

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

"We Three Kings"

D. Edwards

SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME

GREETING

Advent means coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 72:1-7, 17-18

Give the king your justice, O God,

and your righteousness to a king's son.

May he judge your people with righteousness,

and your poor with justice.

May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,

and the hills, in righteousness.

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,

give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

May he live while the sun endures,

and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,

like showers that water the earth.

In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound,

until the moon is no more.

May his name endure forever,

his fame continue as long as the sun.

May all nations be blessed in him;

may they pronounce him happy.

**Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.**

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Congregation:

"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."

Reader: We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
As the Lord has promised, in days to come...

(The candle is lit.)

Reader: The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,

the leopard shall lie down with the kid,

the calf and the lion and the fatling will lie down together,

and a little child shall lead them.

All: Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

Congregation:

"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."

OPENING PRAYER

*HYMN OF PRAISE # 106

"Prepare the Way, O Zion"

CALL TO CONFESSION

(Few moments of silent prayer)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of the future,

you are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule.

We confess that we have not expected your kingdom,

for we live casual lives, ignoring your promised judgment.

We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors,

abuse the earth, and refuse your justice and peace.

In your mercy, forgive us.

Grant us wisdom to welcome your way,

and to seek things that will endure

when Christ comes to judge the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The wilderness will rejoice; the dry land will blossom.

The people of God will return with joy and singing.

Friends, trust the good news of the gospel,

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and made new!

People: **Thanks be to God!**

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 152, vs. 4

"What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright"

O Jesus, while the star of grace

impels us on to seek your face,

let not our slothful hearts refuse

the guidance of your light to use.

*THE PEACE

Leader: As people forgiven by the abundant grace of God,

we are at peace with God,

and we are called to live in peace with one another.

The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

CHILDREN'S EARTHCARE MOMENT

Ann Freeman

****Gateway to Worship** *(Children can meet the Gateway leader in the back of the sanctuary near the entrance doors.)*

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT READING *(p. 640—OT)*

Isaiah 11:1-10

GOSPEL READING *(p. 2—NT)*

Matthew 3:1-12

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON Advent According to Matthew

Dr. Jeffrey Miller

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN OF CONTEMPLATION # 82 *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"*

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God of love, you come to us in the smile of a baby

who had only a manger for a bed.

We see you in the joyful play of children.

We hear you in the retelling of the stories

of Mary, Joseph and the baby,

and the community of believers who followed them.

We feel your awesome presence as we sing carols,

walk through the stillness of winter snow,

and experience the smells of love

in the baking of special Christmas confections.

(continued)

Thank you, glorious God, for coming to us,

taking on our limitations and humanity,

so that we may learn more fully

about your wondrous love for us. Amen.

Nan Jenkins found in *Reformed Worship*, 2001, p 124.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God:

who welcomes our laughter and moves us to wonder...

We believe in Christ:

who welcomes our questions and loves us to trust...

We believe in Spirit:

who welcomes our doubts and inspires us to faith.

This we believe! Amen!

Jeffrey S. Gaines found in *Reformed Worship*, 2001, p 90.

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.

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Offering

Offertory

"Twas In the Moon of Wintertime"

J. Krug

*Doxology # 606

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise God, all creatures here below;

praise God above, ye heavenly host;

praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

GOING OUT TO SERVE

*HYMN OF SENDING # 93

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

"Ding, Dong! Merrily On High"

M. Bedford

*Please rise, in body or spirit.

Notes: *All music reprinted under CCLI license*

Words on front of bulletin are from Jan L. Richardson in her book, *In Wisdom's Path*

****Gateway to Worship** is our worship program for 4-year-olds through second graders. The Gateway leader will take the children to their classroom in the Fellowship Hall after the Congregational Response.

Large-print Hymnals are available in the back of the sanctuary; and **large-print bulletins** are on the table in the Narthex.

Hearing Assist Devices are located in the rear of the Sanctuary. Disposable ear buds are available for your convenience. They can be disposed after use in the labeled slot. **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. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to join with us in service to Christ.

Unfortunately, the Jewelry Sale benefitting The River Ministry previously scheduled for this afternoon at Cynthia's home had to be canceled due to her father's declining health. At the time this bulletin was printed, her father had been placed into hospice care at Princeton. Please keep Cynthia and her family in your prayers.

AFTER CHURCH LUNCH – TODAY!

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall immediately after worship for After Church Lunch. We look forward to sharing this fellowship opportunity with you!

This morning we again welcome Dr. Jeffrey Miller. Jeff is Professor of Bible at Milligan College. He holds bachelor's degrees in pastoral ministry and church music. He has earned a master's of divinity from Emmanuel Christian Seminary and a doctorate in biblical interpretation from The University of Denver. He is editor of *Priscilla Papers*, a journal that promotes women in Christian leadership. He has held ministries in Nebraska, Tennessee, and Colorado. Jeff and his wife, Dana, have two married daughters and four grandchildren. Jeff's interests include playing the piano and hiking in the Appalachian Mountains.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA NEXT SUNDAY, DEC. 15!

Have you heard the sound of beautiful music filling the halls of Covenant? Our choral department is working hard to support our Sunday services with anthems that will sing in your heart throughout the week--anthems of joy, anthems of hope, anthems of the sustaining love of the Creator.

Have you heard that we are now learning a Christmas Cantata to be presented on December 15 at our 11:00 am service? In this Cantata, composed by Joel Raney, the texts of familiar Christmas carols are set to beloved Irish and Welch folk tunes. From its ethereal beginning to its stirring conclusion, you will not want to miss this imaginative and inspiring work!

Have you heard that all are welcome at Covenant Presbyterian Church and we are inviting all our neighbors and families to hear our musical offering? Make a list, invite everyone you know, plan to attend this beautiful Cantata! You'll be glad you did!

MESSAGE FROM THE ADMIN & BUDGET COMMITTEE

We would like to thank everyone who turned in a pledge card for 2020. It is from your pledges that the Admin & Budget Committee and Session are able to develop our budget for the coming year. Our budget is more than numbers on a page, it is a mission document that states clearly what we plan to accomplish and who we, at Covenant, pledge to be in the year to come. Help us to continue doing the works of love and mercy in which we are currently involved. Help us to go further in expanding our work here and beyond. Help us to look to the future with the confidence to dream big for what God can do in and through Covenant Presbyterian Church. We're in this work together!

It is very important that we receive your pledge information soon to be able to complete the process of developing the budget for 2020. Pledge cards and envelopes can be found in the pews or on the table in the Narthex. You are invited to place your pledge card in the offering plate this morning, or you can bring it by the church office. (Remember that as year-end approaches, your tithes and offerings will be credited to your 2019 Statement of Giving if made before December 31st. If you have questions, please contact Gary Smith or the church office.) Thank you for your commitment and generosity in all that we do together at Covenant.

ONLINE GIVING!

Online Giving is available through our website at cpcjc.org. Getting started is easy—just click on the **Online Giving** link. This is a convenient and safe way to make a one-time or recurring donation. *If you have any questions, please contact Tina in the church office.*

Covenant Presbyterian Church has been certified as a **Recovery Congregation** by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.



PW CIRCLES IN DECEMBER

- **Joy Circle:** Tuesday, December 10 at 6:00p at the home of Anne Smith.
- **Friendship Circle:** Wednesday, December 11 at Noon in the Library.
- **Red Tent Circle:** Thursday, December 12 at 7:00p at BJ King's.

TODAY AT COVENANT

Morning Greeter: Jim Starr
Liturgy prepared and arranged by: the Rev. Pat Willard
Liturgist: Ann Freeman
Section Leader: Shawn Hale
Nursery: Julie Wood
Gateway: John Deaton

Covenant Handbell Choir

CHURCH STAFF

Music Director: Jessica Siple
Office Administrator: Tina Simon
Administrative Assistant: Anne Webb
Custodian: Marie Britt
Nursery Worker: Jeanne Gamble

PRAYER CONCERNS

Week of December 8—14, 2019.

John Graham Smith, Cynthia's father, who is in hospice care.
CB Willis, who is back home!
Liz Kuehling, Lauri Zembower's mother in Colorado, who is recovering from back surgery.
Steve Jones, a dear friend of Sharon Fuhrman, who has been diagnosed with kidney cancer.
Bob & Betty Thompson, Phyllis' parents.
Michael & Karen, missionaries who are stationed in Afghanistan.

Please remember those in our congregation who are homebound and unable to join us regularly in worship:

Vi Block, Jeter Collins, Lattie Collins, Mary Derouen,
Helen Fletcher, Glay Hood, Barbara Quisenberry

Join us in continually lifting up in prayer our mission co-workers:

Bob & Kristi Rice: South Sudan
Jon & Kathy Christiansen: Zimbabwe

and Ministries of the Presbytery:

UKirk ETSU (Pres. Campus Ministry)
Holston Presbytery Camp



In the event of emergency, be aware that our Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Unit is located on the wall outside the front door of the Church Office.



Covenant Presbyterian Church is proud to have received the designation of being an Earth Care Congregation, through the PC(USA).

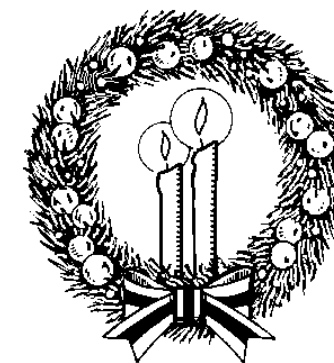
MISSION STATEMENT

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 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

603 Sunset Drive, Johnson City, TN 37604
423-282-5324 ♦ fax 423-282-5346 ♦ office@cpcjc.org ♦ www.cpcjc.org
Facebook: "Covenant Presbyterian Church (Johnson City, TN.)"
Instagram: @covenantpcjohnsoncity

DECEMBER 8, 2019



2nd Sunday in Advent

in the cave of our hearts

in the fabric of our lives

in the soul of our earth

you continue, O God, to be born!

THE ELDERS FUND

Each year we are given the opportunity to provide monetary gifts to the **Elders Fund**, the majority of which is used for Christmas honoraria for the people on our fine staff. Their names and positions are listed in each Sunday's bulletin. Our congregation has always been very generous in providing donations to the fund. Our members are appreciative of the dedication of our staff members, and this is a wonderful opportunity to show that appreciation. We ask that each member consider making their donations as generous as possible and, since it would be helpful for the staff to have their gifts well before Christmas, to make their donations **by December 15**. Just mark "Elders Fund" on your checks and place in the offering plate or send to the church office. We know we can count on our membership, as we always have. Thanks so much.

ALL CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY!

LET'S CELEBRATE TOGETHER THE BIRTH OF JESUS!

Saturday, December 14th from 1 – 4 PM

(or when we finish the White Elephant Gift Exchange)

at the home of Dave and Julie Wood

179 Glass Road, J.C, 37615

**Food, Fellowship, Singing Carols, Storytelling by Ed Wolff,
and the afore-mentioned White Elephant Gift Exchange.**

(Bring a wrapped gift of \$0 - \$10 for the exchange, one per person. Couples may participate as a duo or individually.)

POTLUCK:

Dave & Julie will provide a ham and drinks.

Please bring any other favorite dishes and/or desserts.

RSVP by Wed., Dec. 11 woodfamily5@bellsouth.net

Questions? Call Julie at 904 891-1922.

Please offer rides to those who don't drive and please carpool!

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

Join us **Saturday, December 21st at 7:00 PM** for a holiday movie surprise. Bring your favorite holiday goodies to share and be ready for a good time! We'll see you there, and remember, come early to get the best seat!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Join us for this special service on **Tuesday, December 24**. There will be a time of **refreshments at 4:45 PM**, with the **service starting at 5:30 PM**.

THE MITTEN TREE

The Mitten Tree, which is set up in the hallway across from the church office, will stay up through Christmas. Our goal is to provide hats, scarves, and mittens for children in our area who need a little warmth during the winter. You are invited to continue to "decorate" the Mitten Tree throughout the Advent season. The Mission committee will distribute the items to Rise Up! for Kids before the end of the year.

2019 ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

For many of us, Christmas has become commercialized to the point that we feel pressure to buy and consume. But what do we buy a friend or loved one who has few needs or wants? Last month, Covenant sponsored its **26th Alternative Christmas Gift Fair**. The *2019 Alternative Christmas Giving Guide* can be found on the table in the Narthex and gives you a chance to learn more about worthy organizations and how we as a Christian community can become partners in the work of the church. The mission organizations featured this year are **Family Promise of Greater Johnson City, The River, Holston Presbytery Camp, and World Missions (BABMOC, Bob & Kristi Rice, and Jon & Kathy Christiansen)**. If you missed the Alternative Gift Fair, you can still participate throughout Advent by filling out the enclosed **Giving Form** and dropping it in the offering plate along with your check (*made out to "Covenant Presbyterian Church"*).

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

Today, Dec. 8

9:30a – 9:55a

9:45a/10:00a

9:45a/10:00a

11:00a

Following worship

1:30p

2:00p – 4:00p

7:00p

Monday, Dec. 9

1:00p

6:00p

7:00p

Tuesday, Dec. 10

2:00p – 4:00p

6:00p

7:00p

Wednesday, Dec. 11

Noon

6:30p

7:00p

Thursday, Dec. 12

8:00a

Noon

5:30p

7:00p

Friday, Dec. 13

Noon

1:30p

6:30p

Saturday, Dec. 14

9:30a – 11:30a

12:30p – 3:00p

1:00p – 4:00p

Weekly Prayer Group

Sunday School

Chancel Choir/Ensemble Practice

Worship Service

After Church Lunch

Session Meeting

Angel Tree gift pickup

N.A. Meeting

A Few Preachers Having Lunch

Black/White Dialogue at Carver

NarAnon Meeting

Games in the Library

Joy Circle

Al-Anon Meeting

Friendship Circle

Chancel Choir

N.A. Meeting

Men's Bible Study

Al-Anon Meeting

Cub Scouts

Red Tent Circle

CoDA Meeting

N.A. Meeting

Al-Anon Meeting

Chancel Choir

CCL Meeting

All Church Christmas Party!