

A TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION

THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: The God of all mercy and consolation has reconciled the world through the birth and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, forgiving you all your sin.
By the power of the Holy Spirit
may the image of God be restored in you,
the wisdom of God renewed in you,
and the breath of God revived in you,
in the name of the Prince of Peace, God's Word made flesh.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

*THE GLORIA PATRI 579

Gloria Patri

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

PC (USA) Study Catechism, Questions 29-31

Leader: [Question 29.] What do you believe when you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as "God's only Son"?

People: **That Jesus Christ is a unique person who was sent to do a unique work.**

Leader: [Question 30.] How do you understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ?

People: **No one else will ever be God incarnate. No one else will ever die for the sins of the world. Only Jesus Christ is such a person, only he could do such a work, and he in fact has done it.**

Leader: [Question 31.] What do you affirm when you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as "our Lord"?

People: **That having been raised from the dead he reigns with compassion and justice over all things in heaven and on earth, especially over those who confess him by faith; and that by loving and serving him above all else, I give glory and honor to God.**

*THE GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

Kindly pass your Prayer Requests to the center aisle so they may be collected and forwarded to the Prayer Cordon for special attention.

THE SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE NOISY OFFERING (OF LOOSE CHANGE)

THE CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Creator of the Stars of Night

CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 64:1-9

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Liturgist: Here ends the reading of the Epistle.

All: **Praise be to you, O Lord.**

THE GOSPEL LESSON Mark 13:24-37

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord.

All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

*THE CONGREGATIONAL CANTICLE (Hymn Tune #333, Seek Ye First)

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Al-le-lu, alleluia!**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you,
Seek and ye shall find,
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
Al-le-lu, alleluia!**

THE SERMON “ ANOTHER SEASON BEGINS ” Dr. Swanson

*THE PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER (using “debts” and “debtors”)

*THE THREE-FOLD AMEN Danish

THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS, & GIFTS

THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence* Gustav Holst

*THE ADVENT DOXOLOGY - Hymn 36, vs. 4 CRANHAM

***What can I give Him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
Yet what I can I give Him, Give my heart.***

*THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Use us, O God of miracles, and the offerings we have brought, to bring life and health and hope to your world. Make us generous and faithful stewards of your mysteries, as we share the bounty which you have granted unto us. Through Christ we pray. Amen.

THE COMMUNION HYMN 3 (seated)
Comfort, Comfort You My People PSALM 42

THE INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

- Pastor: Friends, we are the body of Christ.
People: **His Spirit is with us.**
Pastor: Let us lift up our hearts.
People: **We lift them to the Lord.**
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
Pastor: With angels and archangels, with all the saints before us
and beside us, with brothers and sisters, east and west,
north and south, we sing the hymn of unending praise:
People: **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of truth and light,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT (*come forward*)

*THE RESPONSE FOLLOWING COMMUNION

- Pastor: The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all.
People: **And also with you.**
Pastor: Bless the Lord, O my soul;
People: **And all that is within me, bless His Holy Name.**
Pastor: Bless the Lord, O my soul;
People: **We forget not all His benefits.**
Pastor: Let us pray.

O God, who called us from death to life: we give ourselves to You, and with the church through all ages, we praise You for Your great gift of Jesus Christ, born to set us free. Now strengthen us by this holy meal, shared in the spirit with our Lord, who makes us new and strong, who brings us life eternal. Amen.

*THE RECESSIONAL HYMN 20 *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night* ABERYSTWYTH

*THE BENEDICTION

*THE CHORAL RESPONSE *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* Peter C. Lutkin

*THE TIME OF SILENCE

*THE CHARGE AND DISMISSAL

- Pastor: Let us go in eager expectation of the in-breaking day of the Lord
with all its fullness and peace. Wait and watch, pray and work,
for such is the calling of faith.
People: **We will not grow weary, but urge one another on
with words of hope and encouragement.**
Pastor: Then go in peace! Serve the Lord!
People: **Thanks be to God!**

*THE POSTLUDE *Savior of the Nations, Come* J. H. Buttstedt

* THOSE WHO ARE ABLE, PLEASE STAND.

Grace and Peace to All

*We want to get to know you,
especially if you are a visitor!*

Please introduce yourself to others sitting nearby during the passing of the peace. Fellowship Hour will be in the Assembly Room downstairs. (exit at the rear of the sanctuary, go down to the lower level, past the Library to the room near the Sallman painting of Christ knocking at the door.)



THE POINSETTIAS in the Sanctuary are given by Helen Ferguson in honor of Beverly Antis, Choir Director and the men and women of the Covenant Choir.

YOU WERE GREETED TODAY by Helen Ferguson.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR - Everyone is cordially invited to attend today's Fellowship Hour which immediately follows this worship service downstairs in the Assembly Room. Hosting today's Fellowship Hour is Grace Sechler.

In The Life of Our Church

Prayer Concerns:

Mary Elizabeth Goehring . . Hospice Care at Concordia
Mary Lee Marten Continuing knee pain, prayers for mobility

Joys:

The Swansons Pastor Jim and Karen have recovered from their surgeries, and we are happy to have them back!

For Continued Prayer:

Julie & Bud Bruno; Marion Campbell; Marian Curran; Mary Elizabeth Goehring; Joan Moore; Eleanor Ritts; Gladys Strobel; Bill Wilson

Birthdays this week:

Nancy Blewett - Today, November 30
Marian Curran - December 6

THE COVENANT CHOIR - *No rehearsal this Thursday December 4.*

Advent Choir Rehearsals: The Covenant Choir will rehearse in the Sanctuary on Thursdays from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm (a half-hour earlier) on December 11 and December 18. Sunday rehearsal time is 10 a.m.



Advent Calendar

Today, Sunday, November 30 @ 1:30 p.m. (Sanctuary)

Trombone Quartet Concert in the Sanctuary featuring Matt Altdorfer and SRU bandmates (A reception follows in the Assembly Room)

Saturday, December 6

9:30 a.m. - Hanging of the Greens (decorating church for Christmas)

7:00 p.m. - "The Baddest Angels' Band," a YMCA Christmas Musical directed by Dee Demby (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, December 21 - Lessons & Carols Rehearsal for Readers, Choir and Pastor in the Sanctuary following the morning worship service

Wednesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

7:00

p.m. Prelude of Christmas Music

7:30 p.m. Service of Lessons & Carols (based on the traditional service, Kings College, Cambridge, England)

FAIR TRADE GOURMET COFFEE & TEA ARE BACK AGAIN and will be available today in the Assembly Room at Fellowship Hour. Each packet (1.5 ounces) of *Café Salvador* contains enough coffee to make one (64 fluid oz.) pot of coffee. The cost is \$1 per packet. We also have Earl Grey Organic Tea at \$2.50 per box (25 teabags per box).

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Members of the Fellowship & Outreach Committee will be on hand to add decorations to the tree and decorate the church for the Advent/Christmas season this Saturday, December 6th at 9:30 a.m. Members of the congregation are also welcome to attend and to help with the decorating.

SEEKERS' CLASS COMING UP

9:45 a.m. in the Assembly Room

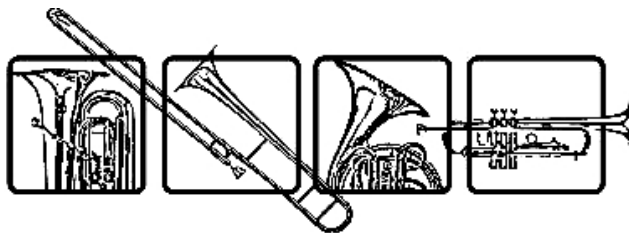
December 7th - Will Pollock

(Meridian Presbyterian Church)

Topic: *Presbyterian Mission Trip to South Africa*



“In Celebration of the Beginning of Advent”



A CONCERT FEATURING

Matt Altdorfer & SRU Friends

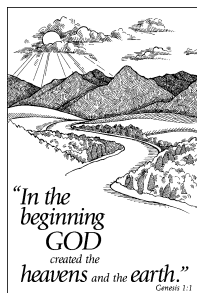
Trombone Quartet

TODAY at 1:30 pm

in the Sanctuary of Covenant Church

Matt, our choir section leader, and his SRU bandmates will delight you with the majestic sound of brass!

A reception with Cookies and Punch follows the concert in the Assembly Room.



“Stewardship of God’s Green Earth, II”

If you have returned your pledge, **THANK YOU!** If not, please place your pledge on the offering plate any Sunday morning, drop it off at the church office, or mail it to the church. Extra pledge cards and envelopes are available in the narthex.



“WHATS HAPPENING WITH OUR ECONOMY?”

Current news of our troubled financial institutions continues to worry everyone. This paper, written by Brent Waters, gives an insightful background to the problem and offers a helpful theological perspective for concerned Christians.

Additional copies of this thoughtful Study Paper are now available on the table in the narthex. Please take one today if you did not get a copy last Sunday!

Butler Arts Center

(located on S. Main St. beside Natili South Restaurant
and across from the Butler Post Office)



Presents their

Annual Holiday Show and Sale

December 5, 2008 through January 2, 2009

Opening Day: Friday, December 5 at 12 Noon – 9 p.m.

Reception from 6 p.m.– 9 p.m.

Art Center is Open: *(Free Admission)*

Wednesdays and Thursdays: 12 Noon – 6 p.m.

Fridays: 12 Noon – 9 p.m.

Saturdays: 12 Noon – 4 p.m.

Mr. Gregory Stokes

Local Artist and Friend of Covenant Church, will have several of his oil paintings on display (which are available for sale.) You may also commission Mr. Stokes to do oil paintings for you or for others.

(A great gift idea)

*Invitations to the congregation
are available in the Assembly Room
during Fellowship Hour*

When you are making out your Christmas cards this year, please take time to send one additional card to:

A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20307-5001



FYI: Cell Phone Numbers Are Now Public

All cell phone numbers were released to telemarketing companies last week, and you will almost certainly begin to receive sales calls. (Of course, you will be charged for these calls if your calling plan does not include unlimited minutes.)

**To prevent this, call the
NATIONAL DO NOT CALL REGISTRY
from your cell phone: 888-382-1222**

Doing this will effectively block your number from unsolicited telemarketing calls for five (5) years.

Note: You must call *from* the cell phone you want to have blocked. You cannot call from a different phone number. It only takes about 30 seconds to complete.

COME TO THE MANGER !



2008 ADVENT DEVOTIONALS ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

Once again this year, we are pleased to offer a printed *Advent Devotional* for you, created by Lutheran Hour Ministries. This year's booklet is titled "Come To The Manger" and is available also in large print. Please get your copy today (on the table at the back of the sanctuary in the narthex.) Extra copies have been printed, so you are encouraged to take additional devotionals to give to family, friends or neighbors. May this resource be a blessing to you as you prepare for the coming of our Savior in your heart, in your home and in our world this year.

A NEW ADVENT SEASON, A NEW CHURCH YEAR!

Happy New Year! This Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent, begins a new church year, a cycle that takes us through the life of Jesus the Christ annually. The lectionary readings begin with this season of Advent too, moving from Year A of the cycle to Year B.

During Advent, the Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament texts, come from the Prophets. During these weeks, the people of the Advent texts will guide us on our way to the coming of the Messiah. First we meet with the Hebrew prophet Isaiah (actually two Isaiahs will be with us). Then we go to the Jordan to encounter the Jewish prophet John the Baptist. During the last two weeks, we sit in the company of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. These two women, one very young and the other beyond child-bearing years, encourage us to slow down and attend to the wonders of the coming Messiah.

The prophets quoted in the Revised Common Lectionary during the three years for Advent are Isaiah, 2 Samuel, Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah, and Micah. Isaiah is the most prominent, with a selection three of the four Sundays in Advent for Year B (this year). Perhaps this is not surprising, given the length of the book of Isaiah with its 66 chapters. And if you look up these texts, many phrases in them will be as familiar to you as nursery rhymes from your childhood. The words are sung in Handel's *Messiah* and more contemporary music, they have been interpreted in art throughout the ages, and they are emblazoned on Christmas cards each year. Isaiah is also the prophet most quoted or alluded to in the New Testament.

Careful reading of the book of Isaiah in its earliest manuscripts has led most biblical scholars to conclude that these words come from not one prophet, but from at least three, and in different eras. Therefore, when reading these passages, we must keep in mind the context of each one.

- **1st Isaiah—Chapters 1–39**

(written 742-687 BCE)

Theme: God's judgment for the sin of the people.

- **2nd Isaiah—Chapters 40–55**

(written 540 BCE)

Theme: Consolation for a destroyed and exiled people.

- **3rd Isaiah—Chapters 56–66**

(written 537 BCE)

Theme: Lament for the destruction witnessed upon return from exile in Babylon.

During Advent we remember that we are waiting, just as the exiles did in Babylon, for the arrival of the Messiah. The Prophets beckon us to begin our Advent experience with their messages. They have been called to keep hope alive in bad times as well as good times. Third Isaiah's recitation of the grievances against God push us to make our own list and remember that Advent waiting is not passive, but active. Second Isaiah's comforting words help us live our lives courageously, without succumbing to fear or despair.



1st Sunday in Advent

November 30, 2008

The prophets introduce us to waiting and to preparing for the Messiah, our work for the season of Advent. But this is not a simple task, as our culture (both the church and the community) pushes us to prepare in more commercial and less biblical ways each year.

-- Carol Wehrheim, Elder at Nassau Presbyterian Church,
Princeton, New Jersey

The Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor

Home: 724-252-8383

Church Office: (724) 287-7731

Website: <http://covenantbutler.org>