

evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.’

THE SERMON “ADVENT” Russ Merritt

HYMN 87 *Comfort, Comfort Now My People*

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *The Apostles’ Creed*
I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE OFFERTORY

*THE DOXOLOGY

GO FAITHFULLY

*HYMN 93 *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

*THE CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*THE POSTLUDE

*Indicates the People Standing

Ushers
Stan Lanford, Mac and Ann Pace, Dave Snider

THOUGHT TO CARRY HOME:

One does not always have to wait for something out of the ordinary. The all-important thing is to keep your eyes on what comes from God and to make way for it to come into being here on Earth.

Christoph Blumhardt, *Action in Waiting*

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Welcome to Christ’s Service of Worship for the Lord’s Day

*December Third the Year of Our Lord
Two Thousand Seventeen*

First Sunday of Advent

GATHER JOYFULLY

THE PRELUDE

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PRAYER AND PREPARATION

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; I Corinthians 1:3-9

(Congregants are encouraged to read and reflect upon these passages as they prepare for worship.)

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Maggie and Michael Hambrick, Christina and Jessee Amos

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (sung by the youth)

BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE PASSING OF PEACE

THE GATHERING HYMN 95 *Prepare the Way of the Lord*

THE CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

Minister: Jesus says, “I am coming soon.”

Congregants: Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Minister: Heaven and earth will pass away.

Congregants: But the Word of God endures forever.

Minister: Let us worship God.

GROW SPIRITUALLY

THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND ADORATION (unison)

**Heavenly Father, Creator and Judge,
Shepherd of Your people, our Hope and Salvation,
You come into our lives, and our hearts sing with praise.
You watch over us, protect us and provide for us,
You gather us now from all our wanderings,
to come together in Christ's name to learn Your Will.
With great expectation we assemble to worship
and to celebrate Your unfolding plan of salvation for all.
Be present with us and guide us toward the truth,
which is ours in Christ's name. Amen.**

* HYMN 83 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

*THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

**God our Creator, we confess
that we are not ready to welcome You.
We study the trends of our times
and ignore the signs of Your reign.
We trust in things that pass away
and forget Your eternal promise.
Forgive us, God of grace.
Strengthen us, by Your divine hand,
so that we may be ready for that day
when You come to reign in glory.
Hear these our silent prayers.**

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Minister)

Every valley is lifted up, every mountain made low.
Now the glory of the Lord is revealed,
for the voice of the Lord has spoken.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Praise be to God!

*RESPONSE Hymn 88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (Verse One)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

THE FIRST LESSON Isaiah 64:1-9

¹ O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— ² as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³ When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴ From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵ You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷ There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸ Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity for ever. Now consider, we are all your people.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE / 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.

ANTHEM

The People Who Walked in Darkness Isaiah 9

THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE / CHILDREN LEAVE FOR JP's

THE SECOND LESSON Mark 13:24-37

²⁴ 'But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵ and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ²⁶ Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. ²⁷ Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸ 'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³² 'But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴ It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵ Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the

Announcements

Ushers for December 10, 2017 –Marie Haines, Jyke Jones, John and Lee Ann Kabana

A big thanks to all of the following families who helped prepare the church for the Advent Season: Alice Baker, Elise Lanford, Barry and Judy Ferrell, Allen Family and the O’Conner Family. Also, to the Choir and Melissa Hudson for the wonderful music they will present on Dec. 10 for the Lessons and Carols service.

THE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE LEARNERS from Blue Ridge Literacy share their deepest thanks to the wonderful Northminster family, for your gracious donation of clothes and more. You have truly shown us the love of Jesus!

"Many thanks to the children and everyone that contributed to this year's Operation Christmas Child. Forty-two (42) boxes were sent on their way for distribution around the world to spread Christmas cheer and the great news of the birth of Jesus."

Lois Waddell would like to thank everyone for the calls, cards, and prayers. I appreciate our Church family for their thoughtfulness. I am doing a lot better and continued prayer would be appreciated.

Jo Ann Threlkeld wants to thank all the Northminster congregation for their prayers, well wishes, cards, and notes during her recent confinement. I love all of you and appreciate so much your caring support.

Sunday December 17th, we will have The Joy Gift luncheon following the morning worship service. Come and celebrate the Christmas season and enjoy Christian fellowship. The Presbyterian Women will provide the meat and we ask that everyone please bring a pot luck dish or dessert. A Christmas program will be presented by the children. And Santa Claus may make a surprise visit!

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNON WORSHIP will be held during our morning worship service on December 24, as we “combine” the normal morning and evening worship experiences.

THE ANNUAL “LESSONS AND CAROLS” service of worship will be held next Sunday, December 10. This special time together, under the leadership of our music program, promises to be a wonderful seasonal blessing. Join us, and invite your friends and family!

"Devotional booklets and daily scripture reading guides can be found in the hallway outside the fellowship hall in the new wall racks and on the table. Current and past copies of devotional booklets including, *These Days* and *The Upper Room* are available. Please help yourself to any of these excellent publications." The 2017 Flower Calendar has been placed on the bulletin board outside the Church Office.

Calendar

Today	9:45 am 11:00 am 12:15pm	Sunday School Worship Service Session Meeting
Monday	5:00 pm	Worship Committee Meeting
Tuesday	7:00 pm	Circle 2 with Ann Pace
Wednesday	5:30 pm 6:30 pm	Memorial Bells Sanctuary Choir
Next Sunday	9:45 am 11:00 am	Sunday School Lessons and Carols

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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WEBSITE: WWW.NORTHMINSTERPCUSA.ORG

Russ Merritt, Transitional Minister Melissa Hudson, Music Director
Susie Tallmage, Secretary Lauren Godsey, Nursery Attendant

Let us keep those listed below in our prayers.

Members

Bobby Brammer	Betty Dixon	Michael Hambrick
Jake Hayes	Betty Hinkle	Lois Hopkins
Rose Howard	Jim Maile	Floyd Moretz
Jace Newman	Mac Pace	Buddy Smith
Sandy Smith	Ruth St. Cyr	Frances Stevens
Jo Ann Threlkeld	Lois Waddell	George Wingeier
Shirley Wynn		

Friends and Family

Cindy Lanford – (daughter-in-law of Stan and Elise Lanford)

*THE SESSION *

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson

Class of 2017: Lynn Kirby, Judy Ferrell, Matt Graybill, Bob Newman, Dave Snider

Class of 2018: Dana Esworthy, Barry Ferrell, Jyke Jones, Stan Lanford, Ann Pace

Class of 2019: Margie Cundiff, John Kabana, Allen Kling, Sarah Plymale,
Holly Woodson

10:30 am

Summer Worship