



Third Sunday of Advent

Preparation for **Worship**

Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you. Now prepare the world for your rule. Come quickly to save us, so that wars and violence shall end, and your children may live in peace, honoring one another with justice and love; though Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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

Prelude Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming arr. Hayes

Welcome and Announcements

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

People: And also with you.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Ellis Bellew & Aly Friend

Creation is full of wonder; God's dream brought to life:
mountains and valleys, the changing seasons, diversity in humanity.
Let the weary world rejoice!

Scripture is flooded with God's dream:
the lion lies down with the lamb, the prisoner is set free,
swords are beaten into plowshares.
Let the weary world rejoice!

Sometimes God's goodness itself feels like a dream:
it allows our souls to sing, it calls us to love our neighbors,
it leads us to feed the hungry and pursue justice for the oppressed.

Today we light the candle of joy.
May it remind us to rejoice in God's contagious dream that overflows with joy.

Hymn #88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel VENI EMMANUEL

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

**O Word made Flesh,
with a sky full of stars and a world full of wonders,
there should be no end to our joy.
And yet, instead of decorating our very being with joy,
we let it slip away like loose change.
Instead of singing like Mary or dancing like David,
we pass by your signs of beauty and love, most days unfazed.
Forgive us.
Teach us the ways of children, who laugh and dance and sing
as if joy is the very thing that keeps them alive.
Gratefully we pray. Amen.**

Hearing **God's Word**

Prayer for Illumination

Epistle Lesson, *1 Thessalonians 5:16-24*

Old Testament Lesson, *Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11*

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon "The Year of the Lord's Favor"

Anthem "As the Dark Awaits the Dawn" Aspaas

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.**

Hymn #378 MERLE'S TUNE

We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom

Charge and Benediction

Postlude People, Look East arr. Langlois

Leading Worship **this Morning**

Mary Kathleen Duncan, *preaching*

Lauren Slingerland, *liturgist*

Nancy Smith, *organist*

Diana Dailey, Katie Knauer, Derek Pitman, Mark Kemp, *vocalists*

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.

We Remember in Prayer

Kristin Robinson on the death of her father, John W. Houser, in Greenville, SC - 11/30/2020.

We Remember in Memoriam

Virginia Coble • (10/1/1929 - 12/1/2020)
and The family of Virginia Coble
"I am the resurrection and the life." -
John 11:25

OPEN HEARTS • Gathering@WPC

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

We have pressed "pause" on our in-person worship services for December 13 and 20. Our recorded worship services will continue to air each Sunday. We invite you to participate via our website at 9am and 11:15am, or via our social media platforms on Facebook and YouTube.

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/>.

2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

As of Monday, December 7, we have received \$2,030,079 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.

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!

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

The 2020 Advent Devotionals are delivered daily to your email. If you prefer to have a paper booklet of this year's devotionals, contact the church office at 232-2424. We invite you to take a moment out of your day to read and meditate on these daily devotions that are leading us through the Advent season.

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 this Sunday, December 13.

Donor _____

In Memory of _____

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

In Honor of _____

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

GIVING HEARTS

- Budget Update@WPC

**FINANCIAL MINISTRY
2020 BUDGET UPDATE**

2020 Pledges	\$2,517,968
Amount Received	\$2,001,362
Pledges Outstanding	(\$516,606)

Our auditing firm has informed us that we must close our books on December 31. Please have any contributions you wish to show on your 2020 statement in by December 31, 2020. By fulfilling your pledge, you enable us to keep faith with our mission partners. Thank you.

THE HARBINGER

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 13 - 19, 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:45 a.m. Zoom Witness & Service

Committee Meeting

9:00 a.m. Pre-recorded Worship Service

on the WPC website

{[www.wpc-online.org](#)}

10:00 a.m. Zoom Bible Study

11:15 a.m. Pre-recorded Worship Service

on the WPC website

{[www.wpc-online.org](#)}

12:30 p.m. Zoom Stated Session Meeting

TUESDAY

12:00 p.m. Zoom Gifts & Gratitude

Committee Meeting

WEDNESDAY

12:00 p.m. Luncheon Group Meeting

RETIREMENT GIVING

For those 70 and 1/2 years of age or older, you can make a direct transfer of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Westminster Presbyterian Church. Though you will not get a charitable deduction, the withdrawal can serve as your required minimum distribution. The money will not be taxed and will not count toward your adjusted gross income. If you have any questions, please contact Sherri Owens, the church's Financial Secretary.

the
HARBINGER
open minds open hearts

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From the Pews, Mark Matlock:

FROM THE MANGER TO THE CROSS

To call what all us have experienced this year as tumultuous doesn't quite fit the bill, does it?

Our lives have been turned inside out by the deadliest pandemic the world has seen in a century. Norms have been shattered, old habits have receded into the shadows and we search for an elusive equilibrium.

We are making sacrifices – some small, some life-altering – for the sake of the greater good. In a sense, we are adrift in a raging sea not knowing when we will reach safe harbor. “Please just let this be over,” is a thought that has been common to most of us for months now. It's one that's understandable, but one that also reflects inward.

A favorite Advent text, Luke 1:26-38, reminds us of a burden a teenage girl had to bear 2,000 years ago. What she did helped lay the foundation of our Christian faith.

“... The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God ... For nothing will be impossible with God.’ Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’”

Can you imagine how frightened Mary was? She was going to be pregnant as a teen without a husband ... 20 centuries ago. Her life literally was on the line at that moment. Her response? To believe the angel Gabriel and trust God's plan. What faith!

In our uncertain and scary time, we can draw strength from God and the season of giving. We can trust that this tumult will not last forever, as God showed us through Christ...all the way from the manger to the cross.