for Sunday School, we send them with this liturgy:

Pastor: Now we go our separate ways to worship and learn about God.

Cong.: **May God be with you there!**

Children: **May God be with you here!**

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 11:1–9 (pg. 640, O.T.)

Sermon

BEGINNING WITH HOPE

Rev. Marshall

*Hymn 626, vss. 1, 2 “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

Offering (Ushers will also collect blue prayer request cards at the time of the offering.)

Offertory “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” *J. Schop*

*Presentation of Offering & Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication (If you need to sit for the prayer, please feel free.)

*Hymn 707

“Hymn of Promise”

*Benediction

*Postlude

“How Brightly Beams the Morning Star”

P. Nicolai

An Advent Creed

ENRICHING OUR WORSHIP OF GOD

Greeter

Wanda Odom

Usher

Carla Chieffo

Flowers

Given by Barb Beucler in honor and memory of her parents, Steve & Anne Freeman Gibbons.

Coffee Servers

Earline & Kermit Eck

Organist

Janet Wooden

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S!

We are so happy that you have joined us for worship this morning! We hope that you experience the presence and love of Jesus Christ here with us today. If there is anything we can do to help you feel more at home, please feel free to ask one of the ushers located at the sanctuary doors. We would love for you to join us for refreshments downstairs in the Fellowship Hall following worship. We are glad that you are here and hope you will worship with us again soon!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

After the Children's Time, grades K–4th and the Confirmation Class will leave with their teachers. Grades 5–12 will remain for communion. If this is your child's first time in Sunday School, the ushers have pamphlets that tell you everything you need to know. As always, nursery care is provided for children ages 5 and under.

COMMUNION SUNDAY

We will be sharing the Lord's Supper today. This is not just for Presbyterians or members of St. John's. Everyone who seeks to know and love Jesus Christ is welcome to share in this meal! **You will be invited to come forward up the center aisle, take a piece of bread, and dip it in the cup (all of the bread is gluten-free). There is also a basket of pre-sealed juice cups, if you would prefer not to do intinction.**

MEN'S GROUP (NOTE DATE CHANGE)

The next meeting of our Men's Group will be on **Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00 a.m.** in the Carriage House. All men are welcome!

WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY – 2 OPPORTUNITIES!

The Sunday Women's Book Group meets at 8:00 a.m. in the Carriage House to study, *Following Jesus, Finding our Way Home in an Age of Anxiety* by *Henri Nouwen*. If you have questions, please contact Nancy Wolfe. The Monday group meets at meets at 11:00 a.m. in the Kean Room to read *Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus* by Ann Spangler and Lois Tverberg. If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Arico.

2024 LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

Do you have a story about God's work in your life? Perhaps a season in your life that God was present and showed you how to be a faithful disciple? This Lent, we will be taking a deeper look at discipleship. We will have our very own St. John's Lenten Devotional featuring entries by our very own St. John's church family! If you are interested in participating and writing for this, please contact Pastor Ridgley (rjoyner@stjohnsdevon.com).

FAMILY ADVENT CALENDAR

St. John's is partnering with House of the Sparrow, an Exton organization, that helps women in need of housing, supplies, educational advice, and support. There is a green poster board “calendar” on the wall in Fellowship Hall with 24 days listed. You can lift off one of the decorations, revealing an item you can purchase. Please bring unwrapped items back to Fellowship Hall and place in the container marked “Advent Calendar Gifts” by December 20.

ANGEL TREE

The Angel Tree in Fellowship Hall is filled with angels for the children at Gemma Services. Each angel represents a child age 3-17 and lists two gifts the child would like for Christmas. You can buy one or both, but it is recommended that you spend about \$35. The Deacons will be in Fellowship Hall to sign you up for the angel(s) you choose, so we can keep track and make sure every child is taken care of. We ask that you return your gifts by **Sunday, December 10, UNWRAPPED** and with the angel attached (you can put the gifts in grocery/shopping bags with the angel attached).

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Now through December 11, you can purchase a poinsettia to help decorate the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. They cost \$10 each, and the poinsettia is yours to take home after the 8:00 p.m. service. To purchase a poinsettia, contact John by email (johnemclintick@earthlink.net) or phone (610-608-7749).

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

St. John's offers several ways for you to celebrate the birth of Christ:

Wednesday, Dec. 20 (7:00 p.m.)

Longest Night Service (with communion)
For those who are struggling to celebrate this season.

Sunday, Dec. 24 (9:30 a.m. & 8:00 p.m.)

Christmas Eve Worship
9:30 a.m. – Kids' Nativity Program
8:00 p.m. – Candlelight

We hope that you will join us, and feel free to bring family and friends!

COME SING WITH THE CHRISTMAS CHOIR!

We're looking for volunteers to sing with the choir for the 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service, and we would love to have your voices singing in celebration of Jesus' birth! We will be singing a few anthems which are relatively easy to learn, as well as leading the congregation in singing the carols that we all know and love. We will have two rehearsals: Thursday, December 14 and Thursday, December 21, both at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Please contact Nancy Kimmons (nkimmons@comcast.net) if you are interested.

PLEDGES FOR 2024

Thank you to everyone who has already pledged to support the life and ministry of our church family in the coming year. It's not too late to make a pledge for 2024! You can submit a pledge on our website or by using one of the cards on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes for 2024 are available for pickup in Fellowship Hall. If you do not have a pack of envelopes but would like one, please contact Brian Bouvier (brianbouvier57@gmail.com).

THANK YOU!

Words cannot express my gratitude for the honor given me at the Sunday, November 19, service! I was totally surprised, totally humbled, totally overwhelmed, and totally speechless! I am forever grateful for all of the parents who have shared their children with me and who have gotten them to rehearsals and "ringing" Sundays. I am grateful for all those who make Supper@St.John's possible. I am so very grateful for St. John's – our Pastors and members near

and far! Thank you all from the bottom of my heart. YOU are the best! – Betsy
MINUTE FOR MISSION –Erik Friend from Wellspring Caritas Foundation will be presenting a Minute for Mission next Sunday, December 10. He will be available after the service for Q & A.

DIVORCE RECOVERY SEMINAR

This January, the Deacons are hosting our first ever Divorce Recovery Seminar in our community. The seminar will be led by two licensed therapists and will be based on the book, "Rebuilding: When Your Relationship Ends" by Dr. Bruce Fisher. Because this is unlike anything that has been offered in this area, we need your help to get the word out! If you have a friend, divorce attorney, therapist, or community board that you would like to share this information with, please take a flyer and some brochures home with you today. They are located next to the entrance of the sanctuary closest to Pastor Ridgley's office.

ST. JOHN'S CALENDAR

Sun, Dec 3	1st Sunday of Advent	9:45 am	Confirmation Class
Mon, Dec 4		9:00 am	TE Care Drive (Carriage House)
		11:00 am	Women's Book Study (Kean Room)
Tues. Dec 5		9:00 am	TE Care Drive (Carriage House)
		5:00 pm	Exercise Class (Fellowship Hall)
Wed, Dec 6		7:00 am	Men's Group (Carriage House)
		9:00 am	Companions in Prayer (Kean Room)
		9:00 am	TE Care Drive (Carriage House)
Thurs. Dec 7		9:00 am	TE Care Drive Ends (Carriage House)
		5:00 pm	Exercise Class (Fellowship Hall)
		6:00 pm	Transformation Team (Kean Room)
Sat, Dec 9		9:00 am	Exercise Class (Fellowship Hall)
Sun, Dec 10	2nd Sunday of Advent	8:15 am	Trustees Meeting (Kean Room)
		9:30 am	Worship & Sunday School

This Week in the Church Office

Our Church Administrator Roseann Christian is in the office from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. She is working virtually on Mondays and Wednesdays, available by phone and email. If you call the church office, she will still answer. Any announcements for next week's bulletin or email must be sent to her by Noon on Wednesday.

Friday is Pastor Patrick and Pastor Ridgley's sabbath day, and the church office is closed on Saturday. If you email or call on those days, you will not get a response until they are back in the office. **If you have a pastoral emergency pertaining to a death, hospitalization, or crisis situation when the office is closed or on a Saturday, you can call 484-604-0499.**



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Roseann Christian, Church Administrator (Admin@stjohnsdevon.com)

Sue Chudy, Clerk of Session (susan.chudy@stjohnsdevon.com)



A CHURCH FAMILY, A FAMILY CHURCH

"Going to Bethlehem"
by J. Barrie Shepherd

Four weeks to cross the continents and oceans to a town that is transformed by twenty centuries of troubled times.

Four weeks in which to travel down the weary corridors, two thousand years of looking back and looking forward.

Four weeks for tramping the harsh pathways of the shopping malls trying to buy the one gift that has never been for sale.

Four weeks to light four candles in the sanctuary of the heart, and then a fifth one to illuminate the heart of God.

Four weeks for learning mystery, for turning darkness toward light, for yearning, day by day, toward that burning flame of welcome that kindles there within the waiting manger.

December 3, 2023

For the latest information and news about St. John's:

www.stjohnsdevon.com

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