



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023 at 10 AM

Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church
500 McKennans Church Road, Wilmington DE
(302) 998-0434; 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.

GATHER

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

One: The Lord be with you.

Many: And also with you.

*CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: Hope is:

Many: Trusting that there is light, even in the dark.

One: Peace is:

Many: The wolf lying down with the lamb.

One: Joy is:

Many: Contagious sounds of Alleluia.

One: Love is:

Many: Unquenchable, never-ending, born in a manger, here today.

*CHORAL INTERLUDE

Carry the Light

Car - ry - the Light, car - ry — the Light.

Go and tell the chil - dren — they are pre-cious in — His sight. — Car-ry — the

Light, - car - ry — the Light. Go and preach the gos - pel — 'til

there is no - more night. In the name of Je-sus Christ, - car - ry - the Light.

One: Let us pray. We welcome your presence now with the lighting of this candle whose flame brings warmth to winter and fills this place with the glow of hope.

Many: Amen.

*HYMN 132

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(from Isaiah 64:5b-7)

Many: Prepare the way of the Lord! Let us make our confession to God. God-with-us, even in Advent, we confess you can seem far away. You are hidden when we need you near. In our hurt, doubt, and fear, we do not try to draw closer to you; instead, we lash out – against you, our neighbor, even those we love. Forgive us, we pray, and come to save us! Let your face shine until our tears are dried, our sins are faded, and our hope is restored. After all, we belong to you, and in your hands, we can be made new. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(from 1 Corinthians 1:4,8,9)

Many: **The grace of God, given to us in Christ Jesus, strengthens us to the end so that we may be blameless when Christ comes again. Thanks be to God, who is faithful and has called us into the fellowship of the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!**

*SUNG RESPONSE

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Please greet those around you, wishing them “peace” or “the peace of Christ.”

CHILDREN’S MOMENT & THE LORD’S PRAYER

LISTEN

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION **Come, Come Emmanuel**

**Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel. (repeat)**

SCRIPTURE Isaiah 7:1-17, Matthew 1:18-25

SERMON Lighting the Way: The Candle Pass Phillips

HYMN 115 **Away in a Manger**

RESPOND

CALL TO PRAYER

One: God be with you.
Many: **And also with you.**
One: May the peace of Christ dwell in your hearts.
Many: **Christ is our peace, our light, and our hope.**
One: Let us pray.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

CALL TO THE OFFERING

We invite you to make a donation by placing a check or cash in the collection plate or online. 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.



MUSICAL OFFERING

*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

*HYMN 146 **Gentle Mary Laid Her Child**

*BENEDICTION



Thanks to today's worship participants:

Ray Krout, *Usher Captain* ❖ Sandy Dudley, *Greeter*

Ray & Mim Krout, *Advent Liturgists*

Join us for Refreshments & Fellowship
in Founders Hall following the Postlude.

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.



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

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE — December 24th, 2023

- ◆ Family Service with Impromptu Pageant | 3PM
- ◆ Holy Night Service with Candlelight | 8PM
- ◆ Candlelight & Communion | 11PM

JANUARY SERVICE CHALLENGE 2024

A month-long service effort that directs our intention to the needs of our community at the beginning of every year.

HOLY WEEK 2024

- ◆ Palm Sunday — March 24th | 10AM
- ◆ Maundy Thursday — March 28th | 7PM
- ◆ Good Friday — March 29th | 12PM
- ◆ Easter Sunday — March 31st | 10AM

KIRKIN' O' THE TARTAN — April 21st, 2024 | 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 2nd, 2024 | 10AM

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

HOMECOMING SUNDAY — September 8th, 2024 | 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 27th, 2024 | 10AM

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

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY — November 17th, 2024 | 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.

Children: Nursery care is available from 9:45 am 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.

LEARN MORE

Check out the church website at www.rcapc.org for a calendar of events and for more on the history and other information about our church!

UPCOMING EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Don't miss TONIGHT's Christmas Eve services at 3PM,
8PM and 11PM! Merry Christmas from our church family
to yours!

RED CLAY CREEK PRESBYTERIAN — MINISTERS, STAFF & CHAIRS

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

Rev. Emily Schwenker, *Parish Associate*

Jeffrey Miller, *Director of Music*

Barbara Vanderkaats, *Assistant Director of Choral 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*

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* ♦ Marcia Kelly, *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*

Anne Ceres, *Community Partners*

A NOTE ON THE LOGO

Our church has "**roots**" in the community that date back to 1722. We have been a good neighbor in the community during times 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 want 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.



The 2024 *Roots & Rays* Service Challenge begins January 2. Take the challenge!

The Roots & Rays Service Challenge is a yearly month-long initiative, that was born in January of 2023 for the purposes of engaging our congregation and greater community in meaningful and creative service to those in need in our area and beyond. Rooted in our devotion to putting the words of Matthew 25: 34-36 into action, we look to feed, clothe, care for, and visit those who could use a loving hand. We believe that our annual Service Challenge is an incredible tool for bringing our congregation together in service, and also for connecting us in friendship to other local churches and to the outside community.

We hope that you will join us and serve in anyway you can, no matter how big or small. Throughout the month, we will be hosting a Baby Supply Giveaway, a Rise Against Hunger meal packing event after worship, a Blood Bank of Delmarva blood drive, an MLK Youth Service Day, volunteer sessions at the Food Bank of Delaware and Friendship House Clothing Bank, and much more!

**For details on all service events and how
to sign up visit:**

www.rccpc.org/serve



132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice with heart and soul and voice;

give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to-day;
 now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man-ger now.
 He has o-pened heav-en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Carols using two languages, like this one dating from at least the 14th century, belong to a special group called "macaronic," the original languages here being German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

Away in a Manger

Capo 3: (D)
F

(G)
B \flat

(D)
F

1 A - way in a man - ger, no crib for his bed,
2 The cat - tle are low - ing; the poor ba - by wakes,
3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay

(A7)
C7

(D)
F

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down his sweet head.
but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes.
close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.

(G)
B \flat

(D)
F

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
I love thee, Lord Je - sus; look down from the sky,
Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,

(A7)
C7

(D)
F

(Em)
Gm

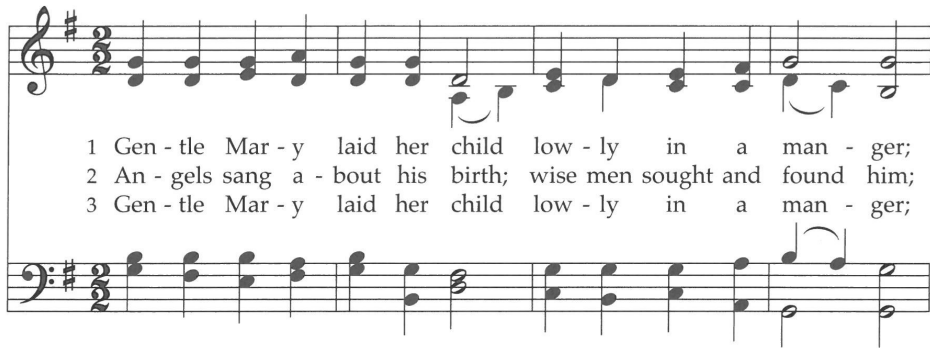
(A7)
C7

(D)
F

the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.
and stay by my side un - til morn - ing is nigh.
and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.

Though erroneously attributed to Martin Luther, this anonymous carol has North American roots, probably originating among Pennsylvania Lutherans. Although more than forty melodies have been connected with these words, this tune was among the earliest written for them.

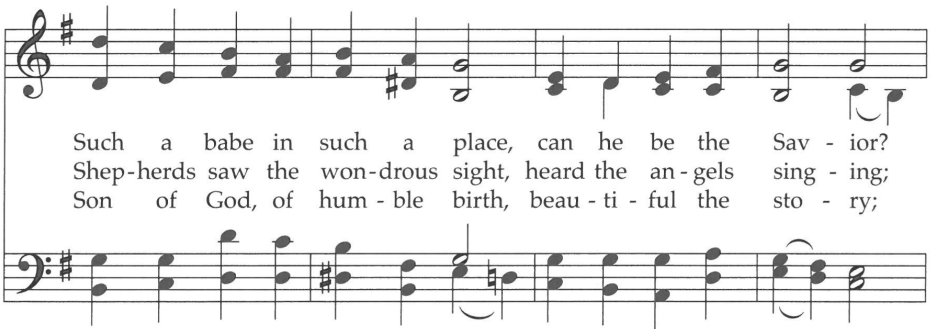
Gentle Mary Laid Her Child 146



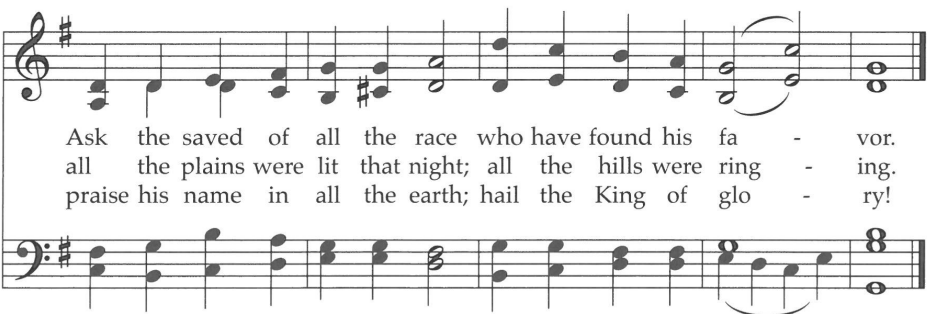
1 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;
 2 An - gels sang a - bout his birth; wise men sought and found him;
 3 Gen - tle Mar - y laid her child low - ly in a man - ger;



there he lay, the un - de - filed, to the world a strang - er.
 heav - en's star shone bright - ly forth, glo - ry all a - round him.
 he is still the un - de - filed, but no more a strang - er.



Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Sav - ior?
 Shep - herds saw the won - drous sight, heard the an - gels sing - ing;
 Son of God, of hum - ble birth, beau - ti - ful the sto - ry;



Ask the saved of all the race who have found his fa - vor.
 all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ring - ing.
 praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glo - ry!

This 20th-century Christmas text by an English-born Canadian clergyman was originally a poem called "The Manger Prince." It gains a certain antique flavor by being set to a late medieval song associated with springtime. (The tune name means "The flowering time is near.")