

Armstrong Chapel Worship Resource—December 29, 2024—10am



Modern Wesley Covenant

Remembering as presented in Scriptures is a meaningful, sacred participation in the reality of past events resulting in powerful implications for one's life in the present!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Victoria Rhodus

LEADER: Commit yourselves to Christ as His servants. Give yourselves to Him, that you may belong to Him. Christ has many services to be done. Some are more easy and honorable, others are more difficult and disgraceful. Some are suitable to our inclinations and interests, others are contrary to both. In some we may please Christ and please ourselves. But then there are other works where we cannot please Christ except by denying ourselves. It is necessary, therefore, that we consider what it means to be a servant of Christ.

Let us, therefore, go to Christ, in worship.

*CAROL

Go Tell It on the Mountain
#251 UMH, vs 4

Refrain:

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain,
that Jesus Christ is born.*

Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. (Refrain)

Source: Afro-American spiritual

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LITANY

LEADER: Embrace the Child and bless God.

PEOPLE: **For the works of god's hands are faithful and just.**

LEADER: God has set a star to hang in the sky;

PEOPLE: **with a blazing torch our god shall lead us.**

LEADER: God has sewn the world a garment of light;

PEOPLE: **with swaddling love god will clothe us.**

LEADER: For the Child's sake, let us be persistent.

PEOPLE: **For the child's sake, let us not keep silent.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Psalms 148 (NRSVUE)
Selected Verses

¹ Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created...

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven....
Praise the Lord!

The Word of God for the People of God.
Thanks be to God.

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TIME WITH CHILDREN

*CAROL

O Come, All Ye Faithful
#234 UMH, selected verses

1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels;

Refrain:

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

3. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;
(Refrain)

5. Child, for us sinners poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee with love and awe.
Who would not love thee, loving us so dearly?
(Refrain)

6. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory given.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
(Refrain)

Text & Music: John F. Wade (1743)

PROCLAMATION

LEADER: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Christian life is redeemed from sin and consecrated to God. Through Baptism, we are entered this life and have been admitted into the new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the mediator. He sealed it with his own blood, that it might last forever.

On the one side, God promises to give us new life in Christ, the Source and Perfecter of our faith.

On the other side, we are pledged to live no more for ourselves, but only for Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us.

ALL: **From time to time, we renew our covenant with God, especially when we face a new year. We meet as the generations before us have met. Let us make this covenant of God our own.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

written by Anne Fraley

We come to adore you, Christ child. On bended knee, with hopeful heart, and eyes stretched wide with wonder and awe. The gentleness of your gaze draws us into the mystery of all that lies beyond, and in that place of falling into joy we yield all that we are to you.

And we pray. For those who are broken, those who seek, the trembling and the rumbling tummies, the haggard spirits and the ragged lives. For those who cling to the last best thing, and those whose hearts pine for something more.

Bless us, O Lord, and turn our faces ever toward you. For peace, for mercy, for the sake of all that is holy. We come to adore you, O Christ.

Hear us as we join the voices of heaven saying:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Colossians 3:12-17 (NRSV)

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord[a] has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of God for the People of God.
Thanks be to God.

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*HYMN

Joy to the World
#246 UMH

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.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts (1719)

Music: Handel (1741), Lowell Mason (1848)

CONFIRM THIS HOLY COVENANT

To make this covenant a reality in your life, listen to these directions and apply them to the fullest extend...

Set apart some time, more than once a day, to be spent alone before God. Consider what are your sins. Consider the laws of Christ, how holy, strict, and spiritual they are, and whether you, after carefully considered them, are willing to choose them all. Be sure you are clear in these matters, see that you do not lie to God.

Second, be serious and let a spirit of holiness direct you.

Third, claim God's covenant, rely on the promises, and trust not in your own strength and power.

Fourth, resolve to be faithful. Study the scriptures,

give without conditions or desire for recognition, pray continually, give your whole heart to the Lord and never go back.

And lastly, be prepared to renew this covenant often. Fall down on your knees, lift your hands before heaven, open your heart to the Lord.

*EXAMINATION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed
#880 UMH

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic*
and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*universal

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SHARING OF GIFTS

We Three Kings

Andrew, Evan, and Ian Herbert

*RESPONSE

#219 vs 3 UMH

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh,
some, peasant, king, to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings,
let loving hearts enthrone him.

This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud,
the babe, the son of Mary.

Text: William C. Dix (1865)
Music: 16th cent. English Melody

SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:41-52 (NRSVUE)

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents were unaware of this. ⁴⁴ Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously looking for you." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them, and his mother treasured all these things in her heart.



⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor.

The Word of God for the People of God.
Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE *Facing a New Year: Living on the Gospel Side*
Rev. David W. Brown

THE COVENANT PRAYER

John Wesley, circa 1780

Holy God, let me be your servant, under your command. I will no longer be my own. I will give up myself to your will in all things.

Before all heaven and earth, I here acknowledge you as my Lord and God. I take you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for my portion, and vow to give up myself, body and soul, as your servant, to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Lord, make me what you will. I put myself fully into your hands:

**put me to doing, put me to suffering,
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and with a willing heart give it all to your pleasure and disposal.**

I do here covenant with you, O Christ, to take my lot with you as it may fall. Through your grace I promise that neither life nor death shall part me from you.

I make this covenant with you, O God, without guile or reservation.

If any falsehood should be in it, guide me and help me to set it aright.

Glory be to you, O God the Son, who loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood,

**Glory be to you O God the Spirit
who by your almighty power
have turned my heart from sin to God.**

Mighty God, let this covenant I have made on earth be ratified in heaven.

**In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

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*HYMN

Love Came Down at Christmas
#242 UMH

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
star and angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine;
worship we our Jesus,
but wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token;
love be yours and love be mine;
love to God and others,
love for plea and gift and sign.

Text: Christina G. Rosetti (1885)
Music: Traditional Irish melody, harm by David Evans (1927)

*BLESSING

written by John Birch

May this eternal truth be always on our hearts.
That the God who breathed this world into being,
placed stars into the heavens,

and designed a butterfly's wing:
Is the God who entrusted His Son
to the care of ordinary people.
God became vulnerable that we might know
how strong is the wonder of Love.
A mystery so deep it is impossible to grasp.
A mystery so beautiful it is impossible to ignore.

In God the Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit
May we dwell in the wonder of Christmas!

*POSTLUDE

**Stand as you are able*

Greeters – Barry Dixon and Jim Pearce



*Gather for coffee and treats in the Atrium
following the 10:00am service!*

REGISTER YOUR
ATTENDANCE



ONLINE
GIVING



You are advised to make this covenant not only in your heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing. Therefore, with all reverence, lay the service before the Lord as your act and deed. And when you have done this, sign it. Then keep it as a reminder of the holy agreement between God and you that you may remember it during doubts and temptations.

Signed: _____



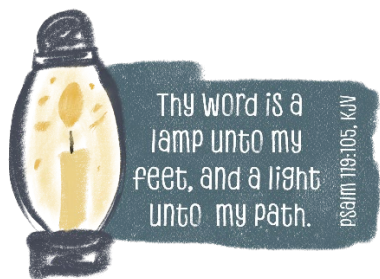
Stay connected with

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Follow us on...   

Rev. David Brown, Lead Pastor
Amy Voss, Director of Preschool
Rev. Elizabeth Brown, Congregational Care Pastor
Shanon Rice, Director of Digital Communications

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Ecclesiastes says that there's a time for everything — and the new year tends to be a time for fresh starts. God's Word is a great place to begin! **Our gift to you for 2025 is a Bible Reading Tracker.** It's not a plan, rather a place to record your progress. We challenge you to spend time in the Word of God in the new year!

Pick up a copy of the reading tracker at the desk in the Atrium or print yours at home:

<https://bit.ly/3ODqg9D>



Come and ring handbells together in January and February! People of all ages — if they are tall enough to stand at the bell tables and are eager to learn — are welcome at the new ringer workshop. This is another short-term commitment for **6 weeks total** for one hour each Sunday from 4:30-5:30pm: Jan. 12, Jan. 19, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, (not on Feb 9) then Feb. 16 and Feb. 23. If you are interested, please invite a friend or family member to join you, and contact Chester Imhausen in advance, at cimhausen@gmail.com or at 513-633-6411.



Third Tuesday of Each Month
Robin Nielsen's home 7275 Cayuga
(3 minutes from the church)
10:30am-12noon

Experience the sense of purpose that comes from making a small difference in the lives of those who might benefit from a handmade item on their journey to wholeness.

Approximately 100 handmade items were distributed to individuals and non-profits in 2024.

Email Robin at ihbookmom@aol.com with any questions!

WOMEN'S STUDIES

ArmstrongChapel.org/womenunited

- **Mondays at 9:30am** in the Armstrong Room. New study begins 1/13. *Untangling Faith—Reclaiming Hope in the Questions Jesus Asked.* Have you ever felt you struggled to find your faith footing? Author Amberly Neese explores the questions Jesus asked as a way to reclaim that faith. Chapters include our own questions like "Can God be trusted?" and "How can I grow in faith?" Led by Sue Porter and Serena Tsuang.
- **Mondays at 6:30pm** at Panera in Mariemont. New 12-week study begins 1/27. *Through the Desert: A Study on God's Faithfulness* by Lina Abujamra helps us find water for our souls. Whether you're navigating through spiritual deserts or seeking a clearer understanding of God's faithfulness, this experience will awaken your Spirit and draw you closer to God. Join us as we journey through the desert with Abraham, the Israelites, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Along the way, we discover that our own deserts offer gifts of mercy, purpose, and spiritual abundance. Led by Victoria Rhodus. To get your book with video access, please call (513) 379-5187.
- **Tuesdays at 9:45am** at the home of Julie Holland. New Study begins 1/14.
- **Thursdays at 6:30am** in the Armstrong Room. Starting William Barclay's *Gospel of Mark*. Led by Jan Bell and Pam Westrup.

MEN'S STUDIES

ArmstrongChapel.org/men

- **Friday Morning Bible Study:** Verse-by-verse study of scripture (currently in 1 Timothy) led by Pastor David Brown. Fridays at 7:00am in the Armstrong Room and via Zoom.
- **Burgers, Brews & the Bible:** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7:00pm at 50 West Burger Bar. Continuing to study 1 Corinthians. Led by Gordon Miller. Arrive at 6:30 if you plan to eat.
- **715BC:** Breakfast Wednesdays at 7:15am at the National Exemplar in Mariemont. Led by Bill Woodward.



Women
UNITED
Monthly
Luncheon

JANUARY 8
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

National Exemplar
6880 Wooster Pike

RSVP to Niki Mitchell
nmitchell@armstrongchapel.org



Armstrong
MEN
Disciples • Bold • Brave • Fearless

Craving
Pancakes & Fellowship?

**Saturday
BREAKFAST**

January 11
in the Fellowship Hall
8:00 am - 9:30 am