

**ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH**  
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY  
**WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND**  
**UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE**

**December 7, 2025**

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT // IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM SERVICE

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Liturgist: Karen Hopkins

[CC] = closed-captioned

\* **Congregation Standing**

**Have your juice and bread/crackers prepared for holy communion**

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**WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME**

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PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer

WELCOME

CENTERING HYMN

“Surely the Presence of the Lord”

UM #328

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.  
I can feel God's mighty power and God's grace.  
I can hear the brush of angel's wings;  
I see glory on each face.  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

CANDLE LIGHTING & HYMN

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"  
(verse 1)

GTG #85

Light one candle to watch for Messiah:  
Let the light banish darkness.  
He shall bring salvation to Israel,  
God fulfills the promise.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

In the wilderness, a voice cries out:

**“Prepare the way of the Lord!”**

Every valley shall be lifted, every rough place made smooth.

**For the promised One is coming with justice and peace.**

Let us gather our hearts and ready our lives.

**Come, Lord Jesus. Come and renew Your people.**

**\*PRAYER OF APPROACH**

**God of our Advent waiting,  
You stir our hearts like John in the wilderness.  
You call us to truth, to courage, to new beginnings.  
Break through the noise that surrounds us and speak Your Word of life.  
Prepare us for the One who comes with fire and Spirit— not to destroy, but to renew.  
Make us ready, O Lord, in hope and faith. Amen.**

**\*OPENING SONG**

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

GTG #102

Savior of the nations, come;  
virgin’s son, make here your home.  
Marvel now, O heaven and earth,  
that the Lord chose such a birth.

From God’s heart the Savior speeds;  
back to God his pathway leads;  
out to vanquish death’s command,  
back to reign at God’s right hand.

Now your manger, shining bright,  
hallows night with newborn light.  
Night cannot this light subdue;  
let our faith shine ever new.

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,  
virgin’s son, incarnate Word!  
to the holy Trinity  
praise we sing eternally.

**\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Merciful God,  
We confess that we prefer smooth paths to honest transformation.  
We resist Your call to repentance and cling to what is familiar,  
even when it does not give life. We avoid the wilderness where You shape us,  
and we ignore the voices calling us back to You.  
Forgive us, Lord. Clear away the clutter of our lives, soften our hearts,  
and lead us in Your way of righteousness and peace.  
Through Christ, our coming Redeemer. Amen.**

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Hear and believe in the Good News of the Gospel.  
**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

***Refrain:***

***There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord,  
for you to reveal yourself to us.***

***There is a longing in our hearts for love  
we only find in you, our God.***

For justice, for freedom, for mercy: hear our prayer.  
In sorrow, in grief: be near; hear our prayer, O God.

***Refrain***

For wisdom, for courage, for comfort: hear our prayer.  
In weakness, in fear: be near; hear our prayer, O God.

***Refrain***

For healing, for wholeness, for new life: hear our prayer.  
In sickness, in death: be near; hear our prayer, O God.

***Refrain***

Lord save us, take pity, Light in our darkness.  
We call you; we wait: be near; hear our prayer, O God.

***Refrain***

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Christ, the Prince of Peace, is near.  
Let us share His peace with one another.

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

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Spirit of wisdom and truth,  
Open our hearts to hear the prophets' cry and to receive Your Word with humility and hope.  
Speak to us again in the wilderness places of our lives,  
that we may prepare the way for Your coming. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 11:1–10

ANTHEM

“Prepare Ye the Way”

*Allen Pote*

Prepare ye the way, the way of the Lord  
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God  
And every valley shall be lifted up  
And every mountain and hill be made low  
And the rough places a plain  
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed  
And all flesh shall see it together  
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Luke 3:2-18

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

"The Right Path"

Pastor Hyiwot Teshome

MESSAGE

"WHAT SHALL WE DO?"

Pastor Hyiwot Teshome

\*RESPONSIVE HYMN

"O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?"

GTG #104

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?  
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!  
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,  
to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;  
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.  
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace  
in love, all loves excelling, our lost and fallen race.

You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill,  
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.  
In patient expectation we live for that great day  
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

"I Want Jesus to Walk With Me"

GTG #775

I want Jesus to walk with me;  
I want Jesus to walk with me;  
all along my pilgrim journey,  
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

In my trials, Lord, walk with me;  
in my trials, Lord, walk with me;  
when my heart is almost breaking,  
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

When I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;  
when I'm in trouble, Lord, walk with me;  
when my head is bowed in sorrow,  
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Holy God,  
Receive these gifts and ready our lives for Your kingdom.  
Use what we bring to lift up the lowly, to comfort the hurting,  
and to prepare a world where justice and mercy flourish.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Intercessory Prayer 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 sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever.  
Amen.**

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and Cup

*The bread of life—given for you.*

*The cup of salvation—poured out for you*

COMMUNION HYMN

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

GTG #525

Let us break bread together on our knees;  
Let us break bread together on our knees;

***Refrain:***

***When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,  
O Lord, have mercy on me.***

Let us drink wine together on our knees;  
Let us drink wine together on our knees;

***Refrain***

Let us praise God together on our knees;  
Let us praise God together on our knees;

***Refrain***

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Eternal God, we thank You for the mystery of faith made visible in this holy meal. As we rise from this table, send us out in the strength of their example and the power of Your Spirit, to love as you loved, to serve as you served, and to trust as you trusted. Keep us faithful until that day when we shall feast with you in the joy of Your eternal kingdom — through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the Alpha and the Omega. In His name, we pray. Amen.**

\*CLOSING HYMN

“Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

GTG #39

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;  
there is no shadow of turning with thee.  
Thou changest not; thy compassions they fail not.  
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

**Refrain:**

***Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.  
All I have needed thy hand hath provided.  
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!***

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

**Refrain**

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

**Refrain**

\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Pastor Hyiwot Teshome

\*POSTLUDE

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

GTG#106

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!  
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.  
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.

**Refrain:**

***O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.***

He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.  
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.  
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.

**Refrain**

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace,  
and tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.  
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.

**Refrain**

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*Readings are NRSV unless otherwise noted. CEB=Common English Bible; CEV=Contemporary English Version; KJV=King James Version; MSG=The Message; NIV=New International Version; NLT=New Living Translation; TIB=The Inclusive Bible*

## **Isaiah 11:1–10**

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow[a] out of his roots.  
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see  
or decide by what his ears hear,  
but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor  
and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;  
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist  
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

The wolf shall live with the lamb;  
the leopard shall lie down with the kid;  
the calf and the lion will feed[b] together,  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,  
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.  
They will not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him,  
and his dwelling shall be glorious.

## **Luke 3:2-18**

During the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord;  
make his paths straight.  
Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

**CALENDAR: SCHEDULED FOR WEEK OF DECEMBER 7 - DECEMBER 14**

**All meetings are via Zoom (unless otherwise noted).**

All meetings are open to the members and affiliates of SJU unless otherwise noted. Members are encouraged to connect to, engage, and invest in the life and leadership of this Body of Christ, the church! Contact [SJUColumbia@gmail.com](mailto:SJUColumbia@gmail.com) if you wish to receive meeting and contact information on anything below:

|              |          |   |
|--------------|----------|---|
| Sun, 12/7    | 8:30 am  | CHRISTIAN APPLICATION   |
|              | 10:30 am | <b>COMMUNION WORSHIP SERVICE</b><br><i>(in-person and livestream)</i><br><i>(Liturgist: Karen Hopkins)</i>          |
|              | 11:30 am | FELLOWSHIP <i>(Room 10)</i>   |
|              | 4:00 pm  | <b>JOEL NWAGBARAOCHA MEMORIAL SERVICE</b> <i>(Room 4)</i>   |
| Thurs, 12/11 | 6:00 pm  | A/V TECH TEAM REHEARSAL <i>(Room 4)</i>   |
|              | 7:30 pm  | CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSAL <i>(Room 4)</i>   |
| Sun, 12/14   | 8:30 am  | CHRISTIAN APPLICATION   |
|              | 10:30 am | <b>CANTATA WORSHIP SERVICE</b><br><i>(in-person and livestream)</i><br><i>(Scheduled liturgist: Robin Dietzway)</i> |
|              | 11:30 am | FELLOWSHIP <i>(Room 10)</i>   |



**STAFF APPRECIATION CELEBRATION**

Sunday, December 14 in Room 10 immediately after the Cantata Service.

Contributions, Personal Notes, and Cards should be mailed to 6304 Golden Hook, Columbia, MD 21044 or delivered to the church by December 10, 2025.

Checks should be made payable to Pamila Brown not SJU or can be sent electronically via [Venmo@Pamila-b](mailto:Venmo@Pamila-b)

**BRYANT WOODS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEAR-END EVENTS**

- We are working with our partner, Bryant Woods Elementary School to celebrate its children and staff this holiday season. We need gift cards for teachers in the amount of \$5 from Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts or Target. It's the small acts that brighten someone's day!
- Please bring in hats, mittens and gloves to decorate our Christmas tree. Help us trim the cutest tree ever with adorable gifts that will later be donated to the community to stay warm this winter. Our drive begins on 11/30 and continues through the December 14th service. Please place your contributions in the basket at the back of the church on Sundays or leave them with Aleia or Pastor Hyiwot at the church office.