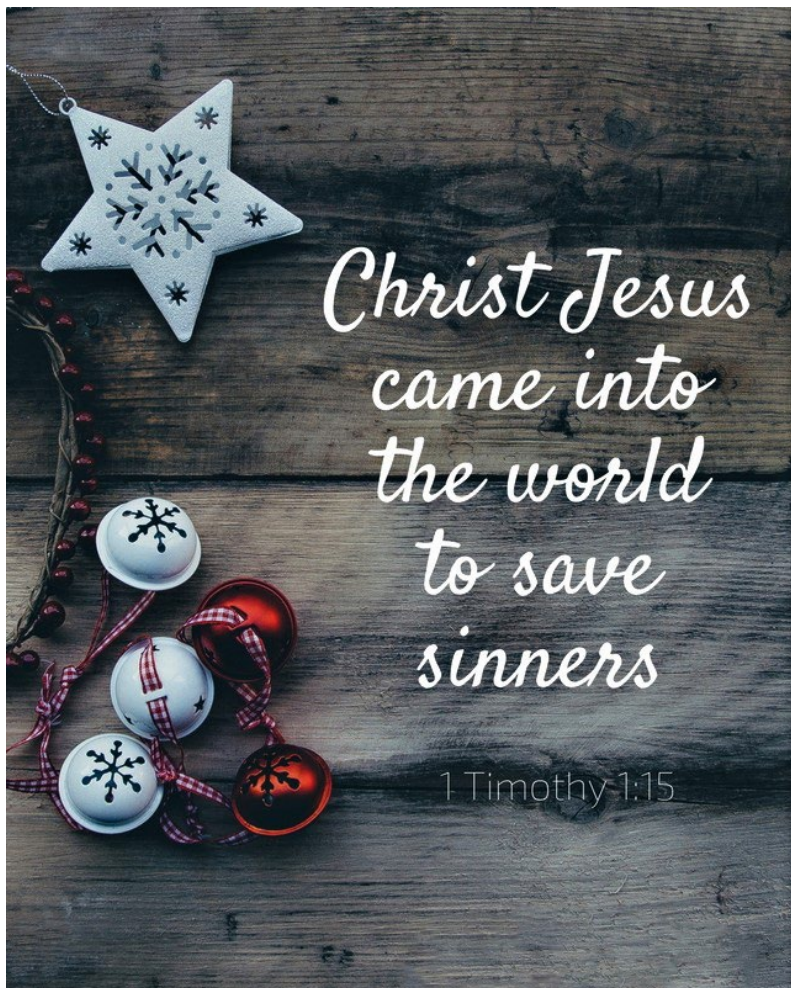


St. John's:
Making and Maturing
Disciples of Jesus Christ



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH
211 EAST CARROL STREET
KENTON, OH 43326

St. John's Evangelical Church

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Office: 419-673-7278

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Office Hours: Monday – Friday (8:30-10:30 & 12:30-2:30)

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“Making and Maturing Disciples of Jesus Christ”

**Christmas Eve
December 24, 2023
8:00 PM**

“SOUNDS OF THE SEASON”

(Let us begin to still our hearts and minds for worship with Christmas Carols.)

Christmas Welcome

The Prelude

Away in the Manger M. Hayes
Randy Rogers/Cinda Shea (organ/piano duet)

Call to Worship

Psalm 98:1-3

L: Oh sing to the Lord a new song,

C: for He has done marvelous things!

L: His right hand and His holy arm

C: have worked salvation for Him.

L: The Lord has made known His salvation;

C: He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations.

L: He has remembered His steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

**C: All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.**

***Hymn #103**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Opening Prayer

Scripture

Isaiah 52:7-10

- ⁷How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of Him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”
- ⁸The voice of your watchmen—they lift up their voice;
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the LORD to Zion.
- ⁹Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted His people;
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
- ¹⁰The LORD has bared His holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

*Hymn #120

Joy to the World

Advent Wreath Lighting

The season for watching and waiting is over. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. This is the light of the world, and the darkness cannot extinguish it.

The Advent wreath candles is lit as is the Christ candle.

Scripture: “O sing to the Lord a new song;

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Tell of His salvation from day to day.

Declare His glory among the nations,

His marvelous works among all the peoples” (Psalm 96:1-3).

“Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name;

Bring an offering, and come into His courts.

Worship the Lord in holy splendor;

Tremble before Him, all the earth” (Psalm 96:7-9).

“Say among the nations, ‘The Lord is King!’

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.

He will judge the world with righteousness,

And the peoples with His truth” (Psalm 96:10a, 11a, 13b).

Special Music

Little Drummer Boy

Levi Dyer

Pastoral Prayer

Children's Sermon

The Story of the Candy Cane

Jane Baker

Special Music

Away in a Manger

kids

Scripture

John 1:1-14

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through Him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. ¹² But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Chancel Choir

On This Still and Silent Night

Korey's/Cook

The Christmas Story - Luke 2:1-20

Teresa Broseke

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸ And in the same region there were

shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!” ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them

Special Music

O Come All You Unfaithful

Beazleys

Sermon

The Glory of God

Prayer

Candle Blessing

O God, source of all illumination, we celebrate today the coming of Your Word made flesh, Your Light of Life to dwell among us. Bless these holy flames that in their glow we may be blessed by Your grace and abiding love. May these candles remind us of Your steadfast presence. May they give us hope in times of darkness. Bless us, that we might reflect the Light of Christ in our daily lives. We ask in the name of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world! Amen.

Candle Lighting (please dip only an unlit candle)

***Hymn #117**

Silent Night

Benediction

Postlude

Joy to the World

Handel



*—Those who are able, please stand.



In loving memory of our parents by Clair and Sue Sanders.
As a gift by Gordon and Jane Donnelly.
In loving memory of Daniel F. Bushong by Shirley E. Bushong
In loving memory of Harold, Eileen, Ken, and Don Faler by Jim & Marilyn Bidwell
In loving memory of Justin Forwerck (son) by Steve & Kae Merold.
In loving memory of Mark & Estella Merold and Dale Locker (parents) by Steve & Kae Merold.
In loving memory of Andrew "Andy" Tice by Grandma Ginny
In loving memory of George and Irene Bidwell by their children
In loving memory of Mr. & Mrs. John Loeffler & Gladys Unger by Virginia Schnaidt and Marilyn Hempy Gordon.
In loving memory of husband, Bruce C. Baker by Jane Baker
In loving memory of parents, Mr. E. Robert and Edna Mae Philips and sister Margaret Jean Philips by Jane Baker
In loving memory of grandparents: Elgin and Ida Mae Wilcox, and E.B. and Grace Philips, and aunts and uncles by Jane Baker
In loving memory of friends and co-workers: Dick Styer, Dean Martino, Connie Harvey, Brett Molk, and Pat Higgins by Jane Baker
In loving memory of Michael J. Varner by Linda L. Varner
In loving memory of our loved ones who have passed to Glory by Shawn, Tasha, Sydney, and Levi Dyer
In honor of our family and friends by Shawn, Tasha, Sydney and Levi Dyer
In loving memory of JoAnn Erwin by Dan, Heather, Eric, & Jada Erwin; Kelsey & Jensen Holly; and Kylie and Elijah Manns.
In loving memory of Bob & Vivienne Hommel by Dick & Carol Wilcox
In loving memory of Thomas (Bud) & Anita Wilcox by Dick & Carol Wilcox
In loving memory of our son, Jeff, by Paul & Nancy Rickenbacher
In loving memory of our grandsons, Erik & Caleb Rickenbacher, by Paul & Nancy Rickenbacher

In loving memory of Jay & Esther Zeigler and Marvin & Phyllis Pulfer by Delmar and Linda Zeigler

In honor of Sheri, John, Madison, Braydon & Grayson Lombardi; Jason, Melissa & Tiffany Zeigler; Trinton Bok; Blake, Terrin, Hollis & Elsie Burt; Jay, Lori, Chad Aiden, and Cooper Heberling by Delmar and Linda Zeigler

In loving memory of Carnarius, Zaring, and Temple family members by Lynda Zaring

In loving memory of Clifford & Lillian Elsasser by Hal Elsasser and family

In loving memory of Iona Hanna by Hal Elsasser and family

In loving memory of Carmen Cronley by Hal Elsasser and family

In loving memory of mother, Gladys Clay, by Nancy Clay

In loving memory of grandparents, George & Louise Rader, by Nancy Clay

In loving memory of Shane's grandparents, Paul & Rose Somers, and Sandra's parents, Jack & Viola Evans by Shane Harkenrider & Sandra Evans

In honor of Shane's parents, Joseph & Cheryl Harkenrider and aunt, Diane Somers, by Shane Harkenrider & Sandra Evans

In loving memory of Thomas and Anita Wilcox by Nancy Wilcox and Dave Burkhart

In loving memory of Frieda and Rolland Burkhart by Dave Burkhart and Nancy Wilcox

In loving memory of loved ones by Dave Burkhart and Nancy Wilcox

In loving memory of my parents, Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Sloan, my sister and brother-in-law, Norma & John Beatty, and brother and sister-in-law, Wilbur & Doris Sloan by Dana Musser

To honor the memory of Neal R. Duffman III and Larry E. Rall by the families of Reelhorn Creek Farm and Rall's Cloverleaf Lane

Altar Flowers: The flowers on the altar are given in memory of Max V. and Florence C. Lease and Frederick W. and Ruth Ann (Lease) Kaufmann.

The Legend of the Poinsettia

It was Christmas Eve in Mexico when many traveled to the nearest chapel to worship and lay their gifts before the Christ Child in the Nativity. Pepita and her cousin Pedro joined their families as they traveled down the dirty road. Pepita held her head low with such a sad look on her face for she was too poor to buy a gift. Pedro tried to encourage her saying that even the smallest gift given in love would be happily accepted by Christ. Pepita's eyes glanced about and landed on a field of flowering weeds along the roadside. She knelt and gathered several making them into a simple bouquet. As she looked at the flowers, her disappointment returned for they were in no way a worthy gift for anyone, much less the Son of God. A small tear fell from her cheek and landed on the dusty path leaving a dark spot behind. As they neared the Nativity, Pepita bowed her head low and drawing courage from Pedro's words - "even the smallest gift given with love will be accepted," she stepped inside the little chapel and approached the Nativity scene. As she knelt there, it is said a miracle took place! The scraggly petals of those weeds changed into beautiful scarlet red blooms. Pepita's face also bloomed with a smile sensing the love her Savior had for her - a poor little girl with nothing to give but herself and her love. From this time on the poinsettias became known as the Flores de Noche Buena - "Flowers of the Holy Night." -Mexican Folktale

Healing

Four hundreds of years before the poinsettia became associated with Christmas, its leaves were used for healing fevers. Jesus left heaven and was born as a baby to live a perfect life and die on the cross to be raised from the dead all for our healing!

Star Center

If you look at the shape of the bloom with the golden center, what does it look like to you? It kind of looks like a star reminding us of the Star of Bethlehem the wise men followed to find Jesus. When we think of stars, we also think of light. The Bible calls Jesus the Morning Star and the Light of the World. He shines in the darkness so we might see and know God. Let's seek Him like the wise men did!

Red blooms

And of course the red blooms remind us of Jesus' blood He shed on the cross to pay the price for our sin.

White Blooms

Did you know what other color poinsettia petals can be? White! White reminds us of the purity of Jesus and how He lived a perfect and sinless life.

Green leaves & stem

What do you think of when you see the color green? Plants or trees? Me too! I think of things that grow and are alive! Jesus called Himself the True Vine because it is only through Him we can have real life!

If I pick a leaf off the stem, what will happen? It will die; without being attached to the stem or vine of the plant, it cannot live.

Summary

So the next time you see a poinsettia, let it remind you of Jesus. He is God's greatest gift to us, and the Legend of the Poinsettia can also remind us of the perfect gift we have to give back to Him in gratitude - ourselves and our hearts!

Ushers: Weaver Family

