# The Lord's Day in Worship

#### COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 23, 2018

For a thousand years the church has prayed the seven "O" antiphons during the last week of Advent. The antiphons were eventually gathered onto the well-known hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." This morning we pray to our Messiah: O Wisdom, O Lord, O Root of Jesse, O Key of David, O Dayspring, O King of Nations, O Emmanuel.

Indeed the greatest moment in our world history will occur when He comes to earth in His second advent to save His people.

#### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Eddy, Stephanie, Maria, Daniel, and Emilie Alonso

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."

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

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

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

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Dan Edwards

## **READING FROM THE PROPHETS**

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.* 

#### **MATTER TO MANTIPHONS**

Congregation will speak the portions in bold and sing the portions in italics.

O Wisdom. proceeding from the mouth of the highest, reaching from eternity to eternity and disposing all things with strength and sweetness:

## Come, teach us the way of knowledge.

O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high and order all things, far and nigh. to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee. O Israel.

O Lord and Leader of Israel You appeared to Moses in the burning bush and delivered the law to him on Sinai:

# Come, redeem us by your outstretched arm,

O Come, O Come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's heights in ancient times didst give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Root of Jesse, You stand as a sign of the people: before you rulers do not open their mouths, to you all nations shall pray:

# Come and deliver us, do not delay.

O Come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free, Thine own from Satan's tyranny. From depths of hell Thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Key of David and Scepter of Israel, You open, and no one shuts; You shut, and no one opens.

# Come and release from prison those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death

O Come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home. Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Dayspring, Splendor of Eternal Light and Sun of Righteousness:

# Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O Come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here. Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

# O King of Nations,

## Come and save those whom You formed of clay.

O Come, Desire of Nations, bind in one the hearts of all mankind, bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be Thyself our King of Peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, The Expectation and Savior of the nations:

## Come and save us, O Lord our God.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appears. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

Words: Latin Hymn, Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710; translated by John M. Neale. Music: Adapted from Plainsong by Thomas Helmore.

#### **PRAYER OF ADVENT**

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which Your Son, Jesus Christ, came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in His glorious Majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through Him Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Amen.

—Book of Common Prayer

#### FIRST READING FROM THE GOSPELS

Tracy Stephens

Luke 2:1-20

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

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>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!"

<sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that

had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.* 

#### **M HYMN OF WONDER**

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest heav'n adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity:
Pleased, as man, with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Hail the heav'n born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), alt. Music: Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847); adapt. William H. Cummings (1831-1915.

#### **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.

## **M PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of the LORD be with you.

And also with you.

Greet one another with words of peace and reconciliation.

#### **MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Visitors and members, please take a moment to fill out the pew pad. You may read all of our ministry announcements on page 23.

Kindergarteners - 2nd graders are dismissed at this time (see page 23 for details).

#### THE MORNING PRAYERS

Charlie Logan

#### **SECOND READING FROM THE GOSPELS**

John 1:10-13

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

All flesh is like grass,

And all its glory is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades,

But the word of our God stands forever.

## **MESSAGE**

| "RECEIVING HIM" |
|-----------------|
| Sandy Willson   |
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#### 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.

The congregation will read aloud the portions that are *italicized*.

## **Prayer of Confession**

John Fountain

Merciful Father, Who has graciously answered the prayers of Your people in sending Your One and Only Son to save us, and Who bids us receive and welcome Him into our hearts, we sorrowfully confess that we, like many of old, have turned Him away at times and have gone our own way. Please forgive us, as we earnestly repent of our foolish pride and beg you to renew our hearts that we may welcome Your unrivaled lordship over every part of our lives and thus bring honor to Your Name, through our dear Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### Massurance of Pardon

The Angel of the Lord said to Joseph: "She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for He will save His people form 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**

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 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.

## **Mathematical Hymn of the Angels**

Gloria
In excelsis Deo,
Gloria
In excelsis Deo.

#### **Words of Institution**

from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

# **Prayer of Humble Access**

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 and the Lord's Prayer

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:

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.

#### **HYMNS FOR THE EUCHARIST**

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

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, And with fear and trembling stand; Ponder nothing earthly minded, For with blessing in his hand; Christ our God to earth descendeth, Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary, As of old on earth he stood; Lord of lords, in human vesture, In the body and the blood; He will give to all the faithful His own self for heav'nly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven, Spreads its vanguard on the way; As the Light of light descendeth, From the realms of endless day; That the pow'rs of hell may vanish, As the darkness clears away.

At his feet the six-winged seraph, Cherubim, with sleepless eye, Veil their faces to the presence, As with ceaseless voice they cry, "Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia, Lord Most High!"

Words: Liturgy of St. James, 4th century; adapt. Gerard Moultrie (1829-1885). Music: French melody, 17th century, PICARDY.

#### "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.

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## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

# **© CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

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.

## **BENEDICTION**

# THIS WEEK AT COVENANT: December 23 - 29, 2018

**SUNDAY, December 23** 

8:45 a.m. Coffee Fellowship (Commons)

9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages and stages (see page 25)

10:30 a.m. Gathered Worship (Sanctuary)

Children's Worship | 3K through 2nd grade

**MONDAY, December 24** 

4:30 & 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (Sanctuary)

(Church offices closed)

**TUESDAY, December 25** Merry Christmas!

(Church offices closed)

#### 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 & 4K • C221** (available for the entire worship hour) **Kindergarten • C221** (dismissed during the Passing of the Peace) **1st - 2nd Grade • C316** (dismissed during the Passing of the Peace)

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services.** Join us at either 4:30 or 6:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve for our candlelight service. This special service is a perfect time to reflect on the meaning of Advent and prepare our hearts for the birth of our Savior. Nursery childcare is available.

**Established Conference.** The Established Conference is coming to Birmingham January 25-26, 2019. This conference is for parents, grandparents, volunteers, and anyone who has a desire to love, teach, and disciple children. You can find out about the available workshops and register at pcacdm.org/established-birmingham.

**PCA Ministerial Relief Fund.** During our Christmas Eve services 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.** Mark your calendars! Our Wednesday night activities will resume on January 9. Bible study information coming soon.

**New Members' Class.** Our next New Members' class is January 25-27. Please contact Victoria Williams at vwilliams@covpres.com for the schedule and to register. Childcare is available for each session.

**2019 Missions Festival.** Covenant's annual Missions Festival is February 9-13! Mark your calendar, and check out our sign up at covpres.com/missions-festival to find out about how you can help.



# CELEBRATE THE SEASON AT COVENANT

SUNDAY MORNINGS IN ADVENT
December 23
Gathered Worship • 10:30 a.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT COVENANT Candlelight Service • 4:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.

CHRISTMASTIDE SUNDAY

December 30

Gathered Worship • 10:30 a.m.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

#### 9:15 a.m.

Maps and directional signs are located around the church.

**COLLEGE** | DINING ROOM\* College students

**COMMUNITY** | E305 All ages and life stages

**CORNERSTONE** | S104 30s and 40s

**CROSSPOINTE** | S100 20s and 30s

**FOUNDATIONS** | E304 30s and 40s

**LIGHTHOUSE** | E301 3os and 4os

**LIVING STONES** | E303 40s and 50s

**KINGDOM BUILDERS** | E201 50s and 60s

**OPEN DOORS** | S105 *70s and above* 

**UPPER ROOM** | S101 *60s and 70s* 

**THRESHOLD** | DINING ROOM Singles and young marrieds;

20s and 30s

**YOUTH** | YOUTH AREA Students grades 7-12

<sup>\*</sup>The college class meets at 12:00 p.m. and includes lunch.

#### STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

#### **EXECUTIVE STAFF**

Marty Crawford, Church Administrator mcrawford@covpres.com

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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

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#### **RULING ELDERS**

2018 2019 2020 AC Frese Ty Dedmon Bill Bennett Eric Getty Jeff Dyess Will Brooke John Hamilton Rick Flynn Michael Latta Daniel Murray Heath Henderson Charlie Logan Warren Norville Tom McKnight Paul Loyless Jason Peevy John Smith T Bob Schaffeld Ben Walker Richard Thompson Lee Sheppard Clay Wheeler Steve Stigler Charles White Mark Taylor John Wood

#### **DEACONS**

Darrell Tucker

2020 2018 2019 Brandon Bishop Jim Bennett Tripp Alexander Nathan Collums Gary Gorham Paul Darden John Harrelson Keith Harrelson Jay Evans Randall Lancaster Bryan Flores Jeff Hayes Matt Searson John Gant Steve Killgore Patrick Strong John David Gray Steve Pfitzer

Brent Powell Marty Martin

John Shank Bud Miller

Todd Sitton Tyler O'Connor

William Slappey John Shults

Billy Tapscott Danny Smith

Robert Stephens

Clark Worrell

## **BIBLE READING PLAN**

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. The scripture readings are from Ligonier Ministries and are designed around a one-year cycle that will allow you to read through the New Testament or the entire Bible in 2018.

#### **DECEMBER READING PLAN**

|       | EZEKIEL                  | 1 PETER       |
|-------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1/2   | □ 45-48                  | □ 3-1 John 1  |
|       | DANIEL                   | 1 JOHN        |
| 3     | □ 1-2                    | □ 2           |
| 4     | □ 3-4                    | □ 3           |
| 5     | □ 5-6                    | □ 4           |
| 6     | □ 7-8                    | □ 5           |
| 7     | □ 9-10                   | □ 2 John      |
| 8/9   | □ 11-Hosea 4             | □ 3 John-Jude |
|       | HOSEA                    | REVELATION    |
| 10    | □ 5-6                    | □1            |
| 11    | □ 7-10                   | □ 2           |
| 12    | □ 11-14                  | □ 3           |
| 13    | □ Joel                   | □ 4           |
|       | AMOS                     |               |
| 14    | □ 1-3                    | □ 5           |
| 15/16 | □ 4-9                    | □ 6-7         |
| 17    | □ Obadiah-Jonah 3        | □8            |
| 18    | □ Jonah 4-Micah 2        | □ 9           |
|       | MICAH                    |               |
| 19    | □ 3                      | □ 10          |
| 20    | □ 4-5                    | □ 11          |
| 21    | □ 6-7                    | □ 12          |
| 22/23 | □ Nahum 1-Habakkuk 2     | □ 13-14       |
| 24    | □ Habakkuk 3-Zephaniah 2 | □ 15          |
| 25    | □ Zephaniah 3-Haggai 2   | □ 16          |
|       | ZECHARIAH                |               |
| 26    | □ 1-3                    | □ 17          |
| 27    | □ 4-6                    | □ 18          |
| 28    | □ 7-9                    | □ 19          |
| 29/30 | □ 10-Malachi 1           | □ 20-21       |
|       | MALACHI                  |               |
| 31    | □ 2-4                    | □ 22          |
|       |                          |               |