

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2011

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27 –
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25**



*Joy to the World! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room and heaven and nature sing.*

With a wreath of candles lit with prayers of hope, peace, love, and joy, halls bedecked with greens, music that touches our hearts, minds, and souls, and words of scripture that remind us who we are and who we are called to be, we hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell: *O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel.*

PREPARING THE WAY: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27



ADVENT CRAFT WORKSHOP
3:00 – 5:00 P.M. IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS
\$5.00 PER CHILD OR \$15.00 FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

For children: our classrooms will be transformed into engaging workshops where children ages 4-12 can create Advent calendars, ornaments, decorations, and with a little help, wreaths. We will also learn how to wrap gifts with environmentally-friendly creative flourishes. And we will repeat one of last year's successes: in honor of Hannah Lyon; who started this wonderful enterprise of costume and camera, we are calling it *The Lyon's Den: A Polaroid Nativity* – a fun chance to dress up, let loose, and have your picture taken as any character of the Advent season.

For teens, adults, and families: Children's Ministry is partnering with the Worship and Music Committee to make the Advent Workshop a time when we can all help to decorate the church for Advent. Plans this year include making new decorations for Fellowship Hall, and working in groups (or families) to add wreaths, greens, and other visible signs of Advent to our worship and gathering spaces. Wreath making in the Hearth Room remains a popular choice for folks of all ages. *If you have a wreath frame from prior use, please bring it.*

Help wanted: Anyone interested in preparing or leading one of our craft activities should be in touch with Ashley Kuly at 610-543-4712 x118 or spcchildren@swrthmorepres.org.

Donations of live greens: Please do some pruning Thanksgiving weekend on behalf of our wreath station! We particularly like spruce, yew, hemlock, holly, laurel, acuba, and arborvitae. Pack them up in large trash bags and leave them at the bottom of the outside steps descending to the Hearth Room on Saturday, November 26 or Sunday, November 27.

Child care: Infants and toddlers will be cared for in the nursery. Children attending the craft workshop should be shepherded by a parent or responsible youth.

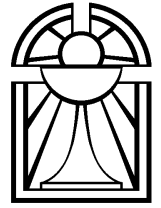


ADVENT SUPPER AND CAROL SING
5:00 – 7:00 P.M. IN FELLOWSHIP HALL
CONTRIBUTIONS TO COVER COSTS APPRECIATED

The hall will be decked and a hearty supper prepared! Parish Life serves up a hot dinner of chili, soup, pizza, fruit, and some sweet treats to accompany our singing. Some of our youngest musicians will lead us with a verse or two on the instruments they are studying. Adults of all ages will gather around tables for a family-style dinner. You are invited to sing, of course, but equally welcome simply to partake of this festive fellowship. Guests and grandchildren welcome, too!



Worship and Music



WEDNESDAY MORNING COMMUNION SERVICES

Wednesdays, November 30 through December 21

9:30 A.M. IN LOEFFLER CHAPEL

Each Wednesday of Advent, from November 30 through December 21, we will light the Advent candles and gather for a quiet service of scripture, prayer, homily and Communion in Loeffler Chapel. Dick Wohlschlaeger, Lisa Day, and John Weicher take turns leading.

A VERY ENGLISH CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 11

10:15 A.M. IN THE SANCTUARY



The special music offered by our Chancel Choir under the direction of Jeff DeVault this year is a tapestry of 20th century English Christmas music selections by Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Benjamin Britten carefully woven into the worship service. For details, see the worship announcements in the December *Herald*.

SPECIAL DELIVERY CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Sunday, December 11

4:00 — 6:30 P.M. BEGINNING IN FELLOWSHIP HALL



Here we come a-wassailing! SPC singers herald the season as Christians all over the globe have done for centuries: we are already humming as we think about strolling (and driving - as modern technology allows us to visit more people this way) to the homes of local friends and neighbors who might enjoy a group of carolers singing just for them. Do you hear what we hear? This sounds like a group of children, youth and adults that like to sing and are happy to do so very informally. No rehearsal, familiar music. Parts are wonderful but melody just fine. We will meet in Fellowship Hall on Sunday afternoon at 4:00 to distribute music, get directions to our visitees, sort ourselves into carpools, and get on the road singing. We will return to SPC around 6:00 to enjoy a little wassail and light refreshments. Please let either Dorrie McGrath (church office/chancel choir) or Gib Hartley (deacon/youth choir) know by Monday, December 5 that you would like to be part of the troupe. We need some idea of what our numbers might be to determine how many people we can visit and to ensure enough music and refreshments for all. We will not, however, turn down any last-minute walk-ins. Songs of thanksgiving to our deacons, who have orchestrated this event!

SUNDAY MORNING CAROLS

Sunday, December 18

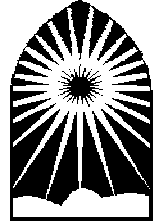
9:00 A.M. IN FELLOWSHIP HALL



Joy to the World! On the Sunday we light the candle of JOY, you are invited to a gathering in Fellowship Hall between worship services to sing through some of your favorite Christmas music over a cup of grab 'n go coffee or hot chocolate. Led by our youth choir director, Vippy Yee, and accompanied by Marv Gelb at the piano, children and adults will create some joyful Christmas music together. Junior choir members will meet in the Sanctuary at 9:00 (because they are singing that morning in worship) and join the fun around 9:30. Youth classes and Gather & Sing will not meet that morning; all are invited to be part of the group in Fellowship Hall. Rumor has it there will even be some yummy treats!



Worship and Music



LONGEST NIGHT MEDITATION AND WORSHIP

Wednesday, December 21
7:00 P.M. IN LOEFFLER CHAPEL

This year, many will face a holiday made difficult by job loss, economic concerns, physical or mental illness, or the brokenness in our lives and our world. In place of our usual carols, a different song can be helpful: "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God." If you know those whose Christmas joy is shadowed by loss or fear this year, please invite them to join you at the Longest Night service, on December 21, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in Loeffler Chapel. This service of prayers, scripture, music, reflection, and candle lighting, based on the form of a psalm of lament, will be led by Lisa Day and the Stephen Ministers. Even psalms of lament end with the hope and promise of a time when carols of praise will once again ring in our hearts, and when we can claim the promise, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined."

CHRISTMAS EVE Saturday, December 24

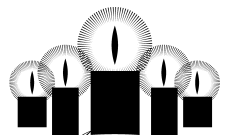
4:00 P.M. PAGEANT OF THE NATIVITY



Children age 3 through 4th grade create a lively stable of shepherds and sheep, cherubs and townsfolk as angels herald the good news. Middle school youth portray King Herod, the innkeeper, Mary and Joseph, and the magi, and they serve as ushers and liturgists. The age old story is given new life with each year's retelling through the bright eyes and barely harnessed energy of our youngest believers.

8:00 P.M. CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

There is no better service than this one if what you love most about Christmas Eve are the carols, scripture readings, and candlelight. With gifts of spoken word, high school liturgists lead us through the entire Christmas story. Between scripture readings we sing hymns and carols and enjoy the anthems sung by our Youth Choir. In prayer, offering and candle lighting, we honor the birth of our Lord and invite you to do the same.



11:00 P.M. TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

The entire Advent season is one of expectation. It is palpable as midnight approaches. Musical preludes begin at 10:40 — Christmas music offered by Jeff DeVault at the piano and Cynthia Folio on the flute. Dick Wohlschlaeger leads worship, assisted by retiring elders who serve as liturgists. Music is led by the chancel choir. High school seniors serve as acolytes. At midnight the church is aglow in candlelight and the sounds of the organ and the familiar words "for God so loved the world. . ." lift us into Christmas Day.



CHRISTMAS DAY Sunday, December 25

11:00 A.M. WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY



We gather on Christmas morning this year to sing, pray, and hear the Word of God in a single service of worship. Family and friends visiting for the holidays are welcome both in worship and in the choir. Those interested in singing with the choir will rehearse in Loeffler Chapel at 10:15. Child care for infants and toddlers will be available beginning at 10:15 as well. There will be no church school classes; children are welcome in worship and activity materials available. There will be coffee and fellowship for all in Fellowship Hall following worship.



Giving



ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS SHOP Sundays, November 27 through December 18 11:30 A.M. IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

Imagine a Christmas shopping experience where everything you purchase can be carried out to the car in one trip. And nothing needs to be gift wrapped. No need to worry about size or color or how to exchange if you got it wrong. For the four Sundays in Advent, Fellowship Hall is just that! Gifts ranging from \$5 to \$45 support charitable organizations carefully selected by our ACS team and attractive gift cards honor the recipient of your choice. Friendly and helpful representatives of each project are happy to explain their work and help you with your purchases. See the colorful flyer displayed outside the church office and in the Fellowship Hall lobby for this year's shopping list and details on how to place your orders.

GIVING TREE Sundays, November 27 through December 11 CONTRIBUTIONS DUE BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 12



The **Giving Tree**, an Advent tradition of many years, offers a tangible way for SPC members to reach out to our local neighbors during the holidays. Like the Christmas trees in many of our homes, this special tree is a collection area for gifts. Gifts needed this year support:

Broad Street Ministry, Chester Eastside Ministries, and The Learning Tree

Our tree will be set up in the sanctuary beginning Sunday, November 27. Please take one of the cards hung as ornaments and labeled with gift suggestions and shop accordingly. *Gifts should not be wrapped!* Place the gift you have purchased, along with the card, under the tree by Monday, December 12. Information on each of these Outreach partners and details on the gifts that are most useful can be found in the December *Herald*.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING Dedicated in Worship Sunday, December 18



The Christmas Joy Offering helps to fund two vital ministries within our faith community. Half goes to the Board of Pensions, to help retired church workers live as independently as possible. The other half is given to the National Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council; it helps to fund scholarships for racial/ethnic education in many Presbyterian Church (USA) schools and colleges. *Envelopes will be available in the pews throughout the month of December. Contributions may also be mailed or left in the church office. Checks, made out to SPC, should indicate "Joy Offering" in the memo area.*

Reflection and Prayer



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS

Come, O Christ, the Light — a brochure of "table liturgy" — adapted by our own John Weicher from our United Church of Christ friends for use nightly or weekly by any family that gathers at the dinner table or around the Advent wreath (that they may have created in our Advent Workshop).

The Lord is Near — a traditional booklet of daily devotions for adults authored by beloved theologian Henri Nouwen; for each day there is a Bible verse, a brief reflection, and either a suggested action or a prayer.

Copies of all Advent materials will be available outside the church office and in the Fellowship Hall lobby.

