

December 17, 2023
10:30 AM Service of Worship
3rd Sunday of Advent

Gathering Around the Word

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Choir

RESPONSE

Light One Candle

*Light one candle for joy,
One bright candle for joy,
He brings joy to ev'ry heart,
He comes, He comes! (Repeat)*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Laura Choi

Leader: Our God can part the sea.

**People: God can bring water from a rock
and provide bread in the desert.**

Leader: Our God can walk on water.

People: He can heal the sick and turn water into wine.

Leader: Our God sets the stars in the sky.

**People: God hears our voice when we cry
and is closer than our own breath.**

Leader: There is nothing our God cannot do.

People: Let us stand in awe. Let us worship God with wonder.

*HYMN #105

People, Look East

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God,

**Somewhere in our childhood we faced the pressure to
outgrow awe. We turn into adults who obsess over data and
facts. We have lost our ability to be curious, wonder, or awe.**

Forgive us for closing that door to you.

Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children.

**Teach us again the ways of awe and wonder,
so that like Zechariah, when we find ourselves speechless,
our first words will be words of praise.**

With hearts open wide, we pray.

*SILENT CONFESSION

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

*RESPONSE #654

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful; in the Lord I will rejoice!

Look to God; do not be afraid.

Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.

Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.

*THE PASSING OF GOD'S LOVE AND PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all ... **And also with you.**

Proclaiming the Word

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Bob Hurte

FIRST LESSON

Psalms 126

p. 613-614

This is the Word of the Lord ... **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

Will They Know Him?

Choir

SECOND LESSON

Luke 1:57-66

p. 1013-1014

This is the Word of the Lord ... **Thanks be to God.**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON

"Allowing Joy"

Pastor Stephen Choi

Responding to the Word

*DECLARATION OF FAITH (Insert)

The Nicene Creed

*HYMN #104

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & 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.**

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY *Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bearing and Following the Word

*HYMN #266 *Joy to the World*

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE #541 *God Be with You Till We Meet Again*
*God be with you till we meet again;
Loving counsels guide, uphold you,
With a shepherd's care enfold you:
God be with you till we meet again.*

*POSTLUDE

*Please stand if able

Stewartsville Presbyterian Church

The Ministers: All the Members

The Rev. Stephen Park Choi, Pastor

The Rev. Jack E. Roan, Pastor Emeritus

Brian Ballentine, Music Director

Denise DeMasi, Choir Director

Laura Choi, Christian Education Director

Renée Herb, Office Manager

Mary Lou Gary, Treasurer

Sarah Sampson, Treasurer Elect

STEWARTSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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Catholic Charities Food Pantry. We continue to donate food and toiletries to the Catholic Charities Food Pantry.

At this time, the food pantry is in particular need of cereal, soup, canned vegetables and fruit, and tuna fish, as well as grocery bags.

Devotionals. The January daily devotionals are available in the back of the sanctuary, or by calling the church office.

Pray for This Week's Mission Partner: Foundation for Peace.

The mission of Foundation for Peace is building relationships, bringing hope and transforming communities by working hand in hand with local communities and churches in the Dominican Republic, Kenya and Haiti. Among the things offered by Foundation for Peace are healthcare and education. To learn more about Foundation for Peace, visit their website at foundationforpeace.org

OUR CONGREGATION IN MINISTRY

Assisting in Worship Today	Laura Choi
Greeters Today	Don and Louisa Miers
Broadcast Team	Alan Deak and Bill Fleming
Nursery Today	Janis Clark and Carol Nixon

Week Ahead at Stewartville Presbyterian Church

Today, 12/17: Congregational Meeting after Worship Service

Christmas Caroling after Congregational Meeting

AA, 6:00 p.m., Roan Hall

Monday, 12/18: Session Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Library

Wednesday, 12/20: AA, 7:00 p.m., Roan Hall

Sunday, 12/24: Sunday School, 9:20 a.m.

Worship Service, 10:30 a.m., with Sunday School Christmas Program

Deacons Chapel Service, 2:00 p.m., Lopatcong Care Center

Christmas Eve Worship Service of Lessons and Carols, 7:00 p.m., with Holy Communion, Special Music, and Candlelighting

This Week's Birthdays and Anniversaries

Today, 12/17: Colton Banghart

Wednesday, 12/20: Anthony DeMasi

Thursday, 12/21: Barry Oberly

Friday, 12/22: Bob Morris

John & Terry Lefler – Anniversary

Announcements

Welcome. Thank you for choosing to worship with us today. We invite you to sign the pew pad as they are being passed. Restrooms are located downstairs in Roan Hall. We hope that the service is a blessing to you, and we look forward to seeing you again soon.

Christmas Eve Worship Service. Please join us for our Christmas Eve Worship Service at 7:00 p.m. next Sunday, Dec. 24. Holy Communion will be celebrated during this service of Lessons and Carols.

The Sunday School Christmas Program will be presented during the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, Dec. 24.

Announcements (continued)

Congregational Meeting. There will be a brief Congregational Meeting after the worship service today. The purpose of the meeting is to elect a new class of Elders and Deacons. Please see the bulletin insert for the nominated officers' bios.

Christmas Caroling. Everyone is invited to go caroling after the Congregational Meeting today. We will sing Christmas carols to our homebound members and deliver cookies to them.

Pajama Sunday. On Sunday, Dec. 31, please feel free to wear pajamas or casual clothing to our 10:30 a.m. worship service. We will have a hymn sing during the service.

Nursery Not Staffed. The church nursery will be open, but not staffed on Sundays, Dec. 24, and Dec. 31.

No Sunday School. There will be no Children's Sunday School on Dec. 31. The Adult Sunday School Class will not meet on Sundays, Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.

All Sunday School classes will resume on Sunday, Jan. 7, 2024.

Undecorating Help Needed. We will be taking down the Christmas tree and decorations in our sanctuary on Saturday, Jan. 6, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Help is needed to assist with the "undecorating." Please see Ed Ham or contact him at ehamjr99@gmail.com for more information.

Friday Morning Devotional Group. The Friday Morning Devotional Group will resume meeting each Friday at 8:00 a.m. beginning on Jan. 12, 2024. The group will meet in person in the church library and on Zoom.

For our next study, we will read "When God Interrupts: Finding New Life Through Unwanted Change" by Craig Barnes.

If you are interested in participating, please let Pastor Stephen know.

Women's Circle Theater Event. The Women's Circle will be going to see "Menopause: The Musical" at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 10, 2024, at the State Theatre in Easton.

Tickets are \$45. If there is a group of more than 10, there will be a discount.

Tickets are open to anyone. If you are interested, please contact Kathy Montgomery as soon as possible at 908-674-0654 or katleemont@gmail.com.

Cuba Mission Trip. Pastor Stephen will be visiting a partner church in Cuba in early April 2024.

If you are interested in going or have questions, please speak with Pastor Stephen.

Christmas Joy Offering. We are receiving the Christmas Joy Offering throughout the Advent season. Please see the insert in today's bulletin for more information about this offering.

Please use the special envelope in your box of envelopes, or write a check with "Christmas Joy" on the memo line.

To give online at the church website go to www.stewartsvillepc.org, Give Now, Special and note "Christmas Joy."

Israel/Palestine Response. In response to the violence in and around Israel/Palestine, **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** is providing humanitarian assistance through partners on the ground and through ACT Alliance.

Response efforts encompass a wide array of vital humanitarian interventions, including but not limited to medical supplies, shelter, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), food and non-food items, and delivering crucial psychosocial support to individuals.

If you would like to give to the relief efforts, please write a check and note "PDA" on the memo line.

For online giving, go to the church website at www.stewartsvillepc.org, Give Now, Special, and note "PDA."

2024 Offering Envelopes. The 2024 Offering Envelopes are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary.

If you would like envelopes but don't see your name, please contact the church office. Also contact the office if you need your envelopes mailed to you.

2023 Giving Statements. Offering received by Sunday, Dec. 31, will be counted toward your 2023 Giving Statement. Offering received after that date will count toward your 2024 statement.

2024 Pledge Cards. If you have not already returned your 2024 Pledge Card and Time & Talent Sheet, please put them in the offering plate, or mail them to the church office as soon as possible. Extra Pledge Cards and Time & Talent Sheets are available in the back of the sanctuary, or by calling the church office.