

**Third Sunday of Advent
December 11, 2022**

Leading in Worship Today

Welcome and Announcements
Birthday Celebration

Pastor: *John D. Jordan*
Pianist: *Jo Ann Heiting*

AV Director: *Marie Stiles*
AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*
Time Together: *Ruth Frady*

Prelude
Call To Worship *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* Jo Ann Heiting
Choir

The Lighting of the Advent Candle

*Hymn *"Lord of the Dance"* 261

Opening Prayer
The Lord's Prayer 895

Proclamation of the Word
Prayer of Illumination

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 35:1-10 Pages 629-630 (O.T.)
Canticle of Mary Luke 1:46b-55 199

*Hymn *"Emmanuel, Emmanuel"* 204

New Testament Reading James 5:7-10 Page 220 (N.T.)
Anthem *"In the Bleak Midwinter"* Choir

Gospel Reading Matthew 11:2-11 Page 16 (N.T.)
Sermon *"Doubts and Questions"* Rev. John Jordan

Response to the Word *"The Apostles' Creed"* 881
Pastoral Prayer

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings
Offertory Jo Ann Heiting

*Doxology *"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"* 95

*Hymn *"Be Still, My Soul"* 534

*Dismissal With Benediction

*Benediction Response *"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"* Choir

*Postlude Jo Ann Heiting

*The Congregation May Stand

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor's tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

TODAY'S LOVELY FLOWERS are given to the **Glory of God** and in honor of **Bonnie Ramsey** on her 70th birthday December 9th, by her sister by heart, **Annie**.

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...

Patsy Zeigler	English Pea	Wayne Hooker	Charlie Hooker	Hilda Edwards	Christopher McCroskey
Jimmy Grahl	Lynn Martin	Marty Johnson	Steve Aiello	Patsy Shuler	Kaye Floyd
John Ballentine	Jackie McNeill	Dale Wells	Latson Lewis	Becky Derrick	

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Linda Maloch; Melton Martin; Georgeann Pace; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

Family and Friends: **Beverly Lipscomb** (sister-in-law of John Jordan); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **Jimmy Dawkins** (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); **David Turner** (brother of Pam Turner); **Chip Mixon** (friend of Tommy Gleaton); **Ron Walker** (friend of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); **Merit Takach** (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); **Frankie Hendrix** (cousin of Billy Pearson); **Howard Stephens** (former church member); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Stacy Coggins** (daughter of Steve Aiello); **Dan & Leslie White** (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); **Alva Humphries** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **Hayley Beaudoin** (niece of Edwa Meek); **Max Nova** (son of friend of Edwa Meek); **Addie Kinard** (cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek); **Stuart & Penny Lloyd** (son & daughter-in-law of Tom & Marilyn Lloyd); **Megan Corby** (daughter of Carlis Edwards); **Chip Hooker** (Wayne Hooker's father); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Gary Becton** (friend of Mark Branham); **Florence Lee Carter**, **Monnie Tiller** (friends of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Alexa Lookingbill** (wife of coworker of Kathy White); **Katelyn Rose** (daughter of co-worker of Kathy White); **Vickie Edwards** (neighbor of Kathy White); **Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Dianne Schmotzer** (sister-in-law of Gale Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Bryson Raszewski** (grandson of Caroline Hutton Raszewski); **Amelia Zinski** (great-niece of Linda Maloch); **Wayne Blair** (son of Dot Johnson); **Walt & Janet Beck** (friends of Jo Ann Heiting); **Adam Lavender** (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 12/04 SS: 9 Worship: 35

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 12/04 \$9,811.10

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS."

Upcoming Events

TODAY Birthday Celebration

12/12 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

Deadline for Donations in Lieu of Poinsettias

12/14 Advent Study, 12 p.m.

Choir, 6 p.m.

T.a.G., 7 p.m.

12/15 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

Readings for December 18

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalm 80

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

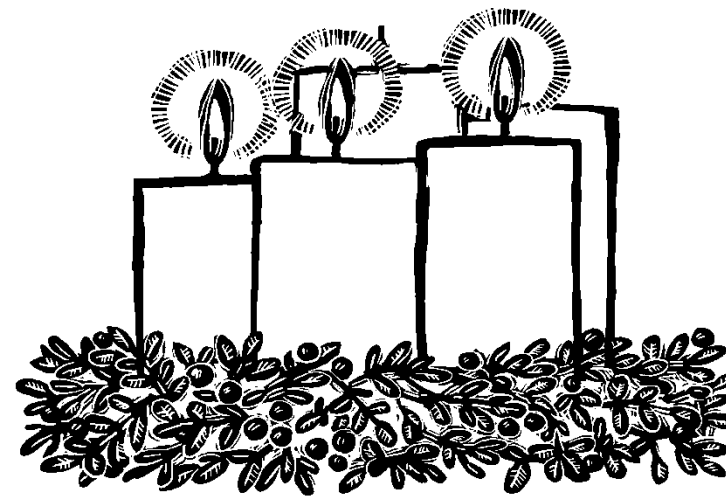


Ministers
Pastor
Resident Bishop
District Superintendent

The Congregation
John D. Jordan
Jonathan Holston
Rev. Fran M. Elrod

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



— THIRD SUNDAY OF —
ADVENT

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WEDNESDAYS IN ADVENT
12 P.M.

On Wednesday, December 14, we will continue our weekly Advent Study, *All the Good: A Wesleyan Way of Christmas*. Within the context of Advent and preparing for the coming of Jesus, we will examine the Wesleyan theology of grace, piety, mercy, and response. Join us at noon in the sanctuary or online on our YouTube channel.



Christmas Cards Needed

It is time to begin writing Christmas cards for our shut-ins and Asbury Arms folks. There are 8 local shut-ins and 55 Asbury Arms residents. We will need great participation for this endeavor! Please bring the cards to the church and put them on the table near the door to the sanctuary.

The last day to bring the cards will be **Sunday December 18** so that the gift bags can be delivered the week before Christmas. Please put the names of the shut-ins on their cards. Thanks so much for everyone's help!

Shut ins: Melton Martin, Jean Raynor, Claudia Sineath, Shirley Butler, Gillette Hipp, Esther Carter, Georgeann Pace and George Taylor



The deadline for turning in the information for gifts in lieu of poinsettias is **Monday, December 12**. All donations will go to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for Hurricane Ian disaster relief. A special insert listing memorials and honorariums will be in the bulletin on December 18.



"Christmas Words and Music"
Sunday, December 18

The cantata for this Christmas 2022 is titled, "**Christmas Words and Music**". To start with, there will be fewer words but that is to make room for lots of music. Come prepared to join us in singing many of your favorite Christmas carols, but you will get a break here and there as the choir sings some familiar anthems and a medley. Between the words and the music, we'll hear the story of the birth of Jesus. Christmas falls on Sunday but we'll be performing this year's cantata on Sunday the 18th. Come and make a joyful noise with us. We look forward to seeing you there!

Christopher & Dan



Columbia Community Concert Band
Christmas Melodies
Sunday, December 18
4 p.m.

The 42nd season of the Columbia Community Concert Band continues with a festive selection of music on Sunday, December 18, at 4 p.m. at Airport High School Auditorium. Admission is free. Chris Derrick will once again drive the church bus. The bus will leave the Gunter Circle parking lot at 3:20 p.m. A signup sheet is on the round table in the Gathering Area for those who would like to ride the bus. We hope you can join us!

Lynn Martin

My process for preparing a sermon is first to pray, then read each of the Lectionary texts. Often, through the guidance of the Spirit, one text jumps out as the one to use for the sermon. I study that text and write the sermon.

Sometimes, which text to use is not clear. None of the texts jump out, or they all jump out. When there is no clarity about which text to use, I read commentaries on each text, usually from *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Reading the commentaries provides further depth into each text so I can discern which text to use and the message from that text.

This week was one of the latter. All of the texts gave some message, but not **the** message. I began reading the commentaries but rather than clarity, I began to get more confused. Finally, as I was reading the commentary from Matthew 11, something in that passage popped out as the message for today, something that is not directly in the text.

John was in prison. He hears what the Messiah has been doing. He sends his disciples to Jesus to ask “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”

At first glance, this seems to be a reasonable query. John was in prison so he could not go ask Jesus for himself. But there is something odd about John asking this question.

In Chapter 3 we read the proclamation of John the Baptist. Matthew identified John as the voice crying out in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. John said one more powerful than he would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Then Jesus came to the Jordan to be baptized by John. John protested that he needed to be baptized by Jesus, not the other way around. John heard the voice from heaven saying, “This is my son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

After experiencing all this and confidently knowing Jesus was the Messiah, John now sends his disciples to ask if Jesus was the Messiah. Eight chapters later John asks this question. Seems a bit odd, doesn't it? It seems that John was beginning to have some doubts about Jesus being the Messiah.

Perhaps John doubted because he did not hear of Jesus doing the expected. Jesus was not inciting an armed rebellion. Jesus was not calling out the ones in power, calling them broods of vipers and such. Jesus was not even baptizing and calling people to repent. Jesus was not the fire and brimstone preacher John may have expected. Jesus was not calling for the destruction of enemies. Any or all of these may be why John doubted but we do know John doubted.

We may have our doubts. We may look around our world and wonder, “Where is God in all this?”. There is a war in Ukraine. People are without power in subfreezing temperatures. Grain supplies to the world are in peril. Innocent people, noncombatants, are being killed. Where is God?

People are dying of starvation. Many around the world are existing on a daily caloric intake that is much less than what is needed to be healthy. Even in this country, with all our wealth and resources, people go to bed hungry through no fault of their own. Many are also homeless. So many in our world are living in poverty, even with all our wealth and resources. Where is God in such poverty?

We see so much violence. Not just in war but on city streets around the world. Much of this violence is related to drug and human trafficking. There seems to be an epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault. Where is the Prince of Peace?

Even in this season of Christmas, we have our doubts. All the emphasis seems to be to buy, buy, buy. The stores put out Christmas merchandise even before the trick-or-treaters hit the streets. We may wonder if Christmas is a big commercial racket. Like Lucy told Charlie Brown, “We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket. It’s run by a big Eastern syndicate, you know.¹” Is Jesus in all this commercialism?

We may have our doubts. We may ask questions. We may wonder, “Has God forgotten us?”.

Perhaps, like John, our expectations of the Messiah are not what we want to hear. Like John, we may expect God to come down with fire and brimstone to destroy all the evil in the world. We expect God to get rid of all the bad and leave the good people. Like the prophet Isaiah said, “He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. (35:4)” God will come and sweep away all the evil and we will live in the peaceable kingdom we heard about last week.

Notice that Jesus did not rebuke John’s disciples in doubt. Nor does he directly answer them. He tells them to tell John what they see and hear: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is brought to the poor. Jesus is indirectly referring to Isaiah 35.

Isaiah says, “Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. (Sounds good so far, so let’s see what God will do) He will come and save you. (yay!) Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.”

This doesn’t sound much like coming with vengeance and terrible recompense. It sounds rather nice. It sounds like people are being restored to wholeness. This is the work of the Messiah, to restore to wholeness people and creation. Jesus tells John’s disciples to report to John that he is doing the work of the Messiah. He is restoring not destroying. Look for the work of the Messiah.

We need to look for the work of the Messiah. In all the stuff that is going on in the world, the work of the Messiah is still happening. Sight is being restored to the blind. Lame people are walking. Lepers, those who believe they are unclean, are cleansed. The deaf hear. Much of this is due to God-given technology and medical advances. The Good News of God’s restoration of the world through Jesus Christ is still being sung every Christmas!

Tuesday we had our Christmas luncheon for the district clergy and spouses. Fran Elrod, the DS, presented the program. Usually, we sing carols but this time Fran told us the backstory of the carols we sang. One was written by a Unitarian Minister named Edmund H. Sears during the tumultuous years before the Civil War. His

¹ Charles Shultz, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1965) 20

carol, *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, does not mention Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, or Wise Men. However, it focused on something he believed people need to hear at that time and it is something we need to hear today.

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
“Peace on the Earth, good will to all, from heaven’s all gracious King”

from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

Every verse ends with “angels sing”. Rev. Sears was telling people then and tells us now to stop and listen, and we will hear the angels sing. The angels are singing. The Messiah is working.

Last week during communion, I almost lost it completely. This year has been so difficult with so many deaths in our church. So many people that we loved so dearly are no longer with us this Christmas. I have been tired, sad, and heavy. Having so many not there to come up with some of you for communion was painful. But when Mark brought Everly and Lyla Faye up for Communion, tears began to trickle down my cheeks. I was reminded that all was not sadness and grief. There were times of joy as we baptized them back in March. The angels sang of the joy of new life. I thought all those I could not serve communion are now singing with the angels. My soul was lightened as the angels sang.

When we doubt and question, look around. Look for the restorative work of the Messiah happening in the world. Listen for the angels singing, for they **are** singing. Stop, Look, Listen. Do you hear them? Do you see the work of the Messiah? Stop, Look, Listen.