

**Covenant Presbyterian Church
Butler, Pennsylvania**



Second Sunday of Advent
December 10, 2017

Wait for the promise, wait for the light;
Wait with a hope that burns brightly at night.
Joy will banish the fears we have worn;
Sacred the moment when Love will be born.

--from the Advent hymn: "Wait for the Promise"

The Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor
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Order of Service for Worship
December 10, 2017
Second Sunday of Advent
Eleven O'clock, A.M.

Rev. Dr. James E. Swanson, Pastor
Organist/Music Director: Beverly Antis
Liturgist of the Month: Lars Morrison

THIS IS GOD'S HOUSE ~ ALL ARE WELCOME HERE !

Even as the world seeks to judge or divide us according to our economic, racial and ethnic groups, ages, gender, abilities, preferences, politics and theological positions, we believe that in Christ there should be no such division.
Our congregation is strengthened through difference and diversity, and in the name of our Lord, we welcome all who come seeking refuge and healing from condemnation, prejudice and discrimination.

PRELUDE *The Holly and the Ivy* arr. John Mack
Lars Morrison, Flute **Beverly Antis**, Alto Recorder
Comfort, Comfort Ye My People Robert Lau

CHORAL INTROIT

Of the Father's Love Begotten Plainsong, Mode V
*Of the Father's love begotten, Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been, And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore! Amen.*
—Aurelius Clemens Prudentius

*OPENING HYMN #13

Prepare the Way BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE

THE CANDLE OF PEACE *Leanne & Bob Heaton*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

As the second candle is lit, the ones lighting will say:

Our journey continues. As we light the second candle of our Advent Wreath, we are reminded that we must prepare our hearts and minds to meet the One who is coming. Listen to these words as they were recorded by the prophet Malachi ~

“The Lord All-Powerful will send my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then suddenly the one you are looking for will appear in his temple. The messenger you desire is coming with my promise, and he is on his way.”

God prepares the way for all to be saved; together we anticipate the day of his coming.

The congregation will pray together:

Lord of hosts, you are coming to purify our hearts and refine us, so that we may be a blessing to others, bringing honor and glory to your name. As we prepare ourselves for the arrival of the Christ, may we also help to prepare the way for others to meet you. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, O come, great Lord of might,
who to your tribes on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel!**

—Latin, c. 12th century
Trans. John Mason Neale

PSALM OF THE DAY Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 (*Pew Bible OT p. 473*)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Hear the echoes of our locked hearts, O God of New Life. We cross the borders into temptation and never seem to find our way back. We multiply the sorrows of others by our hurtful words and harmful deeds. We see the ones you give us to serve, but believe we do not have the abilities to care for them.

Have mercy on us, O God. Walk with us through our wilderness of temptation and sin; show us the way to new life, offering that comfort which heals, that hope which can renew, and that faith which keeps us confident; through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

A FEW MOMENTS FOR SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: The Lord is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
Through the Holy Spirit, God gives us new life
and release from the bondage of sin.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

People: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!**

*THE GLORIA PATRI 579

GLORIA PATRI

**We rejoice in the goodness of God,
renounce the works of darkness,
and dedicate ourselves to holy living.**

**Called to faithful obedience, and set free for joyful praise, we
offer our hearts and lives to do God's work in this world.**

**With tempered impatience, eager to see injustice ended, we
expect the Day of the Lord; and we are confident that the
light which shines in the present darkness will fill the earth
when Christ appears.**

**From the beginning, through all the crises of our times, until
his kingdom fully comes, God keeps covenant forever.**

**Our world belongs to him! God is King!
Let the earth be glad!
Christ is Victor; his rule has begun.**

**As followers of our risen and ruling Lord Jesus Christ,
we declare with joy and trust: this world belongs to God!
Come, Lord Jesus! Our world belongs to you.**

*GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

A FEW MOMENTS FOR MISSION ~ Gina Loebell

--Christmas Joy Offering

SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION Sarum plainsong, Mode IV

*Creator of the stars of night, Your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all, We pray You, hear us when we call.
Amen.*

—Latin, 9th century
Trans. John Mason Neale

FIRST LESSON Isaiah 40: 1-11 *(Pew Bible OT p. 581)*

Liturgist: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE LESSON 2 Peter 3: 8-15a *(Pew Bible NT p. 988)*

Liturgist: Here ends the second lesson.

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

*GOSPEL READING Mark 1: 1-8 *(Pew Bible NT p. 812)*

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord.

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

Hymn #14, **vs. 2** - *Savior of the Nations, Come*

**From the Godhead forth, You came,
And return unto the same,
Captive leading death and hell,
High the song of triumph swell!**

—Ambrose of Milan, 4th century
Para. Martin Luther
Trans. William Morton Reynolds

SERMON

“*STARTLING COMFORT*”

Pastor Jim

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL AMEN

Two-Fold Amen

Beverly Antis

HYMN # 3

Comfort, Comfort You My People

PSALM 42

PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS & GIFTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry
[Setting by Donald Busarow]

Lars Morrison, Flute

*On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings of the King of Kings!*

*Then cleansed be every life from sin;
Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.*

*We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward;
Without your grace we waste away
Like flowers that wither and decay.*

*Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
And make us rise to fall no more;
Oh, let your face upon us shine
And fill the world with love divine.*



THE POINSETTIA PLANTS IN THE SANCTUARY

TWO LARGER PLANTS ON CHANCEL STEPS

Given by Helen Ferguson
*“In Honor of the Covenant Choir &
Beverly Antis, Choir Director”*

PLANTS ON THE RISER

Given by Members and Friends
in Honor and/or Memory of Loved Ones

It is not too late to order your plant!

**Call Elsie in the Church Office (or leave a
message if calling after office hours)**

724-287-7731



A complete list of donors will be published in the Christmas
Eve Lessons & Carols bulletin, on Sunday, December 24th.



***JOIN US FOR OUR WEEKLY TIME
OF FELLOWSHIP !***

...Immediately following worship each Sunday, downstairs in
the Assembly Room. Please join us for fellowship (and food!)

Hosting Today: *Connie Brown*

PLEDGE CARD 2018 REMINDER

If you have not had an opportunity to return your 2018 pledge
card, extra cards are available in the narthex.



Please place your completed pledge card in
the envelope provided and place it on this
morning's offering plate or mail it to the
church. *If you have already submitted your
completed pledge card for 2018 ...*

THANK YOU!



Your Attention Please!

The AED unit is inoperable at the present time. (*A battery pack from the manufacturer is on back-order.*)

Please be assured that in any emergency on church grounds, 9-1-1 will always be contacted first regardless of the circumstance or the availability of an AED unit.



Celebrating Our Heritage

Missing an installment(s) ?

Extra copies of installments #1 through #31 of *“Through Succeeding Years,”* an historical account of the history of First Presbyterian Church from 1813-1938, are available in the narthex (*on the ledge by the window*).

Available in the narthex today!

PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Week 2 ~ Advent Devotionals

Each Sunday a new weekly booklet of *free*
Devotional Readings will be available.

(If you miss a Sunday, or wish to have a weekly installment in advance, contact Elsie in the office)

Committee Meeting This Week

Administration & Stewardship

This Tuesday, December 12th
10:30 am ~ Church Library

The People for Peace (Final Fall Class)

Study Book:

"The Evolution of Faith:
How God is Creating
a Better Christianity"

~ by Philip Gulley



**This Thursday, December 14th
@ 11AM ~ Assembly Room**

Discussion of Chapters 11 & 12

Nancy Rice, *Class Convener*

Questions? . . . See or contact Nancy @ 724-256-5366

ARTISAN MARKETPLACE TO CLOSE DECEMBER 23RD



Sale runs from Dec 4th – Dec 23rd

Each week in December you receive a bigger discount:

Week 1	Dec. 4 th – Dec. 9 th	10% discount on everything
Week 2	Dec. 11 th – Dec. 16 th	15% discount on everything
Week 3	Dec. 18 th – Dec. 23 rd	20% discount on everything

**The Artisan Marketplace shop is located
at 134-B South Main St in Zelienople, PA**

The New Flower Chart for 2018

... **NOW POSTED** on the Assembly Room
bulletin board. Please sign up for any open Sunday.
The cost is currently \$35 for two vases.



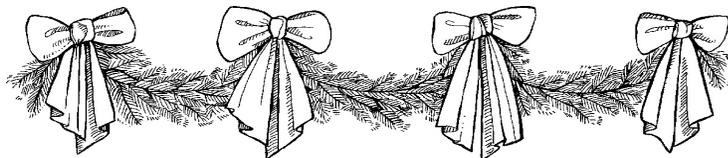
Please make checks payable to Covenant Presbyterian Church. Flowers are ordered through the church office unless otherwise requested.

*Flower forms are available in the narthex.
Please submit payment with your order. Thank you.*

Offering Envelopes for 2018

...now available in the narthex.

Envelopes are arranged alphabetically. If you do not see your name or are new to offering envelopes, please see Tom Davidson, Church Treasurer or call the church office (724-287-7731).



Worship Schedule

Sunday, December 17, 2017

3rd Sunday of Advent ~ 11 am Worship

Betty Butler & Family ~ Lighting Third Advent Candle

Sunday, December 24, 2017 (morning service)

4th Sunday of Advent ~ 11 am Worship

Women of the Covenant Choir ~ Lighting Fourth Advent Candle

Christmas Joy Offering received.



Christmas Eve

Sunday, December 24, 2017

“A Service of Lessons & Carols”

With Communion (*seated*) and Candle Lighting

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Jim & Karen Swanson & Family

7:00 pm ~ Festival Music

7:30 pm ~ Worship Service



December 31, 2017 ~ 1st Sunday After Christmas Day

Two Worship Services ~ Sanctuary

@ 11:00 AM ~ MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE & FELLOWSHIP

@ 3:00 PM ~ ALL AREA CHURCH WORSHIP SERVICE

Service & Music based on the style of Lessons & Carols—but less formal. Covenant and other church choirs (including bell) as well as clergy and musicians from area churches will be participating in this joint collaboration in the Sanctuary.

There will be no reception following the service so that those attending New Year's Eve celebrations can be home in time to celebrate the evening!



Prayer Concerns

Pearl Park ~ Betty Butler's sister fell recently and was hospitalized in Ohio with two fractures in her nose; Pearl is doing well and expected to be released soon (if not already home) from the hospital

Diane Dancik ~ friend of Mary Reefer who has been diagnosed with cancer which has spread to her liver and bowels

Donna Hobaugh ~ keep her in prayer; Donna has Alzheimers and lives at 100 Newhaven Lane, Rm. 6-B

Allen Kitchen (husband of Rev. Mary Kitchen) ~ surgery to remove a tumor on his kidney at Cleveland Clinic has been postponed until December 29





Happy Birthday!

Thomas Burkley & Andrew Burkley (*Dec. 10*)
(twin sons of Linda & Tom Burkley of Harrisburg, PA)
The twins turn 12 yrs. old today!

Nora June Hobaugh (*Happy 4th Birthday – Dec. 13!*)
Daughter of Adam and Kirsten Hobaugh
Donna Hobaugh's great-granddaughter

Leanne Heaton (*Dec. 14th*)

Helen Ferguson (*Dec. 15th*)

Emmalyn Ann Wood (*Happy 7th Birthday – Dec. 15!*)
Daughter of Cassie (Butler) & Josh Wood
Betty Butler's great-granddaughter

Samantha Drohan (*Dec. 16th*)

What Is True?

It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil who seek to rule the world—

This is true: Jesus said: “To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo I am with you, even until the end of the world.”

It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the Church before we can be peacemakers—

This is true: “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions and your old men shall have dreams.” (Joel 2:28)

So let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ—the light and the life of the world.

From *Walking on Thorns*, by Allan Boesak (2004)



“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.”

–2 Corinthians 9:15

This Advent and Christmas season, we celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, we recognize the indescribable gift God has given us in Jesus Christ and also in the leaders within our church.

The Christmas Joy Offering continues the decades-old tradition of equally supporting the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, which provides much-needed assistance to PC(USA) church workers and their families, and Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges, which enable students to develop their gifts and find their calling. Every congregation's gifts to the Offering are critical to the future of these ministries, especially now when the need for funding is at its height.

The Assistance Program relies for its funding not on dues but on voluntary gifts, legacies, endowments, and one-half of the Christmas Joy Offering. It provides a way for caring Presbyterians to support those who serve the Church during their times of need. Assistance is granted for needs that lie beyond the scope of the Benefits Plan.

Racial ethnic schools and colleges working in tandem with the PC (USA) have provided quality education to people in an environment which supports and nurtures racial and ethnic heritage. Leadership institutes identify, equip and connect racial ethnic women and men, who are teaching and ruling elders, with leadership opportunities in the Presbyterian Church (USA). This ministry also strengthens and nurtures the gifts of racial ethnic leaders, and inspires them to greater leadership roles in congregations, mid councils and in General Assembly agencies. It also assists church leaders in starting and transforming worshiping communities through mission program grants.

Please read over the brochure in this Sunday's worship bulletin. An offering envelope will be supplied in next Sunday's, December 17th and in the December 24th 11am bulletin.

Christmas, the Real Deal

“The Ancient of Days is Born as a Baby: Christmas, the Real Deal”

A multimedia presentation

By Father Bogdan Bucur



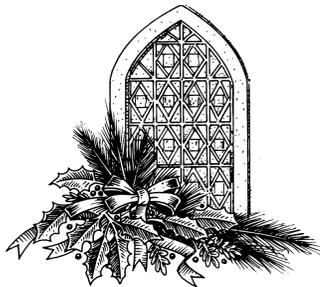
Saturday, December 16th @ 10AM

(Ukrainian Hall, Lyndora)

**Santa and Rudolph and the elves are cute—
but Christmas is about far deeper things.**

Come and learn about the authentic, undiluted theology and spirituality. Question & answer session follows the presentation.

Lunch for all attendees provided by:
Lyndora chapter of the Ukrainian Orthodox League



*The Sacred Music Choir 2017
Christmas Concert of Sacred
Choral, Organ and
Handbell Music*

Friday, December 15, 2017 at 7:30 pm

***Saint Peter's Anglican Church
218 E. Jefferson St. Butler, PA 16001***

Reception and free will offering.

Slippery Rock University

presents Menotti's...

*Amahl and the
Night Visitors*



Saturday, December 16

@ 7:30 PM

**Slippery Rock United Methodist Church
130 Franklin St. in Slippery Rock, PA**

*... a family-favorite one-hour-long opera in English that
highlights a stop on the journey of the three kings.*

Tickets available at the door:

\$15 – General Admission

\$10 – Senior

\$5 – Students

Craig Joseph, STAGE DIRECTOR

Joel Goodloe, CONDUCTOR

Resonance Chamber Orchestra

Slippery Rock University Chamber Singers*

Directed by Christopher Scott

In collaboration with Resonance Works / Pittsburgh

**Nathan Turley, Gideon Zoeller and Frank Paden, SRU Music students who also sing in the Covenant Choir, have parts in this production! (Nathan plays "Page"; Gideon and Frank are in the shepherds' chorus.)*