



First Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

December 15th, 2024

Third Sunday of Advent



Let All Creation Dance by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

The ABC's of Advent
A Christmas Pageant

Order of Worship

Prelude

Noël Suisse
Bruce Stevens, organ

Louis-Claude Daquin

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Amy Starr Redwine

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Judy and LaMont Noble

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

All: Let us start small. Let us begin with what is right in front of us.

Let us do the good that is ours to do and let us do it with joy!

Yes, let us begin with joy. Today we light the candles of hope, peace, and joy.

May these lights remind us of what could be. May these lights inspire action.

May the warmth of these lights fill us with joy.

May it be so! Amen.

*Hymn 106

“Prepare the Way O Zion”

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

Reader: Stella Ball

Z is for Zion. Zion was another name for Jerusalem, the holy city of King David. People believed a new king would come from this city, one who would sit on David’s throne and lead the people in renewal and restoration. In the Bible, Zion is a way of saying “hope.” The Christmas story - like all our stories - begins with hope.

Reader: Madi Waldron

Y is for Yes. Mary said Yes! An angel came to Mary, saying, “Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!” She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob’s house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom.” Then Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.” Mary said yes! (Luke 1:28-33, 38)

Readers: Olivia Sieber and Madi Waldron

X is (kind of) for eXcursion. An excursion is a journey which Mary and Joseph needed to undertake. In those days, Caesar Augustus was the emperor, and he said that everyone throughout the empire needed to return to their hometowns to be counted. Since Joseph belonged to David’s house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David’s city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be counted together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. (Luke 2:1-6)

Reader: Miller Wiltshire

W is for Water. Each week, we come to the baptismal font and remember the waters of baptism. Like rain that falls on everyone, like water that we all drink, God’s love is for all people. No matter what we have done, right or wrong, God cares for us and helps us to grow. God always hears us when we admit our mistakes and ask for forgiveness. Let’s pray together now.

***Please rise in body or in spirit.**

In the beginning, God, your first words to creation were words of love. You looked at the earth and said, “It is good.” At every turn, you have reminded us that we are a blessing, made in your image, held in your love. Forgive us for forgetting this truth. Forgive us for failing to see the belovedness of our neighbors - and ourselves. O Lord, we believe; help our unbelief.

*Passing the Peace

*Hymn 134 (vv. 1, 3, 4)

“Joy to the World”

ANTIOCH

Reader: Norah Andrzejewski

V is for Vulnerable. The shepherds knew their sheep were vulnerable. It was their job to watch over the sheep, making sure they didn’t get lost or attacked. When we feel vulnerable or worried, we can remember that God is like a shepherd to us. In the psalms, we hear, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. ... Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil; for you, O God, are with me.” (Psalm 23:1,4)

U is for Unexpected. The people were awaiting a new king, who turned out to be a baby. They were expecting his birth to be announced to important people, but the first to find out were a group of lowly shepherds. They expected a king to be born in a big city, but instead he was born in a tiny town. All these things were unexpected, and they were all part of God’s plan.

Reader: Palmer Litman

T is for Time. Mary and Joseph had traveled to Bethlehem. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord’s angel stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly, a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors.” (Luke 2:6-14)

Hymn 113

“Angels We Have Heard on High”

GLORIA

Reader: Setemi Taiwo

S is for Shepherds. When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)

Readers: Waylon and Wyatt Ball

R is for Rowdy. The first Christmas was not sweet and calm, there were animals, noises, and smells! What good news it is that Jesus comes to us in our rowdy, messy, confusing lives. God did not need a perfect place to be born, or perfect people to share the message. We can rejoice and remind one another that we are all enough, just as we are.

Hymn 132

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

IN DULCI JUBILO

Reader: Wren Carter

Q is for Questions. Jesus asked questions throughout his life, and we should too! When Jesus was 12 years old, his family took a trip to Jerusalem. On the way back, Mary and Joseph realized he wasn't with the group. After three days they found him in the temple. He was sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed by his understanding. Mary said, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Listen! Your father and I have been worried. We’ve been looking for you!” Jesus replied, “Why were you looking for me? Didn’t you know I would be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:46-50)

Reader: Harrison Kirk

P is for Peace. One of the candles we light for Advent stands for peace. Peace means more than just “not fighting.” It means forgiving our enemies by seeking to understand them, learning about our neighbors, and helping everyone to have what they need.

Reader: Riv Wiltshire

O is for Offering. God gave us the gift of Jesus, the gift of this day, the gift of our lives - and so much more! In response, we return gifts to God during the time of offering. Sometimes we offer our time to be with people who are lonely, sometimes we offer our talents to help others with a task they couldn't do on their own, sometimes we offer our treasure to serve those who are in need. There are so many ways to share what God has given us.

Offertory Anthem

What Sweeter Music
Chancel Choir

John Rutter

*What sweeter music can we bring
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!*

*Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honor to this day,
That sees December turned to May.*

*Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow newly-shorn,
Thus, on the sudden? Come and see
The cause, why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis He is born, whose quickening birth
Gives life and luster, public mirth,
To heaven, and the under-earth.*

*We see him come, and know him ours,
Who, with his sunshine and his showers,
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.
The darling of the world is come,
And fit it is, we find a room
To welcome him. The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the heart.*

*Which we will give him; and bequeath
This holly, and this ivy wreath,
To do him honour, who's our King,
And Lord of all this revelling.*

*What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a carol for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?*

~ Robert Herrick

Reader: Rose Buxton

N is for Near. Because Jesus came into this world, we know that God is always near to us. This is what we read in Philippians: “Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful! Let everyone know how gentle you are. The Lord is near. Don’t worry about anything. No matter what happens, tell God about everything. Ask and pray, and give thanks to him. Then God’s peace will watch over your hearts and your minds. He will do this because you belong to Christ Jesus. God’s peace can never be completely understood.” (Philippians 4:4-7)

Hymn 151 (vv. 1 & 5)

“We Three Kings”

KINGS OF ORIENT

Reader: Alex Kiewiet de Jonge

M is for Magi. Magi is another word for wise people. They followed a star that led them to Jesus and his family. When they saw him, they were filled with joy. Even though he was just a boy, they gave him the kind of gifts you would give to a king: gold and special oils called frankincense and myrrh. Even though they were from a faraway land, the Magi could see that Jesus was the kind of person who would change the world.

Reader: Red Patton

L is for Love. Next week, we’ll light the candle of Love. Jesus showed us what love looks like: feeding the hungry, helping the sick, visiting the lonely, welcoming strangers.

Reader: George Redwine

K is for Kingdom. Jesus told a lot of stories about what God’s kingdom is like: finding a million dollars in a field, or a priceless jewel. It’s like finding something you hated to lose and thought you’d never find again - an old keepsake, a stray sheep, a missing child. When God’s kingdom really comes, it’s as if the thing you lost and found again is yourself. (Adapted from Frederick Buechner)

Reader: Maxwell Scott

J is for Joy. One of the advent candles we light stands for Joy. The birth of Jesus gives us joy. Joy is a kind of happiness that comes from God. No one can take it away from us, and we can share it with everyone.

Reader: Wilson Litman

I is for Imagination. The world tells a lie: there is not enough for everyone. Not enough money, not enough food, not enough love. But Jesus tells the truth: there is **always** enough. Our imagination helps us see how that can be possible, and helps us work to make it so.

Reader: Louisa Kiewiet de Jonge

H is for Hope. One of the Advent candles we light stands for Hope. Hope is knowing good news is coming, even when things look bad. Hope is trusting that God will care for us when times are good and when they are hard. Jesus is the source of our hope.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and of the People

Rev. Amy Starr Redwine

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.

Reader: Carolina Scott

G is for Grace. Grace means getting something you can't earn or deserve. Grace is like a present given at a party: something you get because the giver loves you. Jesus' birth is a gift of grace. Because he loves us, Jesus chose to become one of us - to be with us in our sadness, our happiness, and everything in between. This gift is good news that we can share with everyone we meet!

Reader: Jamie Scott

F is for Faith. When we are faithful, we live as if what Jesus said is true, even if we can't see it yet: we share what we have; we give food, clothing, time, and forgiveness; we include those who are left out. We love, because God first loved us. "Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we can't see." (Hebrews 11:1)

Hymn 133

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

ADESTE FIDELES

Reader: Morayo Taiwo

E is for Emmanuel. Emmanuel means "God is with us." That one word tells us the whole story of Christmas - God came to be with us, and God IS with us. Today, tomorrow, and always.

D is for Discover. When we read the stories of Jesus' life, we discover more about who God is and who God wants us to be. In the Bible, we read: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength. Tell these stories to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up. (Deuteronomy 6:5-7)

Reader: Fiona Nicholson

C is for Called. As he grew up, Jesus called people to follow him and learn from him. He called all kinds of people: poor people and rich people, doctors and fishermen, lawyers and tax collectors, women and men - people of every kind! Jesus welcomes everyone, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Reader: Lawson White

B is for Beloved. Each one of us is a beloved child of God. Whenever we feel lost or alone, we can always find comfort in the depths of God's love for us. We hear this throughout scripture. From the prophet Isaiah: "You are precious in my eyes, you are honored, and I love you." From the letter to the Romans: "I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or anything else that is created." (Isaiah 43:4 & Romans 8:38-39)

Reader: Brooke White

A is for Alpha. In the Bible, Jesus is called the Alpha and Omega - the first and the last. He knows the story of our lives, forward and backward. He is with us in the highs, the lows, and everything in between, and he gives us the strength to be there for others. This is good news of great joy - for ALL people!

On the first day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
and praise you Christ the King!

On the second day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Emmanuel, we praise you Christ the King!

On the third day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
God with us, Emmanuel, we praise you Christ the King!

On the fourth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the fifth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the sixth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the seventh day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Almighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the eighth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the ninth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the tenth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Lord of Lords,
Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the eleventh day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
King of Kings, Lord of Lords,
Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

On the twelfth day of Christmas,
we gather now to sing
Alpha and Omega, King of Kings, Lord of Lords,
Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace!
Bright Morning Star, God with us, Emmanuel,
we praise you Christ the King!

Blessing and Benediction

Cate Jobe

Postlude

Chorale Fantasia on “In dulci jubilo”

J. S. Bach

Curious about the bulletin image cover? Scan the QR code to read a statement from the artist.



Christmas Eve Services

4:00pm: We'll sing carols, hear familiar scriptures, and celebrate the wonder of the Incarnation.

8:00pm: We'll celebrate with a festival of lessons and carols with communion, our Chancel Choir, and candlelight.

*Childcare will be available during both services for infants to 3 year olds.

We have some great **J-Term** class offerings this year – there is sure to be something for everyone! Visit timyurl.com/jterm2025 to see a full list of courses.



Visit fpcrichmond.org/give or scan the QR code to make your 2025 pledge. Thank you for all the ways you give.



This week's usher team includes: Ken Horton, Caley Cantrell, Sherry May, Steve May, Tara Modisett

If interested in serving as an usher, contact Ken Horton (kmmfour@aol.com).

Elders at the doors: Eone Beck, Christina Luxon, Vicki Warren

The flowers in the Sanctuary are given in remembrance of Joan Bradley Hastings Crosby by Ralph R. Crosby, Jr. and his sons; and in honor of Carrington's first birthday by the Rudd family.

The flowers in the Sanctuary were arranged by Harriet Yake. The flowers in the Memorial Corridor were arranged by Kathy Watson.

Please keep in your prayers those with special concerns:

- Angela Annas (*Christina Luxon's mother*), recovering from hip replacement surgery
- Julia Bonham (*Sheila Smith's mother*), health concerns
- Ashtyn Bratt, recovering from broken ankle
- Vernon Glenn, health concerns
- Ken Horton, medical issues
- Pat Lintner (*Christa Santos' father*), health concerns
- John Miller, in treatment for brain cancer
- Barbara Mitchell (*Judy Noble's mother*), in hospice care
- Jane Neer, health concerns
- Byrd Newton (*Emily Laux's father*), health concerns
- Sue Parrish (*Kathy Nelson's mother*), health concerns
- Betty Proffitt (*Jenny Morris' mother*), health concerns
- Sandra Putbrese (*Cortland Putbrese's mother*), health concerns
- Yvonne Robertson (*Michelle Call's mother*), health concerns
- Sharon Spencer, health concerns
- Percy Wootton, health concerns

Those Grieving:

- Ila and John Porter on the death of their daughter-in-law, Cindy Porter, on December 7.
- Ash and Nellie Kashiwabara-Martin on the death of Ash's grandmother, Sue Cheney, on December 8.

We pray for members and family serving in the military:

Tripp Bowles, Jenny Sigel Burkett, Joshua Garber, Zach Kirk, Mason Louthan, Nathan Thomas Meade, Peyton Spivey, Pierce Tarry, and Will Watkins.

How can we pray for you?

You can submit concerns and celebrations at fpcrichmond.org/prayer or let one of our pastors know.