

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 22, 2019



COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America

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*Upon entering the sanctuary, please be sensitive
to the congregation's preparation for worship, and please make sure
all electronic devices are turned off or set to silent mode.*

-DRAWING NEAR TO GOD-

Welcome and Silent Prayer

A voice cries:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

O Lord, as we worship today, help us to prepare to welcome your dramatic work in our midst, in our hearts, in our community, and in all of creation. Help us to worship you.

—based on Isaiah 40.3

***Call to Worship**

Psalm 66.1-4

***Prayer of Adoration**

***Song of Advent**

Hymn No. 211

GOD REST YOU MERRY, GENTLEMEN

-HAVING OUR HEARTS CLEANSED-

Confession of Sin

Heavenly Father, we long to recapture the wonder of Christmas. You showed the world your splendor in the coming of your Son, yet our sins often leave us cold. Instead of peaceful, our hearts are often anxious; instead of joyful, irritable; instead of filled with surprise, bland; instead of anticipatory, fearful. In our sophistication we have become impoverished. Have mercy on us, O God. Renew us by your grace and mercy. Deliver us from the things that dim the brightness of your grace within us and prevent us from taking our deepest delight in you. We ask this in the name of Jesus, God with us. Amen.

Silently Add Your Own Confession of Sin

Assurance of Pardon

Matthew 1.20-23

Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

Old Testament Reading

Micah 5.2-5a

New Testament Reading

Luke 2.8-15

*Song of Advent

Hymn No. 218

ANGELS, FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

*Confession of Faith

Of what advantage to us is Christ's ascension?

Christ physically ascended on our behalf, just as he came down to earth physically on our account, and he is now advocating for us in the presence of his Father, preparing a place for us, and also sends us his Spirit.¹

—The New City Catechism, No. 51

Prayer for the Church and the World

¹ "Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us" (Rom 8.34).

-ATTENDING TO THE WORD-

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1.26-38

Sermon

“Immensity Contracted to a Span”
Rev. Ron Gonzales

***Song of Response**

Hymn No. 193

LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE

Worship of God with Tithes and Offerings

**DOXOLOGY*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Him, all creatures here below;

Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Words Thomas Ken, 1709; music Genevan Psalter, 1551; Public Domain

-OBSERVING THE SACRAMENT-

The Lord's Supper

We celebrate the Lord's Supper by coming forward and partaking of the bread and the cup. Wine is served in the inner rings of each tray; grape juice in the outer ring. We warmly invite to the Table all baptized Christians, who are living under the authority of Christ and his body, the Church. By eating the bread and drinking of the cup, you are acknowledging that you are a sinner, without hope except in the sovereign mercy of God, and that you are trusting in Christ alone for salvation. If this does not describe you, we are glad you are here and commend to you the following prayers for your use during this time.

A Prayer for those Searching for the Truth

Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and leads to the life you promise. Amen.

A Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever believed, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my need and may turn from every false pleasure to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race set before me, looking to you, the author and perfecter of my faith. Amen.

***Song of Thanksgiving**

Hymn No. 224

GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

-GOING FORTH TO SERVE-

***Benediction**

2 Corinthians 13.14

Postlude

*Please stand if able

Our Nursery Helpers

Today: Nicole Miller

Next Week: Jenni Early

Gatherings

A Children's Catechism Class, taught by Pastoral Intern Ronnie Curfman and Pastor Ron, meets the first and third Thursdays of each month, during the school year, from 3:30 to 5:00 PM, at the church.

The Tuesday Night Home Fellowship Group, led by Eric Carpenter and Ronnie Curfman, meets at Kathy Martin's (213 Chapra St) the first and third Tuesdays of each month, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. They are studying the Gospel of Luke and all are welcome.

A Men's Leadership Bible Study, led by Kirk Alden, meets at Tate's Umapine Mercantile on Tuesdays, from 6:00 to 7:00 PM. All men are invited. For more information, talk to Kirk.

The Men's Group, which meets Wednesdays, from 6:00 to 7:30 AM, is on break until January 8, when it will begin a study through the book of Joshua.

Prayer Meeting: Because of the Christmas Eve Service, there will be no prayer meeting this Tuesday.

The Women's Study, led by Cherry Gonzales and Christina McBean, is on break until Thursday, January 9, when it will resume its study of James.

Sermon Notes: “Immensity Contracted to a Span” (Luke 1.26-38)

Prayer Concerns

Boise Presbyterian Church: Pray for Rev. Brian Frey, our church planter in downtown Boise, that God strengthens him and blesses his labors as he gives himself to the city and to the church that has just begun under his leadership.

Tom & Melissa Manning (Turkey): Tom received the results of his recent biopsy. Most of the enlarged lymph nodes were type 1 (slow growing), though some were type 2 and a few type 3 (fast growing). Various treatments were presented, including chemotherapy. Pray for wisdom and discernment as he and Melissa weigh the options. And pray for their time with their children over Christmas—a particular blessing, given all that is going on.

Vickie Myers is at St Mary's, fighting another infection. Pray for healing and strength, and that she continues to be kept in God's comfort and peace.

Announcements

Birthdays & Anniversaries this Week:

December 26	Patton McKinney
December 27	C. J. Early
December 28	Eric and Karen Carpenter
December 28	Steve and Eileen Davis

The Children's Choir will practice after worship today for the Christmas Eve Service.

Christmas Brunch: Please join us after this morning's service for brunch and fellowship.

Christmas Eve Service: Please come and bring your family and friends to a Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, at 6:00 PM on Christmas Eve.

Daily Bible Reading: Reading through the Bible regularly is vital to our spiritual growth. Many of us will be doing so again in 2020, using Robert Murry M'Cheyne's daily schedule, which is available on the literature table. Please consider joining us.

Financial Update: The November financial report has been posted to the church website. If you need the password to view it, Jacob Schroeder would be happy to give it to you.

Explanation of Cover Symbol

In the Greek language of the early Christian era abbreviations were typically the first and last letters of words, often with a superscription to indicate the missing letters. IC is a standard abbreviation of IHCOYC, the Greek "Jesus," XC the abbreviation of XPICTOC, "Christ"; and NIKA means "He conquers." The symbol then reads, "Jesus Christ Conquers by the Cross" or "Jesus Christ, Victor."