

PRELUDE

SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME

Kathi Cary

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Don Coble

GREETING

Advent means coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

How lovely, Lord, how lovely
to worship in this Holy place.
**How lovely, Lord, how lovely
to walk with you all of our days.**

How lovely, Lord, how lovely
to live as your people on earth.
**How lovely, Lord, how lovely
to be strengthened and blessed by your grace.**

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Don & Michele Hart & Family

Congregation:

***“O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai’s height
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.*”**

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 wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

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

Congregation:

***“O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai’s height
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.*”**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”

OPENING PRAYER

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN # 140**

“Once in Royal David’s City”

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.
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.**

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

***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 *“Infant Holy/He Is Born”* arr. Brant Adams

***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**

CANTATA

“Have You Heard?” By Joel Ramey

“Christmas Day in the Morning”

“Come Messiah, Come Emmanuel”

“Have You Heard?”

“Celtic Christmas Lullaby”

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

“O Holy Night”

“Come and Adore Him”

“Wexford Carol/Finale”

***RECESSIONAL HYMN # 133** *“O Come, All Ye Faithful”*

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE**

*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.

The Cantata presented today by the Covenant Presbyterian Church Choir is lovingly dedicated to the memory of Janet Allison Powell.

Please join us in the library following the worship service for a time of refreshments and fellowship.

The congregation expresses its deepest sympathy to Cynthia Erdei in the death of her father, John Graham Smith, on December 9, 2019.

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**.

2019 ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

It’s not too late! 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. If you missed the Alternative Gift Fair, you can still participate throughout Advent by filling out the enclosed **Giving Form** (green) and dropping it in the offering plate along with your check (*made out to “Covenant Presbyterian Church”*).

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.

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.

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.

UPDATE: The first load of mittens, hats & scarves has been delivered to Rise Up! for Kids! (Thank you, Melanie.) Let's fill up the tree again!!

THANK YOU, COVENANT CONGREGATION

I want to thank this wonderful congregation for the friendship and the kindness you have shown me all these years (30+). It has meant so much to me. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas!

Love,
Marie Britt

SUPPLIES FOR MELTING POT

The Melting Pot is in need of some **durable dish rags**. If you are able to bring some, please place them in the Good Samaritan grocery baskets in the hallway. Thanks!!

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.*

NAME TAGS

Please wear your name tag to make it easier to get to know each other. **If you don't find one with your name on it, please let us know!**

TODAY AT COVENANT

Morning Greeter: Jim Starr
Liturgy prepared and arranged by: the Rev. Pat Willard
Liturgist: Gary Smith
Section Leader: Shawn Hale
Soloists: Liz Dollar and Shawn Hale
Nursery: David/Sharon Miller
Gateway: Jane Deaton

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 15—21, 2019.

Alice Schmitz, Bill Hyers' sister, who is in hospice for pain management following a hip fracture and surgery.
Cynthia Erdei, who is home, recovering from surgery.
Elaine Warehime, who had surgery on Thursday.
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).

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



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

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

DECEMBER 15, 2019



**3rd 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!

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

2019 Christmas Joy Offering—next Sunday, Dec. 22

Advent is a time of anticipation and promise, of thanksgiving and celebration. Every year, we pour out our gratitude by giving to the Christmas Joy Offering which supports church workers and their families in need and nurtures the promise of our future racial ethnic leaders. Like the shepherds, we hear the news and we are stunned: in Jesus, God has come among us as one of us, to accompany us and transform us. As we open our hearts to God's love in Jesus, we find it will not be contained but yearns to be shared with others. One of the ways Presbyterians have traditionally responded to the news of God's great gift is by sharing our own gifts through the Christmas Joy Offering. The Offering supports racial ethnic education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, where students develop their gifts and find their calling. It also helps families of active and retired church workers meet unexpected needs through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. As we celebrate this good news of great joy – that a Savior has been born to us – may our gifts bear joyful witness to God's uncontainable love.

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

Today, Dec. 15

9:30a – 9:55a	Weekly Prayer Group
9:45a	Called Session Meeting
9:45a/10:00a	Sunday School
9:45a/10:00a	Chancel Choir/Ensemble Practice
11:00a	Worship Service: Christmas Cantata
7:00p	N.A. Meeting

Monday, Dec. 16 – COURIER DEADLINE

6:00p	Hermitage Manor Gathering (F'ship Hall)
7:00p	NarAnon Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 17

2:00p – 4:00p	Games in the Library
7:00p	Al-Anon Meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 18

7:00p	Chancel Choir
7:00p	N.A. Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 19

8:00a	Men's Bible Study
Noon	Al-Anon Meeting
5:30p	Cub Scouts

Friday, Dec. 20

Noon	CoDA Meeting
1:30p	N.A. Meeting
6:30p	Al-Anon Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 21

7:00p	Saturday Night at the Movies (Library)
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