



December 25, 2016

## Merry Christmas!

It is Christmas Day! Merry Christmas! Perhaps you are enjoying a wonderful celebration. Perhaps it is everything you planned. I certainly hope so.

But if you are far from home or feel distant from those who are very near, if there is more tension than cheer in the air, if you are exhausted, or feel a let-down, or if your life is such that it feels like an *unlikely* place for Jesus to show up—pay particular attention. Because Jesus is always showing up in unlikely places, including perhaps the most unlikely place of all—our own lives.

The news of Jesus' birth is announced not in a palace or a temple, not where things are bright and beautiful, not to good people, or to whoever might be considered the right people. Shepherds, rather unclean and smelly people, were the first to get the news; and the first to share it. As surprising as this would have been at the time, in retrospect it seems entirely fitting because Jesus is forever showing up in the most unlikely places and associating with the most surprising people.

*"In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night... The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord."*

It's the only announcement that ever changed the world. I hope it's the one that will change yours -- if it has not already.

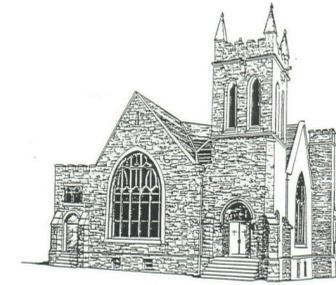
Merry Christmas,  
Bill

*-William P. Worley, Conference Minister*



**IMPORTANT NOTE !!** Treasurer Training is taking place Jan. 14th, not Jan. 21st ! Please refer to the PSEC website—psec.org.

## Getting to Know :



## St. John's UCC

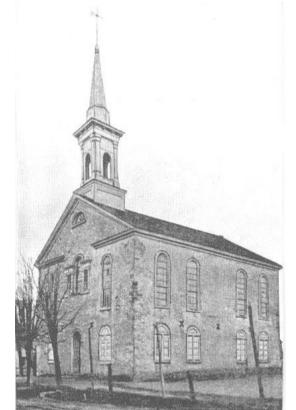
232 E. Market St., Orwigsburg, PA 17961

Traditional Worship for Contemporary Souls" is the centering statement describing St. John's UCC to all those seeking a church home. In our 1907 Akron-style sanctuary with pipe organ and choir, we worship the living God with enthusiasm and then go out into the world prepared to serve in Christ's name. Worship is sometimes a quiet and

meditative time away from the daily grind. Other times, worship is lively as the movement of the Spirit energizes and encourages us.

Our building houses the Orwigsburg Area Food Pantry. We receive assistance from a wide range of local churches, businesses, farmers and non-profit organizations, so that once a month boxes of food staples are distributed to over 125 southern Schuylkill County residents. Our Health Ministry led by Commissioned Minister Kay Jones, offers a variety of activities, blood drives, healthy habits workshops to the church and wider community. We care for others and ourselves, body and soul!

We are a multi-generational church honoring our faithful elders and nurturing our eager children, encouraging our youth away at college or in the military, making room at the table for singles, widows and the divorced, and offering a variety of service opportunities for all ages. Our music program includes a variety of guest musicians and vocalists, along with our faithful choir. Our church is 185 years old....but our thinking is now! To learn more, visit our web-



**Original St. John's church**



Prayers are requested for the members and leaders of St. John's UCC , Orwigsburg.