

DECEMBER 3, 2023

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Covenant

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CHRIST • PEOPLE • COMMUNITY

MISSION STATEMENT

Covenant Presbyterian Church exists to glorify and enjoy God. We live knowing that God calls us to be a place of love, support, hope and acceptance regardless of earthly labels. Jesus Christ commissions us to make disciples and passionately share our gifts with the world through prayer, teaching, and service. The Holy Spirit allows us to determine and carry out Christ's will for our lives and the life of our church and empowers us to seek out and respond to the needs of our local and global community.



Covenant is proud to be an **Earth Care Congregation**, a **More Light Church** – supporting the LGBTQ+ community, and a **PC(USA) Matthew 25 Church** – committed to dismantling structural racism, eradicating systemic poverty, and building congregational vitality.

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Facebook: "Covenant Presbyterian Church (Johnson City, TN.)"

*(As you participate in worship today, you're invited to rise in body or spirit at * and read aloud the **bolded** responses together with the congregation.)*

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

WELCOME

GREETING

One: The day of the Lord is surely coming;

All: **The promises of God shall be fulfilled.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH Katelyn Gabler, Jeremi Lukanus, & Harvey Trueblood

PRELUDE # 85 (v. 1)

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

He shall bring salvation to Israel, God fulfills the promise.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

based on Psalm 80

One: O Shepherd of Israel, hear us, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

You who are enthroned above the angels, shine forth! Shine out before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh! Awaken your saving power!

All: **Return to us, O God, let your face shine on us, and we will be saved.**

One: God of Hosts, how long will you look away while your people pray?
Our tears have filled our drinking cups. We have fed on sorrow night and day.

All: **Return to us, O God, let your face shine on us, and we will be saved.**

One: There was a vine which you uprooted from Egypt. When you planted it, it took root and grew. Its branches were like the cedars, covering the hills with good shade. Look down now upon your vine, before it is trampled, before it is destroyed by wild beasts. Let your hand be upon your Chosen One, and restore our life.

All: **Return to us, O God, let your face shine on us, and we will be saved.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

***HYMN OF PRAISE # 82**

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, your love is good news for the oppressed; you bind up the brokenhearted. Forgive us when we think that your good news is only for us. Forgive us when we twist your gospel into something that fits comfortably in our lives. By your light, let us see you leading us beyond ourselves and into the world you love. By your grace, set us free to try again. This we pray through Jesus our Savior. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us! Even if we have gone out in tears, God brings us home shouting for joy. Friends, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

SHARING THE PEACE

One: May God fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope. The peace of Christ be always with you

All: And also with you.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Who Are We Waiting For”

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST LESSON (p. 738—OT)

Jeremiah 33:14-16

***HYMN OF INVITATION # 87**

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

SECOND LESSON (p. 691—OT)

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

One: This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Maggie Rust

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

from *The Confession of 1967*

When the fullness of time came, God raised up Jesus. He was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, the perfect child of God, the anointed Messiah whom we confess to be Emmanuel, God with us. It is Christ who calls the Church to be his servant and work for the reconciliation of the world.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving and The Lord’s Prayer

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: It is truly right...

...sing to the glory of your name:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

One: You are holy, O God...

...the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

One: Gracious God,...

...now and forever. **Amen.**

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

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER # 88

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

GOING OUT TO SERVE

***HYMN OF BLESSING # 129**

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

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Large-print Hymnals are available in the back of the sanctuary.

Hearing Assist Devices are located in the rear of the Sanctuary. Disposable ear buds are available for your convenience. **Please note**, only one ear bud receives signal, so please check both buds to determine that the unit is working. Contact the church office with any other issues.

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WELCOME VISITORS! We are glad you are here. We invite you to fill out a Visitor Card and place it in the offering plate. If you are seeking a church home, you are welcome to join us in discipleship in our community of faith and service; Pastor Maggie would be happy to talk to you about your journey and church membership.

5 CENTS A MEAL OFFERING

The basket is out for the 5 Cents a Meal Offering. Please consider giving 5 cents for each meal you have eaten in the last month (or any amount you wish) to help fund local and global programs to feed the hungry.

TODAY AT COVENANT

Liturgist: Betsy Moakler

Accompanist: Jeremi Lukanus

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Maggie Rust

Music Director: Katelyn Gabler

AV Tech: Harvey Trueblood

Office Administrator: Tina Simon

Admin. Assistant: Artie Davi