



Extravagant Sign

St. John's United Church of Christ  
An "Open and Affirming" Congregation

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Rev. Alice Rauch, Pastor

The Service: 10:00 a.m.

January 16, 2022

*(Let us be silent and prayerful as we prepare ourselves for worship.)*

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**MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Remembering that God calls us through Christ to be ministers with each other, St. John's United Church of Christ, as inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, seeks: To be inclusive and accessible to all people; To provide loving service to all of God's people through mission and ministry; To strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

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

Prelude

Announcements and Prayer Concerns

Moment of Meditation

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP (from Isaiah 43:2-3a)**

*When you pass through the waters,*

**God will be with you;**

*And through the rivers,*

**They shall not overwhelm you;**

*When you walk through fire*

**The flame shall not consume you.**

*For the LORD is our God,*

**the Holy One, our Savior.**

\*Hymn # 584 "I Am the Light of the World"

**\*INVOCATION**

O God, all people are your Beloved, across races, nationalities, religions, sexual orientations and all the ways we are distinctive from one another. We are all manifestations of Your image. *We are bound together in an inescapable network of mutuality and tied to a single garment of destiny.* You call us into your unending work of justice, peace and love. Let us know our presence among us now: Let us delight in our diversity that offers glimpses of the mosaic of Your beauty.

Strengthen us with Your steadfast love and transform our despairing fatigue into hope-filled action. Under the shadow of Your wings in this hour may we find rest and strength, renewal, and hope. We ask this, inspired by the example of Your disciple, Martin Luther King, Jr., and in Jesus' name. Amen.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession - Holy One, we confess that we live at times as if You are far away. We live at times as if You are above us, distant in a cloud. We have forgotten the humanness of Your life, that You were born as vulnerable and messy as us. You were baptized as we were baptized, in water from this earth You created. You called forth followers who were Your friends. You celebrated at weddings and had family members tell you what to do. Remind us to invite You into the mess of our lives, O God, for You have lived it and experienced it. You know what it is like to be rejected by family, to be feared, to be forgotten, and to be loved and accepted and cared for. Remind us that You are very near to us, not only in Spirit, but in experience. You know us. You know our hearts. You know our lives. May we rejoice and celebrate that You are dear to us, and we are dear to You. Amen.

Assurance and Blessing: *Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of God is my mother and my sister and my brother, my siblings, my family." Whenever we turn back to Jesus' way and live into God's will, we know that we belong to God's family, that we belong to Jesus and Jesus belongs to us. Love one another, forgive one another, help one another in healing and encouragement. Live into this good news, knowing that God knows the number of hairs on your head, and loves you madly. Amen.*

Words for All - Especially Children

Anthem

Scripture: *John 2:1-11*

Message                    ***"Waters of Reconciliation"***

Prayer

Lord's Prayer (sinned and sinned against us) **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 sins, as we forgive those who have sinned 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.**

Installation of Officers and New Consistory Members

Greeting

Introduction

Presentation

Covenant - *Members of this household of faith, you have heard the promises of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them.*

**We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.**

Prayer

Declaration

Greeting of Christian Love

Celebration and Joys

\*Dedication of Gifts and Offerings - **O God, we commit to use all our gifts -wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues, administration, hospitality, and finances-in the service of acting as co-workers with You and each other for peace and justice to flow like a mighty stream. Amen.**

\*Hymn #285                    ***"O Holy Dove of God Descending"***

\*Benediction - *Let us go forth to celebrate and strengthen our inescapable network of mutuality, and become the radiant hope needed in the world. As we go forth in this mutuality, may we experience our God rejoicing over us and with us. Let us go forth confident that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. Amen!*

\*Benediction Response #809 ***"God Be with You"***

\*Postlude

## THIS MORNING

**St. John's is pleased you have joined with us today.** We hope that you have found this time to be a blessing. **Please sign** the attendance book located in the Narthex (and kindly include your mailing address/telephone number and/or email) and introduce yourself to the persons who are worshipping around you. If you are looking for a new church family and are interested in knowing more about St. John's, please indicate that following worship to the Pastor or one of the ushers.

**Available to you**, if needed, is a Quiet Room for adults and children, where the service can be seen and heard. Also available are phonic-ear hearing units, large print bulletins, and large-print Bibles. Ask any usher.

**HYGIENE CLOSET** - the hygiene closet at the Mifflinburg Intermediate School is in need of a few items to restock Shampoo, Conditioner, Deodorant (men's and women's), body spray (lightly scented men's and women's) might be nice for the students.

**HOLY JOE CAFÉ** - The Congregation invites you to enjoy coffee and fellowship before the worship service. The Holy Joe's Café ministry enables the UCC chaplains to provide a coffee house atmosphere for spiritual care and good coffee. This program can be supported by placing a donation in the Holy Joe's container located by the coffee cart or visit Holy Joe's Café' at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).

### In Our Thoughts and Prayers This Morning

(Please contact the church office, at 570-523-0162, with any updates)

**Ongoing Needs**- Scott Bower, Betty Hackenberg, Janet Heaton, Bill Geyer, Ingrid, Christine Sartwell, Joanne & Bill Stahley, Peg Swinehart. Leanne Trout (Dee Ledgerwood's Mother), Linda Williams, Wayne Williams.

**Shut-In/Homebound**- Ann Beasom, Richard Berry, Peg Brouse, Bill & Lola Fuller, Jane Hayes, Evelyn Mabus, Ken Moore, Ethel Moser, Loretta Roberson, Mary Stover.

**Immediate Concerns** - The family of Martha Anderson (Rev. Marian Anderson's mother), Maryjane H., Richard Heaton, Michelle L., Katelynn Mattison, Logan Nolter, Kay & Gary Nottis, Loretta Roberson, Russ Wynn Jr.

## THIS WEEK

Monday, January 17	<b>12 Noon</b> <b>7 pm</b>	<b>CALL TO CARE (PAR)</b> <b>FINANCE/PERSONNEL (ZOOM)</b>
Tuesday, January 18	9:30 am 6:30 - 8 pm 7:30 - 9:30 pm	Central Assoc. Ministerium (FH) Girl Scout Troop 600006 (CR) Men's Westbranch Chorus (CH.RM)
Wednesday, January 19	7 am - 830 am <b>7 pm</b>	Lewisburg Sunrise Rotary (FH) <b>OPEN/AFFIRMING SERIES (ZOOM &amp; SANCT)</b>
Thursday January 20	9 - 10 am 1030-NOON <b>7 pm</b>	TOPS (CR) Willowbrook String Band (FH) <b>CONSISTORY MEETING (ZOOM)</b>
Friday, January 21	<b>NOON</b> 4 pm	<b>OFFICE CLOSING AT NOON</b> Suzuki Class (SANCT.)
Saturday January 22	11 am	FELLOWSHIP HALL RSVD. BY MEMBER
Sunday, January 23	<b>9 am</b> <b>10:00 am</b> <b>3:30 pm</b>	<b>BELL CHOIR REHEARSAL</b> <b>WORSHIP</b> - (Children's Church during worship) <b>MESSY CHURCH (FH &amp; SANCT.)</b>

## FUTURE

**MARK YOU CALENDAR, AGAIN** - First Session - January 19<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm., we will begin a monthly series titled, *"So, we're Open and Affirming. Now what?"* - The series will be held on Wednesday evenings, both **In-Person or ZOOM**, whichever is most comfortable for you. Please call the Church office (570-523-0162) if interested in attending. The next session is scheduled for Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> during which we will learn a bit about a faithful response to racism. Speaker - Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** - for January 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will again be hosting Messy Church for everyone who would like to attend.

**COMING SOON** - We will again be having a **"SOUP SALE"** on February 13<sup>th</sup>, in celebration of **"Soup - R - Bowl" Sunday**. More info will be available soon. Profits from the sale will be sent to the local Food Bank.

**MASK REQUIREMENTS** - We thank you for your vigilance as we all continue to stay safe and healthy. We **ask** that masks be worn when inside the building.

**THE OUTWARD SIGNS**

Friday, Christmas Eve, December 24, 2021  
Christmas Eve Offering - \$875.00; Current Expenses - \$335.00;  
Loose Offering - \$66.00; OCWM - \$120.00;

**GRAND TOTAL - \$1,396.00 THANK YOU!**

**THE OUTWARD SIGNS**

Sunday, December 26, 2021  
2021 Poinsettias - \$50.00; Bethany Children's Home - \$25.00;  
Building Use - \$115.00; Current Expenses - \$1,052.50;  
Envelope Expenses - \$6.00; Food Pantry - \$20.00; Giant Gift Cards - \$25.00;  
Improvements/Maintenance - \$10.00; OCWM - \$368.50;  
Security Project - \$10,000.00; Weis Gift Card Sales - \$25.00;

**GRAND TOTAL - \$11,697.00 THANK YOU!**

**THE OUTWARD SIGNS**

Sunday, January 2, 2022  
Building Use - \$80.00; Christmas Eve Offering - \$10.00;  
Current Expenses - \$1,455.00; Envelope Expenses - \$40.00;  
Improvements/Maintenance - \$15.00; LEAF Fund - \$203.00;  
Loose Offering - \$25.00; OCWM - \$85.00; Vanguard Admiral - \$208.19;

**GRAND TOTAL - \$2,121.19 THANK YOU!**

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**St. John's United Church of Christ**

1050 Buffalo Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837 -- (570) 523-0162  
Worship 10:00 a.m. Office: Mon.- Fri. 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
Website: [www.stjohnslewisburg.org](http://www.stjohnslewisburg.org) Email: [stjohnsucc@ptd.net](mailto:stjohnsucc@ptd.net)

***It is a privilege to serve you today . . .***

Rev. Alice Rauch, *Pastor*

Rev. James E. Johnson, *Pastor Emeritus*

Todd R. Hummel, *Dir. of Music/Organist*

Todd R. Hummel, *Bell Choir Director*

Linda Sartwell / Sue Baish, *Sound Technician*

Todd Hummel, *Administrative Assistant*

?, *Greeters*

Kiera Aulenbach, *Acolyte*

Barry Catherman, *Video Technician*

CCLI #20796546 One License #738455-A

## Extravagant Sign

Weddings join more than the people being married. They join families, traditions, and stories. Generations come together. Children who were strangers become cousins. Two become one in many ways. In this story told in John's Gospel, there is a wedding with a problem. The wine has run out. Jesus is there, with his mother. In the hands of this gospel author that situation turns into an opportunity to make a point about a moment in the first century when the religious landscape was changing. This is a story about the transformation of traditions.

During the time that John's Gospel came into being, synagogues were being disrupted by Jews who were proclaiming a new religious vision within the context of Judaism. Their voices were raised in worship and community gatherings. What they proclaimed was disruptive to the religious traditions of their day. They were saying that a carpenter's son who was crucified by Roman guards was the Messiah for whom they have been waiting. Talk about conflict! Talk about turmoil! It must have been hard for everyone. John's gospel emerged in the middle of this commotion. That is why this Gospel often takes traditional religious symbols of its day and puts them in the hands of Jesus who transforms them.

The jugs that Jesus fills with wine were used for religious rituals of cleansing. What was sacred and symbolic is, after Jesus gets through with them, now filled with wine...a symbol of celebration and newness. There are many ways we can think about this. One is that by using ritual vessels for wine Jesus joins what we think of as ordinary with our sacred practices.

Many of our churches experiment with new ways of worship and new ways of transforming old traditions. In Cleveland, at our own Amistad Chapel, in the summer of 2018, artists gathered from all over the country. They were visual artists, dancers, scholars of liturgy, writers, and storytellers. They gathered to create and wonder and experiment and discover a new language of our faith – a language for a new century already well underway. They gathered to develop resources for the local church and to support our justice work, and they all came to share how the sacred speaks through our creative selves made in God's image. One of the participants, Rev. Erin Beardemphl said this about art, "If we could, in our churches and in our communities, show people that they really are creative beings, I expect the world would be so much more loving." Like what Jesus did at the wedding, they were filling old vessels with new wine.

