

Use the following worship guide as we gather on Sunday morning via Zoom. Simply click here:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2398495210>

** Announcements are at the end of this order of worship. **

The Service of Worship
First and St. Stephen's United Church of Christ
Baltimore, Maryland
Advent 2 – Year C – “Peace”

December 8, 2024

10:30 a.m.



Prelude

Nancy Flandermeyer Chronister, Director of Music

Welcome

The Rev. Dr. Kelly M. Sisson, Pastor

Call to Worship

~ congregation reads **bold print** ~

In this season of waiting, our God comes.

Come suddenly, Holy God, into our slow expectations and fill us with your urgent hopes for justice.

In this holy season of delight and wonder, our Savior comes.

Come suddenly, Companion of the poor, and challenge us to share in the gospel of welcome for all.

In these days of remembering what our lives are to be, our Spirit comes.

Come suddenly, Preparer of the way, to take us by the hand to walk with our sisters and brothers down the path to service.

Lighting of the PEACE candle

Candle Song

(sung to the tune ‘Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent’)

words by Rev. John Kubar

As we light the candle of peace, We await the Christ yet to come.

Seeking peace within and around us, to a world with fear overgrown.

Christ, come to us, upon our Earth do dwell, May we carry peace close to home.

Hymn for Advent NCH #101 *Comfort, Comfort, O My People* PSALM 42 FREU DICH SEHR

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Our Joys and Concerns

Remember these known joys and concerns:

- Peace in our world, our country, our community
- Anticipation of the Kavanagh's 4th grandchild
- Nancy Chronister's father
- Freeman Palmer, Conference Minister, recovering from knee surgery
- Laura Weaver-Haas' health
- Jen's friend, Andrew and his family
- Bryce – Jen Langdon's nephew

If you share a concern and wish for it to be printed on this list, please consult with the person/s whose names are involved, then let the pastor know in writing via email they give their consent.

Call to Reconciliation

(congregation reads **bold print**)

We may appear pure and blameless to others, but we know the mistakes we have made with our words, our thoughts, and our actions. God promises not only to save us from our enemies, but from ourselves as well. Join me as we offer our confessing words to the One who will make us new once more.

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

You witness the sorts of lives we lead, Approaching God. Asked to share the gospel of hope, we place it on our to-do list instead. Given the chance to cry out for justice for others, we fall strangely silent. Invited to pray with joy in every moment, we prefer to grumble about every insignificant thing in our lives. Have mercy on us, God of grace, and prepare our hearts for Your forgiveness to have its way in them. Fill us with Your hope so we might lighten the shadows of others. Help us to join the choirs of children in singing of Your joy. Transform us with that tender mercy who is Jesus Christ. Amen.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

God is our witness. We have spoken of our lives and been forgiven of every mistake we have made, every hurt we have caused.

We are held in God’s heart, not only on this day, but all the days of our lives. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

Scripture Lesson

Philippians 1:3-11

Liturgist

Anthem

Every Valley

Choir

by John Ness Beck

The Message

Living Tapestries

Rev. Sisson with Bill Ingram

Congregational Response

For the Weaving of Our Lives (see insert)

by Amanda Udis-Kessler

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Making an Offering

Please consider making an offering through on-line giving or mail your check to the church address. You can find information on our church web page: first-ststephens.org You may also place your offering in the offering plate in the sanctuary. Or, you may use the QR Code in this bulletin.

Prayer of Dedication/Offering

(congregation reads bold print)

You come in this holy season with the simple gift of life itself. You invite us to share from the abundance of our lives, so others might be filled with life, with hope, with love, and with grace. Bless these gifts we offer to You, so they may be used to share the good news of wholeness and welcome for all. Amen.

Hymn for Sending

NCH #62

Come, Share the Spirit

SHARE THE SPIRIT

~ as you are able, please stand ~

Postlude

Nancy Chronister

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Worship Resources are adapted from:
Thom Shuman, PCUSA

Welcome! We are glad you are here. If you are visiting with us, please fill out a visitor’s card from the back of one of the chairs and place it in the offering plate or hand it to the pastor after the service.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National AIDS Memorial Quilt – Today is the last chance to see this exhibit we have been blessed to share with the wider community. Thanks to all of you who have volunteered your time – were/are docents, slept in the church overnight, shared flyers on social media and in the community, and told your friends about this wonderful opportunity. Special thanks to Jason and Kevin Adson-Skerik and to JPar Realty for having this idea and sponsoring the event.

Church-wide Called Business Meeting – Sunday, December 15 – immediately after the worship service. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the loan from Cornerstone and vote on a 2025 budget. Be watching your email early this week for more information to help make informed decisions next week.

Changing the Cycles – please bring **sanitary products** to help those in menstrual poverty. Please bring items to the box in the foyer and help young women remain in school during their cycles.

ACTC is asking for any non-perishable food items. For December, please bring **canned soups**. Place items in the red wagon in the foyer so they may be delivered weekly.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service – 7p.m.

To Make an Offering Now



Church Staff

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Consistory for 2024

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For the Weaving of Our Lives

♩ = 112

For the weav - ing that of our lives on the loom of
the thread that binds us all of - fers to the
For the web that each us all gen - tly in its

joy and grace, warp of love that holds our hearts,
world's de - sign, fa - bric of a thou - sand hues,
tang - led skein, ba - by's cry and pro - phet's call,

welt of faith we add each day: All cre - a - tion
heart and hands we and soul and mind: All cre - a - tion
strands of peace and strands of pain: Dear cre - a - tion,

hears our song, We are wo - ven kind and strong,
hears our prayer, as we weave a world of care,
may that we yet re - pair your ta - pe - stry.

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Music: Conrad Kocher, 1786-1872, abridged (Dix 7.7.7.7.7.)

Email: amanda@amandaudickessler.com New hymns: quercersacredmusic.com Permission is given for free use of this hymn

Advent & Christmas 2024: Star Stuff



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	
<p>1 First Sunday in Advent Set up your advent wreath and creche. Include a star, far away but calling to all.</p>	<p>2 Make a star out of cardboard & foil. Carry it in your pocket till Epiphany, to remind you of where you come from.</p>	<p>3 Pray for someone on the other side of the political divide from you. Try to mean it.</p>	<p>4 Pick one star in the sky tonight—let her be your companion this month. Communicate in code.</p>	<p>5 Do a small thing that might turn out to be a big thing re: reconciliation.</p>	<p>6 Write down three things that still give you hope. Set them on the first 3 stars you see tonight. Rest.</p>	<p>7 Make a pillow fort and hide in it. Tell yourself or a friend a Christmas story about Jesus and a star. Make it up if you don't know one!</p>
<p>8 Second Sunday in Advent Do a small thing that might turn out to be a big thing re: kindness.</p>	<p>9 Read about a tyrant, real or pretend. Remember no tyrant lives forever, and many are deposed because wise ones keep walking toward the light.</p>	<p>10 Walking by government buildings, pray for the people inside: flickering stars who need encouragement.</p>	<p>11 After you bathe, stand naked in front of the mirror. Marvel that every part of you was born from the heavens.</p>	<p>12 Dia de Guadalupe – make Guadalupe's star-spangled headscarf, and sing or shout the Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55</p>	<p>13 It's OK to veg. There's more than one way to stargaze. Get together with someone you like and watch a Christmas movie tonight.</p>	<p>14 Ask for, and receive, a heart to heart hug from at least 3 people. Hold for six seconds or more.</p>
<p>15 Third Sunday in Advent Put on body glitter, turn off the lights, and dance to Sly and the Family Stone's "Everybody is a Star."</p>	<p>16 Light a candle and leave it burning in a window all night (maybe an LED). Pray that it might guide someone home.</p>	<p>17 Go gaze at the sky tonight. Draw a new constellation with your finger. What shape does it make, what story about God does it tell?</p>	<p>18 Look up at the day sky. Your star friend is there, even though you can't see her. God too, though invisible, is just as real. Reach up & hold.</p>	<p>19 The fastest pulsar spins at 42,960 revolutions per minute. Can you beat that? Try!</p>	<p>20 Set your alarm for a random time in the middle of the night (don't look). When it goes off, go look out your window at Crea-</p>	<p>21 Winter Solstice Light your house entirely with tealights tonight. Pretend they are stars and you are a spaceship. Dwell among them.</p>
<p>22 Fourth Sunday Spend time with a creche, wondering about each figure's fears, motivations and hopes. Go to church and pray for them.</p>	<p>23 Wear a sign today that says "you are stardust and made of Heaven itself."</p>	<p>24 Christmas Eve Wear beautiful jewelry—heavy metals were created by two stars smashing. You are smashing too!</p>	<p>25 Christmas Day Jesus is here! Be the baby. Swaddle, nap, cry if you need attention.</p>	<p>26 Listen and sing along to this new Christmas song by Rob Lev-eridge: tiny.cc/r28wzz</p>	<p>27 The smallest stars have the longest lifespan. Don't burn out too soon—small as you are, you will endure.</p>	<p>28 Go for a night walk without GPS. Look for your star-friend and let her guide you home.</p>
<p>29 Your star is wishing on YOU. What is her wish?</p>	<p>30 Watch Sean the Science Kid talk about the miracle you are: tiny.cc/r28wzz</p>	<p>31 New Year's Eve New stars keep getting born. Look at a dark corner of the sky, and imagine a dazzling new arrival.</p>	<p>1 New Year's Day Wake up early & watch the sunrise. Feel the turning of the world. The Light is getting stronger, however it may seem.</p>	<p>2 Do a small thing that might turn out to be a big thing re: a new connection.</p>	<p>3 Learn about one of your ancestors. Be guided by them: the good they have done, or the cautionary tale.</p>	<p>4 Get your face in the sun, bright morning star, for 15 minutes today.</p>



Advent

is the hush in the theatre
between the house
lights going down
and the curtain going up.

#TinyAdventPoems 1/24

Text - Amy Scott Robinson | Design - Richard Lyall

