

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 23, 2018



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

Dr. Ron Gonzales, Minister

Office: 5 W Alder St, Ste 237 Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 522-1020 Email: office@covenantwallawalla.org

*Upon entering the sanctuary, please be sensitive
to the congregation's preparation for worship, and please make sure
all electronic devices are turned off or set to silent mode.*

-DRAWING NEAR TO GOD-

Welcome and Silent Prayer

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." O Lord, as we worship today, help us to prepare to welcome your dramatic work in our midst, in our hearts, in our community, and in all of creation. Help us to worship you.

—based on Isaiah 40.3

***Call to Worship**

Psalm 66.1-4

***Prayer of Adoration**

***Song of Advent**

Hymn No. 211

GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

-HAVING OUR HEARTS CLEANSED-

Confession of Sin

Heavenly Father, we long to recapture the wonder of Christmas. You showed the world your splendor in the coming of your Son, yet our sins often leave us cold. Instead of peaceful, our hearts are often anxious; instead of joyful, irritable; instead of filled with surprise, bland; instead of anticipatory, fearful. In our sophistication we have become impoverished. Have mercy on us, O God. Renew us by your grace and mercy. Deliver us from the things that dim the brightness of your grace within us and prevent us from taking our deepest delight in you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, God with us. Amen.

Silently Add Your Own Confession of Sin

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

Old Testament Reading Micah 5.2-5a

New Testament Reading Luke 2.8-15

***Song of Advent**

Hymn No. 218

ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

***Confession of Faith**

Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension?

Christ physically ascended on our behalf, just as he came down to earth physically on our account, and he is now advocating for us in the presence of his Father, preparing a place for us, and also sends us his Spirit.¹

—The New City Catechism, No. 51

Prayer for the Church and the World

¹ "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us" (Rom 8.34).

-ATTENDING TO THE WORD-

Scripture Lesson

John 3.16-17

Sermon

“Christmas in a Nutshell”

Rev. Ron Gonzales

*Song of Response

Here is Love

words, vs. 1,2 William Rees (1802-1883)
vs. 3,4 possibly William Williams, mod.
trans. from Welsh to English William Edwards 1900
music Robert Lowry, 1876



1. Here is love, vast as the o - cean, lov - ing - kind - ness as the flood, When the
2. On the mount of cru - ci - fix - ion foun - tains o - pened deep and wide; Through the
3. Let me all your love ac - cept - ing, love you ev - er all my days; Let me
4. In your truth you do di - rect me by your Spir - it through your Word; And your



Prince of Life, our Ran - som, shed for us his pre - cious blood. Who his
flood - gates of God's mer - cy flowed a vast and gra - cious tide. Grace and
seek your king - dom on - ly and my life be to your praise; You a -
grace my need is meet - ing, as I trust in you, my Lord. Of your



love will not re - mem - ber? Who can cease to sing his praise? He can
love, like might - y riv - ers, poured in - ces - sant from a - bove; Heav - en's
lone shall be my glo - ry, no - thing in the world I see. You have
full - ness you are pour - ing your great love and pow - er too; With - out



nev - er be for - got - ten through - out heav'n's e - ter - nal days.
peace and per - fect jus - tice kissed a guilt - y world in love.
cleansed and sanc - ti - fied me, You your - self have set me free.
meas - ure, full and bound - less, draw - ing out my heart to you.

Worship of God with Tithes and Offerings

**DOXOLOGY*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Words Thomas Ken, 1709; music Genevan Psalter, 1551; Public Domain

-OBSERVING THE SACRAMENT-

The Lord's Supper

We celebrate the Lord's Supper by coming forward (generally from the back of the sanctuary to the front, though you may commune at any time) and partaking of the bread and the cup. Wine is served in the inner ring of each tray; grape juice in the outer ring. We warmly invite to the Table all baptized Christians, who are living under the authority of Christ and his church. By eating the bread and drinking the cup, you are admitting that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Christ alone for salvation. If this does not describe you, we are glad you are here and commend to you the following prayers for your use during this time.

A Prayer for those Searching for the Truth

Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and leads to the life you promise. Amen.

A Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever believed, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

***Song of Thanksgiving**

Hymn No. 224

GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

-GOING FORTH TO SERVE-

*Benediction

Numbers 6.24-26

Closing Prayer

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Help us to joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so that we may with sure confidence behold him when he comes as our Judge, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Please stand if able.

Our Nursery Helpers

Worship

Today: Collie Parsons

Next Week: Nicole Miller

Gatherings

The Martin Home Fellowship Group led by Eric Carpenter and Ronnie Curfman, meets at Kathy Martin's (213 Chapra St), the first and third Tuesdays of each month, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. They are studying the Gospel of Luke and all are welcome.

The Men's Group is on break for the holidays. It will resume its study of Exodus on January 9. All men are invited.

Prayer Meeting: We meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, at 5:15 PM in the chapel, to pray for one another, the kingdom, and our world. Please join us.

The Psalm Sing is on break until January 6.

The Women's Study is taking the rest of the month off. They will resume their study of the book of Acts, on Thursday, January 10.

Sermon Notes: "Christmas in a Nutshell" (John 3.16-17)

1. God loved.

2. God gave.

3. God saves.

Prayer Concerns

Rev. Andrew Allen: Pray the drugs Andrew is taking arrest the cancer, that he is granted strength to endure, and that he and Amy are kept in God's peace.

Mike Givens: Pray for relief from the pain Mike is experiencing, and that God brings healing to his shoulder without the need for surgery.

Tom & Melissa Manning have returned to Boise, where they will catch their breath until mid-February, when they can reapply for a 1-2 year residence visa in hopes that prospects will be more favorable at that time. Pray for rest and for spiritual refreshment.

Oaks Parish: Pray for Rev. Bryan Buck, our church planter in southeast Portland, that God strengthens and uses him as he preaches the gospel and ministers the love of Christ to those in need.

Announcements

Birthdays & Anniversaries this Week:

December 27	C. J. Early
December 28	Eric and Karen Carpenter
December 28	Steve and Eileen Davis

The Children's Catechism Class is not meeting this month. A new class begins January 10, taught by Pastor Ron and Ronnie Curfman. The children will be learning *The New City Catechism*.

Christmas Eve Service: Please join us at 6:00 PM on Christmas Eve, as we gather with Crazy Love Church for a Service of Lessons and Carols.

Daily Bible Reading: Reading through the Bible regularly is vital to spiritual growth. Many of us are doing so again in 2019, using M'Cheyne's daily schedule, which is available on the literature table. Please consider joining us.

Family Photos: David Gonzales, Pastor Ron and Cherry's son, has offered to take family photos (his gift to us) after the Christmas Eve service, for any who would like them. They will be available for you to access after Christmas.

Financial Update: The November financial report has been posted to the church website. If you need the password to view it, Jacob Schroeder would be happy to give it to you.

Pastor Ron will be on vacation until January 2. He can be reached via email, but if you have an urgent need feel free to call Ronnie or one of the elders.

Explanation of Cover Symbol

The anchor is an ancient Christian symbol for hope. It is derived from Hebrews 6.19: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul..." When combined with a cross it makes plain that Christian hope is in Christ and His redemption. The symbol was frequently used in this sense in the catacombs of ancient Rome.