

# WILLIAMSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 15, 2024

# PRAYER FOR PREPARATION

Merciful God, you come into our midst longing for communion with us, becoming one of us. Break our resistance to life with you, show us the path toward just relations, and bring us into your unimaginable peace; in Jesus' name. Amen.

# THE GATHERING PREPARING TO HEAR THE WORD

#### PASTORAL GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH Ken Keating

MINUTE FOR MISSION: Christmas Joy Offering Judy Austin

PRELUDE Once in Royal David's City arr. Bechtler

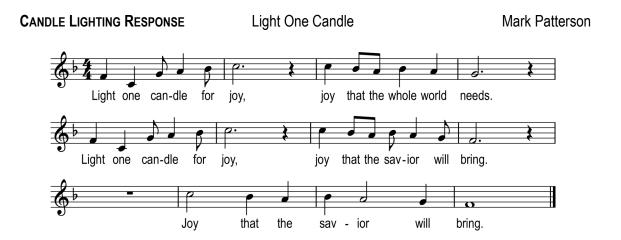
String Ensemble

<sup>\*</sup> Please rise in body or spirit.

The people's responses are in **bold type**.

#### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Joy can be hard to find in the divided and divisive world we live in. Maybe nothing really matters, maybe we can't make a difference, but maybe just maybe the seeds that were planted long ago will spring forth new life. Maybe we will find ourselves laughing at our shared experiences, and we will find communion brighter than the stars full of joy with one another. So we light this candle of Joy, knowing that Hope and Peace will guide us to solutions to problems, and we will celebrate all that grows from just a single tiny seed.



# **PRAYER OF ADORATION (unison)**

Great God of adventure and Advent, come again to our lives and to our church. Come to us in these days of pain, sorrow and warring. Come to us with new strength and vitality. Help us in these days of expectation and preparation to get ready for the amazing arrival again of the Baby of Bethlehem. Guide us as we move forward to these journeying days and hours of getting ready; in the name of Jesus, born for us long ago and again now. Amen.

# Comfort, Comfort Now My People 87



This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1–5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

#### \*CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts through our lives and relationships. But God is able to restore us. Like water coursing through a desert, the waters of baptism flow through us, reminding us that we belong to God and are raised to new life.

# \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O Holy God of Promise, we so often place our trust in the things we can see, touch and easily believe. But you did not ask us to believe what is easy, you have asked us to believe what is true! Forgive us, Holy One, when we doubt the ways you work. Forgive us when we find it hard to believe an ancient story. Forgive us we question how you chose to enter the world, born as one of us. Forgive our lack of faith and belief in ways which seem so impossible to believe. Help us to look in faith, open our belief, and set aside our doubts that you sent your Son, born of a virgin — the One who has come to set us all free. We offer these prayers in the name of your Son, Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.

#### \*A TIME FOR SILENT PRAYER



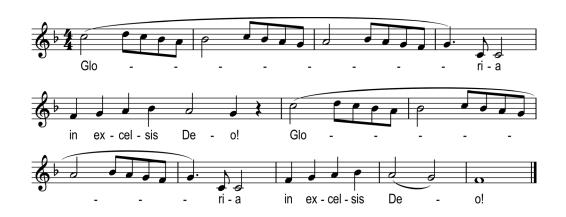
#### \*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us! Even if we have gone out in tears, God brings us home shouting for joy. Thanks be to God: we are forgiven!

\*GLORIA

Angels We Have Heard on High

**GLORIA** 



(11:00) At this time any and all children through the 5th grade are invited to come forward for Sharing Faith with Children.

(11:00) SHARING FAITH WITH CHILDREN

Jim Kirkpatrick

# THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

Holy Word, you are our guide and ultimate assurance. By your Holy Spirit, open us to your promises and commands and shower us again with the fire of your love. Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Luke 3:7-18 Paraphrase (9:30) Ken Keating

(11:00) Jackson Elton

Crowds of people came to the desert to be baptized by John the Baptist.

Sometimes he would yell, "You are just a pile of snakes! If you want to turn your lives around, let me see you do it. Don't think just because Abraham was your ancestor you'll get away easy. God could turn these rocks into the children of Abraham. You're nothing special."

The crowds said, "What do you think we should do then?"

John said, "If you have any extra coat, give it to someone who has no coat at all. If you have plenty of food, share it."

Tax collectors, who used to cheat people, would come to be baptized. "What should we do, John?"

"John would say, "Don't collect more money from people than you should"

Soldiers would say, "And what about us? How do we turn our lives around?"

John would tell them, "Don't squeeze money out of people just because you have power over them. Be satisfied with the money you earn."

John had filled the hearts of people full of hope. And they wondered if he might be the One they were waiting for to save them.

John made sure they knew that he was not the Messiah. "I just baptize you with water. The Messiah is much more powerful and will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. He will make things right."

That was good news to people's ears and hearts.

Paraphrase from God's Word, My Voice

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

(9:30) **PSALM 126** (unison)

(11:00) PSALM 126 - Embodying the Psalm

Children of WPC

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion. we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb. May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

**SECOND LESSON:** Isaiah 12:2-6

This is the Word of the Lord!

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

The Prophets of Advent: Joy

Pastor John E. Morgan

# RESPONDING TO THE WORD

\*Hymn 144 In the Bleak Midwinter CRANHAM

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: From A Declaration of Faith (unison)

We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child, yet born of God's power as was no other child. In the person and work of Jesus, God himself and a human life are united but not confused, distinguished but not separated. The coming of Jesus was itself the coming of God's promised rule. Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection, he brings about the relationship between God and humanity that God always intended.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (UNISON)

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.

#### **OFFERING**

Thank you for your continued faithful stewardship to WPC. May our offerings continue to help us be the light for our neighbors and our siblings in Christ all over the world. Offering envelopes can be found inside the friendship register book. We invite you to make your offering or pledge payment in one of the following ways:

- Place your offering into the plates as you exit the sanctuary.
- Visit mywpc.org/offering or scan the QR code at the right to give online
- Mail your offering to the church office at 215 Richmond Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185.



Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

# String Ensemble and Chancel Choir Ellen Peters, soprano solo

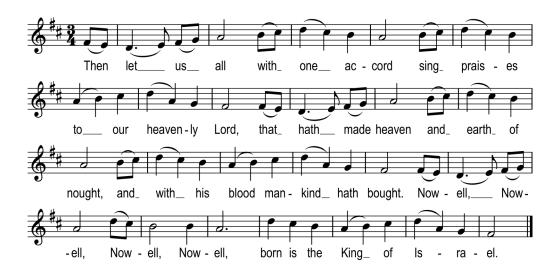
While shepherds watched their flocks by night, All seated on the ground, The angel of the Lord came down, And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread Had seized their troubled minds, "Glad tidings of great joy I bring To you and all mankind.

"To you in Bethlehem this day Is born of David's line A Savior, who is Christ the Lord; And this shall be the sign.

"The heavenly babe there you shall find, To human view displayed, All simply wrapped in swaddling clothes, And in a manger laid.

"All glory be to God on high, And to the earth be peace; To those on whom his favor rests, Goodwill shall never cease."



\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

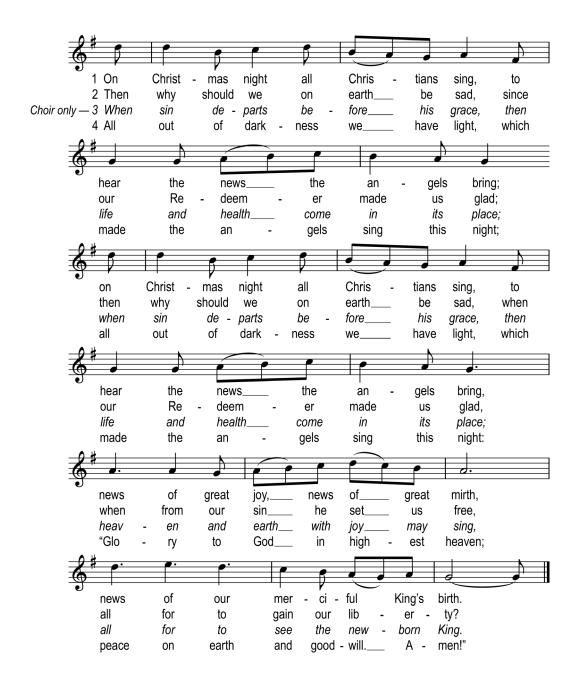
# GOING OUT TO BE THE CHURCH

#### \*Invitation and the Lord's Day Greeting

We are glad you are worshiping with us today! If you are joining us online, please remember to "sign" our online friendship register:

- Click on the "Welcome to WPC! Click here to sign the Friendship Register" banner at the top of the website page
- Visit mywpc.org/friendship or scan the QR code at the right to access the online friendship register.





#### \*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Postlude

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen / Carol of the Bells

Gert van Hoef

The service of worship concludes after the postlude. The music can be enjoyed or used as an opportunity for prayer. You may remain seated; if you wish to depart, please do so quietly and without disturbing those who choose to stay.

# >> THE CHANCEL FLOWERS ◆

On this Advent Sunday of Joy, the chancel flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Arthur G. Rodgers III, Jane and David Stabler, and in honor of Bell-Jo Rodgers, by the Stabler family.

#### >> THOSE SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY <>>

#### **PASTORS**

John E. Morgan, Pastor/Head of Staff

Pam Hrncir, Associate Pastor

# **MUSIC MINISTRY**

Chris Bechtler, Director of Music Ministries

Norman Elton, Organist

String ensemble:

Samantha Allen and Lauren Bristow, violin

William Hederer, viola

Anna Moyer, cello

Marco Sardi, bass

#### **GREETERS**

9:30 a.m. Harley Stewart

11:00 a.m. Bruce Powell and Megan Davis

# **USHERS**

9:30 a.m. Matthew Underwood, Pat Underwood, David Littell, and Julia Smith

11:00 a.m. Bob Bolstad, Ruth Cobb, Tom Moul, Donna Powell, Annie and Gabe Challener, and Haley Elton

# **LITURGISTS**

Ken Keating and Jackson Elton

# SHARING FAITH WITH CHILDREN

Jim Kirkpatrick

# **COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOSTS**

Sue Rennagel, Kathy Lykins, and Cheryl Roettger

# \*WILLIAMSBURG LANDING USHERS

**Dottie Teubner** 

# \*WINDSORMEADE USHERS

Ray Whitney

# **AUDIO AND VIDEO TECHNICIANS**

Tom Squire and John Schoenberger

<sup>\*</sup>Satellite campuses

#### **≈ CHILDREN'S STATEMENT ≪**

**Children are welcome at WPC!** We have Sunday School for all ages at 9:30 a.m. and a nursery for children ages 3 and below during both services. We also have children's worship bags and sensory objects available to be borrowed while in the building. Please ask an usher if you need assistance in locating anything.

The way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and to one another. Let them know, and let us show them, that they are at home in this house of worship. Parents, feel free to sit near the front where children can see, explain the parts of the service to them, and invite them to learn by watching and copying. And relax, God put the wiggle in children, so don't feel you have to suppress it in God's house. All are welcome!

#### >> SUPPORT FOR OUR MEMBERS <> <> <

- **Stephen Ministers.** In need of one-on-one prayer? Please look for a Stephen Minister in the Fellowship Hall or the church foyer after the morning services. They will find a private place to talk and pray with you. Just look for the blue Stephen Ministry name tags.
- Monthly grief support group meets the first Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. in room 220 on the second level. During this meeting we check in with one another and occasionally watch videos about a specific grief topic. All are welcome to attend.

#### >> PRAYER CONCERNS, JOYS, & TOUCH NOTES ◆

To share a joy or concern, please visit www.mywpc.org, select "Get Care" on the menu bar, then "Prayer Request" from the drop-down menu. Complete the form and click "Send Request" on the bottom of the form. Per your instructions, your request will be shared with our pastors, prayer chain or will be included in the worship bulletin. If the internet is not available to you, please call the church office at (757) 229-4235 with your request. The Prayer Chain Coordinator is Jo Ann Youhas (handbellringer2@gmail.com). Please notify Jo Ann when you would like to remove your name from the prayer chain.

If you are in need of a pastor after hours or on the weekend with an emergency request, please contact the Pastor-on-Call listed below for this week. To reach a Pastor during the week, please call the church office.

# Sunday, December 15 - Saturday, December 21

Pastor Pam Hrncir • phirncir@mywpc.org • 757-508-4668

# The WPC Family extends its deepest Christian sympathy and prayers to:

- · The families of WPC who have lost beloved family members or friends recently.
- Vanessa Gamble, WPC Secretary, who is recovering from an accident.

# Please pray for our sick and homebound:

- Denny Yeingst, Bob Siclari, Carol Sorensen, George Harris, Lee Beach, Clara Crumbly, Wolf Koenig, Nell Stowe, and Carole McNeel
- Lynne and Mike Savidis as Lynne recovers from neck surgery in Richmond.
- Sherry Volk's nephew and his family as they recover from a car accident.

# Please pray for those:

 Recovering from various surgeries and our sick and shut-ins who are at home or facility bound, who have family and friend concerns, affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, attending and serving in the school systems, serving our country in the military services and their families, affected by the wars in Gaza, Israel, Sudan, Lebanon and Ukraine.

#### → ANNOUNCEMENTS ✓

- The Longest Night: A Service of Comfort and Hope. With much of the focus of Christmas on preparation and celebration, we often forget that the first Christmas began with a long, difficult journey. Mary and Joseph wrestled with fear, questions, doubt, and uncertainty as they made their way to Bethlehem. It was not an easy road for them to birth new life into the world. As we make our way to Christmas, join us for a meaningful Taizé service to experience comfort and hope as we acknowledge our own loss, disappointment, and uncertainty on our journey to Bethlehem. Join us on Tuesday, Dec 17th (note this is a date change) at 3:00 PM in Stevenson Hall.
- Christmas Joy Offering. Each year at Christmas time, we share in the special offering called "Christmas Joy." Your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering provide life-giving assistance to pastors and church workers who are facing unexpected and critical financial need. It also funds schools that equip communities of color to pursue higher education and to grow in faith. In this season of hope, please prayerfully consider giving generously to this special offering. Envelopes will be available at December services. Checks may be made out to WPC with "Christmas Joy" on the memo line. You will also be able to give online at the WPC website. Thank you for your continued support of this caring mission.
- **Gift of Christmas 2024.** The Gift of Christmas is a wonderful way to experience the true spirit of Christmas giving by supporting one of the listed programs helping folks in need in our communities. When you donate to one of these programs you can receive an Angel Ornament and a card that you can give to the family member or friend you are honoring. Look for the 19 different helping programs and their details in the bulletin.

You can visit the Gift of Christmas table that will be set up in the parking lot entrance hallway each Sunday in December or call Karen Annoni\* for more information.

- WPC is decorated! Please take a few minutes to walk to the Narthex to see the beautiful creche and live tree, if this is an area you do not usually see on Sunday. Also, please look in on Stevenson Hall to see the decorations there. This is the work of approximately twenty volunteers. (The candles are all on a timer, so please don't adjust them.)
- This Sunday, December 15, is our last FISH food collection of the year. FISH currently needs turkey/ chicken gravy packets; yams; pasta; cold cereals (especially kids cereals); peanut butter and jelly; boxed macaroni and cheese; canned chicken, tuna, and beef stew; canned soups; pancake mix and syrup; shampoo; toothpaste; diapers (size 4 and 5), and laundry detergent. Please place your donations in or near the red shopping cart located by the rear entrance. The Outreach Committee thanks you for your generous participation.
- Our next New Member Orientation Luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, February 23, immediately after the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Come and enjoy great food and great conversation with members and staff as you get to know the people and ministries of WPC. If the Holy Spirit is nudging you to become a part of this church community, reach out to Pastor Pam (phr@mywpc.org) after the service.
- Harold McKeithen's "ILove to Tell the Story" sermon compilation has been reprinted, thanks to the continuing stewardship of WPC member and editor Wilford Kale. The book is available for \$15 through the church office.

**Volunteers are needed for WPC hosting of COFM Winter Homeless Shelter.** WPC will be hosting the winter homeless shelter January 12–19, 2025. WPC will staff the shelter with our own members and friends on Sunday–Monday, January 12–13; Monday–Tuesday, January 13–14; and Saturday–Sunday, January 18–19 (partner churches will staff the remaining nights). We need volunteers for the following tasks and times for the three days:

Shift 1: Check in crew from 5:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Shift 2: Dinner crew from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m..

Shift 3: Overnight crew from 8:45 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

Shift 4: Breakfast crew from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.

If you can help or have any questions, please contact Jim Winthrop\* or Joe Avellar.\*

- The Flower Calendar for 2025 has 4 Openings. They are February 16, July 6, August 3 and November 30. The Master Flower Calendar for 2025 is in the back of Stevenson Hall. Please fill in the required information by the date of your choice. Please contact Ruth Cobb\* if you require further information.
- Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign: Many members have been wondering how they can get involved in WPC's active Christian Outreach Ministry. Well, we have an opportunity for you! Join your fellow WPC members by ringing bells to spread comfort and joy to our neighbors in need. Volunteer to be a bell ringer for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign on December 18 or 21. Sign up for a one-hour shift at https://www.mywpc.org/advent/.
- Open Door Concert Series presents the Virginia Handbell Consort today, December 15, at 4:00 p.m. Join the Virginia Handbell Consort to ring in the holiday season! A premier handbell ensemble in Virginia, VHC consists of auditioned musicians from across the area. They advance the art of handbell ringing through engaging performances of original compositions and Christmas favorites.
- Attention All WPC Staff and Kitchen Event Volunteers: Food Storage in the Kitchen Refrigerator and
  Freezer. Please remember to label any food left in the refrigerator or freezer with your name and the date.
  Labels and a pen are attached to the refrigerator for your use. Too much food is left inside, and the Kitchen
  Committee often has no idea who it belongs to or how long it has been stored. In the future, if items are not
  labeled we will be making a concerted effort to discard food each week. Thank you from the WPC Kitchen
  Committee.
- Cleaning of the sanctuary takes place weekly on Thursday morning by the Church Sexton. Occasionally, coffee cups, plastic cups, food wrapping, and crumbs have been found in the sanctuary. We ask that you refrain from eating and drinking in the sanctuary during worship services. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

\*Contact information can be found in our online directory. You may also contact the church office at 757-229-4235.

More information about the events and announcements listed above can be found on our website at mywpc.org/news or on the church calendar at mywpc.org/calendar.

#### >> THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE OF EVENTS ≪

#### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15**

FISH Food Collection Sunday

9:30 a.m.–12 p.m. Nursery open during both worship services 9:30 a.m. Sunday School / Christian Education Wing

9:30 a.m. In-person Worship / Sanctuary; Live-Stream Worship; visit mywpc.org to access 11:00 a.m. In-person Worship / Sanctuary; Broadcast on FM93.5 The Burg and AM740 or

wmbgradio.com

4:00 p.m. Open Door Concert Series presents the Virginia Handbell Consort

#### **MONDAY, DECEMBER 16**

1:00 p.m. Caregiver Support Group / Rm 123 1:00 p.m. Presbyterian Women Circle 3 / Rm 220

#### **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17**

10:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study / Rm 220 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting / Zoom

3:00 p.m. The Longest Night: A Service of Comfort and Hope / Stevenson Hall

7:00 p.m. AA Williamsburg Big Book Study / Rm LL009 and LL049

#### **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18**

7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal / Choir room

# **THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19**

9:00 a.m. Sanctuary Cleaning

4:30 p.m. Carol Choir and Junior Choir Rehearsals / Children's music room

# FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20

# **SATURDAY. DECEMBER 21**

> NEXT SUNDAY IN WORSHIP ↔

December 22, 2024 • The Fourth Sunday of Advent

Pastor John's sermon, "The Prophets of Advent: Love," will be based on Zephaniah 3:14–20.