

The Lord's Day in Worship

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2019

Could I so false, so faithless prove
To quit thy service and thy love,
Where, Lord, could I thy presence shun,
Or from thy dreadful glory run?

—Isaac Watts

But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings,
that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

—1 Peter 4:13

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Candle of Joy

Susan and Warren Norville

Luke recounted the story, "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

☒ CALL TO WORSHIP

Sandy Willson

☒ HYMN OF INVITATION

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

O come all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels;
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

Sing choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
O sing all ye citizens of heav'n above;
Glory to God,
All glory in the highest;
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

Yea, Lord we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing;
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!

Words: attr. John F. Wade (1711-1786); tr. Frederick Oakeley (1802-1880).
Music: John F. Wade's Cantus Diversi, 1751.

☒ *Congregation stand as able.*

READING FROM THE PROPHETS

Grace Harrelson

Isaiah 35:1–10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;

²it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart,
“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

☒ HYMN OF JOY

“Joy to the World”

Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow;
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders and wonders of His love.

Words: Isaac Watts. Music: George Frederick Handel, arr. B Lowell Mason.

PRAYER OF ADORATION

READING FROM THE EPISTLES

Philippians 2:5–10

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

☒ HYMN OF DIVINE HUMILITY

"Thou Who Wast Rich Beyond All Splendor"



1. Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor,
2. Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing,
3. Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing,



5 all for love's sake be - cam - est poor;
all for love's sake be - cam - est man;
Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.



9 thrones for a man - ger didst sur - ren - der,
stoop - ing so low, but sin - ners rais - ing,
Em - man - u - el, with - in us dwell - ing,



13 sap - phire - paved courts for sta - ble floor.
heav'n - ward by thine e - ter - nal plan.
make us what thou wouldst have us be.



17 Thou who wast rich be - yond all splen - dor,
Thou who art God be - yond all prais - ing,
Thou who art love be - yond all tell - ing,



21 all for love's sake be - cam - est poor.
all for love's sake be - cam - est man.
Sav - ior and King, we wor - ship thee.

GIVING OF FIRST FRUITS

“He is Born the Divine Christ Child”

Chancel Choir

He is born, the divine Christ Child;
Play the musette and the bagpipe merrily!
He is born, the divine Christ Child;
Sing we all of the Savior mild.

Through long ages of the past,
Prophets long have foretold His coming;
Through long ages of the past,
Now the time has come at last!

He is born, the divine Christ Child;
Play the musette and the bagpipe merrily!
He is born, the divine Christ Child;
Sing we all of the Savior mild.

O, how lovely, O how pure
Is this perfect Child of heaven;
Oh how lovely, O how pure,
Gracious gift to human kind!

He is born, the divine Christ Child,
Play the musette and the bagpipe merrily!
He is born, the divine Christ Child;
Sing we all of the Savior mild.

Jesus, Lord of all the world,
Coming as a Child among us,
Jesus, Lord of all the world,
Grant to us Thy heav'nly peace.

He is born, the divine Christ Child,
Play the musette and the bagpipe merrily!
He is born, the divine Christ Child;
Sing we all of the Savior mild.
Sing we now, the divine Christ Child!

Words: Anonymous. Music: traditional French carol, arr. by Dan Forrest.

☒ 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.

Children's Worship Information:

Children ages 3 to 4 may attend Children's Worship for the entire worship service, while kindergarteners through 2nd graders are dismissed during the Passing of the Peace. Following the worship service, parents will find their children attending Children's Worship in the following rooms:

3K ▪ C224/C225 (*available for the entire worship hour*)

4K ▪ C221 (*available for the entire worship hour*)

Kindergarten ▪ C221 (*dismissed during the Passing of the Peace*)*

1st & 2nd Grades ▪ C316 (*dismissed during the Passing of the Peace*)*

**Children on the main level will dismiss through the door leading into the Fellowship Hall, and children in the balcony will dismiss through the door closest to the elevator.*

MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visitors and members, please take a moment to fill out the pew pad with your full name and names of any family members attending with you. You may read all of our ministry announcements on page 19.

THE MORNING PRAYERS

Tom McKnight

📖 READING FROM THE GOSPELS

John 6:60–71

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”

⁶¹But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

⁶⁶After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, ⁶⁹and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

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.

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. An usher will prompt each pew when it is time to come forward to receive the bread and the cup, and then you will return to your seat. If you are not communing but would like to participate, please come forward and cross your hands in front of your chest, and the one serving communion will pray a brief prayer for you or pronounce a blessing over you.

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

Prayer of Confession

Dan Edwards

*Almighty and merciful Father,
we, your stubborn and stiff-necked people,
confess that we have sought out what might fulfill us
In many worldly things, and we have failed to seek our life in your Word.
For the sake and name of the Lord Jesus,
forgive our iniquities and transgressions against you,
And renew in us a willing spirit that seeks you above all else.
Enable us by your Spirit to follow our Savior and King Jesus with our whole being,
in whose name we pray, Amen.*

Assurance of Pardon

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

—Colossians 1:13–14

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.

☒ **Apostles' Creed**

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.*

☒ **Congregational Response**

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 of Institution

from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Mark 14:22-25

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.*

*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

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

“Infant Holy”

Infant holy, infant lowly,
For His bed a cattle stall;
Oxen lowing, little knowing
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
Swift are winging angels singing,
Noels ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the Babe is Lord of all,
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping
Vigil till the morning new
Saw the glory, heard the story,
Tidings of the gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,
Praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the Babe was born for you,
Christ the Babe was born for you.

Shepherds praising, mother gazing
On her Son, the Prince of Peace;
Child of Mary, He shall carry
Our dear cross for sin's release.
Praise forever, loving purely,
Failing never, dwell securely:
Christ the Babe, our Savior Lord.
Christ the Babe, our Savior Lord.

Words and Music: traditional Polish carol, translated by Edith M. G. Reed (1921); 3rd verse by Joseph Strickland.

“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**

☒ **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

God rest ye 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.

☒ **BENEDICTION**

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT: December 15 - 22, 2019

SUNDAY, December 15

- 8:45 a.m. Coffee Fellowship (Commons)
- 9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages and stages
(see page 21)
- 10:30 a.m. Gathered Worship (Sanctuary)
Children's Worship | Rising 3k through 2nd grades
- 6:00 p.m. Act of Congress Christmas Concert

MONDAY, December 16

- 8:15 a.m. Women's Prayer Time (Ingram Link's office)

TUESDAY, December 17

- 11:30 a.m. Gospel Manhood (Fellowship Hall)

Should you need pastoral assistance after our regular office hours, please contact our pastor on call at 205-874-3559 (Josh Johnson, December 16-22).

MINISTRIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Please see our full calendar of Covenant events at covpres.com/calendar.

Act of Congress at Covenant. Join us tonight at 6:00 p.m. for a Christmas concert with Act of Congress, one of Alabama's best-known acoustic bands. They will be performing traditional and contemporary Christmas songs. You do not want to miss this opportunity to hear them live! (Nursery childcare available by reservation; nursery@covpres.com.)

PCA Young Adult Event. All young adults from area PCA churches are invited to Covenant's Act of Congress Christmas concert on Sunday, December 15 at 6:00 p.m. with a dinner to follow. Both the concert and dinner are free. This will be the kick-off event for future monthly gatherings sponsored by participating PCA churches. No reservations required!

Gospel Manhood. Our final event of the year is Tuesday, December 17 at 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Our speaker will be Sean Lucas, Senior Pastor of Independent Presbyterian Church (Memphis, TN). Invite a friend!

Christmas Eve Services. On Tuesday, December 24 we will have our Christmas Eve candlelight services at 4:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Please plan to join us for one of these services. Nursery childcare will be provided during the 4:30 service.

Come to the Table 2020. Ladies, our Come to the Table event is just around the corner! Mark your calendars for January 10, 2020. We will meet at Covenant to hear from one of our local missions partners and then head out to host homes in groups of six to eight to share a meal and work on a missions project together. This is such a fun way to meet women in our church! Invitations coming soon.

Sacred Studio 2020. Ladies, Sacred Studio is February 28 - 29, 2020. This third annual event includes gospel-centered teachings, delicious meals, and your choice of three project "studios." Registration is open at sacredstudio.org (cost: \$145). Register today!

Lighthouse Family Retreat. Lead your family on mission with Lighthouse Family Retreat March 22-28 (Spring Break)! Childhood cancer is hard, and Lighthouse Family Retreat seeks to lighten that burden for one week by providing families living with cancer a chance to rest, restore relationships, experience joy, and find hope in God! This service trip for individuals and families (with children age 4+) will be a transformational experience for the parents and children you serve, as well as you and your own family. Contact Kate and Clay Wheeler to learn more, katewheeler24@gmail.com or 205-862-2769.



"Gloria
in excelsis
Deo!"

CELEBRATE THE SEASON AT COVENANT

SUNDAY MORNINGS IN ADVENT

December 15 & 22

Gathered Worship ▪ 10:30 a.m.

LESSONS & CAROLS

December 8 ▪ 6:00 p.m.

An evening of worship presented by our Chancel and Children's Choirs

ACT OF CONGRESS

December 15 ▪ 6:00 p.m.

A concert of traditional and contemporary Christmas songs

CHRISTMAS EVE

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

CHRISTMASTIDE SUNDAY

December 29

Gathered Worship ▪ 10:30 a.m.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

9:15 a.m.

Maps and directional signs are located around the church.

COLLEGE COMMONS	<i>College students*</i>
COMMUNITY E305	<i>All ages and life stages</i>
CORNERSTONE S104	<i>30s and 40s</i>
CROSSPOINTE S100	<i>Young families; 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>50s and 60s</i>
OPEN DOORS S105	<i>70s and above</i>
THRESHOLD DINING ROOM	<i>Singles and young marrieds; 20s and 30s</i>
UPPER ROOM S101	<i>60s and 70s</i>
YOUTH YOUTH AREA	<i>Students grades 7-12</i>

**College students gather in Commons Area at 12:00 for class and lunch.*

STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

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RULING ELDERS

2019

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

2020

Bill Bennett
Will Brooke
Michael Latta
Charlie Logan
Paul Loyless
Bob Schaffeld
Lee Sheppard
Steve Stigler
Mark Taylor
John Wood

2021

Eric Getty
Russell Martin
Daniel Murray
Warren Norville
Sandy Stradtman
Clay Wheeler

DEACONS

2019

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

2020

Tripp Alexander
Paul Darden
Jay Evans
Bryan Flores
John Gant
John David Gray
Marty Martin
Bud Miller
Tyler O'Connor
John Shults
Danny Smith
Robert Stephens
Clark Worrell

2021

Nick Baggett
Ward Bailey
Samuel Bragg
Trey Clegg
Will Graham
Jeff Hicks
Jim Jenkins
Alan Spooner
Patrick Strong

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 2019.

DECEMBER READING PLAN

	EZEKIEL	2 PETER
1	□ 43-46	□ 2-3
		1 JOHN
2	□ 47-48	□ 1
	DANIEL	
3	□ 1-2	□ 2
4	□ 3-4	□ 3
5	□ 5-6	□ 4
6	□ 7-8	□ 5
7/8	□ 9-12	□ 2 John - 3 John
	HOSEA	JUDE
9	□ 1-4	□ Jude
		REVELATION
10	□ 5-8	□ 1
11	□ 9-11	□ 2
12	□ 12-14	□ 3
13	□ Joel	□ 4
	AMOS	
14/15	□ 1-6	□ 5-6
16	□ 7-9	□ 7
17	□ Obadiah	□ 8
18	□ Jonah	□ 9
	MICAH	
19	□ 1-3	□ 10
20	□ 4-5	□ 11
21/22	□ 6-Nahum 3	□ 12-13
23	□ Habakkuk	□ 14
24	□ Zephaniah	□ 15
25	□ Haggai	□ 16
	ZECHARIAH	
26	□ 1-3	□ 17
27	□ 4-6	□ 18
28/29	□ 7-12	□ 19-20
30	□ 13-14	□ 21
31	□ Malachi	□ 22