

Second Sunday of Advent
December 10, 2023

Leading in Worship Today

Welcome and Announcements		
Prelude		Christopher A. McCroskey
Call To Worship	<i>“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”</i>	Choir
Greeting		
*Hymn	<i>“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”</i>	216
Opening Prayer		
The Lord's Prayer		895
Proclamation of the Word		
Prayer of Illumination		
“Let the Children Come!”	<i>Lighting of the Advent Candle</i>	
	<i>(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)</i>	
Old Testament Reading	Isaiah 40:1-11	Page 634 (O.T.)
Psalter	Psalms 85	806
*Hymn	<i>“I Love You, Lord”</i>	TFWS 2068
Epistle Reading	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Pages 227-228 (N.T.)
Anthem	<i>“The Earliest Christmas Morn”</i>	Choir
Gospel Reading	Mark 1:1-8	Page 37 (N.T.)
Sermon	<i>“Advent: The Way”</i>	Rev. John Jordan
*Affirmation of Faith	<i>“The Apostles' Creed”</i>	881
*Gloria Patri	<i>“Glory Be to the Father”</i>	70
Pastoral Prayer		
Presentation of Tithes & Offerings		
Offertory		Christopher A. McCroskey
*Doxology	<i>“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”</i>	95
*Hymn	<i>“Heralds of Christ”</i>	567
*Dismissal With Benediction		
*Benediction Response	<i>“May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You”</i>	Choir

*The Congregation May Stand

Pastor: *John D. Jordan* AV Director: *Marie Stiles*
 Music Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey* AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*
 Time Together: *Ruth Frady*

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.

A Gift to Trinity is given to the Glory of God and in honor of Bonnie Ramsey's 71st birthday on December 9th, by her sister-by-heart, Annie Heiting

“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 ...

In-Person Attendance 12/03 SS: 13 Worship: 37

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 12/03 \$ 3,691.00

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

TODAY Birthday Celebration

SPRC Meeting following Worship

12/11 Poinsettia Information Due

12/13 Wednesday's Words, 11 a.m.

Choir, 6 p.m.

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

12/15 Office Closed

Readings for December 17

Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28



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.

“Prepare the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight.”

Mark 1:1-8

Mark does not begin with a birth story or theologically dense prelude; he dives right into the Gospel. Mark begins his Gospel with these words from Isaiah.

In Isaiah, these words are in the context of the return of the exiles to Jerusalem. For Mark, these words set forth the mission of John the Baptizer. John is the voice shouting in the wilderness, calling people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. These words also are a call of what we are to be doing. We are to be preparing the way of the Lord.

Wait a minute! John’s gone off the deep end again. What does he mean; we are to be preparing the way of the Lord? One, Jesus has already come. Secondly, we are not prophets; we are just ordinary people coming to hear God’s word (or maybe get a nap). How are we supposed to prepare the way of the Lord? We are not trained to prepare the way of the Lord. We have not gone to seminary.

To see what I mean, let’s look closely at this phrase, “Prepare the way of the Lord.” Let’s examine it in the context of Isaiah and Mark.

As I mentioned earlier, the exile’s return to Jerusalem was the context of Isaiah. The Israelites had been in exile in Babylon. Now, the Persian king allowed them to return to Jerusalem. While the first entrance into the Promised Land was after 40 years of wandering the wilderness and military conquest, the return was to be straight and level. The glory of the Lord would be revealed at the end of the highway. God was leading the Israelites back to the Promised Land. They were to be restored to the land.

In Mark, this was the mission of John. John was the voice shouting from the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. John was preparing the people for the coming of the Messiah. John was preparing for the one who would reclaim Israel from foreign oppression and bring the people back to God.

In both Isaiah and Mark, the way appears to be a road. Both the Hebrew and Greek meant road or path. They were preparing a road. In Isaiah, the road was to return the exiles to Jerusalem. In Mark, the road was for the Messiah to come to Israel. Both were preparing for something to come, returning to Jerusalem and the Messiah.

The word way has another meaning besides road or path. In Hebrew, Greek, and English, the word “way” may refer to a manner of behavior or custom. When we talk about the way we do things around here, we refer to how we behave here, not the road we took to get here. Way means a mode of life, a lifestyle.

So when the prophets talk about the way of the Lord, they may also be talking about living the way the Lord wants us to live. For Isaiah, the way of the Lord would be living according to the Torah. The restored nation of Israel would live according to God’s instructions. The glory of the Lord would be revealed through the Torah.

In Mark, John points to the good news that follows. He prepares people for the way of God that is revealed through Jesus. While John baptizes with water, Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus, God’s way is fulfilled. God’s glory is revealed in Jesus, and creation is restored.

What is God's way? What is the way we are to live? Is it keeping all the commandments of the Bible? The way we live is not keeping commandments to the letter of the law. No, the way we live is according to the life of Jesus.

The way we live is according to Jesus in the manger, humbly, and for the marginalized and outsiders. We live according to Jesus of Galilee, his teaching and healing. We live according to Jesus in Jerusalem, confronting oppression and exploitation. We live according to Jesus in Gethsamene, adhering to the Father's will even though we don't want to. We live according to Jesus on the cross, sacrificing ourselves to God. As we do, we live according to the resurrected Jesus, eternally with the Father. This is our way.

This way of Jesus is a way of hope. Hope in the certainty of God's word. As Isaiah says, "The grass withers; the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. (40:8)." Those that walk this way have hope that God's word is eternal and God's promise of restoration is being fulfilled. We have a present and future hope that God is working in the world and God will restore creation. As Bishop Kenneth Carder says, "God gets the last at-bat."

The way of Jesus is a way of peace. Peace is not just an absence of conflict but of harmony. People work together for a goal, in the same way that the soprano, alto, tenor, and bass voices of the choir come together to make beautiful music. It is not only external peace but also inner peace. The way of Jesus brings peace to the world, social relations, and our souls.

The way of Jesus is a way of joy. Joy goes beyond happiness. While happiness is a response to external events, joy is an internal way of being. Joy is more than an emotion. It is a state of being. Join me at 11:30 am Wednesday here or on YouTube as we delve deeper into joy.

The way of Jesus is a way of love, not a sentimental love but giving one's self. This love comes from God, who, in the form of Jesus, died on the cross to redeem the world. As this love comes from God, we give love to our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

This is the way. This is the way of we who follow the path of Jesus. Though not always an easy way it is the way we experience God's glory. It is the way that leads to eternal life in the presence of God. It is the way we prepare for others.

We are the signpost pointing the way of Jesus to others. The Isenheim Altarpiece was sculpted and painted by Matthias Grunewald for the hospital chapel of St Anthony's Monastery in France. It depicts the Crucifixion of Jesus flanked by the mourning Madonna being comforted by the Apostle John and Mary Magdalene on the left. On the right is John the Baptist, pointing to Christ on the Cross.

We who live the way of Jesus point the world to the crucified Christ. We point to the Son of God dying on the cross as the means by which God is working to restore creation and bring life to the world. We point to Christ by giving hope, peace, joy, and love to those around us.

To prepare the world, we must prepare ourselves. In Hebrew, the word translated as prepare in Isaiah means to turn toward. We prepare ourselves by turning away from the world and toward God.

In this season, which the world glorifies by consumerism, let us turn toward the true glory of the season, a baby born in a stable that was destined to reveal God's glory by teaching, healing, and dying on the cross. Let us point the world to the way of Jesus, the way of hope, peace, joy, and love. Let us reveal God's glory to the world.