



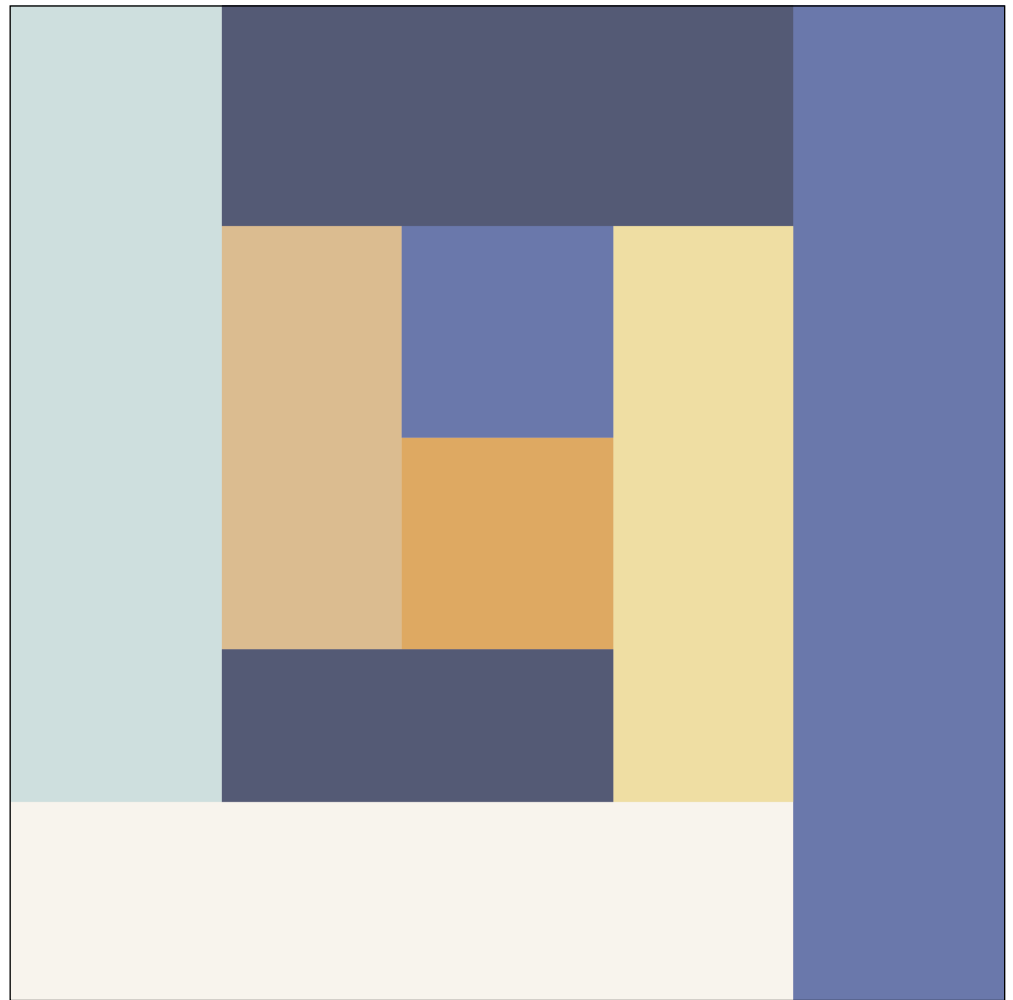
**Second Sunday
in Advent**

DECEMBER

8

2024

10:00AM



This quilt square is called a "log cabin", and is meant to symbolize that together we can hold one another up and make something greater.

WE CAN'T GO ALONE

▶ Our worship service is livestreaming on our YouTube Channel: upcbgm.org/youtube
Join via phone call on Zoom: Call (+1) 646-558-8656, Meeting ID 865 274 8433



Everyone is welcome here
**UNITED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF BINGHAMTON**
do justice • love kindness • walk humbly with God



WELCOME TO THE CELEBRATION!

December 8, 2024 • 10:00am

Mary hears the words of the angel and agrees to be God's partner in bringing Jesus into the world. But she turns immediately from her angelic encounter to her earthly community, traveling to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is also expecting a baby. Together they support each other and celebrate with each other, caring for each other in the long weeks of preparation and giving each other strength for the journey ahead. When God calls us to work for new life and new hope, God also calls us into community with each other. We are not alone, and we do not have to journey by ourselves. God brings unlikely people together, and forms us into a covenant community.

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH

OPENING BELL *The bell tolls to center our hearts and minds for worship.*

GATHERING MUSIC "Advent Promise"

United Ringers handbell choir

Music: Anna Laura Page, quoting HYFRYDOL ("Come, Thou Lone-Expected Jesus") by Rowland H. Prichard.
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WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP (*responsive*)

Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

One: In a world that is lonely,

All: we will save a seat for you.

One: In a world that is anxious,

All: we will light candles against the gloom.

One: In a world that is weary,

All: we will sing songs of joy and truth.

One: I am not alone.

All: We are not alone.

One: For here in this place, God is weaving us together.

All: Light the candles! Sing with joy!

We are a three-cord strand, not easily broken.

***SONG OF GATHERING** "Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here" (see insert)

* = *Please rise in body or in spirit.*

HEARING ASSISTANCE devices are available; please inquire with one of our technicians at the back of the sanctuary.

GATHERING PRAYER *(together)* adapted from *Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art*

Holy God, the words of this world whip around us like a mighty wind.

We are caught up in news reports, in text messages, in emails and notifications.

**We are drowning in updates from the media,
caught off guard by the constant hum of it all.**

But here on this bright morning we remember: you too are speaking.

Still the voices around us.

Calm our minds and center our hearts

so that we can hear your words above the wind.

We are beginning again.

Speak to us, as only you can.

Amen!

WE TELL AND HEAR THE WORD

FIRST LESSON *Luke 1:39–45, CEB*

³⁹ Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. ⁴⁰ She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. ⁴³ Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

TIME FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART: *We Light the Advent Candles of Hope and Peace*

PRAYER *(together)*

Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

All: Let us begin together.

Let us begin arm in arm.

Let us begin by holding each other up, instead of tearing each other down.

Let us begin with words of peace.

One: Yes, let us begin with peace.

Today we light the candles of hope and peace.

All: May these lights remind us of what could be.

May these lights mark a new beginning.

May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.

One: Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side.

May we begin again.

All: Amen!

FOCUS LESSON *Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, CEB*

⁹ Two are better than one because they have a good return for their hard work. ¹⁰ If either should fall, one can pick up the other. But how miserable are those who fall and don't have a companion to help them up! ¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they

can stay warm. But how can anyone stay warm alone? ¹²Also, one can be over-powered, but two together can put up resistance. A three-ply cord doesn't easily snap.

REFLECTIONS “Words for the Beginning: We Can’t Go Alone” Rev. Kimberly P Chastain

WE RESPOND TO THE WORD

***SONG OF RESPONSE** “Will You Let Me Be Your Servant” (see page 5)

WE SAY WHAT WE BELIEVE (*together*)

adapted from Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

We believe in a with-us God:

**a God who walks with us in the valley,
dances with us on the mountaintop,
sings with us through the night
and rejoices in the morning.**

We believe that this with-us God

**wired us for relationship,
saying to creation on the very first week,
“Humans should not be alone.”**

**Therefore, we strive to live like the Trinity —
connected, united, and centered.**

We believe in the power of community.

We commit to learning each other’s names.

We choose to journey with each other.

And we remember that no one can go through life alone.

Thanks be to God, for lighting our way.

Amen!

MINUTE FOR MISSION PC(USA) Christmas Joy special offering

Marilynn Guinane

WE OFFER OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO GOD

You are invited to support the ministry of this congregation through online giving at upcbgm.org/give, or by sending a check to the church office or putting an offering in the plates by the door.



You can contribute to the PC(USA)’s Christmas Joy special offering online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy or text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999, or use the Special Offering envelope from your worship guide in one of the plates by the doors, or send a check to the church office marked with “special offering” in the memo line.



MUSICAL OFFERING “Savior of the Nations, Come”

UPC Choir

Savior of the nations, come; Virgin’s Son, make here thy home!
Marvel now, O heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant



1. Will you let me be your ser-vant, let me be as Christ to you?
2. We are pil - grims on a jour-ney, here to - geth - er on the road;
3. I will hold the Christ-light for you, in the night-time of your fear;
4. I will weep when you are weep-ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;
5. When we sing to God and heav-en, we shall find such har - mo - ny,



Pray that I might have the grace to let you be my ser-vant too.
we are here to help each oth - er walk the mile and bear the load.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
I will share your joy and sor-row till we've seen this jour-ney through.
born of all we've known to - geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.

Words and Music: Richard Gillard. © 1977 Scripture In Song (a div. of Integrity Music). All rights reserved.
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Not by human flesh and blood, by the Spirit of our God
was the Word of God made flesh — woman's offspring, pure and fresh.

Wondrous birth! O wondrous child of the virgin undefiled!
Mighty God and man in one, eager now his race to run!

Now thy manger's halo bright hallows night with newborn light;
Let no night this light subdue; let our faith shine ever new.

Praise to God the Father sing; praise to God the Son, our King;
praise to God the Spirit be ever and eternally.

Words: Ascribed to Saint Ambrose; tr. William Reynolds (sts. 1, 2, 3a, 5) and Martin L. Seltz (sts. 3b, 4; © 1969 Concordia Publishing House, used by permission). Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, *Enchirida*, 1524; arr. Carl Schalk, © 1972 Augsburg Publishing House. All rights reserved.
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PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*together*)

Loving God, we know that ministry is not a service we receive at church so much as it is a life-giving work you call us to do with others. Use our gifts and our talents, blended with the gifts and talents of others around the world, to make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. Amen!

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS (*responsive*)

As each petition is concluded, the prayer leader and congregation respond:

One: Lord, in your loving kindness,

All: hear our prayer.

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

adapted from Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

O God who has called us into one community,
We know that some days are beautiful and some days are terrible.
And we know that we cannot go through life alone.
Like flowers need the sun,
as humans, we need relationships.

So we give you thanks for the connections we do have.
Thank you for the friends who know us.
Thank you for the families who claim us.
Thank you for the church who welcomes us.
Thank you for the neighbors who remember us.
Thank you for the mentors who believed in us,
and for the saints who taught us.

And as we remember our human need for connection, we lift up every person who
has ever felt alone, or cut off by fear or anger or suffering.
We pray for anyone who has ever felt invisible in a crowded room.
We pray for those who feel distanced from their family, by choice or circumstance.
We pray for those who doubt their worthiness, for those who have been damaged by
life or by toxic relationships, for those who are confined or imprisoned.

For all those who are in need of connection, we ask you to draw near.
Remind us that with you, we are never truly alone.
With you, we are seen.
We are loved.
We are known.
We are celebrated.
Grant that we may share that love with those around us, so that all are sustained by
your community,

And with grateful hearts, let us practice connection by joining our voices together in
prayer, saying the words your son taught us to pray...

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(together)*

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 debts, as we forgive our 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!

WE GO FORTH IN GRATITUDE TO SERVE

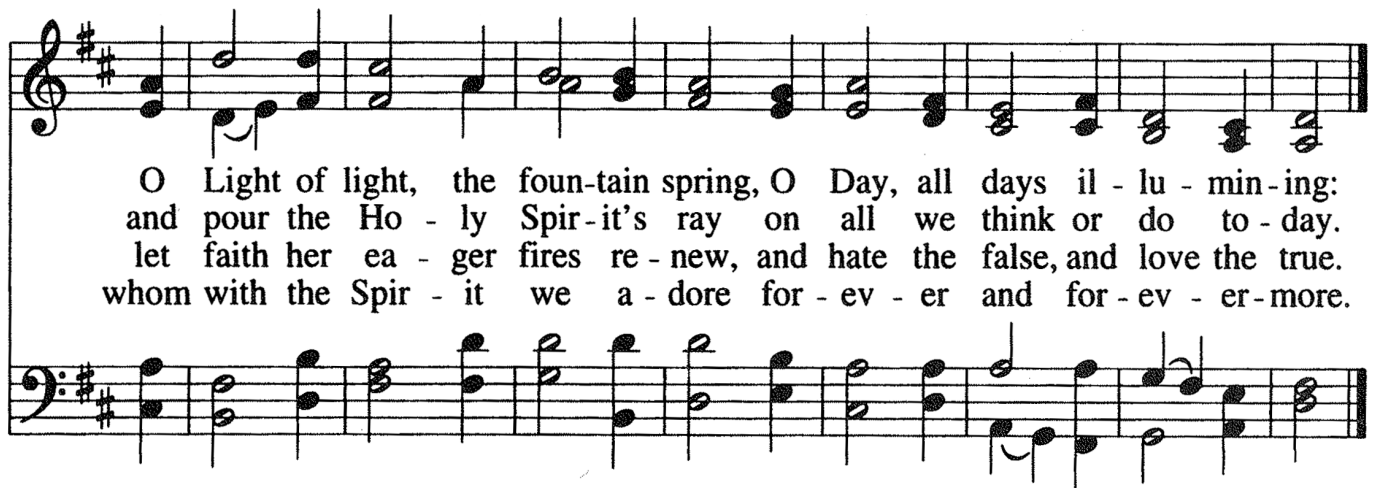
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INVITATIONS

***SONG OF SENDING** "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright" (see page 7)

144 O Splendor of God's Glory Bright



1 O splen-dor of God's glo - ry bright, from light e - ter - nal bring-ing light,
2 Come, ver - y Sun of heav-en's love, in last-ing ra - diance from a - bove,
3 Con-firm our will to do the right, and keep our hearts from en - vy's blight;
4 All praise to God the Fa - ther be, all praise, e - ter - nal Son, to thee,



O Light of light, the foun-tain spring, O Day, all days il - lu - min-ing:
and pour the Ho - ly Spir-it's ray on all we think or do to - day.
let faith her ea - ger fires re - new, and hate the false, and love the true.
whom with the Spir - it we a - dore for - ev - er and for - ev - er - more.

Words: Ambrose of Milan; tr. composite. Music: PUER NOBIS, Trier manuscript, 15th c.; adapt. Michael Praetorius.

BLESSING

Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art

As you leave this place,
may you have the wisdom to lean on one another.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.
For in a world full of dead ends,
Advent invites us to begin again.
So start here.
Start now.
Start with love and begin again.
In the name of Christ,
our new beginning,
go in peace.

SHARING OF CHRIST'S PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

SENDING MUSIC “Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

Rebecca Mebert, organ

Music: ES IST EIN ROS', *Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, 1599; arr. Paul Liljestränd.

(Please exchange a greeting of peace with those around you as our worship concludes.)

After the service, everyone is invited to join us downstairs for a time of fellowship and refreshments as we celebrate all the birthdays in the month of December.

Children in Worship: “Let the little children come to me...” —Matthew 19:14

We are glad that your children are here today, and we hope that you know that they are welcome and encouraged to be in worship with you. We truly believe that a community of faith is made up of people of ALL ages. There is a PrayGround space with coloring sheets and quiet toys in the front of the sanctuary to use there or can be taken to another pew, if that suits your family's needs. Sunday school materials are mailed to our families once a month to do together at home.



There is also a nursery space at the end of the hall at the front of the sanctuary that is open for use with a parent or guardian. It has a changing table, a rocking chair, and some toys appropriate for age two and under. There is a speaker in the room so you can listen to the service. Please let us know if you have questions.

COVER IMAGE: “We Can't Go Alone” quilt square design by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRAYER CREDITS: “Words from the Beginning” prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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Pastors Rev. Kimberly P Chastain and Rev. Becky Kindig

Readers Allison & Ethan Nyamuame ~ **Musicians** Aimée Backus, *Music Coordinator*, Rebecca Mebert, *accompanist*, Austin Shadduck, *United Ringers director*, Andrea Gilebarto, Starletta Noll-Long, Phil Westcott, the United Ringers handbell choir, and the UPC Choir ~ **Technicians** Andy Chadwick, Emily Hugenbruch, Matt Johnson, Scott Kindig, Sara Lieberman, Ken Mebert

Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here

1. Great God, your love has called us here as we, by love, for
3. Great God, in Christ you call our name and then re - ceive us
5. Great God, in Christ you set us free your life to love, your

love were made. Your liv - ing like - ness still we bear,
as your own. Not through some mer - it, right, or claim
joy to share. Give us your Spir - it's lib - er - ty

though marred, dis - hon - ored, dis - o - beyed. We come, with all our
but by your gra - cious love a - lone. We strain to glimpse your
to turn from guilt and dull de - spair and of - fer all that

heart and mind your call to hear, your love to find.
mer - cy seat and find you kneel - ing at our feet.
faith can do while love is mak - ing all things new.