

First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 2023

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey
(As the Prelude begins, prayerfully prepare your hearts and minds for worship.)

Call to Worship "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" Choir
Greeting

Blessing of the Chrismon Tree
*Hymn "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" 196
Opening Prayer
Prayer for Illumination

"Let the Children Come!" *Lighting of the Advent Candle*
(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 64:1-9 Page 658 (O.T.)
Psalter Psalm 80 801-802
*Hymn "Dear Jesus, in Whose Life I See" 468

Epistle Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Page 157 (N.T.)
Gospel Reading Mark 13:24-37 Pages 51-52 (N.T.)
Sermon "Advent Hope" Rev. John D. Jordan

*Response to the Word "The Apostles' Creed" 881
*Gloria Patri "Glory Be to the Father" 70
Pastoral Prayer

Invitation
Confession and Pardon
Passing of the Peace

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings
Offertory "An Advent Prayer" Choir
*Doxology "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" 95

The Great Thanksgiving
The Lord's Prayer
Breaking the Bread
Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Hymn "Hymn of Promise" 707
*Dismissal With Benediction
*Benediction Response "May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You" Choir & Congregation

*The Congregation May Stand

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: John D. Jordan AV Director: Marie Stiles
Music Director: Christopher A. McCroskey AV Assistant: Chris Derrick
Time Together: Jack Stevens; Pam Turner

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 **Jim Stiles' birthday on December 5**, by **Marie, Mac, Paige, Piper and Addi Stiles**.

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

Patsy Zeigler Becky Derrick Kaye Floyd Dale Wells Patsy Shuler Christopher McCroskey
Charlie Hooker Latson Lewis John Ballentine Mary Kamoroff Steve White Jimmy Grahl

Shut-Ins: Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

Family and Friends: **Bryan Collard** (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); **Charlyn McNeill** (sister of Mary Sue Lewis); **Elizabeth Kelsey & Jamie Barnett** (friends of John & Kay Jordan); **Alex Courtney** (friend of great nephew of Joyce Robinson); **Lawrence Gilbert** (friend of Becky Derrick); **Bob Bohnstengel** (spouse of Jo Ann Heiting's cousin); **Judy Spence** (former member); **Anne Piercy** (former member); **Missy Abrams** (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); **Charlie & Mary Davis** (son-in-law & daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Lauren & Leah Grace Edwards** (granddaughter & great-granddaughter of Hilda Edwards); **Gloria Erd** (friend of Lynn Martin); **Pearl Geddens** (mother of Tom Geddens); **Beverly Lipscomb** (sister-in-law of John Jordan); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **Nancy Wilson** (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); **David Turner** (brother of Pam Turner); **Ernie & Betsey Hendrix, Chip Mixon** (friends of Tommy Gleaton); **Ron & Janet Walker** (friends of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); **Merit Takach** (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Stacy Coggins** (daughter of Steve Aiello); **Sweat Family** (friends of Marty Johnson); **Alva Humphries** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **David Grandshaw** (brother-in-law of Edwa Meek); **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, Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Bernardo Velasquez, 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 ...

Attendance 11/26 SS: 14 Worship: 33

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 11/26 \$ 2,922.69

OUR SERVICE...

OUR WITNESS.”

Church Calendar

12/06 Wednesday's Words, 11:30 a.m.

Choir, 6 p.m.

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

12/08 Office Closed

Readings for December 10

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8



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



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Christmas Cards & Gifts for Shut-ins and Residents of Asbury Arms

It is time to begin writing Christmas cards for our shut-ins and residents of Asbury Arms. There will be approximately 75 bags so we will need lots of cards. Please bring your cards to the church and place them in the box in the Gathering Area designated “Cards.” Please bring your cards to the church by Sunday, December 17. (Please write the names of our shut-ins on the cards’ envelopes.)

Shut-ins: *Esther Carter, Nell Cooke, Gillett Hipp, Linda Maloch, Jean Raynor, Claudia Sineath, Libby Strickland and George Taylor*

All of the cards will be placed in gift bags as well as small gifts and treats. If you would like to donate to this ministry, please place your check or cash in an envelope marked Christmas Gift Bags, and either (1) place it in the offering plate or (2) give it to Jackie Eitel, by December 17.



The Gifts of Christmas Sunday, December 17

This year’s Christmas Cantata is called *The Gifts of Christmas*. What will be unwrapped through music and narrative are the things we celebrate at this season: family, friends, presents and the spiritual blessings we find in the birth of Jesus. Please come and celebrate with us on Sunday the 17th as we usher in the gifts of Christmas.



In lieu of Poinsettias this year, we will be collecting funds for the **University of South Carolina Food Pantry**. The pantry provides students in need with food as well as toiletries, school supplies and small housewares as needed. The deadline for turning in the information for gifts in lieu of poinsettias is **Monday, December 11**. Inserts will be in the bulletin and can be picked up in the Church Office. Please call if you need one mailed or emailed to you. A special insert listing memorials and honorariums will be in the bulletin on December 17.



Columbia Community Concert Band *Holiday Cheer* Sunday, December 17 4 p.m.

Sunday will be a day of music for our church family! Our Trinity choir will present their beautiful Christmas Cantata during our time of worship which is always special and meaningful. Christopher and the choir have been practicing for weeks to prepare this musical celebration of the Christmas season, and we do hope that many of our congregation will attend in person to enjoy the wonderful musical talents of our choir.

At 4 in the afternoon on the 17th, please join us at the Airport High School Auditorium as our community band presents their final concert for the 2023 season. The musical selections vary from classic to contemporary to popular Christmas songs and there’s bound to be one that you’ll recognize. And there may be a song or two you haven’t heard before that might be a new favorite! So, let’s make it a musical day as we slow down from all the rushing around and enjoy the sounds of the Christmas season. You’ll be glad you did! Chris Derrick will be driving the church bus which will leave the Gunter Circle parking lot at 3:20 pm. A sign-up sheet is on the round table in the Gathering Area if you’d like to join our festive group!



This month I will begin a program I am calling **Wednesday’s Words** at 11:30 am. You may participate in person in the sanctuary or on our YouTube channel. The beginning series will be Finding and Keeping Joy based on the *Book of Joy* by Bishop Desmond Tutu and the Dali Lama. After that, I will begin a series on United Methodist beliefs. This will be ongoing and open to any topics you might like to discuss. Come or tune in on Wednesdays at 11:30 am.

Advent Hope
Mark 13:24-37

12/3/2023
1st Sunday of Advent

Life for the commoners in Judea during the Roman rule was dark. They lived under the darkness of Roman oppression. Herod, the “king of the Jews” was not a Jew. He was a puppet enthroned by the Romans. He was so power-hungry and paranoid that he eliminated any threat to his power, even having his son murdered.

Then there were the taxes. One paid tax to the Romans, tax to Herod, and one even had to pay a temple tax. If one did not pay the taxes, troops would come in and take everything, including sons and daughters. The people were oppressed by taxes and the “peacekeeping” Romans.

Life for a commoner in Judea two thousand years ago was bleak, as bleak as a tree in midwinter. The summer green and autumn colors were gone and its branches were stark against the winter sky. Life was cold and cruel. People struggled to survive.

In this darkness, God was acting. God was sending a light into the darkness of the world. The light came not bright and flashing but in the form of a baby born to a common laborer and his young bride. This baby was not born in a city or a palace but in a stable in a small town called Bethlehem, whose name means House of Bread.

This light first appeared to shepherds, who went to see the babe who brought light into the dark world. The light was revealed to the Magi, who had been watching the heavens for the sign. This sign was a star that led them to where they could pay homage to the light.

The shepherds were the lowest on the social ladder. They were young boys and old men, unable to do any other work. They were among the marginalized. They had little hope for a better life. Yet, the light first appeared to them. The light of hope came to those who had little hope.

The Magi were Gentiles. They came from the East, indicating they were from Persia, a place that had formerly been a place of exile. They did not have the hope of being citizens of God’s Kingdom. Yet, the light appeared to them. The light of hope came to the outsiders, foreigners, and “others.”

The light of hope came to the marginalized; they needed hope because they had none. The light of hope came to the foreigners; they were looking for the sign of hope.

We may feel that our world is dark and bleak. We have wars and the atrocities of war. People are shot or beaten because of the color of their skin, their dress, or their religion. Civil discourse has given way to back-biting, name-calling, and threats of violence. Truth has gone out the window, and we hear what we want to hear. Yes, life may seem pretty bleak.

But the light that came into the darkness of ancient Judea still shines today. The hope that came to the marginalized 2000 years ago still comes to the marginalized today. The light of hope still shines for the hopeless. The hope that came to foreigners and outsiders still comes to all people today. The light of hope still shines to gather all people to the light.

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Earthly empires have risen and fallen, emperors have come and gone, dictators have gained and lost power, never-ending empires have been forgotten, invincible military powers have been overrun, and great buildings have been turned to rubble. All earthly things pass away.

But Jesus' words will not pass away. By Jesus' words, we are not talking about Jesus' sayings or the writings about Jesus, but the revelation of God through Jesus. The revelation is that God comes to the marginalized and hopeless. God comes to the foreigners and outsiders. God comes to bring healing and restoration to all creation.

God's revelation through Jesus is that God is taking over. God's kingdom has come on earth and is expanding. God's hope is here for those needing it and those seeking it.

We tend to think Advent is the time for preparing for Jesus to come. We decorate and sing hymns in anticipation of Christmas to celebrate Jesus' birth. We prepare for Jesus' return.

We prepare for Jesus to return to complete the salvation and restoration of creation begun in the manger of Bethlehem. In the darkness and bleakness, we see the shoots of new leaves on trees. We know that the dark and cold of winter will give way to the warmth and light of summer.

We prepare for Advent in our usual ways: decorating trees, hanging ornaments, buying gifts, and singing carols. In this way, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light that gives hope in the darkness.

We also prepare for Jesus' return. We prepare in the ways we have discussed over the last few weeks, continuing to do the work for God's Kingdom. We look for opportunities to shine light and spread hope to others.

Tuesday night Kay and I went to the USC Men's basketball game. I had gotten out cash anticipating paying for parking. Fortunately, we found a place to park for free. So, Wednesday morning, I still had cash in my wallet.

At about 11:45, Jackie buzzed me and said that someone was at the door who wanted to talk to a pastor. I went to the door, and a man was standing outside. I opened the door and introduced myself. He said he didn't want anything but needed to talk to someone.

He and his wife had recently bought a house in Blythewood. His wife was in Lexington Medical Center and possibly needed surgery. He had been staying at the hospital with her but occasionally driving home. Because of this situation, his resources were running low.

He was the type of person who always took care of things and was in control. However, he felt he could not take care of his wife and home and had no control. He said he needed faith and hope.

We talked for a while, then went into the sanctuary and prayed. On his way out, his wife called to let him know she was having the surgery. This meant more trips back and forth to Blythewood. Because I had the cash, I gave him enough to get some gas and some essentials. More than the cash, I pray I gave him some hope. I pray I gave him some hope that God will get him through this crisis.

We can shine light into the world to overcome the darkness. We can give hope to the hopeless as opportunities are revealed to us. We have the hope of Advent. We have hope that the revelation of God through Jesus' birth never passes away. We have the hope that Jesus will return and complete the restoration of God's Kingdom. We have hope that spreads as we give hope to others.

This is our advent hope.