

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE

“What Child Is This”

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Prepare the way of the Lord!

his way is straight and true.

Christ comes like a refiner's fire,

to burn away our impurities.

Christ comes like the fuller's soap,

to cleanse us from our sins.

Christ comes as a newborn baby

and yet he is a king.

Christ comes to call us,

as John the Baptist was called,

to speak against the false values of this world,

and to stand for the Kingdom of God.

Prepare the way of the Lord!

Come and worship! Come and wait!

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

David & Sharon Miller

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. Advent means coming. We are preparing ourselves for the days when the nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. [Isa. 2:4]

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

(The first candle is re-lit.)

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. [Isa. 11:6]

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

(The second candle is re-lit.)

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. [Isa. 35:1]

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

(The third candle is lit.)

HYMN # 92 (vs. 3)

“While We Are Waiting, Come”

Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Bill Hyers

GREETING

Advent means coming. Christ is coming.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*HYMN OF PRAISE # 110

“Love Has Come”

CALL TO CONFESSION

(Few moments of silent prayer)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Living God,

visit us in this season with your Holy Spirit

that we may get carried away

(continued)

that we may do

obedient things that we have not yet done,

kingdom things that we did not think we had in us,

neighbor things from which we cringe.

May you act in us,

through us,

beyond us,

more than we imagine,

because newness is on its way among us. Amen.

A prayer of Walter Brueggemann from the Advent devotional,

CELEBRATING ABUNDANCE

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, believe the good news! In Jesus Christ you are not only forgiven, you are made new so that God can act through you.

Thanks be to God!

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 82 v. 1 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

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 earth thou art;

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

*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.

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Please take a moment to share the peace of Christ
with those near you.

****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 *(pg. 889—OT)*

Malachi 3:1-4

NEW TESTAMENT READING *(pg. 196—NT)*

Philippians 1:3-11

GOSPEL READING *(pg. 60—NT)*

Luke 3:1-6

SERMON

While We Are Waiting

Rev. Paul Helphinstine

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN OF CONTEMPLATION # 96

“On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry”

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from A Brief Statement of Faith

In life and in death we belong to God.

Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit,

we trust in the one true God, the Holy One of Israel,

whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God;

preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,

teaching by word and deed and blessing the children,

healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,

eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,

and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

(continued)

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,

Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain

and giving his life for the sins of the world.

God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life,

breaking the power of sin and evil,

delivering us from death to life eternal.

With believers in every time and place,

we rejoice that nothing in life or in death

can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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 Anthem *“Of the Father's Love Begotten”* Arr. Wohigemuth

*Doxology # 606

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

Praise God, from whom all blessing flow;

praise him, all creatures here below;

praise him above, ye heavenly host;

praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

GOING OUT TO SERVE

*HYMN OF SENDING # 132

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

*For those who are able, please stand.

NOTES: All music reprinted under CCLI license

****Gateway to Worship** is our worship program for 4-year olds through first 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.

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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.

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

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held on **Monday, December 24 at 5:30 PM.** Please join us for this special service.

2018 ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

It's not too late! The *2018 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 five mission organizations featured this year are **Family Promise of Greater Johnson City, The River, Holston Presbytery Camp, Bear Another's Burdens Ministry of Christ (BABMOC), and Frontera de Cristo.** 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"*).

GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

2018 Christmas Joy Offering—Sunday, December 23

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.

FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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 16.** 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.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS FOR THE WINTER SEASON

Monday: 1:00p – 4:00p, Tuesday – Thursday: 9:00a – 4:00p

The office is closed on Friday.

Messages may be left on the church voicemail at any time, 423-282-5324. Press "2" to leave a message for Tina; press "1" for Paul.

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!**

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



TODAY AT COVENANT

Morning Greeter:
Liturgy written by:
Liturgist:
Violinist:
Nursery:

Jim Starr
the Rev. Pat Willard
David Miller
Tyler Rosselot
Emily Helphinstine

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor:
Music Director:
Office Administrator:
Administrative Assistant:
Custodian:
Nursery Worker:

Rev. Paul Helphinstine
Jessica Siple
Tina Simon
Shirley Barrett
Marie Britt
Jeanne Gamble

PRAYER CONCERNS

If you have placed someone on the prayer list, please contact the office with a brief update regarding the name you submitted or let us know that it's ok to remove that name from the list. Updates can be submitted on a weekly basis or, if the need is singular and temporary, the name and the concern will remain on the list for four (4) weeks. This will help us pray more specifically and be more intentional in our prayers for one another. Thank you.

Week of December 16—22, 2018.

Ivy Finn, 2-mo. old daughter of friends of Dave & Julie Wood, who has a severe heart condition and has had 3 surgeries so far.
Reg Murphy, who was in the hospital for a few days but is home now, recovering.
CB Willis, who is at NHC for rehab.
Lori Simon, Tina's sister, who had gamma knife surgery for 2 new brain tumors on Monday, Dec. 10. Follow-up scan will be in 3 months.
Bob Hart, who has been ill and is asking for prayer to regain his energy.
Kendall Harris, who is undergoing treatment for his blood condition.

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

Vi Block, Butch Carr, Jeter Collins, Lattie Collins,
Mary Derouen, Helen Fletcher, Barbara Quisenberry

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

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



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 16, 2018

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Advent

*A Season of Hope
& Expectation*

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Merciful God,
you sent your messengers the prophets
to preach repentance
and prepare the way for our salvation.
Give us grace to heed their call
and forsake our sins,
that we may greet with joy
the coming of Jesus Christ our redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

NOTES ABOUT YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

Here are just a few reminders as you consider your year-end contributions to the church.

If possible, please consider fulfilling your “2018” Pledge. To those who have made your 2019 Pledge, thank you for supporting the church and its mission.

If you are planning on giving a contribution of stock, please have a broker statement in the Church Office no later than December 31, 2018, for the gift to be included as a “2018” contribution.

All donations must be delivered or mailed (and postmarked) on or before December 31, 2018 in order to receive a charitable tax donation for “2018”.

Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2019 will not qualify for a charitable tax contribution deduction in 2018.

However, checks that are written, mailed and postmarked in “2018” will be deductible in 2018 even if not received by the church until 2019.

Thank you for your generous gifts to the church,

The Stewardship Committee

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. All of the items will be distributed before the end of the year.

GOOD SAMARITAN FOOD OFFERING—DECEMBER 23

The **Good Sam Food Offering** will be received on **Sunday, Dec. 23**. This month they need: **Mac 'n Cheese!**

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.*

NEW ADDRESS:

Bob & Betty Maletich
2101 Christian Lane, #202
Johnson City, TN 37601

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

Today, Dec. 16

9:30a – 9:55a

10:00a

11:00a

12:30p

2:00p – 4:00p

1:30p – 5:00p

7:00p

Monday, Dec. 17

COURIER DEADLINE

8:30a

7:00p

Tuesday, Dec. 18

8:30a

1:00p – 2:00p

7:00p

Wednesday, Dec. 19

6:30p

7:00p

7:00p

Thursday, Dec. 20

8:00a

Noon

2:00p – 4:00p

Friday, Dec. 21

Noon

1:30p

Weekly Prayer Group

Sunday School

Worship Service

Mission Committee Meeting

Angel Tree Gift Pickup

N.A. Regional Meetings

N.A. Meeting

N.A. Meeting

NarAnon Meeting

N.A. Meeting

Cards for Angel Tree

Al-Anon Meeting

SAFG

Chancel Choir

N.A. Meeting

Men's Bible Study

Al-Anon Meeting

Bridge & Games in the Library

CoDA Meeting

N.A. Meeting