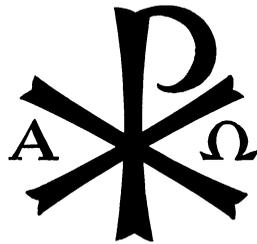


The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 19, 2021



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

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*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. 214

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

-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.

Assurance of Pardon

Matthew 1.20-23

Lighting 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

Congregational Petitions and the Lord's Prayer

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 also have forgiven 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.

-ATTENDING TO THE WORD-

Sermon

“The People of the Nativity”

Luke 2.1-20

Rev. Ron Gonzales

***Song of Response**

Hymn No. 211

GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

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 body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking of the cup, you are acknowledging 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.

A Prayer for those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my need and may turn from every false pleasure to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the author and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

***Song of Thanksgiving**

Hymn No. 224

GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

-GOING FORTH TO SERVE-

Benediction

Numbers 6.24-26

Gatherings

A Children's Catechism Class, taught by Pastor Ron and Elder Jacob Schroeder, meets every other Wednesday afternoon, from 3:30 to 5:00 PM, at the church. This fall the class is studying Qs 38-52 of the New City Catechism. For more information, talk to Pastor Ron.

Home Fellowship Group, led by Pastor Ron, meets on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at Chad and Heidi Leinweber's, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. They are studying 2 Kings and all are welcome.

The Men's Group meets Fridays, from 6:00 to 7:00 AM, in the Coffee Hour room. They are going through a series, led by Kirk Alden, entitled "Leading by the Book," in which fifty-two leadership principles related to personal development, relationships, and life skills are studied from a biblical perspective. All men and older sons are invited.

A Men's Leadership Bible Study, led by Kirk Alden, meets at Tate's Umapine Mercantile on Thursdays, from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. All men are invited. For more information, talk to Kirk.

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

Sunday Evening Worship & Cultural Engagement: On the second Sunday of each month, we gather from 6:00 to 7:15 PM for a brief time of worship followed by teaching and discussion of issues relevant to our society's cultural moment. Pastor Ron and Elder Jacob Schroeder have just begun a study on human sexuality, based on the report adopted by our General Assembly this past June. Reports can be found on the literature table. We meet in the sanctuary, and children are welcome.

The Covenant Women's Study is on break for the holidays. We will begin a new study January 12 on 2 Corinthians. Please read 1 Corinthians over the holidays in preparation. We will continue to meet on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5:00 PM.

Sermon Notes: "The People of the Nativity" (Luke 2.1-20)

Prayer Concerns

The Dodge/Schroeder Family: Pray that Samantha and her family know God's peace amidst the loss of her dad this past week. May his presence with the Lord be a great comfort to them.

The Peace of God: Paul urged the Philippians, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Ph 4.6-7). In addition to strength and healing, pray that the hearts and minds of *Sandy Cupolillo, Mike Givens, Tom Manning, Rick & Vickie Myers, Joel Smith* and *Wayne Snavelly* are guarded this week by God's peace as they trust him with every need and every anxious thought.

The Persecuted Church: There are some 10,000 Christians out of 4.6 million people in *Mauritania*, a Muslim country in Northwest Africa. For Christians, public worship carries a constant threat. Churches must be careful not to be accused of proselytizing Muslims, baptisms must be done in secret, and there is a growing fear because radical Islam is on the rise. Pray for Christian converts from Islam who faced intense pressure from the government, their families, and their communities. Pray for the problem of slavery and its victims; this heinous reality often stems from religious extremism. And pray that God strengthens the church in *Mauritania*, and its leaders, that they might honor Christ by living out their faith in this most inhospitable place.

Rev. Alister & Sarah Torrens (Ukraine): Saphira's surgery in Dublin was rescheduled for January, which means the Torrenses will be out of Ukraine longer than expected. Pray the surgery is successful, and that Alister is able to renew his visa before the next seminary session begins. Things continue to go well at the seminary and at Christ the Redeemer, the church-plant in Kiev.

Announcements

Advent Service: Join us tonight at 6:00 for our fourth Advent service. We will be reading Scripture, singing carols, and reflecting on the incarnation from Isaiah 9.1-7.

Christmas Eve Service: Please come, and bring your family and friends, to a Service of Lessons and Carols, at 6:00 PM on Christmas Eve.

Daily Bible Reading: Reading through the Bible regularly is vital to our spiritual growth. Many of us will be doing so again in 2022 using M'Cheyne's daily schedule, which is available on the literature table. Please consider joining us.

High Tea: Our Covenant Women's Event for January will be a High Tea on Saturday, January 22, at 3:00 PM, at the church. We are looking for table hostesses. Please let the Women's Ministry Team know if you would like to host a table. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by January 9.

Sunday School for all ages resumes January 9, from 9:00 to 9:45 AM.