

**St. Paul's United Church of Christ**  
301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551  
610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org  
Worship 10:30am

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



*Welcome to*  
**St. Paul's United Church of Christ**  
**Online Streaming Worship Service**

*May God's loving presence be very real to you,  
and may you receive strength and guidance today  
that will enable you to handle life's challenges.*

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**Sunday, January 3, 2021**  
**Second Sunday after Christmas**  
**Epiphany Sunday**

# ORDER FOR WORSHIP

## We Gather

*We are coming together as a community of faith to worship our God,  
and provide for one another our love, support, and care.*

### A TIME OF GATHERING

#### RINGING OF THE BELL

#### PRELUDE

#### GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*{To center your hearts and minds,  
you are invited to individually offer this prayer silently during or before the Prelude}*

#### PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP<sup>②</sup>

Holy God, we greet you at the start of another year. As we mark time on our calendars, you see us within the timelessness of eternity. You esteem us more highly than we think of ourselves. You give us honor and glory we dare not expect. You entrust us with responsibility that often seems beyond our capacities. O God, how majestic is your name in all the earth! How amazing is the child lying in a manger and later found in a house in Bethlehem! We call on the name of Jesus, for in that name we find our salvation, and in that name we gather now to worship. Amen.

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

#### \*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

*"As With Gladness Men of Old"*

Vs 1 & 5

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#### \*INVOCATION

Leader: In the name of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit.  
ALL: Amen.

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>②</sup>

Leader: This is the time for worship and praise!  
This is a day for song and celebration!

People: **God has sent light to dispel our fears.  
The glory of God has risen upon us.**

Leader: The gospel of Christ reveals God's grace.  
We share in the promise of Jesus Christ.

People: **We gather together and lift up our eyes to God's radiant truth.  
Our hearts thrill to the sight and our lips rejoice in praise.**

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### **Virtual Worship Service**

Online: [Live Stream](https://www.sprucc.org) at sprucc.org - Live or Watch & Listen on [St. Paul's UCC YouTube Channel](#) Later  
[Phone Stream](#) at 1-888-649-5770 - Live or Listen Later

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WILLIAM C. DIX, 1861

7. 7. 7. 7. 7. 7.

DIX  
Abridged from *Chorale, Trierer Heiland*  
CONRAD KOCHER, 1838*Joyously*

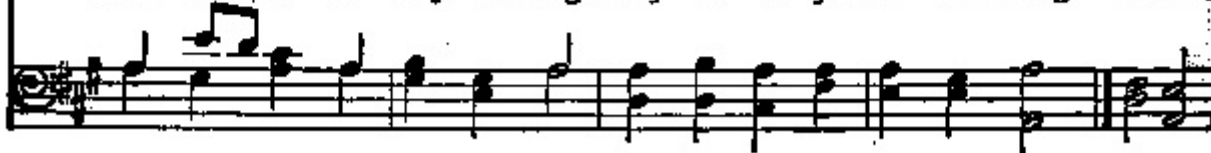
1. As with glad-ness men of old Did the guid-ing star be-hold;
2. As with joy-ful steps they sped To that low-ly man-ger-bed;
3. As they of-fered gifts most rare At that man-ger rude and bare;
4. Ho-ly Je-sus, ev-ery day Keep us in the nar-row way;
5. In the heav-en-ly coun-try bright Need they no cre-a-ted light;



As with joy they hailed its light, Lead-ing on-ward, beam-ing bright;  
There to bend the knee be-fore Him whom heaven and earth a-dore;  
So may we with ho-ly joy, Pure and free from sin's al-loy,  
And, when earth-ly things are past, Bring our ran-somed souls at last  
Thou its Light, its Joy, its Crown, Thou its Sun which goes not down,



So, most gra-cious God, may we Ev-er-more be led to Thee.  
So may we with will-ing feet Ev-er seek the mer-cy-seat.  
All our cost-liest treasures bring, Christ, to Thee our heav-en-ly King.  
Where they need no star to guide, Where no clouds Thy glo-ry hide.  
There for- ev-er may we sing Hal-le-lu-jah to our King. A-MEN.



## We Repent

*This is a time to confess our wrongdoings and neglects, ask for God's mercy, admit our need for God's forgiving grace, hear the assurance of our forgiveness, and then give God our thanks and praise.*

### \*CALL TO CONFESSION<sup>®</sup> (Leader)

The God of justice and righteousness calls us to account for the ways we invest our hours and our resources. Amid the oppression and violence that many endure, God listens for our voices and watches for our works. What have we done with the commission entrusted to us by God's grace? Let us confess our sins before God and before one another.

### \*CONFESSION OF SIN<sup>®</sup> (Unison)

**God of kings and commoners, we confess that we are often more impressed with famous people than we are with your amazing glory. The rulers of this earth are more real to us than the One who reigns over time and eternity. Your priorities are not foremost in our lives. We reach for power and popularity more than for justice for the poor. We are more focused on prosperity than on relief for the oppressed. Our pursuits do not satisfy; save us from their fragmenting grip in our lives. Cause a new epiphany among us, we pray. Amen.**

### \*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

*{A time to silently offer our personal prayers of confession}*

#### \*PRAYER FOR MERCY

*"Kyrie"*

♪ Red # 518

Leader (*spoken*): Lord, have mercy upon us.  
**People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.**  
Leader (*spoken*): Christ, have mercy upon us.  
**People (*sung*): Christ, have mercy upon us.**  
Leader (*spoken*): Lord, have mercy upon us.  
**People (*sung*): Lord, have mercy upon us.**

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### \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON<sup>®</sup> (Leader)

To all who receive Christ, who believe in that name and trust in that love, God gives power to become children of God. When we are born of the Spirit, we receive grace upon grace. Light shines into our lives to bring understanding and empowerment. The goodness of our God makes us radiant witnesses to God's truth. Let it be so among us! **Amen.**

### \*CALL TO PRAISE

Leader: We have heard angels from on high sweetly singing over the plains  
**People: We join the mountains in reply, echoing their joyous strains**

### \*SUNG PRAISE

*"Angels We Have Heard on High"*

**Glo - - - - ria, in excelsis Deo!**  
**Glo - - - - ria, in excelsis Deo!**

*Music by Edward Shippen Barnes  
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*{Please be seated}*

## We Hear the Word of God

*We seek to learn more about God's love and grace, and how we are to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our primary text on faith, which we consider to be scripture - sacred writings.  
We believe the Bible to be the "inspired word of God."  
Gospel (which means "Good News") refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are Christians' most central books of the Bible.*

### PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

**New Testament Lesson:**

[Ephesians 1:3-14](#)

**Gospel Lesson:**

[John 1:1-18](#)

(Gospel reading for the Second Sunday after Christmas)

### HYMN

*"We Three Kings"*

Vs 1 & 5

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**Gospel Lesson:**

[Matthew 2:1-12](#)

(Gospel reading for Epiphany)

### CHILDREN'S SERMON

### SERMON

# 288 We Three Kings

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Magi from the east came. Matthew 2:1*

1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are; Bear - ing gifts we tra - verse a - far -  
 2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain; Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain,  
 3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh.  
 4. Myrrh is mine: its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom -  
 5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise, King and God and Sac - ri - fice;

Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain - Fol - low - ing you - der star  
 King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er O - ver us all to reign.  
 Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship Him, God on high.  
 Scr - r'wing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb,  
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Earth to heav'n re - plies.

*Refrain*

star of won - der, star of right, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.

TEXT: John H. Hopkins, Jr.  
 MUSIC: John H. Hopkins, Jr.

KINGS OF ORIENT  
 8.8.4.4.6. with Refrain

## We Respond with Thanks

*We have heard God's call and have come and worshiped, we have confessed our sins and been assured of our forgiveness, we have learned more about God's grace and God's will. We now respond by re-affirming our faith in God, praying with and for one another, trusting in God's providence in our world, and giving of ourselves for the sake of the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.*

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

### \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison) *Nicene Creed*

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, one in being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us men and our salvation he came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
he was born of the virgin Mary,  
and became man.**

**For our sake, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered, died, and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.  
With the Father and Son, he is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one, holy, catholic\* and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

\* The word "catholic" means "relating to the church universal" and was the word used in the original version of the Creed. It does not mean the Roman Catholic Church, but the church, the body of Christ, as a universal fellowship.

*{Please be seated}*

### CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray....

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE<sup>®</sup>

Leader: Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*{A time of silent prayer}*

Leader: Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rain forests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

Leader: God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of your Son Jesus, in whose name we pray....

**LORD'S PRAYER** (*Unison*)

**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.**

**PRAYER RESPONSE**                    *"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"*                    Vs 3 & 4

Vs3    **And in despair I bowed my head:  
"There is no peace on earth," I said,  
"For hate is strong and mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good will to men."**

Vs4    **Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead, nor doth he sleep;  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good will to men."**

Text: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1807–1882  
Music: John Baptiste Calkin, 1827–1905  
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**OFFERTORY INVITATION** ②

Leader: No gift is too small, except to the giver, for we cannot receive what we are unwilling to share.

**People: The riches God entrusts to us cannot satisfy those who hoard them for their own purposes.**

Leader: They are a delight only when they are invested on our knees before the manger.

**People: Our tithes are our homage before our King.**



## VIRTUAL CHOIR

### RETURNING GOD'S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

Online Giving

*{As we share in hybrid worship, there is no passing of the plate in person.  
A plate is placed in the rear of the sanctuary for offerings to be placed  
when arriving or departing from the sanctuary.*

*Whether worshipping in person or online,  
the safest way to offer your tithe and offering to God through his church  
is through our secure [Online Giving](#) option on our website at [sprucc.org](http://sprucc.org). [Click Here](#)  
Offerings may also be mailed to St. Paul's UCC; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551}.*

*{Those who are able, please rise}*

#### \*OFFERTORY RESPONSE "What Child is This"

**So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
Come peasant, king to own Him;  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.  
This, this is Christ the King;  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

*Words: William C Dix  
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#### \*OFFERTORY PRAYER <sup>2</sup>

We reach for the boundless riches of Christ, even as we give the tithes and offerings we have pledged. An abundance of things does not satisfy, and the wealth of nations cannot buy peace. Therefore, we join our efforts in the church to make a difference in the world, not through instruments of oppression but through the power of love. Employ our gifts in the service of Jesus Christ, we pray. **Amen.**

## We Are Sent Out

*In response to God's love and grace,  
we go out into the world to share God's Good News  
through our words and actions.*

#### \*COMMISSION <sup>2</sup>

**Leader:** Go forth renewed and equipped for this new year.  
Seek the will of God for yourself and all you meet.  
**People:** **Whatever our circumstances, there is a witness we can make.  
In all times and places we will seek to serve Christ.**  
**Leader:** Reach out to the least of your sisters and brothers.  
As you help them, you honor the Christ.  
**People:** **God crowns our lives with glory and honor.  
We will enjoy the gifts God entrusts to us.**  
**ALL:** **Amen.**

#### \*BENEDICTION

#### \*THREE FOLD SUNG AMEN

*♪ Red # 558  
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#### \*SENDING HYMN

*"The First Noel"*

*Vs 1, 2, 5, & 6  
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*{Acolyte carries the light back into the world, leading us,  
as we now go to carry God's light and love back into the world}.*

# The First Noel 265

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

1. The first No - el, the an - gel did say, Was to cer - tain poor shep - herds in  
 2. They look - ed up and saw a star, Shining in the east, be -  
 3. And by the light of that same star Three Wise Men came from  
 4. This star drew nigh to the north - west, O'er Beth - le - hem it  
 5. Then en - tered in those Wise Men three, Full rev - 'rent - ly up -  
 6. Then let us all with one ac - cord Sing prais - es to our

fields as they lay; In fields where they lay keep - ing their sheep, On a  
 yond them far; And to the earth it gave great light, And  
 coun - try far; To seek for a King was their in - tent, And to  
 took its rest, And there it did both stop and stay, Right  
 on their knees, And of - fered there in His pres - ence Their  
 heav'n - ly Lord, That hath made heav'n and earth of naught, And

*Refrain*  
 cold win - ter's night that was so deep,  
 so it con - tin - ued both day and night.  
 fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went. No - el, No - el, No -  
 o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.  
 gold, and myrrh, and frank - in - cense.  
 with His blood man - kind hath bought.

el, No - el, Born is the King of Is - ra - el.

TEXT Traditional English carol  
 MUSIC W. Sandys' Christmas Carols, 1839; arranged by John Scainer

THE FIRST NOEL  
 Irregular meter



## Worship Service Resource Credits

Biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible (1989) by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted with permission from *The New Century Hymnal* of the United Church of Christ. (1995). Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press. and/or the *Book of Worship* of the United Church of Christ (1986). New York: United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership.

<sup>2</sup> *Led by Love* by Lavon Bayler. (1996). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.

<sup>3</sup> *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. (1995). Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis and Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia.

<sup>4</sup> Reprinted with permission from *Sundays and Seasons*. (2020). Augsburg Fortress.

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted with permission from the *Order of Worship for the Reformed Church in the United States*. and/or *The Hymnal of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*. (1985) New York: United Church Press.

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted with permission from *Sourcebook of Worship Services*

<sup>7</sup> scouting.org - resources for Boy Scouts of America

<sup>8</sup> Reprinted with permission from *Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ*. (2020).

<sup>9</sup> *Lecturn Resource*. (2014). Logos Productions, Inc.; Grove Heights, MN.

<sup>10</sup> Sunday Sermons Preaching Resources. (2017). Margate, NJ.

<sup>11</sup> Edmonds, Robert Lee (Editor). (2008). *In Our Own Way; Living a Scouting Life Through Faith; A Handbook of Prayer and Devotion*. Dallas, TX: Red Honor Press

<sup>12</sup> Reprinted with Permission from *Lecturn Resource*. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.

<sup>13</sup> Miller, Earl D. (1994). *Consecrating Stewards*. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz

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*Resources are edited and adapted for use in this worship service.*



## The Flow of the Worship Service

Our worship service has an intentional order to it. The flow of worship is called the liturgical movement. The movement reminds us weekly of our journey in faith of moving from being separated from God by sin, to being restored by God's grace as disciples of Christ. It is based on the sixth chapter of the Biblical book of Isaiah.

- (1) God welcomes us and invites us
- (2) We respond to God's call by worshipping Him
- (3) We confess our need for God's forgiveness and grace
- (4) We are assured of God's forgiveness and grace
- (5) We learn more about God's will through scripture, song, and sermon
- (6) We grow closer to God and one another through prayer
- (7) We give God thanks by offering our time, talent, and treasure
- (8) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others

## † Prayer List †

*Please lift up those listed here in your prayers this week.*

*"Pray for one another, so that you may be healed.*

*The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." ~ James 5:16b*

B. & S. Blatt  
 R. DiGirolamo  
 L. Laumeister  
 R. & J. Seifrit  
 K. Long & D. Long  
 G. Merkel III  
 A. Robertson  
 F. Rahmanian  
 A. Snyder  
 D. Logic  
 J. Altrechter  
 R. Koch  
 N. Miller  
 S. Rowe  
 P. Porter

Family & Friends of E. Phillips  
 Family & Friends of S. Walker  
 Family & Friends of E. Himlin  
 Family & Friends of A. Robertson  
 Family & Friends of B. Gechter  
 Family & Friends of L.J. Neuen  
 Students and Teachers  
 Veterans  
 Those impacted by storms and hurricanes  
 Those battling forest fires  
 Victims of forest fires & their loved ones  
 Efforts to reduce & eliminate racism  
 Those impacted by COVID-19  
 Those working on a vaccine for COVID-19

*Please let us know if we can be in prayer with you.*

*All are welcome to add names to the prayer list.*

*Names are generally left on the list for about four weeks.*

*Please let us know if you would like a name to remain longer or shorter.*

*If you would like someone's name added to the prayer list, please contact the church office at 610-621-5770 or [office@sprucc.org](mailto:office@sprucc.org).*

## ††† General Announcements †††

### Welcome!

We are glad that you are here to worship with us virtually. May you find the worship and message meaningful and satisfying to your soul. May your week be blessed.

### In Person AND Virtual Sunday School Options

Due to the increase in the number of people affected by COVID, *in-person Sunday school* for children and adults has been suspended until further notice.

However, [The Wired Word](#) is still available for adults. This is a virtual option which you may join via Zoom. For Zoom you can join either with a computer or smart device (if you do not yet have the Zoom app, click on this [Zoom](#) link), or call 1-301-715-8592 with a landline or cell phone. Meeting ID: 860 8980 7220; Passcode: 195152.

Although not in-person, the youth can still continue to learn about God's Word through the information available on our website. We have Sunday school music, videos, and an assortment of other materials that are available for downloading. Click on this link for [Sunday school for youth](#).

We also have devotional music for all ages on our website, courtesy of Pastor Bob. Click on this link for [Devotional Music](#).

For our Sunday school [COVID-19 Safety Precautions](#) click on the following link:

<http://www.sprucc.org/news-a-events.html#COVID19Precautions>

To have a copy of the precautions mailed to you, please call 610-621-5770.

### Telephone Live Streaming & Playback Worship

This service is being offered to those who do not have internet access. You may call us at our toll free number **1-888-649-5770** and listen to the worship service live using a landline or cell phone. (No internet, smartphone, tablet, or computer is necessary - this works with a standard corded phone, cell phone, or even with a rotary phone). You also have the option for the church to automatically call you when the live stream worship begins (rather than you calling the church); which you can sign up for at the above toll free number, or you can call the church office, and we can add you to the call list. If you have any questions, difficulties, or issues, please let us know by calling the office at 610-621-5770. There is no charge to you for this service. If you know of someone who does not have internet access, please let them know of this feature, especially as they cannot log onto the website and find out about this themselves.

### Visitation Care Team

Our Visitation Care Team (VCT) is composed of lay members who have been trained for visitation. If you are in need of prayer, a visit, or just a listening ear, they are here to be of support to you. To contact the Visitation Care Team with a visitation request or to share information about a potential care need, call the church office at 610-621-5770 or email the office at [office@sprucc.org](mailto:office@sprucc.org). For more information, go to our "[Visitation Care Ministries](#)" page at [www.sprucc.org](http://www.sprucc.org) under the "ministries" tab.

### Annual Pork & Sauerkraut Meal

Thank you to everyone who was able to help with our annual Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner held on Friday, January 1. We couldn't have done it without so many stepping up to help. HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

### Robesonia Blood Drive

St. Paul's will be hosting [Miller-Keystone Blood Center](#) this Tuesday, January 5. For more information go to our website under [Recent & Upcoming Events](#).

### Closing of the 2020 Books

The closing of the 2020 books will be on Sunday, January 10, 2021. If you would like a donation counted for the 2020 contribution year, it will need to: (1) be received by the counting team by worship on Sunday, January 10; and (2) be dated for 2020. As of January 1, all other contributions will be attributed to the 2021 giving year.

Please contact the Financial Secretary, Terry Pastor, at [finsec@sprucc.org](mailto:finsec@sprucc.org), or call the church office if you have any questions or need additional information.



Link to Website's  
Upcoming Events

## About Today

**Church Season - Christmas** - Christmas is the season of celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed one, who is our King and Saviour, who is the Light of the World. The season of Christmas last 12 days and is from sunset of December 24 through January 5. (January 6 is Epiphany).

**Color of the Paraments** (cloths on the altar, pulpit, and lectern):

**White** - symbolizes Christ as the Light of the World. of Christ's presence for the Kingdom of God is near.

**Colors of the Advent Season** (such as used for the Advent Candles):

**Blue** - symbolizes the hope found in the anticipated coming of Christ

**Violet** - symbolizes royalty and penitent preparation for Christ our King, who offers forgiveness

**Rose/Pink** - symbolizes joy, as expressed by Jesus' mother Mary

The suggested scripture lessons are from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which selects passages throughout the Bible over a three year cycle. The RCL is the most common lectionary used by Christian churches. We are in **Year B**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Mark.

The Bible is in two sections: Old Testament - OT (scripture prior to Christ's birth), located in the first 2/3 of the Bible; and New Testament - NT (about Christ & early church).

**This Sunday, January 3, 2021, Lectionary Reading for Second Sunday after Christmas.**

Jeremiah 31:7-14 *or* Sirach 24:1-12; Psalm 147:12-20 *or* Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18; Matthew 2:1-12.

### **Jeremiah**

The book of Jeremiah (OT) is attributed to the major prophet Jeremiah and written around 600-500 B.C. (B.C.E.). A prophet is one who is divinely appointed by God to lead and instruct. Jeremiah's ministry extended over the last tragic forty years of the kingdom of Judah to the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jewish people to Babylon.

### **Psalm 145**

This OT song attributed to David, gives praise for the greatness and goodness of God. In its original Hebrew, it has an alphabetic acrostic form, which means that every other verse begins with a successive letter of the alphabet.

### **The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians**

The Epistle (letter) to the Gentile church in Ephesus is attributed to the Apostle Paul, written in the first century A.D. This is an open letter to many churches in response for the life-changing radical transformation in our personal and social life as we become a part of Christ's family. Paul was a Christian, Jew, Pharisee, Roman citizen, and leader in the Christian church, who had a direct encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus after Jesus' ascension into heaven. He wrote more of the NT than any other person. The title of this letter "Hebrews" presumably refers to the original audience of this letter as primarily Jewish-Christian.

### **The Gospel According to John**

John is the latest of the four Gospels, written around 80-90 A.D. probably in Ephesus, and attributed to John the son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple of Jesus. This Gospel was "written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and through believing you may have life in his name" (20:31).

### **The Gospel According to Matthew**

Matthew's Gospel was written around 80-90 A.D. in Antioch, Syria by a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian. The first writing was probably by a Christian scribe who wrote in the name of Matthew. Matthew was a disciple who knew Jesus personally.

**Next Sunday, January 10, 2021, Lectionary Reading for The Baptism of Christ - First Sunday after Epiphany.**

Jeremiah 31:7-14 *or* Sirach 24:1-12; Psalm 147:12-20 *or* Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9), 10-18.