

# *Faith United Church of Christ*

*“An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.  
A place to make a difference.”*

December 31, 2017

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas**

Sacred Fellowship 10:45 AM

*We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God’s grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life’s journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!*

## **CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY**

### **Welcome and Announcements**

*Please sign the registration pads at the ends of the pews on the center aisle.  
We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.  
Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship  
in Romig Hall (lower level of elevator or stairs).*

*\* = You are invited to stand as you are able*

### **Prelude**

*"O Hail this Brightest Day of Days"                      D. Buxtehude  
O hail this brightest day of days, All good Christian people!  
For Christ is come upon our ways, Ring it from the steeple!*

### **Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst                      (acolytes light altar candles)**

*We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love’s light is brought into our awareness. The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.*

### **Affirming God’s Presence in Us All**

*“You Matter!”*

## Sharing Christ's Peace

*As a sign of our reconciliation with God and one another, greet and welcome those around you and share "the peace of Christ."*

### **\*Centering Our Souls**

O God, we ask for gifts of discernment of your will for our lives.

**But it is easier to ask than to listen, and easier to listen than to follow.**

The words that Mary heard about her son were incredible. They were testimonies of praise for the great thing God would do, but also words of warning about the opposition and contention that would occur...of the pain and sacrifice as well as the joy and blessing.

**We would prefer to hear only the good news rather than all of the news. We long for glory without effort, and success without a struggle.**

Help us to be faithful to your words and will for us.

**Help us to have the courage to be lights in the world.**

Teach us constancy and humility...patience and resolve.

**Strengthen us for the journey you call us to begin. Inspire us to live as lights of love and peace that your way may be lit by our lives. May it be so.**

**\*Hymn of Christmas Joy**

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

**#144**

**Our Stories of Random Acts of Kindness & Intentional Deeds of Compassion**

## **WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES**

**A Time for All God's Children**

### **Prayers**

***Sharing Our Joys and Concerns***

***Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People***

***Pastoral Prayer***

***Unison Prayer "Prayer from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer"***

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure,

spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. May it be so.

**\*Hymn of Warmth amidst Cold**                      “In the Bleak Midwinter”                      **#128**

**Scripture Lessons**    Luke 2.21-40

**Message**    “Shining Light Casts Shadows”

**\*Hymn of Divine Mystery**                      “What Child Is This”                      **#148**

## **WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD’S SERVICE** **THROUGH FAITHFULNESS**

### **Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings**

*“Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see; but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing.”*

**Offertory** “Organ Improvisation”

**\*Song of Dedication**

*Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7*

The advent of the Christ draws near.

With hope and faith we conquer fear.

Let love and peace in us be found.

Let joy within our hearts abound.

**\*Unison Prayer of Dedication**

O Light of Love that lives in every person and throughout creation: We have been blessed as the recipients of your goodness, and now we offer a portion of that goodness back to replenish and nurture our world. Multiply the sum of these gifts we present by the sincerity and joy of our giving that they may bring forth a harvest of compassion and justice. May our thoughts and prayers we have raised today inspire us to go forth more caringly and kindly for all our tomorrows. Be born in us that we may carry on and create stories of love to all peoples and to all the earth. May we always be the gift of being givers. Now and always.

### **\*Encouragement for the Journey**

**Postlude**

Voluntary in D Major

W. Selby

### **\*The Light of Love Goes into the World**

*Love’s light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world!*

# WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL

*Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,  
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.*

*Use the blessings God has given you as you share  
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,  
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.*

*Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.*

Faith UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through worship and the sharing of God's word. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender identity, sexual orientation, capability, or circumstance of life.

## Our Ministry

Ministers — All the Congregation  
Trustee —  
Liturgist —  
Acolyte —  
Fellowship —

Interim Pastor — Rev. Bret Myers  
Ushers —  
Children's Message —  
Nursery —

## Church Staff

Custodian — Scott Luzier  
Organist—Mark Ferraguto

Church School Coordinator — Barbara Chellman  
Choir Director – Mike Dolan  
Administrative Assistant — Jeff Stormer

*The liturgies for this morning's worship, along with the Song of Dedication, were written by Rev. Bret S. Myers except where otherwise noted.*

## ***Prayers for healing and wholeness:***

Bob Ritzman, the family of June Brown, the family of Jean Weller, Lisa B. (JoAnn's daughter), Brandon G., Lisa Neidigh, Bunnie Hartswick, Katelynn Wilson, Darlene Ripka, April S., Randy Brown (Aimee's Dad), the Piggot family, Robert Zupp (Eileen Pfaff's nephew), the Snook family.



**Welcome to all first-time (and returning) guests to Faith UCC!** We would like to get to know you and for you to get to know us. Join us after worship for coffee and **conversation**. There is free parking on Sundays at the meters and at the McAllister & Pugh Street parking garages – so, we hope you'll worship with us again next Sunday!

**Electronic Giving Options:** During the offering time in the service, you may place your offerings on the plates the ushers will bring around. If you prefer to give electronically simply **scan the QR code** with your smartphone to be directed to our online donation page.



**December Special Offering**

The **Christmas Fund** benefits retired clergy and their families that live on very limited incomes. Last year, Faith gave \$512.

Make checks payable to Faith UCC with “Christmas Fund” noted in the memo line.



- **December 31**      **New Year's Eve Service, 7 PM**
- **January 6**        **Epiphany**
- **January 7**        **the Baptism of Christ**
- **January 10**      **ESGMT @ 1 PM**  
                                 **Trustees @ 7 PM**
- **January 14**      **2nd Sunday After Epiphany**
- **January 15**      **MLK, Jr Day**

**Get In Touch with Us!**

Faith United Church of Christ, 300 E. College Avenue, State College, PA 16801  
 Tel: (814) 237-3904      Websites: [www.faithucc.info](http://www.faithucc.info), facebook.com/SCFaithUCC  
 Church Office Email: [faithucc@comcast.net](mailto:faithucc@comcast.net) Pastor's Email: [revbmyers@yahoo.com](mailto:revbmyers@yahoo.com)  
 Church Office Hours: 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays

Please make an appointment with Rev. Myers if you would like to meet with the pastor.  
 You may call the church office, or his cell at 608-370-9472.