

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

*CONGREGATIONAL CAROL SING (*see insert—sing vs. 1 of each hymn*)

“Away in a Manger” (# 115)

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” (# 119)

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” (# 121)

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” (# 143)

“The First Nowell” (# 147)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, singing of grace.

We come to sing in gratitude.

Come, dancing with joy.

We came with dancing hearts.

As Mary once sang God's praises,

so now we come to worship and praise

in honor of the babe to be born in Bethlehem.

Let us sing and dance and worship

with hope for today and for the future.

OPENING PRAYER

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

The Long Family

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 re-lit.)

The Lord will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel (God is with us). [Isa. 7:14b]

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

(The fourth candle is lit.)

HYMN # 92

“While We Are Waiting, Come”

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.

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

With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.

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

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

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

GREETING

Advent means coming. Christ is coming.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*HYMN OF PRAISE # 112 (vs. 1, 2, 4) “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing”

CALL TO CONFESSION

(Few moments of silent prayer)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of a new day,

you call us to overcome evil with good,

to live a different kind of life

than the one offered to us by the world.

During this time of waiting, stir anew our commitment

to generosity and hospitality and forgiveness,

that we might be people of hope and healing

in the neighborhoods of our lives. Amen.

A prayer of Walter Brueggemann from the Advent devotional,

CELEBRATING ABUNDANCE

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

O magnify the Lord! Rejoice in God, our Savior! For God looks with favor on our lowliness, lifts us over the difficult places, and restores us to fullness of life in Christ Jesus. Arise, take heart, we are forgiven and made new!

Thanks be to God!

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 82 v. 2 “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,

Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;

By thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

*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.**

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. 865—OT)

Micah 5:2-5a

ANTHEM “Sing An Alleluia”

Joseph Martin

GOSPEL READING (pg. 57—NT)

Luke 1:39-55

SERMON Mary: Dangerous Prophet, Rev. Paul Helphinstine
Unshakable Faith

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN OF CONTEMPLATION # 98 (vs. 1, 2, 4 & 6)

“To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary”

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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

“Fum, Fum, Fum” and “Silent Night”

*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 # 134

“Joy to the World”

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE *Hallelujah Chorus from “The Messiah”* G.F. Handel

*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.*

*Please pray with the Powell family as they worship today
at Janet's home church in Rose Hill, NC and at the inurnment service
for her this afternoon at Rockfish Cemetery in Wallace.*

2018 CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

This morning we will receive the **CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING**. This offering supports the education of students at Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges and helps families of active and retired church workers in need through the assistance programs of the Board of Pensions. Please give generously.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE—DEC. 24

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be held tomorrow evening. **Our pre-service music will begin at 5:00 PM.** Seasonal music will be presented by bells, members of the choir and invited guests. Please plan to attend this special event before our candle lighting service, which begins at 5:30 PM.

2018 ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

It's not too late! 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"*) 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.**

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 by Dec. 31st 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.

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

If you are a member or a regular visitor, or even if you have just started coming to Covenant, you **most likely** have a name badge hanging on the wall in the Narthex. We're asking **everyone** to wear their name tags while at the church 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!**

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.

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: Jim Starr
Liturgy written by: the Rev. Pat Willard
Covenant Young Musicians

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Paul Helphinstine
Music Director: Jessica Siple
Office Administrator: Tina Simon
Administrative Assistant: Shirley Barrett
Custodian: Marie Britt
Nursery Worker: 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 23—29, 2018.

Vi Block, who has been in rehab for blood clots in her legs.
Carrie Beth Swanay, Betsy Moakler's cousin, whose cancer is spreading. At only 55 years old, she has had to retire from her position as a professor at Milligan.
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.
Ron Smith, who is having neck spasms and prayers for he and Pat, who are traveling for the holidays.
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, CB Willis

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 23, 2018
4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Advent
**A Season of Hope
& Expectation**

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

God of grace,
your eternal Word took flesh among us
when Mary placed her life at the service of your will.
Prepare our hearts for his coming again;
keep us steadfast in hope and faithful in service,
that we may receive the coming of his kingdom
for the sake of Jesus Christ, ruler of all,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

NOTES & SCHEDULE CHANGES

The Church office will be closed on **Tuesday, December 25**.

The **Men's Bible Study will not meet on Dec. 27**. Their next meeting will be on January 3, 2019, from 8 – 9 AM. Please join them!

Note to Committee Chairs: 2018 Committee Reports for the Annual Report need to be e-mailed to Tina by January 4, 2019. (*Reports from 2017 have been e-mailed to you.*) Questions? Ask Tina.

EARTH CARE CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

Covenant Presbyterian Church is a certified Earth Care Congregation. As part of our certification, we provide Earth Care Children's Moments once a month during worship. If you are interested in offering a small Earth Care moment to our young ones in 2019, please contact the church office at office@cpcjc.org, or speak to Ann Freeman.



Members & Regular Visitors: Your **2019 Offering Envelopes** are on the table in the Narthex. If you would like a box of envelopes for 2019, but don't see your name, please call or e-mail Tina in the church office! (*Several of you have told me that you don't need envelopes this year. If they are on the table, I apologize. Please mark an "X" through your name and I will remove them. Thanks, Tina.*)



COLD & FLU SEASON

There are **Purell hand sanitizers** located throughout the building. These were given to the church as a donation to help reduce the spread of illness during cold and flu season. So shake hands (or "fist bump") all you like, just stop by one of the hand sanitizers on your way out!

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

Today, Dec. 23

9:30a – 9:55a	Weekly Prayer Group
10:00a	Sunday School
11:00a	Worship Service
5:00p	Lessons & Carols at St. John's
7:00p	N.A. Meeting

Monday, Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve

8:30a	N.A. Meeting
5:00p	UKirk Meal
5:00p	Pre-Service Music
5:30p	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
7:00p	NarAnon Meeting

Tuesday, Dec. 25 – Christmas Day

Church Office Closed

8:30a	N.A. Meeting
7:00p	Al-Anon Meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 26

6:30p	SAFG
7:00p	N.A. Meeting

Thursday, Dec. 27

NO Men's Bible Study this week

Noon	Al-Anon Meeting
2:00p – 4:00p	Bridge & Games in the Library

Friday, Dec. 28

Noon	CoDA Meeting
1:30p	N.A. Meeting (Library)
5:00p	Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

Saturday, Dec. 29

1:00p	Wedding of Lynnea & David
	Reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall