

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.*



ON HEARING THIS, THEY WERE
BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF
THE LORD JESUS.

ACTS 19:5, NRSV

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.*

+++

Sunday, January 10, 2021
The Baptism of Christ
First Sunday after Epiphany

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 ^②

O God, in the beginning you fashioned the universe. Each star and planet had its beginning in you. Out of the void, you brought light and life. Through eons of creativity, you have acted, and today we are here, inheritors of an amazing process, tiny specks in the limitless reaches of time and space. And you are here, waiting to greet us, continuing to act in the world in ways beyond our understanding, yet we are seeking a greater understanding. As you acted in our baptism, you are acting still to make all things new within us and among us. Let your light awaken us and your Spirit empower us for faithful living. Amen.

{Those who are able, please rise}

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

“Crashing Waters at Creation”

vs 1, 3, & 4

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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 ^②

Leader: The powerful voice of God created all worlds.
That same voice calls us to worship.

People: **Ascribe to our God glory and strength.
Come before God’s glorious majesty.**

Leader: Come together to remember your baptism.
Gather to celebrate the Spirit’s gifts.

People: **The heavens open to us at the Word of God.
Surely God forgives and makes whole.**

Virtual Worship Service

Online: [Live Stream](#) 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

455

Crashing Waters at Creation

F Dm C F C B \flat C F

1 Crash - ing wa - ters at cre - a - tion, or - dered by the Spir - it's breath,
 2 Part - ing wa - ter stood and trem - bled as the cap - tives passed on through,
 3 Cleans - ing wa - ter once at Jor - dan closed a - round the one fore - told,
 4 Liv - ing wa - ter, nev - er end - ing, quench the thirst and flood the soul.

Dm A Dm C F Dm C F

first to wit - ness day's be - gin - ning from the bright - ness of night's death.
 wash - ing off the chains of bond - age -- chan - nel to a life made new.
 o - pened to re - veal the glo - ry ev - er new and ev - er old.
 Well - spring, source of life e - ter - nal, drench our dry - ness, make us whole.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993
 Music: arr. Christian F. Witt, 1660-1716; adapt. Henry J. Gamdett, 1805-1876
 Text © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

STUTTGART
 87 87

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** [®] (Leader)

John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We, who have received the gift of baptism, recognize the need to confess our sins to remind ourselves of our finitude and of God's amazing grace. Let us confess our sins before God and before one another. Let us pray...

***CONFESSION OF SIN** [®] (Unison)

Creator God, you have created us, but we have chosen to go our own way. You have reclaimed us, but we have, by our arrogant attitudes and actions, rejected the claim. You have sent your Holy Spirit to break into our controlled and unimaginative routines, and we have not appreciated that burst of creative energy. We are ready now, ready to admit that our ways are full of dangerous byways. Our mistakes and failures have often come because, in our false pride, we have not listened to you. Save us again by your forgiving love. 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[®] (*Leader*)

A voice from heaven said to Jesus: "You are my own Son, the Beloved; with you I am well-pleased." Jesus Christ passed on that gift to those who dared to follow. We, too, are beloved children of God, loved, forgiven, and sent on a mission. All who are truly sorry for their sin and repent are relieved of its burden and are recreated in God's image. Celebrate God's strength and glory! **Amen.**

*CALL TO PRAISE

Leader: Let us praise God for our baptism in Christ's name.
People: **We lift up our voices in thanks for the Spirit now within.**

*SUNG PRAISE *"Baptized in Water"*

**Baptized in water, Sealed by the Spirit,
Marked with the sign of Christ, our King;
Born of one Father, We are His children,
Joyfully now God's praise we sing.**

*Music: Tom Fettke; Text: Michael Saward
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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

First Lesson: [Genesis 1:1-5](#)
Second Lesson: [Acts 19:1-7](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Mark 1:4-11](#)

HYMN

"Baptized in Water"

vs 1 & 2

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CHILDREN'S SERMON

465 Baptized in Water

We were buried with Him through baptism that we may live a new life. Romans 6:4

Unison

1. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it
 2. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it
 3. Bap-tized in wa - ter, Sealed by the Spir - it

Cleansed by the blood of Christ, our King;
 Dead in the tomb with Christ, our King;
 Marked with the sign of Christ, our King;

Heirs of sal - va - tion, Trust-ing His prom - ise,
 One with His ris - ing, Freed and for - giv - en,
 Born of one Fa - ther, We are His chil - dren,

Faith - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
 Thank - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.
 Joy - ful - ly now God's praise we sing.

TEXT: Michael Seward

MUSIC: Traditional Gaelic melody; arranged by Tom Ferke

BUNESSAN
5554.D.

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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) *The Apostle's Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended to the dead;
on the third day he rose again,
ascended into heaven,
and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,*
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. 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}

OFFERTORY INVITATION ^②

Leader: In thanksgiving for all we have received,
People: we enlist in the ministry Christ demonstrated and inspired.
Leader: We have nothing apart from God's gifts.
People: We have everything when we allow God's Spirit to work through us.
Leader: This offering demonstrates the depth of our awareness.
People: We generously give our first and best to our God.

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](#). [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 *"Baptized in Water"*
**Baptized in water, Sealed by the Spirit,
We bring offerings to Christ, our King;
Jesus has saved us; Jesus has sent us;
Gratefully now God's praise we sing.**

Music: Tom Fettke; Text: Michael Seward & Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz
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*OFFERTORY PRAYER ②

Mighty God, you have given us everything we have. You have granted us life. You have poured out abiding love on our behalf. You have made us rich. We share out of this awareness, and because we care about people who do not know you, people who have not shared your abundance, people who have defied your commandments, people who need your love. Bless our gifts to do the work you intend. **Amen.**

{Please be seated}

THE AGAPÉ FEAST (LOVE FEAST) ③

The Agapé Feast is a simple meal included as a part of a worship service based on the first gatherings of Christians after Pentecost (Acts 2:42) and continued to be practiced by the Christians of the early church (Jude 1:12). Agapé is the Greek word for the self-sacrificial *love* of Christ that reconciles us to God and unifies us as Christians. This meal demonstrates our desire to be in fellowship with one another as equal children of God (Galatians 3: 26-29). It involves a common food and a common drink, but not to be confused with the sacrament of Holy Communion. The modern use of the Love Feast as a part of worship began in the 1700s in Germany by the Moravian Church, and then slowly spread to other denominations. In the early American settlements congregations were often served the sacraments by an occasional visit of a traveling pastor, and therefore the Love Feast became a common alternative to communion for those times when no pastor was available to consecrate the communion elements. The use of the Love Feast has become increasingly practiced during the COVID-19 pandemic as alternative meal to communion, as a way to share in a meal of community with God and with one another, through virtual electronic means, without the need to have consecrated bread and wine/grape juice.

*{For the following Love Feast,
we invite you to share in a simple meal together
virtually over the live stream and in spirit through Christ}.*

{Both the food and the drink is your choice, but should be something common and simple.

Examples of food include: a pastry, doughnut, pancake, French toast, biscuit, muffin, cookie, cracker, dinner roll, or sticky bun.

Examples of drink include: water, coffee, tea, orange juice, or lemonade}.

*{Bread cubes, wafers, wine, and grape juice are ok, but are generally not used,
so as not to confuse the Love Feast with the Lord's Supper}.*

GREETING (Leader)

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we have all come to this place frail and broken. In a world of violence, hate, greed, and isolation, we come together as a church searching to find the way forward, we look for healing through this restorative service of old. It is in this Agapé Feast where adversaries become friends, friends become neighbors, and the Christian family embraces all.

The history of the feast, as a celebration born simply out of love, generosity, and fellowship is beautiful. At its most basic, the love feast is an experience of warmth and sharing, a commemoration of the early church. At its most symbolic, the love feast is a means of God's grace that is experienced in the fellowship with each other and with God. But the simplest explanation of the love feast, to which one can respond when asked, is that it is a way to remember Christ's presence on earth, and to celebrate with gratitude the spirit of God's love.

In times and places when Christians are unable to partake of Holy Communion, many people share in a tradition called the Love Feast. Sisters and brothers, we are always hungry and thirsty for Christ's love. One thing we know about Jesus is how he intentionally gathered at a table or in a field or even along the seashore to break bread, to nourish both body and spirit. This is what Jesus did on that final night before his passion. He gathered in love with those who would betray him, those who would deny him, those who would abandon him. He held together this humble community with the steadfast love of God in him. Jesus gathered them to share his love and to encourage them.

Today we gather at a distance, united in Christ's love. We all need food; we all need drink. We are equal before God; we are equal as we share in this meal of love together. This simple food and drink unite us as sisters and brothers in Christ. May this service and this meal not only nourish our bodies, but also our spirits and the bonds of love between us.

OPENING PRAYER (*Unison*)

Leader: We thank you, O God, for the life, love, and knowledge which you have revealed through Jesus, your child and our brother. To you be glory forever.

ALL: **Be present at our table, Lord;** *(by John Cennick)*
Be here and everywhere adored;
Thy creatures bless, and grant that we may feast in paradise with Thee. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS (*Leader*)

(NRSV)

Galatians 3: 26-29 (Equals in Christ)

- ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.
²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free,
there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.
²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Ephesians 4: 1-6 (Unity in the Body of Christ)

- ¹ I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,
³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace.
⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,
⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

John 13:34-35 (Jesus' "New Commandment" to love one another)

- ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.
Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.
³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

BLESSING (*Unison*)

(a meal prayer believed to have originated in the Moravians)

**Come Lord Jesus be our guest,
and let these gifts to us be blessed.
Like manna in the desert given,
the Bread of life, sent down from Heaven. Amen.**

MEAL

Leader: I now invite you to eat and drink together, united by love in fellowship and in spirit by Christ.

*{If our technology works in the way that we hope it will,
a slide show of our fellowship together as the church will be playing
in the live stream during the following hymn}.*

HYMN

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

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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.**

{Those who are able, please rise}


Love and Fellowship

CHARLES WHEATLEY, 1747


8.7.8.7.D.

BEECHER
JOHN ZUNDEL, 1870*In moderate time*


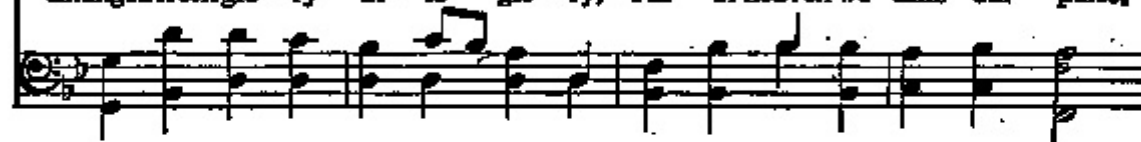
1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cell - ing, Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
2. Breathe, O breathe Thy lov - ing Spir - it In - to ev - ery trou - bled breast;
3. Come, Al - might - y to de - liv - er, Let us all Thy life re - ceive;
4. Fin - ish, then, Thy new cre - a - tion; Pure and spot - less let us be;




Fix in us Thy hum - ble dwell - ing, All Thy faith - ful mer - cies crown;
Let us all in Thee in - her - it, Let us find the prom - ised rest;
Gra - cious - ly re - turn, and nev - er, Nev - er - more Thy tem - ples leave.
Let us see Thy great sal - va - tion Per - fect - ly re - stored in Thee;

Je - sus, Thou art all com - pas - sion, Pure, un - bound - ed love Thou art;
Take a - way the love of sin - ning; Al - pha and O - me - ga be;
Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing. Serve Thee as Thy hosts a - bove,
Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, Till in heaven we take our place,




Vis - it us with Thy sal - va - tion, En - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.
End of faith, as its be - gin - ning, Set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
Pray, and praise Thee with - out ceas - ing, Glo - ry in Thy per - fect love.
Till we cast our crowns be - fore Thee, Lost in won - der, love, and praise. A - MEN.



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 ^②

Leader: Listen to the majesty of God's voice, calling you!
Glorify God's name in your work and worship.
**People: We have been baptized in the name of Jesus.
The triune God has blessed and empowered us.**
Leader: Then go out as a new creation in Christ.
Let others see how God is changing you.
**People: We are unworthy servants of the Most High.
Yet we are ready to do what God expects.**
ALL: Amen.

*BENEDICTION ^①

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Savior Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do God's will, working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*THREE FOLD SUNG AMEN

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*SENDING HYMN

"This is My Father's World"

*all 3 verses
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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}.*

His World

MALTBY D. BARCOCK, 1901

S. M. D.

TERRA PATRIS
Melody by FRANKLIN L. SHEPARD, 1915
Arr. EDWARD SHIPPEN BARNES, 1916*In moderate time and graceful rhythm*

1. This is my Fa-ther's world, And to my lis-tering ears,
2. This is my Fa-ther's world, The birds their car-ols raise,
3. This is my Fa-ther's world, O let me ne'er for-get

All na-ture sings, and round the rings The mu-sic of the spheres.
The morn-ing light, the ill-y white, De-clare their Mak-er's praise.
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Rul-er yet.

This is my Fa-ther's world: I rest me in the thought Of
This is my Fa-ther's world: He shines in all that's fair; In the
This is my Fa-ther's world: The bat-tle is not done; Je-

rocks and trees, of skies and seas; His hand the won-ders wrought.
rus-ling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me ev-ery-where.
sus who died shall be sat-is-fied, And earth and heaven be one. A-MEN.

Musical arrangement by Edward Shippen Barnes. Used by permission.
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 - ② *Led by Love* by Lavon Bayler. (1996). Cleveland, OH: United Church Press.
 - ③ *Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship*. (1995). Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis and Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia.
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 - ⑦ scouting.org - resources for Boy Scouts of America
 - ⑧ Reprinted with permission from *Worship Ways of the United Church of Christ*. (2020).
 - ⑨ *Lecturn Resource*. (2014). Logos Productions, Inc.; Grove Heights, MN.
 - ⑩ Sunday Sermons Preaching Resources. (2017). Margate, NJ.
 - ⑪ 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
 - ⑫ Reprinted with Permission from *Lecturn Resource*. 2014. Logos Productions, Inc., Inver Grove Heights, MN.
 - ⑬ Miller, Earl D. (1994). *Consecrating Stewards*. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.
 - ⑭ The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz
 - ⑮ The Love Feast liturgy was primarily designed and written by United Methodist pastor, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia A. Wilson (2018) at umcdiscipleship.org, with adaptations from: the Rev. Tamie Scalise, Richard Stowe (author of *The Love Feast*), moravianmusic.org, moravian.org, and the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz. One License is our Church Copyright License# A-728042., which is a subscription service giving us copyright permission to print the words and music found in the bulletin and to live stream music on the internet during the Worship Service.
- 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

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.

††† 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. For more information, go to our "[Visitation Care Ministries](#)" page at www.sprucc.org under the "ministries" tab.

Closing of the 2020 Books - TODAY

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, or call the church office if you have any questions or need additional information.

About Today

Church Season: Epiphany - Season of the manifestation of God incarnate to the world.

In Greek “phan” is “shine” or “manifest,” and “epi” is “upon.” The season of Epiphany continues from January 6 until Ash Wednesday.

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

White - symbolizing the purity of Christ as we are washed in the baptismal waters and the blood of Christ.

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 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.

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 147

This OT song is a hymn of praise to God for the Lord’s care, power, and wisdom in creation, especially for God’s care and keeping of the lowliest and weakest creatures.

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).

Next Sunday, January 17, 2021, Lectionary Reading for the Second Sunday after Epiphany.

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51.