



BETHLEHEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sunday, December 7, 2025

Second Sunday of Advent

Worship Leader: Rev. Randy Koppenhaver

Musician: Kathy Bowe

The white peace candle on the altar is lit in solidarity with all peoples of the world affected by armed conflict, civil war, oppression, tyranny, exploitation and discrimination. God, bring them peace.

***= Please rise in body or spirit**

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: as you inhale, say the first part of the prayer to yourself, and say the second part as you exhale. Repeat 5x

Praise be to the Lord God :: who alone does marvelous deeds

RINGING OF THE BELLS

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #86 v. 1

"like a child"

like a child love would send to reveal and to mend,

like a child and a friend, Jesus comes

like a child we may find claiming heart soul and mind,

like a child strong and kind, Jesus comes.

CALL TO WORSHIP AND ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING - PEACE

[the match is lit]

Out of darkness a light shines.

Out of silence a voice cries, "prepare the way of the Lord."

From a dead stump shoots grow.

Out of chaos, a people flourish;

righteousness and peace kiss.

Today we continue the Advent journey.

Today, we light this candle of peace.

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[the first two candles in the advent wreath are lit.]

God invites us, “let them make peace with me, let them make peace with me.”

**Love and faithfulness meet together;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.**

Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from heaven.

**The LORD will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest.**

Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

*OPENING PRAYER:

**God of wisdom and understanding, of peace and promise,
you are the giver of life, and you live in us.**

**You have welcomed us as your children and called us to live out your image
with hospitality toward each other.**

**In Jesus Christ, you offer us living water to wash away our sin and sorrow,
and call us back to paths of justice and righteousness.**

**With the Holy Spirit, you baptize us for service and life in community,
refreshing us each day with your presence and purpose.**

**Glory and honor and praise be yours, Creator, Christ and Spirit,
this day and every day, now and evermore. Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN (insert)

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

God of peace and promise,

we confess that we have taken your commitment to us for granted.

**We assume what we do is acceptable to you, yet we tend to judge others
without compassion. We have been slow to welcome others,
especially if their cultures or convictions differ from ours.**

**You call us to repentance, but we resist acknowledging what needs to
change in our hearts or our habits. Forgive our self-satisfied attitudes,
and challenge us with your vision of a peaceable kingdom where all can be
made new. *Time of silent reflection...***

WORDS OF GRACE

Receive the Good News in peace.

With great mercy, God forgives what we have confessed and offers us new life in Christ.

Receive the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will. And we will be at peace with God, with ourselves and with one another. May it be so.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“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.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Isaiah 11:1-10 - New English Translation

A shoot will grow out of Jesse's^[a] root stock,
a bud will sprout^[b] from his roots.

² The Lord's Spirit will rest on him^[c]—

a Spirit that gives extraordinary wisdom,^[d]

a Spirit that provides the ability to execute plans,^[e]

a Spirit that produces absolute loyalty to the Lord.^[f]

³ He will take delight in obeying the Lord.^[g]

He will not judge by mere appearances,^[h]

or make decisions on the basis of hearsay.^[i]

⁴ He will treat the poor fairly,^[j]

and make right decisions^[k] for the downtrodden of the earth.^[l]

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,^[m]

and order the wicked to be executed.^[n]

⁵ Justice will be like a belt around his waist,
integrity will be like a belt around his hips.^[o]

⁶ A wolf will reside^[p] with a lamb,

and a leopard will lie down with a young goat;

an ox and a young lion will graze together,^[q]

as a small child leads them along.

⁷ A cow and a bear will graze together,
their young will lie down together.^[r]

A lion, like an ox, will eat straw.

⁸ A baby^[s] will play

over the hole of a snake;^[t]

over the nest^[u] of a serpent

an infant^[v] will put his hand.^[w]

⁹ They will no longer injure or destroy
on my entire royal mountain.^[x]

For there will be universal submission to the Lord's sovereignty,
just as the waters completely cover the sea.^[y]

Israel is Reclaimed and Reunited

¹⁰ At that time^[z] a root from Jesse^[aa] will stand like a signal flag for the nations.
Nations will look to him for guidance,^[ab] and his residence will be majestic.

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

¹ Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.

² **May he judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.**

³ May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.

⁴ **May he defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
may he crush the oppressor.**

⁵ May he endure^[a] as long as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all generations.

⁶ **May he be like rain falling on a mown field,
like showers watering the earth.**

⁷ In his days may the righteous flourish
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

¹⁸ **Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.**

¹⁹ Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

Matthew 3:1-12 - NIV

³ In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"^[a]

⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think

you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with ^[b] water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with ^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

CHILDREN'S TIME

FIVE MINUTES OF PRAISE

"Go Light Your World"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1iBFDcxXac>

MESSAGE

*HYMN #92

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

ADVENT SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

(Written by: Rev. Andrew O'Neil, St. Paul's United Church, Riverview, New Brunswick)

INVITATION

PREFACE

God be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**

Let us give thanks to God. **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

THE STORY

In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise: "I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up." (Jeremiah 33:15)...

... We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight, that valley's peace be lifted up and mountains might brought low so that all God's people might rejoice together, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night...

... With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

Bless us, O God, and these your gifts. Encourage us to share your life and love, which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.

Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children:
those who feel alone or afraid...

those who whose souls and homes are broken by violence...

those who will go hungry, thirsty, and cold tonight...

those who long only to hear that they are loved...

God made known in Jesus Christ, **hear our prayer.**

We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger. At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always, that we might welcome hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives, and become hosts to God's presence and people.

God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world, where the lonely and longing gather. Lead us to the mangers of our time, where hope and renewal are born again. Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen.

RESPONSE #525 refrain only

"One Bread, One Body"

One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless. And we, though many, throughout the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.

PRAYER CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER...THE LORD'S PRAYER

Petitions end with: God of peace with justice,

make us better stewards of the gifts you give 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 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.

SUNG PRAYER RESPONSE #403 "Lord, Listen to your Children Praying"

**Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying, Send us love, send us pow'r, send us
grace.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY At Bethlehem United Church of Christ, we collect TWO offerings each Sunday. Our regular operational offering is collected in the wooden plate. In the metal cans, we collect loose change and small bills for a monthly designated benevolent collection. December's Jingle Change supports the UCC's 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."*)

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE Doxology to tune of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below.
Praise God above ye, heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Rejoice, Rejoice, Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God, our Peace and our Promise, receive our gifts as seeds of gratitude for your gift to us in Christ Jesus. Bless these seeds with growth so that peace will take root in people who face conflict and danger, and in places seeking to establish peace in the face of violence. Be their peace and their promise, through Christ our Lord.

*CLOSING SONG "Go Now in Peace"

***Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith. Steadfast strong and true.
Know he will guide you, in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.***

***God will be there, watching from above.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love. A-men, A-men, A-men.***

BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

POSTLUDE

***liturgies for this morning were used with permission from: presbyterian.ca/worship/ unless noted otherwise.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Heifer International: Still time to contribute to the Heifer International Project. In 2024 Bethlehem donated \$2750 to Heifer. The goal for 2025 was set at \$1820. We've donated enough to meet our 2025 goal, as well as time to match our 2024 donations. Deadline is Sunday, December 7.
- The confirmation students will be preparing and serving breakfast to cover the costs of their winter retreat. Please join them TODAY following worship. Freewill donations will be collected.
- Chili Supper Tickets Available – packets of 10 tickets for the February 4, 2026 Chili Supper are available in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign out any packets you take. If you'd like less than 10 please see Kaye Radder. Payment is due by Feb 4.
- Bethlehem UCC is signed up to work at the Sheboygan Warming Center on Sunday, January 26. The shift is from 6pm-9pm. The work involves setting up for dinner, serving dinner, washing dishes (commercial dishwasher) and cleaning up. There are five slots available. Sign up in the fellowship hall.
- CALLING NEW MEMBERS!! If you've been visiting for a awhile and feel like Bethlehem is a "good fit" for you, we will be inducting new members on Sunday, February 8. We will meet at 8:45 am that morning for a little paperwork and Bethlehem "education," followed by the induction during worship. We will celebrate after worship with a reception. Please see Pastor if you'd like to join Bethlehem, or if you have questions.

Community Announcements – See flyers in fellowship hall for details.

- Cookie Walk – 12/6 – 9a-11a – St. Peters UCC, Kiel
- Christmas Bingo – 12/14 – 11:30a-2:00pm - St. Marks UCC – see flyer for details

IN OUR
Thoughts and Prayers

Those Grieving:

The Family of Tom Phillip, Jr
The Family of Jeanette Wriedt
The Family of Will Mathes

Those struggling with health issues:

Louie Bowe	Dawson Horneck
Heidi Konen	Darlene Horneck
Brad Westphalen	Jessica Horneck
Sofia	Melissa
Hubert	Larry
Chase Goekes	Tyler Smith
Mark	Molly
Willow	

Those unable to worship with us:

Merlin Nimmer Helen Henning

This Week at Bethlehem:

Sunday 12/7: 8:00am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship w/ Communion; Breakfast served by the confirmation class following worship; *Happy Birthday Stephen Deignin, Jr, Jeff Holz, and Jackie Volland!*

Monday 12/8:

Tuesday 12/9: 6:30pm Consistory Mtg

Wednesday 12/10:

Thursday 12/11:

Friday 12/12:

Saturday 12/13: *Happy Birthday Darlene Horneck and Christa Taylor!*

Sunday 12/14: 8:00am Sunday School; 9:30am Sunday Worship; *Happy Birthday Ivan Salm!*

December Panty Item: Box of Cereal

