

**DECEMBER 10, 2023**

**SECOND 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: God has promised a new creation

**All: where righteousness will be at home.**

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

Alan & Deborah Lewis

**PRELUDE # 85 (v. 2)**

*"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"*

Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

*from Psalm 25*

One: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

My God, I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame.

**All: Show us your ways, O Lord. Teach us your paths.**

One: Lead me in your truth, for you are the God of my salvation. For you I wait.

**All: Remember your mercies and your love, ancient and unwavering.**

One: Pardon my sin and my rebellion; remember me because of your love and goodness.

**All: How good and upright are you, Lord! You guide the humble in what is right.**

One: The ways of God are full of love and faithfulness.

**All: Let us fix our eyes on the Lord; let us worship God who is our hope.**

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE # 93**

*"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"*

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Gracious and welcoming God, have mercy on your people. We confess we do not heed your word each day in all we say and do. We do not see our neighbors, families, and friends as beloved children you have made. We do not believe in your incarnation, your presence in our midst. In your mercy, forgive us, for we repent of our ways and look to your power to heal us and raise us up. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

One: The reign of God has come near; the repentant will be judged with righteousness and mercy. Friends, be filled with hope, believing in the power of Christ to bring you to new life.

In him, we are forgiven and set free to rejoice.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## SHARING THE PEACE

One: My friends, while we await the day of the Lord, let us strive to be found at peace at his arrival. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: **And also with you.**

## HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

### SPECIAL MUSIC

*“Peaceful Blessing”*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST LESSON (*p. 640—OT*)

Isaiah 11:1-9

\*HYMN OF INVITATION # 347

*“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”*

SECOND LESSON (*p. 865—OT*)

Micah 5:2-5a

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.**

### OFFERTORY

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

**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.**

## GOING OUT TO SERVE

\*HYMN OF BLESSING # 140

*“Once in Royal David’s City”*

\*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.

**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.

## CALLED MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

There will be a **Called Meeting of the Congregation right after worship.** We will elect officers (elders) for the Class of 2026. The nominees being presented by the Nominating Committee are Matt Cary, Betsy Hagelberg, and Christian Zembower.

**Please join us in the Fellowship Hall after worship for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Potluck!**

**Session** is meeting this afternoon. Please be in prayer for our church leaders.

## UPCOMING EVENTS IN DECEMBER:

**Christmas Caroling at Covenant:** This year we will meet on **Sunday, December 17 at 5:00 PM** in the church library. (Yes, this is a change from years past when we were outside, but being inside where we can see the music and stay warm seemed like a good change.) Bring family and friends and join in for singing as many Christmas carols as we want to! Hot chocolate and sweet treats will be provided. Your presence will contribute to the warm fellowship.

**Longest Night Service:** Covenant will hold a Longest Night service on Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 5:30 PM. The tradition of the Longest Night comes from an acknowledgement that though the holidays are full of joy and celebration, for some this can also be a difficult season of grief. This quiet and more contemplative service of prayer offers space to honor our laments this Advent as we wait for Christ to come as the Light of the World.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:** Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. We will have our regular service at 11 AM and our Candlelight Service, which will include Communion, at 5:00 PM. We hope you will join us for both services.

## TODAY AT COVENANT

Liturgist: Ron Smith

Accompanist: Jeremi Lukanus

## CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Maggie Rust

Music Director: Katelyn Gabler

AV Tech: Harvey Trueblood

Office Administrator: Tina Simon

Admin. Assistant: Artie David