



Second Sunday of Advent

Preparation for **Worship**

God of surpassing peace, give us and all your church peace:
peace of mind; forgiving peace; and reconciling peace.

Inscribe their signatures in muscle, brain, and bone,
so that we may know, share, and give the peace beyond understanding
that the world cannot give. In Christ's name. Amen.

Gathering and Preparing for **God's Word**

Welcome and Announcements

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

Prelude O Come, O Come Emmanuel arr. Haan

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

9a Ryan & Sarah Beasley, Lilly and Beau
11:15a Trey & Beth Morrow, Haynes, Andrew, and Ben

One: John the Baptist said, "Prepare the way."
We prepare the way this Advent by
silencing the inner critic, and letting go of busy thoughts.

All: We make space for God to speak.

One: Mary said, "Let it be with me according to your word."
We rest in God's word this Advent by
making space for silence, and opening our hearts and minds.

All: We make space for God to speak.

One: Joseph called his child "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us."
We acknowledge God in our midst this Advent by
receiving peace as offered, and extending grace to others.

Today we light the candle of peace.

**All: May it remind us that there is another way:
a way that makes space for God and one another.**

Prayer of Confession

**Holy God, we wish that peace was something we could buy.
We wish that peace could be ordered in a subscription service,
found on a map, downloaded in an app, or voted for in a ballot.
We wish that peace was as easy as a one-time choice
when we are feeling our best.
However, what we have found is that peace involves everyday
decisions over and over, whether or not we are feeling our best.
Today we confess, in front of you and one another,
that we have not always worked for peace,
and that we need your help this Advent season.
Prepare the way for greater peace and teach us how to be a part of it.
Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Musical Reflection "I Wonder as I Wander" arr. Hayes

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Lesson, *Isaiah 40:1-11*

Gospel Lesson, *Mark 1:1-8*

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon "Where Do We Draw the Line?"

Responding to **God's Word**

Affirmation of Faith, *The Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

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.**

Charge and Benediction

Postlude Overture from "Unto Us a Child Is Born" J.S. Bach

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Ben Dorr, *preaching*

Mary Kathleen Duncan, Lauren Slingerland, *liturgists*

Nancy Smith, *organist*

Jason Farmer (9a), Elizabeth Palmer (11:15a), *head ushers*

Sarah Beasley, Catherine Pollock, *greeters* (9a)

Laura Williams Sanders, Talitha Allen, *greeters* (11:15a)

The liturgy we are using this Advent is adapted from a variety of sources, including A Sanctified Art's "Those Who Dream" Words for Worship.

Join Us in Welcoming

BAPTISM

This morning we welcome into our fellowship *Haywood Brigham Campbell*, son of Gene & Elizabeth Campbell, in our 9a online worship.

OPEN HEARTS • Gathering@WPC

OPEN SANCTUARY

Our sanctuary is open for individual prayer and reflection on Monday and Tuesday (9a-1p). WPC members will need to sign up ahead of time at <https://wpc-online.org/events-registration/prayer-in-the-sanctuary-at-wpc/>.

PARTICIPATING IN WORSHIP FROM HOME ON SUNDAY MORNING?

Our pre-recorded service will continue to air on our website at 9am, and on our social media platforms. Our in-person worship service will air on our website via livestream at 11:15a. The Harbinger that you receive in the mail will be for our pre-recorded worship. If you would like the Harbinger for our 11:15am livestream worship, you may download it from our website at <https://wpc-online.org/sermon-archive>.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

The Session has called a congregational meeting for this Sunday, December 6, to hear the report of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. If you attend in-person worship on December 6, you will be invited to stay to hear the APNC's report after both worship services. If you are unable to attend in-person worship, you will be able to hear the report via Zoom at 1pm on December 6.

2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of Monday, November 30, we have received \$1,879,973 in pledges toward our 2021 budget goal of \$2,513,715.

For your convenience, you may pledge via our website at wpc-online.org/pledge-today, you may mail in your pledge, or send your pledge by email to the Church Financial Secretary, Sherri Owens, at sherri@wpc-online.org.

Rescheduling WestFest

Tickets are still available for this year's rescheduled WestFest!

Join us Sunday evening, December 13, for a safe, socially-distanced take on your favorite Advent event featuring responsibly distanced live-music from Atlanta musician Sam Burchfield in the WPC Green Lot.

To accommodate maximum fun and safety, we're hosting two 45-minute concerts, each capped at 100 participants. The Early Concert begins at 5:00p and will run under an hour. The Late Show will begin at 6:30.

Guests will be asked to stay in their "pods" and remain masked when not eating or drinking (BYO). Don't forget blankets and lawn chairs, and don't you worry, you'll be able to holler at your friends and glow in the light of this year's WFVIII koozies and swag.

To sign up and learn more, visit wpc-online.org.

OPEN MINDS • Education@WPC

ZOOM BIBLE STUDY ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

You are invited to participate in a Zoom Bible study at 10am on Sunday mornings led by Ben and Leigh! The Zoom information will be sent the preceding Thursday in the weekly newsletter and each Friday with the weekly emailed Harbinger. We will take a look at the texts that are being used in that particular Sunday's worship service. Please join us!

FIRST STEPS MUSIC FOR 2-3 YR OLDS

Music this fall for the youngest voices at Westminster will be offered online, still as a part of the First Steps Music program. Register to receive access to on-demand links with Diana Daily that explore music and movement through simple songs and activities. For more information, contact Mark at mkemp@wpc-online.org or visit the events registration page under "connect" at [wpc-online.org](#). Registration is free!

POINSETTIA/LIBRARY MEMORIALS

Those who wish to remember loved ones during the Christmas Season may do so in two ways. Poinsettias for the sanctuary may be purchased for \$15.00, or money may be given to buy library books. Poinsettias will decorate the sanctuary again this year. Please fill out the slip below or contact the church office, 232-2424. Donors may pick up their poinsettias after Christmas if they wish to take them home. Orders must be placed by Sunday, December 13.

Donor _____

In Memory of _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Honor of _____

Library Amount \$ _____ OR Poinsettias x \$15.00 = \$ _____

JUSTFAITH: FAITH AND RACIAL EQUITY

Just Faith meets Mondays at 6p on ZOOM. For information, previously registered class members may call Susan McLeod (787-6262) or Bill Holt (982-3368).

OPEN HEARTS @WPC

Drive season is wrapping up but there is still time to donate to United Ministries. Drop off non-perishables in the vestibule from 8:30-5p, M-F.

THE HARBINGER

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ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

The 2020 Daily Advent Devotionals will be delivered by email beginning Sunday, November 29. If you prefer to receive a paper copy, contact the church office at 232-2424. We invite you to take a moment out of your day to read and meditate on this daily devotion that will lead us through the Advent season.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 6 - 12, 2020

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

- 9:00 a.m. In-Person Worship Service followed by Congregational Meeting
- 10:00 a.m. Zoom Bible Study
- 11:15 a.m. In-Person Worship Service followed by Congregational Meeting
- 1:00 p.m. Congregational Meeting by Zoom
- 5:00 p.m. Middler & Senior High Shepherd Groups in backyards

TUESDAY

- 4:30 p.m. PW Circle #3 by Zoom

WEDNESDAY

- 3:00 p.m. It's Elementary by Zoom

THURSDAY

- 12:00 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting by Zoom

the **HARBINGER**
open minds open hearts

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From the Pews, Jennifer McDavid:

When I was growing up, we had an Advent calendar that my mother prepared every year. She would hang a wreath on the wall and individually wrap and label 24 small ornaments. I cannot remember exactly what every single ornament was (or its meaning), but I distinctly remember excitedly digging through the little bowl holding the tissue paper wrapped packages looking for the number corresponding to the designated day, opening each little package, learning about the meaning, and placing the ornament on the wreath. We always opened Joseph on December 22 (my Daddy's birthday, which I thought was highly appropriate: open Jesus's earthly Dad on my Dad's birthday), Mary on December 23, and Jesus on Christmas Eve.

The nativity was always my favorite. Picturing baby Jesus in a barn, surrounded by farm animals and his loving parents, was my idea of perfection. Having now gone through labor twice (and neither time in a barn), I am absolutely certain that reality was far less beatific. In high school, I created a nativity scene for my sister out of Sculpey clay, forming each tiny person and animal with minute detail. I included a pig (complete with awesome curly tail) because I think pigs are cute, and they're farm animals, so they had to be there, right? My grandmother was very quick to tell me Christmas morning that no self-respecting Jew would have kept a pig. I've never included another one in any of the subsequent nativities I've made for friends over the years.

Until the past few years, I have always, consciously or unconsciously, associated Advent with the Nativity. As such, I have quite frankly always found the beginning of Mark's gospel to be boring. It skips over the part that I always found the best, especially as a child. I've often wondered why the writer of Mark chose to 1) leave out the best part of the story, the nativity, and 2) randomly include John's clothing and dietary choices among the verses describing John's calling to baptism. I mean, come on! He was covered in (presumably dirty) camel hair and ate the bugs that comprised one of the seven plagues of Egypt, but he was cleansing people of their sins by ritually dunking them in water?

This is actually the perfect Christmas message for 2020. Think about it. Nothing fits our plan of perfection this year. We have a literal plague knocking at our doors. However, when we look closely, God is at work. God is ALWAYS at work, especially among the dirt and grime of our world. God is at work in the people donning layers of PPE and coming to work to save lives in our medical facilities. God is at work in the people stocking shelves at the grocery store. God is at work in homeless shelters and in our postal workers and delivery people. God is at work in the people that acknowledge God's presence and those that don't. And God is even at work in animals. I dare you to look into the eyes of a dog or horse or cow (or even PIG) and tell me that you don't see God there. Maybe a pig is a necessary reminder in the nativity, just like John's clothing and food choices remind us that God is with us even when we are dirty and unclean in any sense. The expectation and waiting for Jesus and God's salvation does not begin or end at the nativity or even at the cross. It extends throughout Jesus's life and beyond, even until now and into our future.