



# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 1, 2024 at 10 AM

Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church  
500 McKennans Church Road, Wilmington DE  
(302) 998-0434; [www.rccpc.org](http://www.rccpc.org)

## *Rooted in Love, Lighting the Way*

*Welcome to worship, welcome to Red Clay, welcome home!*

*Please visit the welcome cart in the narthex to learn more about our community.*

**Please silence your cell phones.**

## GATHER

### LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE

(a silent prayer)

*God of grace and mercy, as we await the Prince of Peace, we come to you with hearts yearning for the day when your peace reigns in the world. May your light dispel the darkness of discord, and may nations unite in the pursuit of harmony and justice. Inspire our leaders with wisdom and compassion that they may work for the well-being of all. Amen.*

### CHIMING OF THE HOUR

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

One: Let Heaven and Nature Sing! A voice cries out in the wilderness:

Many: **“Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”**

### MINUTE FOR MISSION

Linda Neel

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: Today, we light the candle of hope, reminding us that, just as dawn breaks over a dark night, God’s hope rises in the world. All of creation waits, breathing in anticipation for the One who will bring peace, justice, and love.

*(continued)*

**Many:** May the light of hope awaken our hearts and tune us to the song of heaven and nature.

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room,  
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing,  
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

**One:** Gracious God, as we light this candle, may its glow remind us of the hope that comes with Christ's coming. Help us to share this hope with the world around us.

\*HYMN 83                   **Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**One:** God of the heavens and earth, you came in vulnerability and grace, yet we confess we have often chosen paths of fear and power.

**Many:** **We fail to listen to the earth and to one another, forgetting that we are part of your living, breathing creation. We close our ears to the songs of hope and justice that echo through your world. Forgive us, O God, and open our hearts to the song of life, to the whisper of the Spirit, and to your Word made flesh.**

\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

**One:** Hear the good news: God's love reaches to the heavens, and God's faithfulness to the skies. As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is God's love for those who seek to follow in God's way.

**Many:** **Thanks be to God. In Christ, we are forgiven, loved, and made whole. Amen.**

\*SUNG RESPONSE      Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

*Now the heavens start to whisper, as the veil is growing thin.  
Earth from slumber wakes to listen to the stirring, faint within:  
Seed of promise, deeply planted, child to spring from Jesse's stem!  
Like the soil beneath the frostline, hearts grow soft to welcome him.*

\*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*Please greet those around you, wishing them "peace" or "the peace of Christ."*

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT & THE LORD'S PRAYER

*At the conclusion, Pre-K through 8th grade children who wish to attend Sunday school may proceed to their classes.*

## LISTEN

CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION    While We Are Waiting, Come

***While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.  
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.***

SCRIPTURE LESSONS    Psalm 19:1-4, Matthew 3:1-6

SERMON    Heaven & Nature Sing: The CUP Game    Rev. Dr. Phillips

HYMN 97    **Watchman, Tell Us of the Night**    (to be sung antiphonally)

*This dialogue hymn alternates between the voice of a traveler and that of a watchman, setting up an exchange that creates parallels between the coming of dawn and the birth of Christ. The tune is named for a Welsh town whose name means "mouth of the bending river".*

## RESPOND

CALL TO THE OFFERING

*We invite you to make an online donation or by placing a check or cash in the collection plate. Envelopes are available in the pews for specified giving. The gray envelopes are for our new Roots & Rays Fund, which goes to creative outreach projects in the community.*



\*SUNG RESPONSE    As with Gladness Men of Old

***As they offered gifts most rare at thy manger, rude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.***

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

# SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

GRACIOUS INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**Many: We lift them up to the Lord.**

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*All are welcome to the table! This morning the congregation is served in procession. Those seated in the pews at the front of the sanctuary begin the procession when directed by ushers.*

*For those unable to process forward, stay seated and a server will bring the sacrament to you.*

*All bread is gluten-free; please take a piece from the offered tray. Empty glasses are placed in the bowls provided near the communion servers.*

MUSICAL OFFERING

Stand with John in the River

Hench

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Many: Gracious and abundant God, even as we wait for the fulfillment of your creation, you meet us in Christ at this table, in this meal. We thank you for feeding us with the bread of life and quenching our thirst with the cup of salvation. Now send us out into the world by the power of your Holy Spirit to share your life and salvation with all whom we meet. Amen.**

\*HYMN 152

**What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright**

\*BENEDICTION



Thanks to today's worship participants:

Tom Hench, *Soloist*  
Chancel Choir, *Music Ministry*  
Rick Marsey, *Usher Captain*  
Susan Kissell, *Greeter*

Join us for refreshments & fellowship in Founders Hall following the postlude.

The flowers today are given in loving memory of my grandmother, Sarah V. Townsend, from Keith Barton. Sarah was born November 18, 1900, and was a member of RCCPC from 1920 until her death in 2003; for many years, she was the oldest member of the congregation!

Through a series of in-person messages, devotionals, and worship opportunities, we hope to keep you connected to—and nurtured by—the Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church community. Make sure you're signed up for our Thursday eNews, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. Visit [www.rccpc.org](http://www.rccpc.org).



Red Clay Creek Presbyterian invites you  
to its *Signature Services* during the coming year.

**CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE — December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

- ◆ Family Service with Impromptu Pageant | 4PM
- ◆ Holy Night Service with Candlelight | 8PM
- ◆ Candlelight & Communion | 11PM

**ROOTS AND RAYS SERVICE CHALLENGE 2025**

A month-long service effort beginning in January of each year, that directs our intention to the needs of our community.

**HOLY WEEK 2025**

- ◆ Maundy Thursday — April 17<sup>th</sup> | 7PM
- ◆ Good Friday — April 18<sup>th</sup> | 12PM
- ◆ Easter Sunday — April 20<sup>th</sup> | 10AM

**KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN — May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 | 10AM**

Kirk is the Scottish word for church, so a church celebration and blessing of the tartans in our Presbyterian church honors both local and church heritage since it was the Scots who brought the Presbyterian Church to America.

**OUTDOOR SERVICE & PICNIC — June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 | 10AM**

Join us in the back meadow for worship and our annual picnic.

**SUMMER ARTS CAMP — JULY 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 | 9AM-12PM**

Kids K-5 will have music, drama, visual arts, snacks, and FUN, culminating with bingo and performance night July 18<sup>th</sup>, as well as Youth Sunday on July 20<sup>th</sup>.

**HOMECOMING SUNDAY — September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025 | 10AM**

We mark our return to regular church programming with the start of our fall sermon series and Sunday School kick off.

**FALL CELEBRATION SUNDAY — October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025 | 10AM**

A joyous worship service where we give Bibles to our 3rd graders and dedicate our pledges, followed by outdoor trunk-or-treat and a flag football game.

**ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY — November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 | 10AM**

We give thanks for God's many blessings and our rich history of over 300 years.

# WELCOME TO RED CLAY

For LARGE print bulletins or children's bulletins, please ask an Usher.  
Restrooms are available. Just ask!

Welcome to worship, welcome to Red Clay, welcome home! Rooted in God's abiding love for all, our church is lighting the way for friendship, compassion, and service. Please join us for coffee hour in Founder's Hall after service, and stop by the welcome cart by the front entrance to learn more about our community. We hope you will worship with us again soon! If you are interested in deepening your participation, or if you just love Red Clay, it's time to think about membership! Contact Elder Nancy James at [njames19966@gmail.com](mailto:njames19966@gmail.com).

Here at Red Clay, we have numerous groups that are open and that welcome newcomers, including, e.g., Quilters, Crafters, "Friends and Fellowship" free luncheon for seniors, Bible study, ROMEOs ("Retired Old Men Eating Out"), Centering Prayer, "The Arcaders" social group for GenX and Millennials, Breakfast & the Bible with Pastor Nate, and Pickleball. Details can be found at [www.rccpc.org](http://www.rccpc.org)!

Children: Nursery care is available from 9:45AM through the conclusion of worship in Room 305 (just down the hallway from the sanctuary). After the Children's Moment, Pre-K - 2nd grade will adjourn to Room 303 and Grades 3-8 will adjourn to Room 202/204.

## UPCOMING EVENT SPOTLIGHT

### **ARCADERS Social Club: Jingle & Mingle**

Join us on Friday, December 6 at 7 pm at the Conly residence in Kennett Square for a fun evening of socializing and Christmas fun—if you are in the 25-50 approximate age range. Please RSVP to sign-up (email Rachele at [rachele@rccpc.org](mailto:rachele@rccpc.org)).

## RED CLAY CREEK PRESBYTERIAN — MINISTERS, STAFF & CHAIRS

Rev. Dr. Nathaniel D. Phillips, *Senior Pastor/Head of Staff*

Rev. Emily Schwenker, *Parish Associate*

Rev. Dr. Philip Jones, *Parish Associate*

Jeffrey Miller, *Director of Music*

Deena Andrews, *Assistant Director of Instrumental Music and Children's Choir Director*

Lisa Nichols, *Bell Choir Director*

Rachele Gilmore, *Director of Community Life*

Ben Andrews, *Director of Christian Formation*

Jamie Russell, *Director of Children's Ministries*

Barbara Vanderkraats, *Pastoral Care Coordinator*

Judy Lozier, *Nursery Director* ❖ Shelby Beattie, *Sunday School Teacher* ❖ Sofia Martin, *Nursery Support*

Julie Reeder, *Office Coordinator* ❖ Dinyar Vania, *Facilities Manager*

Kelley Norton, *Administrative Assistant* ❖ Anthony M. Condoluci-Smith, *Financial Associate*

Charlie Hannagan, *Technology Support*

A. Leonhard, S. Armstrong, K. Barton, A. Bloom, D. Howarth, J. Schubel, P. Worrell, *Livestream Production*

Sandy Sarjeant, *Clerk of Session* ❖ Sue Gleason, *Deacon Moderator*

Geoff and Pam Meyer, *Belong Chairs* ❖ Nancy James, *Nurture Chair*

Linda Reisor, *Reach Chair* ❖ Lois Galinat, *Rejoice Chair*

Brandon Wallace, *Finance Chair* ❖ John Gast, *Personnel Chair*

Mark Cozine, *Home Chair* ❖ Scott McHenry, *Administration Chair*

Andrew Bloom, *Community Partners* ❖ Marcia Kelly, *Memory Garden Chair*

### A NOTE ON THE LOGO

Our church has "roots" in the community that date back to 1722. We have been a good neighbor when we were surrounded by farmland up until now when we are surrounded by the suburbs. Our history helps us remember a time when people helped one another out because that was the right thing to do. We hope to be a sign that this kind of community can still exist. We also believe that, in order for that community to exist, we need to stay "rooted" in the Good News that God has chosen to love us - not because of who we are, but because of who God is. We call that grace.

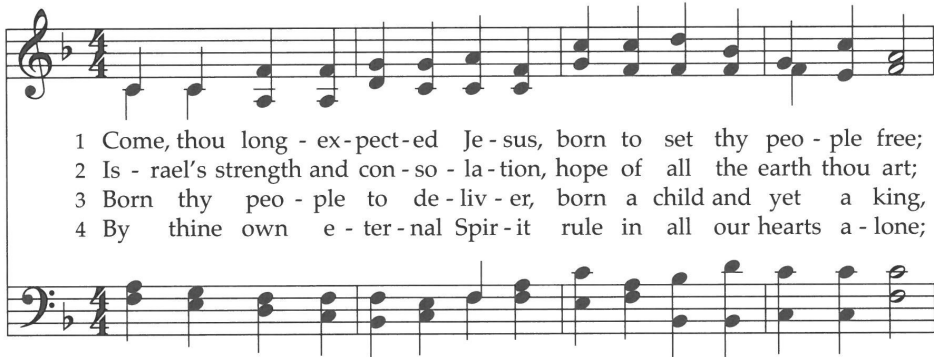
That is where the "rays" come in. We hope to extend our love, and the love we know from the graciousness of God, in many ways today. This means engaging in friendships with those that Jesus would have made friends with - those that feel isolated for any number of reasons. We know we will never be perfect at that, but we will try! We are especially aware that churches have long held back from friendship with others based on age, economics, sexuality, race, disability, and the list goes on. We seek to be something different than that. There are so many stories about how Jesus entered into life-affirming friendships with those that others wouldn't. We seek to be like Jesus.

Right there, in the center of it all, is the **cross**. For us, the cross is a "Tree of Life." It represents how God broke into this world to establish a new way of being alive. It symbolizes how God calls us to love with freedom, with recklessness even, if it means connecting the world to the wonder of God's transformative presence.





# 83 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



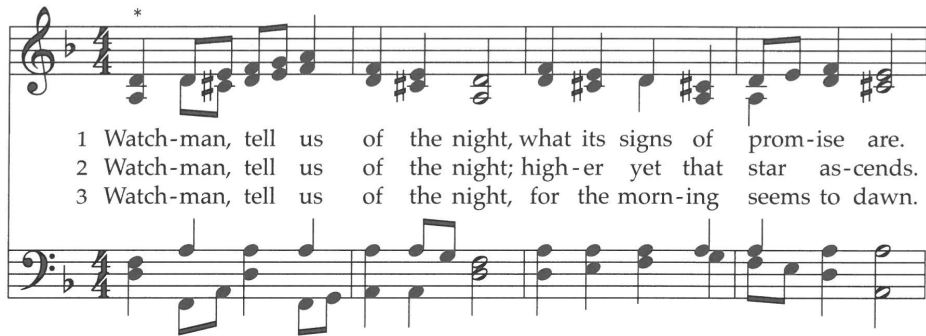
1 Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;  
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;  
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,  
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



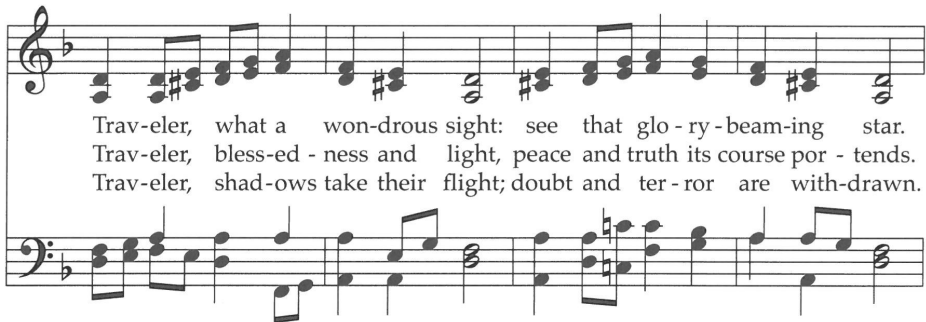
from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

With its opening "Come," this hymn sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

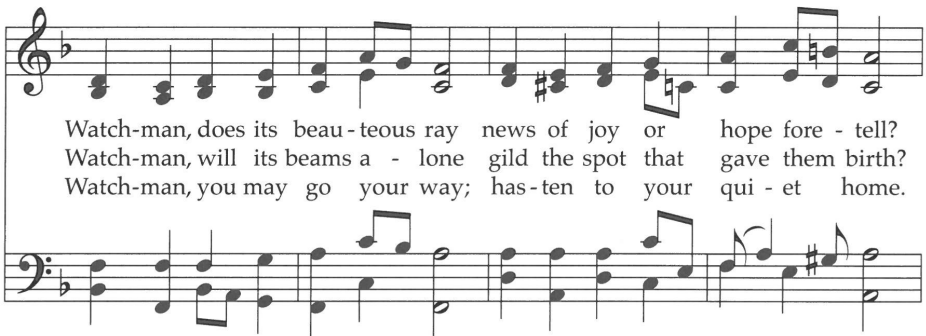
# Watchman, Tell Us of the Night 97



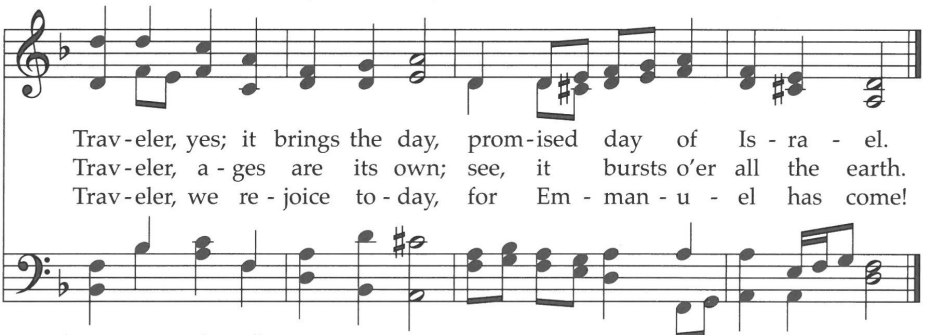
\*  
1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom-ise are.  
2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high-er yet that star as-cends.  
3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn-ing seems to dawn.



Trav-eler, what a won-drous sight: see that glo-ry-beam-ing star.  
Trav-eler, bless-ed-ness and light, peace and truth its course por-tends.  
Trav-eler, shad-ows take their flight; doubt and ter-ror are with-drawn.



Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore-tell?  
Watch-man, will its beams a-lone gild the spot that gave them birth?  
Watch-man, you may go your way; has-ten to your qui-et home.



Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, prom-ised day of Is-ra-el.  
Trav-eler, a-ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.  
Trav-eler, we re-joice to-day, for Em-man-u-el has come!

*\*May be sung antiphonally.*

This unusual dialogue hymn alternates between the voice of a traveler and that of a watchman, setting up an exchange that creates parallels between the coming of dawn and the birth of Christ. The tune is named for a Welsh town whose name means "mouth of the bending river."

# What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright 152

Capo 2: (C) (Am) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G) (C) (F)  
 D Bm A D G D A D G

1 What star is this, with beams so bright, more  
 2 'Tis now ful - filled what God de - creed, "From  
 3 While out - ward signs the star dis - plays, an  
 4 O Je - sus, while the star of grace im -

(C) (G) (C) (F) (C) (G)  
 D A D G D A

love - ly than the noon - day light? 'Tis  
 Ja - cob shall a star pro - ceed"; and  
 in - ward light the Lord con - veys and  
 pels us on to seek your face, let

(Am) (D7) (G) (C) (F) (C) (Dm)  
 Bm E7 A D G D Em

sent to an - nounce a new - born king, glad  
 lo! the east - ern sa - ges stand to  
 urg - es them, with ten - der might, to  
 not our sloth - ful hearts re - fuse the

(G) (C) (G) (C) (F) (G) (C)  
 A D A D G A D

ti - dings of our God to bring.  
 read in heaven the Lord's com - mand.  
 seek the giv - er of the light.  
 guid - ance of your light to use.

This 18th-century Latin text calls attention to three kinds of light: the light of the star leading the Magi to the Christ-child, the inward light inspiring their journey, and Christ who is the Light of the world. The simple unison melody unites everything in a gentle arc.