Covenant United Presbyterian Church

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Worship with us on YouTube.com/@CovenantTV1813



Through ages, the story ever told, Of a Savior's love, priceless and bold. A promise fulfilled, sin to destroy, Leaving in its wake — Advent joy.

As we journey through this sacred space,
Each day unwraps a gift of grace.
In every carol, in every decoy,
Lies the heart's refrain — Advent joy.

Let joy unfurl in every heart,
A symphony divine, a work of art.
For in the waiting, a hope to enjoy,
The timeless refrain — Advent joy.

Advent III - Joy December 14, 2025, 11:00 AM

Pastor: Rev. John C. R. Silbert TV Producer: Brian F Graff, C.P. Worship Leader: John Reefer Music Director: Dominico Reyes

Musician: Lars Morrison

Lighting the Joy Candle: Don & Dorothy Wallace

~ Order of Worship ~

** = Please stand, as able

The Gathering

CHORAL INTROIT

Prepare the Way, O Zion ~ Price

Prepare the Way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!

Let every hill and valley a level way appear.

Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.

O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE & TIME OF CENTERING

Il Est Ne ~ Overton

LARS MORRISON

PROCLAMATION

** OPENING PRAYER

**OPENING HYMN 107

Awake! Awake. And Greet the New Morn

REJOICE, REJOICE

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE ~ The Candle of Joy **Don & Dorothy Wallace**

God's majesty is his radiating joy, and that joy is what he promises to us.

Dorothy:

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. Advent means coming. Even as we celebrate the birth of our Lord in Bethlehem so long ago, we are preparing ourselves for the return of our Lord Jesus as he comes again in glory! The first candle called us to hope. The second candle calls us to seek peace. This third candle reminds us to find joy in the Lord's presence!

Don:

Hear these words from Psalm 96: "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness."

Both:

Let the light of this third (pink) candle dance before us shining blissfully in our lives, reminding us to rejoice always in the power of the Holy Spirit! Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Congregation: Holy One, you are the only true source of our strength and salvation. As we proclaim the good news of the birth of Christ, may we do so with great joy – and may we invite others to experience the joy of your salvation. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

VENI EMMANUEL

O come, O Bright and Morning Star, and bring us comfort from afar!

Dispel the shadows of the night and turn our darkness into light.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

INVITATION TO CONFESSION & CORPORATE PRAYER CONFESSION

Magnificent God, it is easy to rejoice at the wilderness bursting into bloom and the hungry being filled with good things. We may not want the powerful to be brought down or the rich to be sent away empty. We know that sometimes, we are the powerful. Sometimes, we are the rich. Sometimes we are the ones with privilege, Ignoring and harming those you would lift up. Forgive us, humble us, and refocus us, that we may follow your way of life and truth.

A TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION & ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: There is nothing and no one That is too far gone for God to redeem.

There is no land too parched that God cannot make streams of living

water flow. Beloved, in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

People: Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

**CONFESSION RESPONSE 581 Glory Be to the Father GLORIA PATRI (Greatorex)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

**THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: May the Hope, Peace, & Joy of Advent be yours all through the year. The

peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

The Word

**ILLUMINATION B14 v.3 Savior of the Nations, Come NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND You, the chosen Holy One, Have o'er sin the victory won.

Boundless shall Your kingdom be; When shall we its glories see?

HT LESSON Isaiah 35: 1–10 Pew Bible P.578

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord. People: Thanks be to God!

SCRIPTURE HYMN 100 (Luke 1: 46b - 55)

My Soul Cries Out with A Joyful Shout

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

NT LESSON James 5: 7 – 10

Pew Bible P.982

Leader: Here ends the reading of the Epistle. People: Praise be to You, O Lord!

**GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 11: 2 – 11

Pew Bible P.792

Pastor: The Gospel of Our Lord. People: Glory to You, O Christ!

CANTICLE 84 v.3

Creator of the Stars at Night

CONDITUR ALME SIDERUM

At your great name, O Jesus, all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:

All things on earth with one accord, like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.

THE MESSAGE Advent III: Joy

PASTOR JOHN

SERMON RESPONSE 108 v.5 Of the Father's Love Begotten

DIVINUM MYSTERIUM

O ye heights of heaven, adore him. Angel hosts, his praises sing.

Powers, dominion, bow before him, and extol our God and King.

Let no tongue on earth be silent; every voice in concert ring,

evermore and evermore. Amen.

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH IN SONG

Hymn 134

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

THE PASTORAL PRAYER with 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.

The Eucharist

A MINUTE FOR MISSION

Christmas Joy Offering

PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS & GIFTS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

How Great Our Joy ~ Courtney

**DOXOLOGY 144 v.4

In the Bleak Midwinter

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.

**CORPORATE PRAYER OF DEDICATION *

Precious God, take these gifts in the spirit they were given, with joy and love for our siblings around the world. Let us remember that we all have times of trouble. We will each stand before you, hands clasped in prayer, begging for relief. Use what we have here to bring that relief where it is needed most. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

The Sending

**HYMN Christ Is Coming! UNSER HERRSCHER

**THE CHARGE & BENEDICTION

**CHORAL RESPONSE Comfort, Comfort Now My People ~ GENEVEN 42

"Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God.

"Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load.

To my people now proclaim that my pardon was for them!

Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over."

POSTLUDE Christmas Pipes ~ Traditional

LARS MORRISON

← -- The words on the bulletin cover are the last three stanzas of a poem, by Jeremi Richardson, entitled "Advent Joy." The Corporate Prayer of Dedication is from Worship Ways, a liturgical resource for Advent 3A from the United Churches of Christ.

Join us again for:

Dec 21 - Advent IV: Love

Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Worship 4:00PM

Membership at Covenant United Presbyterian Church

If you are reading this information in our Worship Bulletin, you already belong here at Covenant United Presbyterian Church. Here, all are welcome, and membership in the congregation is not required to participate in any of our activities and ministries. By becoming a member, you will have voice and vote in congregational meetings and can better express your commitment to Jesus Christ through this church. Welcoming people as members helps us to get to know them better and to support you more fully – letting all of us stay engaged and grow in faith together. Individuals may join the church by Profession of Faith and Baptism (for those who have never been baptized), by Reaffirmation of Faith (for those who are not currently active members of another Christian church), or by Transfer of Church Letter (for those on the active roll of another church.) Contact Pastor John to find out more.



Church Announcements



<u>Wait! Don't Go Yet!</u> Join us for conversation and food in fellowship hall right after the service. Thanks to *Elaine Nucci* for hosting today!

Donations: "Tithely" at covenantbutler.org or "Tithley" Smartphone App

<u>Christmas Joy Offering</u>: The final PC(USA) Special Offering of the Year supports church leaders in our area and in the world. Offering envelopes are available on the bulletin table in the Sanctuary. Collection is December 21 during our offering time.

<u>Celebration</u>: December 18th Ione Mathias' Birthday!

ABBE Group meets on Wednesday, December 17, at 11 AM – Let's decide on a book to read!

Quiet Christmas Service: December 17 7:00 PM Hill UP



<u>Prayer List</u>: If you have a prayer request, please contact the Prayer Cordon: Virginia Lokovich 724-287-3920, Jane Hall 724-287-5410, Pastor John 412-779-6148, or

covenantoffice@zoominternet.net

<u>Please Pray for:</u>

Brenda, Virginia Lokovich's daughter, for healing after neck and spine surgery on November 25.

Sammy Peters, step-son of Linda Peters, continued prayers for healing after surgery.

Bonnie Readett, Pastor John's sister in East Greenwich, RI, for relief from right shoulder and back pain.

Pam Patterson, residing at Concordia Cabot – Please note her room is #2510.

Jane Faulkner, Ann Morrison's sister in CA, that the FEMA Congressional Affairs Office will be open to taking over management of her housing application.

Scotty McAliley, Ann Morison's cousin in NC, is in stable condition while being treated for cancer.

Christmas Still - Gina Loebell

Before the last snare drum of leaves has scuttled over the drive.
Silvery frost rimes the russet leaves,
And the last pumpkin becomes pie,
The tympani roll of Christmas choirs
Begins in early fuscia sunsets.

Copper beeches reflect fall's dying light as Staccato holiday pop and xylophones of red and green

Occlude the whole notes of Advent.

Time's drum beats louder and faster
Against the horns' blast of lists to check,
Presents to wrap, food to make,
Parties to plan, gifts to buy.

The sweet low melody of the spirit drowns In the trombone's demanding push and pull of holiday diversions.

The chimes' tinkling promise of eternal spirit is muted by

Concerts and gals and dinners and shopping.

The crescendo begins as endless activity Leaves us deflated yet sugarplum sated Until the Conductor's kairos baton pulls us the finale.

All our movements are inadequate Because God's symphony is enough. The Prince of Peace reigns. His children receive our gift.

Christmas Eve whispers in At the quiet night ushers Christ's coming, still, and yet again. Covenant United Presbyterian Church December 24, 2025 4:00 PM



Preludes at 3:40 PM

Bring a Guest(s)!

* CANDLELIGHT SERVICE *