

The Lord's Day in Worship

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 24, 2017

O mystery, from whom fertile wonders rise!
O mortals, open here your hearts and eyes;
O purest seraphim, angelic squadrons bright,
Swoop down to earth in your ardent flight.

He whose praises night and day you hail,
Has left meanwhile his far celestial home;
His robe of light is hid beneath an infant's veil,
A rooftop vile exchanged for his palatial dome.

The Ancient of Days in childhood is concealed,
The unseen, seen, and God in birth revealed,
The immortal is now mortal, Infinity is bound.
At last I see you in a lowly stable found;
And ravished I cry out, "Eternal One, born anew!
In your deep humility, how I worship you!"

—"On the Nativity of Our Lord," Laurent Drelincourt (1626-1681)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Dan Edwards

Pastor: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that though he was rich,
yet for your sake he became poor,

People: *so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

Pastor: Therefore, let us lift up our hearts
and voices to His praise.

People: *We join the saints and angels in glorifying His holy Name.*

 *Congregation stand as able.*

HYMN OF INCARNATION

“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Shepherds in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant Light:
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Sages, leave your contemplations;
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations,
Ye have seen His natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear,
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear:
Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Come and worship, come and worship;
Worship Christ, the newborn King.

Words: James Montgomery, 1816. Music: Henry T. Smart, 1867.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Father in heaven, we gladly join the angels,
the shepherds, the sages, and all the saints
in magnifying Your glorious Name;
for You made all things, You sustain them by Your sovereign power,
and You have sent Your One and Only Son to be born of a virgin
that we might be delivered from the burden of our sin
and evermore dwell with You on high.
Receive our humble thanks,
and be enthroned upon our praises,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

Reader: Jesus said, "I am the light of the world;
the one who follows me will not walk in darkness
but have the light of life."

People: *We light this candle in gratitude for His first coming
and in anticipation of His glorious return.*

Reader: He will come to bring light and life to His people.

People: *Come, Lord Jesus, bring comfort and joy to Your people.*

The Advent candle is lit today by Flynt, Nancy, Reid, and Jake Purvis.

READING FROM THE PROPHETS

Caroline Walker

Micah 5:2-5a

Reader: But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

People: *Therefore he shall give them up
until the time when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.*

Reader: And he shall stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

People: *And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the
ends of the earth.
And he shall be their peace.*

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: *Thanks be to God.*

HYMN OF COMFORT AND JOY

“God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen”

God rest you merry, gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas day;
To save us all from Satan’s pow’r
When we were gone astray.

Refrain:

*O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!*

From God our heav’nly Father
A blessed angel came;
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same;
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name.

(Refrain)

“Fear not, then,” said the angel,
“Let nothing you affright;
This day is born a Savior
Of a pure virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in him
From Satan’s pow’r and might.”

(Refrain)

The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a feeding
In tempest, storm, and wind,
And went to Bethlehem straight-way
The Son of God to find.

(Refrain)

Words and Music: Traditional English carol.

READING FROM THE GOSPELS

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And 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, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GIVING OF FIRST FRUITS

“Once in Royal David’s City”

Congregational Hymn

Once in royal David’s city,
Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her Baby,
In a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven,
Who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable,
And His cradle was a stall:
With the poor, the scorned, the lowly,
Lived on earth our Savior holy.

For He is our childhood’s pattern;
Day by day, like us, He grew;
He was little, weak, and helpless,
Tears and smiles, like us He knew;
And He feels for our sadness,
And He shares our gladness, too.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
Through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle,
Is our Lord in heaven above:
And He leads His children on,
To the place where He is gone.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1848. Music: Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849;
arr. Andy Gullahorn, 2010.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Pastor: The peace of the LORD be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Greet one another with words of peace and reconciliation.

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Taylor Brown

Visitors, please take a moment to fill out the attendance cards located in the pew racks.

You may read all of our ministry announcements on page 22.

Children are dismissed at this time.

THE MORNING PRAYERS

Lex Williamson

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

All who are united in Christ Jesus by faith and are baptized, communing members of His visible Church are invited to come to the Lord's Table. If you are not communing but would like to participate, come forward and fold your hands, and you will receive a prayer of blessing from the server.

Prayer of Confession

ALL: *Son of God, full of mercy and grace,
Who in Your great humility was born in a cattle stall
and crucified on Calvary's cross,
we confess that we have miserably failed to imitate Your lowly spirit:
we have too often preferred ourselves over others
and have abandoned our assigned role of servant.
Please forgive us;
and restore in us the desire and power to walk in Your steps
and bring glory to Your wondrous Name,
now and through eternity. Amen.*

Assurance of Pardon

Pastor: The angel said to Joseph:
“..you shall call his name Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.”

—Matthew 1:21

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you forgiveness
of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and
the grace and consolation of His Holy Spirit.

Nicene Creed

ALL: *I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven
and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance
with the Father, by whom all things were made.*

*Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary,
and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again,
according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven,
and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again,
with glory, to judge the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.*

*And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life;
who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father
and the Son together is worshiped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and I look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

 **Gloria Patri**

Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end.
Amen, amen.

Words: 2nd century. Music: Henry W. Greatorex, 1851.

Words of Institution

from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Prayer of Humble Access

ALL: *We do not presume to come to this your Table,
O merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy so much as to gather up
the crumbs under your Table,
but you are the same Lord
whose property is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to commemorate in this breaking of bread
the death of your dear son Jesus Christ,
that we may feed on him in our hearts by faith,
and that we may evermore dwell in Him,
and He in us.
Amen.*

Prayer of Consecration

Pastor: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast and united in ministry with your people in every place.

This we pray in the name of the One who taught us to pray, saying:

ALL: *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.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
for Thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen.*

*If you desire gluten free bread, please walk down the center aisle, either upstairs or down,
and the server will provide it accordingly.*

HYMNS FOR THE EUCHARIST

“Away in a Manger”

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head;
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

Words: Stanzas 1-2, Little Children's Book for Schools and Families, c. 1885; stanza 3, Gabriel's Vineyard Songs, 1892. Music: James R. Murray, 1887.

Congregation, please sing the Hymns for the Eucharist during Communion.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together,
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n;
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

HYMN OF JOY

Laud and honor to the Father,
Laud and honor to the Son,
Laud and honor to the Spirit,
Ever Three and ever One;
One in might, and One in glory,
While unending ages run.

Words and Music: Latin, 7th century, tr. by
John Mason Neale, 1851.

BENEDICTION

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT: December 24-30, 2017

SUNDAY, December 24 *Family Promise families arrive*
8:30 a.m. Coffee Fellowship (Commons)
9:00 a.m. Gathered Worship (Sanctuary)
Children's Worship | 3 years through 3rd grade
4:30 p.m. Candlelight Service (Sanctuary)
Nursery childcare available
6:00 p.m. Candlelight Service (Sanctuary)

MONDAY, December 25 Church Offices closed for Christmas

TUESDAY, December 26 Church Offices closed for Christmas

Should you need pastoral assistance after our regular office hours, please contact our pastor on call at 205-874-3559 (Marty Crawford December 25-31).

MINISTRIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Children's Worship Information. Following the Sunday morning worship service, parents will find their children attending Children's Worship in the following rooms:

3K - C224 (available for the entire worship hour)

4K - C221 (available for the entire worship hour)

Kindergarten - C221 (dismissed during Passing of the Peace)

1st through 3rd Grades - C316 (dismissed during Passing of the Peace)

Services and Sunday School. This morning and on December 31, we will not have a Sunday School hour. Join us tonight for one of our Candlelight Services at either 4:30 or 6:00 p.m. There will be nursery childcare available during the 4:30 service.

PCA Ministerial Relief Fund. During our Christmas Eve services this evening we will be collecting an offering for the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund. In accordance with James 1:27, the PCA began the fund to aid in the financial stress of the widows of our pastors and missionaries. Your gift to this fund acknowledges their life of service and provides for them in their time of need.

Wednesdays@Covenant. Our Wednesday night activities resume on January 10 with adult studies, choir, kidConnection, and youth activities. There is something for everyone, so make plans to join your Covenant family and connect over a midweek meal, prayer, and studying God's Word. For all of the details, visit covpres.com/schedule.

Women's Winter Retreat. Ladies, join us January 26-28 at the Auburn Marriott at Grand National. Abby Hutto will be our guest speaker, and she will be teaching about "The Heart of the Father." Invite someone to join you and register at covpres.com/womens-ministry.

Missions Festival 2018. Save the date for our annual Missions Festival February 10-14, 2018! We will have close to 20 of our missionary partners here with us, both local and global. Visit covpres.com/missions to volunteer.

FINANCIAL UPDATE *through* November 30, 2017

GENERAL FUND GIVING (181 commitments totaling \$2,306,030)

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>Receipts</u> | <u>Expenses</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| \$3,120,013 | \$2,839,867 | \$3,066,129 |

2017 Operating Surplus/(Deficit): (\$226,262)

2017 Operating Reserve: \$108,469

2017 Line of Credit: \$0

FAITH PROMISE GIVING (83 commitments totaling \$187,711)

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>Funds Received</u> | <u>Funds Disbursed</u> |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| \$188,081 | \$231,436 | \$188,081 |

FAITH PROMISE RESERVE: \$107,305

If you have questions regarding the budget, please contact Marty Crawford in the church office or members of the Joint Finance Committee:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Ty Dedmon | Lee Sheppard |
| Gary Gorham | Todd Sitton |
| Merrill Johnston | Darrell Tucker |
| Mark Miller | John Wood |

| *The Campaign for Covenant* |

FAITHFUL over a LITTLE

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pledges (252 commitments): | <u>\$3,506,682</u> |
| Receipts: | \$2,852,599 |
| Funds from sale of building: | <u>\$1,987,385</u> |
| Total funds provided: | \$4,839,984 |
| Funds used for debt: | <u>(\$1,983,644)</u> |
| Funds available: | \$2,856,340 |
| Costs to date: | <u>(\$2,665,490)</u> |
| Net funds available: | \$190,850 |



"Gloria
in excelsis
Deo!"

CELEBRATE THE SEASON AT COVENANT

SUNDAY MORNINGS IN ADVENT

December 3, 10, 17, & 24*

Gathered Worship ▪ 9:00 a.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT COVENANT

Candlelight Services ▪ 4:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.

(nursery childcare available during the 4:30 service)

CHRISTMASTIDE SUNDAY

December 31*

Gathered Worship ▪ 9:00 a.m.

**No Sunday School*

SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

10:30 a.m.

Maps and directional signs are located around the church.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| COMMUNITY E305 | <i>All ages and life stages</i> |
| CORNERSTONE S104 | <i>30s and 40s</i> |
| CROSSPOINTE S100 | <i>20s and 30s</i> |
| FOUNDATIONS E304 | <i>30s and 40s</i> |
| LIGHTHOUSE E301 | <i>30s and 40s</i> |
| LIVING STONES E303 | <i>40s and 50s</i> |
| KINGDOM BUILDERS E201 | <i>40s, 50s, and 60s</i> |
| OPEN DOORS S105 | <i>70s and above</i> |
| UPPER ROOM S101 | <i>50s, 60s, and 70s</i> |
| THRESHOLD DINING ROOM | <i>Singles and newly married; 20s and 30s</i> |
| YOUTH YOUTH AREA | <i>Students grades 7-12</i> |

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

EXECUTIVE STAFF

| | |
|--|--|
| Marty Crawford, Church Administrator | mcrawford@covpres.com |
| David Driskill, Director of Ministries | ddriskill@covpres.com |
| Dan Edwards, Pastor to Children and Families | dedwards@covpres.com |
| Ingram Link, Director of Women's Ministries | ilink@covpres.com |
| Sandy Willson, Interim Senior Pastor | swillson@covpres.com |

MINISTRY AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

| | |
|---|--|
| Rick Barnes, Director of Musical Arts | rbarnes@covpres.com |
| Jami Bennett, Director of MDO and Nursery Ministries | jbennett@covpres.com |
| Austin Braasch, Student Ministries Intern | jabraasch129@gmail.com |
| Katie Caldwell, Director of Design and Production | kcaldwell@covpres.com |
| Meg Cotney, Financial Secretary | mcotney@covpres.com |
| Tyler Cuidon, Technical Director | tyler.cuidon@gmail.com |
| Rachel Davis, Assistant Director of Girls Ministries | shields.rachel.c@gmail.com |
| Katie Flores, Director of Pre-School Ministries | kflores@covpres.com |
| Phyllis Hamm, Assistant to Director of Ministries | phamm@covpres.com |
| Bill Hay, Pastor Emeritus | bhay@covpres.com |
| Kim Oliver, Assistant to the Interim Senior Pastor | koliver@covpres.com |
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| Stacey Loyless, Director of Communications and Media | sloyless@covpres.com |
| Traci Parker, Director of Food Services | tparker@covpres.com |
| Tyrone Perry, Facilities Manager | tperry@covpres.com |
| Brooke Stewart, Covenant Day School Director | bstewart@covpres.com |
| Karan Stuart, Receptionist | kstuart@covpres.com |
| Laura Tucker, Ministry Assistant, Children & Families | ltucker@covpres.com |
| Victoria Williams, Pastoral Assistant | vwilliams@covpres.com |

RULING ELDERS

2017

Paul Loyless
Russell Martin
Mark Miller
Norman Pless
Charlie Regan
Lee Sheppard
Mark Taylor

2018

AC Frese
Eric Getty
John Hamilton
Daniel Murray
Warren Norville
Jason Peevy
Ben Walker
Clay Wheeler
Charles White

2019

Ty Dedmon
Jeff Dyess
Rick Flynn
Heath Henderson
Tom McKnight
John Smith T
Richard Thompson

DEACONS

2017

Lee Baker
Aaron Coffey
Paul Darden
John Gant
Jonathan Gidley
Grant Haines
John James
Stephen Mince
Carey Rome
Steve Stigler

2018

Brandon Bishop
Nathan Collums
John Harrelson
Randall Lancaster
Matt Searson
Patrick Strong
Darrell Tucker

2019

Jim Bennett
Gary Gorham
Keith Harrelson
Jeff Hayes
Steve Killgore
Steve Pfitzer
Brent Powell
John Shank
Todd Sitton
William Slappey
Billy Tapscott

DAILY WORSHIP RESOURCES

These readings are provided as a personal, family or group worship resource. Use them along with your worship guide as resources for readings, prayers and hymns. Set in the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), a schedule of daily Bible readings in accord with the Church year, these scripture readings are designed around a three-year cycle that will take you through the Old Testament once, the New Testament twice, and the Psalms frequently.

SUNDAY, THE LORD'S DAY • FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Morning | Psalm 24, 29 | Genesis 3:8-15 | John 3:16-21 |
| Evening | Psalm 8, 84 | Revelation 12:1-10 | |

MONDAY

| | | | |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Morning | Psalm 2, 85 | Micah 4:1-5, 5:2-4 | John 3:26-31 |
| Evening | Psalm 132, 110 | 1 John 4:7-16 | |

TUESDAY

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Morning | Psalm 93, 96 | Isaiah 62:1-5 | Matthew 2:1-12 |
| Evening | Psalm 34 | Hebrews 2:10-18 | |

WEDNESDAY

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Morning | Psalm 103 | Isaiah 65:15b-25 | Matthew 2:13-23 |
| Evening | Psalm 148 | Revelation 21:1-6 | |

THURSDAY

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Morning | Psalm 97, 98 | Isaiah 12:1-6 | John 7:37-52 |
| Evening | Psalm 118 | Revelation 1:1-8 | |

FRIDAY

| | | | |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Morning | Psalm 18:1-20 | 2 Samuel 23:13-17b | Luke 1:57-66 |
| Evening | Psalm 18:21-50 | 2 John 1-13 | |

SATURDAY

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| Morning | Psalm 20, 21 | 1 Kings 17:17-24 | John 5:1-15 |
| Evening | Psalm 23, 27 | 3 John 1-15 | |

SUNDAY, THE LORD'S DAY • CHRISTMASTIDE SUNDAY

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Morning | Psalm 93, 96 | 1 Samuel 1:1-2, 7b-28 | Luke 2:22-40 |
| Evening | Psalm 34 | Colossians 1:9-20 | |