

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

Prelude – *Lo, How a Rose*

Max Drischner

Prayer of Preparation (*you may prepare for worship by praying silently*)

God of grace and revolution, you revel in reversing injustice and upending corrupt hierarchies. Inspire us to sing with teenage Mary of the oppressed going free; and the last being made first. Ignite our hearts until we truly understand what it means to see the world made into a more holy realm. Embolden us to risk everything for the chance to serve as midwives to your new creation, so that, with Mary, our spirits will rejoice in God our Savior and magnify Christ's love in all we do. Amen.

Chiming of the Hour

Greeting and Announcements

Cala Raborn

Call to Worship – Lighting of Advent Candles (responsive) The Harris and Rosado Family

At Christmas, we join with the angels, singing:

Joy to the World!

Jesus said, "Love one another, just as I have loved you",

He said this so that his joy would be in us, and that our joy would be complete.

St. Paul said "Rejoice, again, I say, Rejoice!"

Joy is a deep and confident delight in the Lord.

Joy came to earth to save us,

so that we can be filled with His joy.

Let us joyfully worship God!

* Hymn of Praise 93 – *Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates*

* Call to Confession

The life of faith is not only about being faithful to God. It is knowing that God is faithful to us. Trusting that God will never turn away from us, let us tell the truth about our lives.

* Prayer of Confession (unison)

Magnificent God, it is easy to rejoice at the wilderness bursting into bloom and the hungry being filled with good things. However, we find that we may not always want to be personally involved in your redemptive work. Sometimes, we may even find that we prefer the status quo because it benefits us and so we ignore the plight of the lowly ones you would lift up. Forgive us and refocus us, that we may fully follow your way of life and abide in your truth and love. (time for silent confession)

* Declaration of Forgiveness (responsive)

There is nothing and no one that is too far gone for God to redeem. There is no land too parched that God cannot make streams of living water flow. Beloved, we are forgiven!

Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

* The Congregation's Response: *Gloria Patri* Hymn 581

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.

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

Time with Children

Michael Ginn

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, our hope and strength, by the power of your Spirit prepare the way in our hearts for the coming of your Word, so that we may see the glorious signs of your promise fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading – Isaiah 35:1-10

Pew Bible pg. 578

The Word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem – *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Michael Larkin

Come thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.

From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the world thou art;

Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver; born a child, and yet a king.

Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thy own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;

By thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free.

From our sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

Second Reading – Matthew 11:1-6

Pew Bible pg. 792

The Word of the LORD.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon – *Go and Tell John What You Hear and See*

Rev. Dr. Christopher Crotwell

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

* Hymn of Thanksgiving 101 – *No Wind at the Window*

* Affirmation of Faith: Adapted from The Confession of 1967, 9.19 (unison)

Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

Prayers of the People (responsive)

Gathered here, in the house of the Lord, let us pray for the coming of Christ's realm. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peace of the church . . . Bring peace, O God, to the body of Christ; strengthen our hearts, teach us patience, and make us messengers of hope. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peace of the earth . . . Bring peace, O God, throughout the world; feed the hungry, set captives free, and give justice to the oppressed. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peace of all nations . . . Bring peace, O God, to every land; teach us to love righteousness and lift up those who are bowed down. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peace of this community . . . Bring peace, O God, to our city; watch over travelers and strangers, and uphold the lonely and vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peace of loved ones . . . Bring peace, O God, to those we hold dear; heal the sick, bring good news to the poor, comfort the sorrowful, and raise the dead to life. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peace of Jerusalem . . . Bring peace, O God, to the world you have made: the peace that passes understanding and the promise of your new creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is coming in glory to reign. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to Offering

All things in heaven and earth belong to God, who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation. Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

Offertory – *O Come, Divine Messiah*

Robert J. Powell

* The Doxology – Hymn 606

* Prayer of Dedication (unison)

Eternal God, as we wait for the fulfillment of your reign, use these gifts and the gifts of our lives to bring justice to those who are oppressed, to set free those who are in prison, to lift up those who are bowed down, and to uphold those who are vulnerable. Amen.

GO IN GOD'S NAME

* Hymn of Consecration 140 – *Once in Royal David's City*

* Blessing and Charge (responsive)

May the God of peace make you holy and the power of the Spirit sustain you until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Alleluia!** Prepare the way of the Lord! **Amen.**

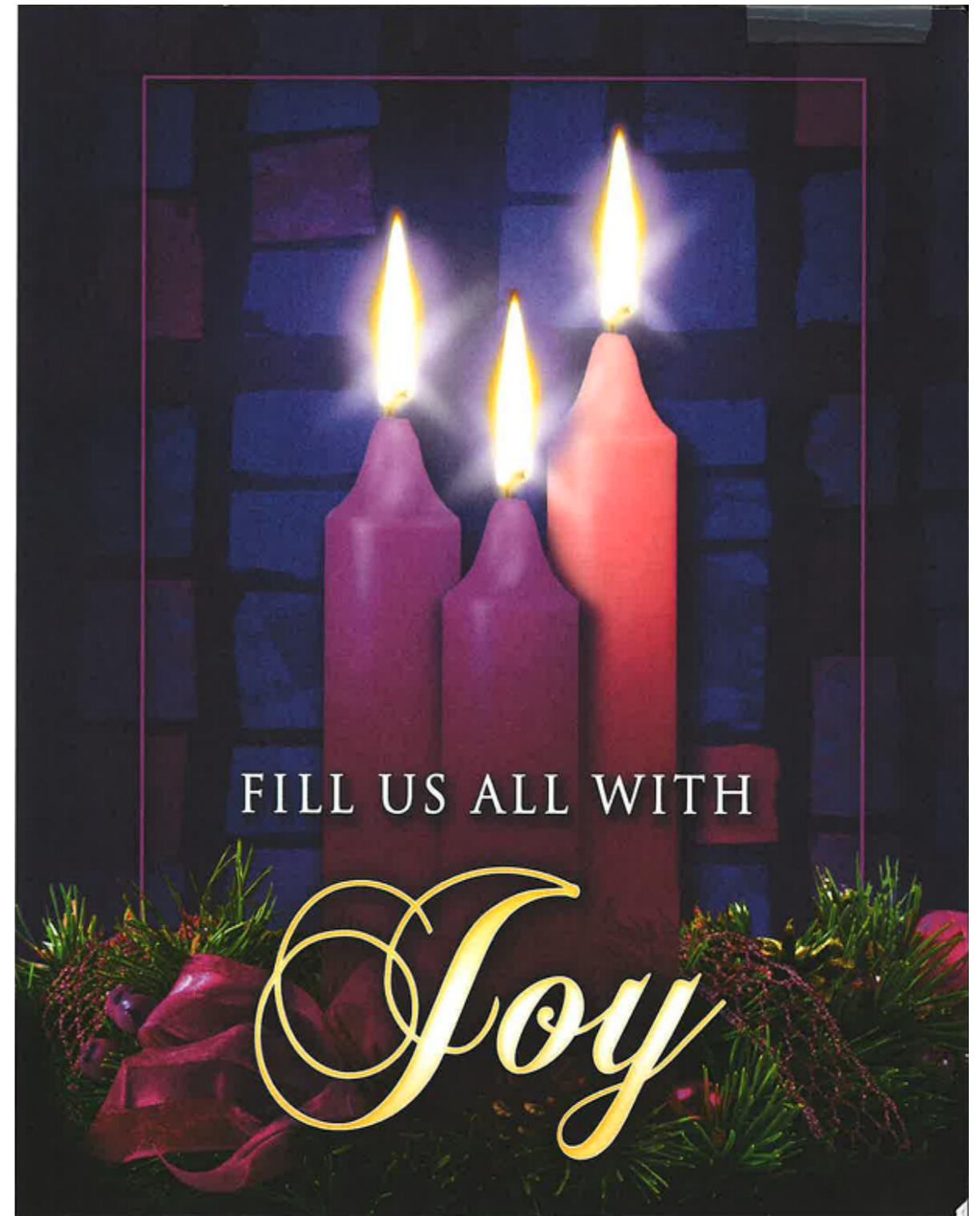
* Postlude – *From Heaven Above*

Wilbur Held



* Please stand at the * as you are able. Unison readings are **printed in bold.**

Today's liturgy is in part adapted from the Call to Worship website, a resource created the PCUSA's Office of Theology and Worship and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians.



PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND STRENGTH

(* new added prayers)

Terri Banks, friend of Pam Love – health issues

Janet Baldwin, Oseola director – nerve issues with back and foot

Linda Basden, neighbor of Janeil Harris – Alzheimer's

Jan Bozeman – constant pain

Franklin Bryant – recovering from broken pelvis at home

Larry & Margaret Burge of Poplarville, friend of Michael Yore – Larry has cancer

Laura Pearce Cureton, Nancy Johnson's goddaughter – nerve block therapy continues

Deidra Dickenson, Kathy Cain's sister – onset dementia

Cathy Dudley – Bedford Care (Medical Blvd)

Bill and Louise Edwards, friends of Charles Brown – strength and endurance

Teresa Ginn, Michael Ginn's aunt – dementia

Lee Graham, Pam Love's son-in-law – health issues

Jim Harris, Dixie Coats' brother-in-law's father – in hospital with serious health issues

Mary Gunn – continued positive medical reports

Charles "Rocky" Hartfield, friend of Pam Love – health issues

Peggy Henry, Karen Reidenbach's sister – continued strength through addiction recovery

Charlotte Hill

Ann Johnson

Geraldine Jones

Roger Kuyrkendall, Carrie Creel's father – Alzheimer's

B.J. Lambert

Vivian Lochhead, daughter of Bob and Margaret Lochhead – eye issues

Peggy McCarthy, friend of Iris Easterling – facing serious health issues

Lender McKinzie, sister of Janet Baldwin – upcoming hip replacement

Deloris McLaurin, Glenn Nobles' first cousin – dementia

**Bill Mitchell – FGH rehab*

Anita Murphy, friend of Mary Cromartie – lung cancer

Butch Nobles' mother – recovering from broken hip

Glenn Nobles – endurance and strength

Renee Parker, friend of Ruthie Davis – macular degeneration

Carolyn Mitchell Pintard, Bill & Betty Mitchell's daughter – grave health issues

Shannon Love Roberson, daughter of Pam Love – broken shoulder

Laura Todd, Grayson Rayborn's cousin – multiple health issues

Louise Traxler, Karen Reidenbach's mom – Bedford Care (Medical Blvd)

Korie Turner, friend of Ruthie Davis – prayers for courage

Rose Marie Yore – recovering from spinal fusion surgery

Ella Young, sister of Janet Baldwin – struggling with dementia

Due to the generous donations, everyone at Boswell will receive a nice Christmas gift from Westminster. Thanks so much to everyone who donated to make Christmas a little brighter for people in the community.



Greeting and Announcements

Welcome to Westminster! We're delighted to see you in worship. We hope you will sense Christ's presence. If you are looking for a place to grow and serve, we'd love to tell you more about us. Please silence cell phones during the worship hour.

Youth and Children will not meet today.

PW Prayer Ministry will meet on Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.

Brown Bag Bible Study will meet on Tuesday at 11:00 a.m.

Choir will meet on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

Men of the Church will meet on Thursday at 7 a.m. at Loblolly Bakery.

New Beginnings, Monday, Dec. 15, at noon to pack Breadbasket Christmas baskets.

Please let Tommy or Martha know if you plan to attend.

John Dudley, former pastor, has printed his Christmas Eve sermons (1995-2000). They are on the narthex table. If you would prefer one emailed, please let Martha know.

It's that time of year when **Breadbasket** will prepare for **100 Christmas boxes** to be given before Christmas. This year Westminster will provide oranges for these boxes. We are asking for donations to purchase the oranges. There is a box labeled oranges on the narthex cabinet for your donations. If you are writing a check, please put oranges on the memo line. For more information, contact Sharon Potin or Martha Davis.

Breadbasket week is Dec. 15-18

Volunteers are needed. Please contact Martha to volunteer.
601-584-7574



Youth/Children Ornament Swap, Sunday, Dec. 22, during Sunday School.

A CAROLING WE WILL GO

You are invited to come caroling with your church family Sunday, Dec. 21. We will meet in the church parking lot at 5:00 p.m., split into two groups and go caroling! Afterwards, we will meet back in Montague Hall for supper.

The **Christmas Joy Offering** is shared equally by Presbyterian-related schools and colleges and supports retired pastors. Offering envelopes and handouts are in today's bulletin.



You and your family are invited to join us for our Christmas Eve Service at 6 p.m. (nursery available)

