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**We are an Inclusive Faith Community.**

**All Are Welcomed and All Really Means ALL!**

Sunday, December 31st, 2023, 10am

First Sunday of Christmas



I'd rather regret the things I've done than regret the things I haven't done.

**--Lucille Ball**

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Worship Notes:

**PRELUDE**

Greeting and Reply

Opening Hymn: **Jesus, the Light of the World (AAHH-217)**

*Hark the herald angels sing*

*Jesus, the light of the world*

*Glory to the newborn king*

*Jesus, the light of the world*

*Refrain:  
We’ll walk in the light, beautiful light*

*Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine right,*

*Oh, shine all around us by day and by night.*

*Jesus, the light of the world.*

*Joyful all ye nations rise*

*Jesus, the light of the world*

*Join the triumph of the skies*

*Jesus, the light of the world [Refrain]*

*Christ, by highest heav’n adored*

*Jesus, the light of the world*

*Christ, the everlasting lord*

*Jesus, the light of the world [Refrain]*

*Hail, the heav’n-born prince of peace*

*Jesus, the light of the world*

*Hail, the Sun of righteousness!*

*Jesus, the light of the world [Refrain]*

**Our Church’s Mission:**

Welcome all into a loving, inclusive faith community,

Seeking to live out the teachings of Jesus,

Building on our own rich history, actively exploring beliefs and assumptions, and Promoting justice, peace and spiritual growth.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: God of life, you promise good news of great joy for all people,

**Many: and call us to be messengers of your peace.**

One: We confess that too often we hoard…

**Many: our joy, our resources, and our security.**

One: Where we are self-centered,

**Many: open our hearts.**

One: Where we are reluctant,

**Many: give us courage.**

One:  Where we are cynical,

**Many: restore our trust.**

One:  Renew us with your grace

**Many: and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**

### Hebrew Reading: Isaiah 61:10—62:3

10I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
  my whole being shall exult in my God;  
 for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
  he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
 as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
  and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
 11For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
  and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
 so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
  to spring up before all the nations.  
  
 62:1For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,  
  and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,  
 until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
  and her salvation like a burning torch.  
 2The nations shall see your vindication,  
  and all the kings your glory;  
 and you shall be called by a new name  
  that the mouth of the Lord will give.  
 3You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,  
  and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

### Gospel Reading: Luke 2:22-40

22When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), 24and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”  
 25Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. 27Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,  
 29“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
  according to your word;  
 30for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
  31which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
 32a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
  and for glory to your people Israel.”  
 33And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”  
 36There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.  
 39When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

INVOCATION

Worship & Praise through Music

Passing the Peace of Christ

THE LORD'S PRAYER: (Singing) **(Green Hymnal-740)**

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 trespasses **(Debts),** as we forgive those who trespass against us **(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

Announcements

Offering

Doxology (Praise God from whom all blessings flow)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above the heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen!** *(Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost)*

Honoring June Wright

Sermonic Hymn: **“This Is a Time to Remember” (W&R-579)**

*This is a time to remember the greatness of the Lord*

*He has so faithfully led us as promised in his Word*

*He has so bountifully given his grace like freshening rain*

*He has so lovingly pardoned and made us whole again*

*This is a time to remember the glories that have been*

*This is a time to press onward to vistas yet unseen*

*Christ is alive in his people, he meets us face to face*

*Granting the power of his Spirit to serve him in this place*

*This is a time to remember the Church is His, not ours*

*This is a time to surrender ourselves, our wealth, our powers*

*This is a time to be servants—to give ourselves away*

*Building the Church of the future until the coming day*

MESSAGE: Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes – Numbers 11:18-20

**18**And say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wailed in the hearing of the Lord, saying, “If only we had meat to eat! Surely it was better for us in Egypt.” Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. **19**You shall eat not only one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, **20**but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you—because you have rejected the Lord who is among you and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?” ’

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RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD: “**O God, Our Help in Ages Past” (W&R 84)**

*O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home.*

*Under the shadow of your throne  
your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone,  
and our defense is sure.*

*Before the hills in order stood  
or earth received her frame,  
from everlasting you are God,  
to endless years the same.*

*O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
be now our guide while life shall last,*

*and our eternal home.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Three-Minute Suggestion:

Please spend the first three minutes with someone who is relatively new to our church family, or new to you. Get to know them like a friend might! THEN take some time with longtime friends. Thanks!

WORSHIP CONTINUES IN FELLOWSHIP:

*Coffee and Connections is brought to you by the Sunday Kids in honor of June Wright*

*Monthly Budget: $10,000.00*

*Weekly Giving:*

*12/24 (AM)- $2,077.00*

*12/24 (Christmas Eve)- $1774.00*

*December Budget Met!*

*MONDAY: 01/01*

*New Year Day*

*Church Office Closed*

*TUESDAY: 01/02*

*Journey Singers and Musicians—5:45pm*

*Handbell Practice—7pm*

*AA Living Sober – 7:30pm*

*Woodwinds Rehearsal- 8pm*

*WEDNESDAY: 01/03*

*Finance Committee—7pm*

*AA - 8pm*

*THURSDAY: 01/04*

*AA Meeting – 7:30pm*

*FRIDAY: 01/05*

*AA Meeting (Men’s) – 7:30pm*

*Saturday: 01/06*

*LOOKING AHEAD:*

*Communion Visitation Resumes: If you or someone you know would like to receive communion at home or would like a visit from Rev or Elders in the home, please contact the office.* [*office@wentzsucc.org*](mailto:office@wentzsucc.org)

*January:*

*01/11/24—1pm (TimeOut Skippack) and 6:30pm (Wentz’s UCC): Book and a Beverage; Part 2 of “Weird Church”*

*01/19/24—12Noon-5pm Red Cross Blood Drive in Fellowship Hall*

*https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time*

*Ongoing:*

*If you would like to schedule time with Rev either in-person or zoom, please contact Mike via email to be placed on his calendar.* [*office@wentzsucc.org*](mailto:office@wentzsucc.org) *Evenings appointments are available.*

*Bring a friend with you next Sunday!*

*Take them out to lunch! Have a better day!*

Wentz’s UCC

Open & Affirming Statement:

We are Wentz’s United Church of Christ, an open and affirming congregation, where your identity and being are cherished. We respectfully welcome all without exception, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, and family structures. Together we create an open and active community. Everyone is invited to walk with us in our journey. You are welcome here. Whomever, wherever, at all times.

You. Are. Simply. Welcomed.

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Wentz’s United Church of Christ

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Mike Todd- Deacon/Pastoral Assistant

Corey Taragna- Lead Trustee

Donna Mower – Guild President

June Wright- Organist

Laura McLennan and Jim O’Donnell- Music Dept

Matt MacDonald- Technology