

## GATHER JOYFULLY

### THE PRELUDE

#### SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PRAYER AND PREPARATION

Psalms 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10

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

### BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST

### THE PASSING OF PEACE

THE GATHERING HYMN 88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**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.**

#### \*LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLES

Tina Paquette and Family

#### THE CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

Minister: The mystery of the ages is now revealed.

**Congregants: To our God be glory forever!**

Minister: A King will come forth from Bethlehem.

**Congregants: He will be the shepherd of peace.**

Minister: Come, let us worship God.

#### THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND ADORATION (unison)

**God of grace,  
Your eternal Word took flesh among us  
when Mary placed her life  
at the service of Your Will.  
Prepare our hearts for his coming again.  
Keep us steadfast in hope,  
and faithful in the ways of peace,  
so that we may receive the coming  
of Your Kingdom of love and mercy,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, the ruler of all,  
in whose loving name we pray. Amen.**

\* HYMN OF PRAISE 97 *Watchman, Tell Us of the Night*

#### \*THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

**God our Maker, we confess  
that we are not ready to meet You.  
You call us to repent,  
but we turn away from You.  
You wait patiently for us,  
but we fail to watch and wait for You.  
You offer us a place in Your house,**

**yet we find no room for You in our lives.**

**You invite us into Your eternal realm,**

**yet we fail to welcome others.**

**Forgive us, God of grace.**

**Let Your Word of life be with us**

**so that we may truly believe**

**that nothing is impossible with You.**

**Hear these our silent prayers.**

\*THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (Minister)

\* RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS Hymn 113 (Refrain)

**Gloria in excelsis Deo! Glorie in excelsis Deo!**

## GROW SPIRITUALLY

#### THE FIRST READING OF GOD'S WORD Luke 1:46-55

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, <sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

#### 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 Angel Gabriel* arr. Robert Sieving

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

#### THE SECOND READING OF GOD'S WORD Micah 6:6-8

<sup>6</sup> 'With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? <sup>7</sup> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' <sup>8</sup> He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

#### PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION (unison)

**Holy God, our hope and peace, by the power of Your Spirit  
prepare the way in our hearts for encountering Your Word,  
so that we may see the glorious signs of Your promise fulfilled.  
We pray through Jesus Christ, Your incarnate Son. Amen.**

THE SERMON *CHRISTMAS VISIONS: LOVE* Dr. Merritt

\*HYMN OF COMMITMENT 129 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*

\*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (unison)

**I believe in the meaning of Christmas,  
and our celebration of its wonder and glory.**

**I believe in the God at the center of Christmas,**

**Whose promise for this world was dreamed by seers  
and proclaimed by prophets.**

**I believe in the messengers and angels of God,  
who speak to us in moments when we listen well.**

**I believe in the pondering spirit of Mary,  
who knew God was in the birth of her child.**

**I believe in the beauty of the manger,  
transformed by the coming of Jesus.**

**I believe that like the shepherds we can hear God's music,  
celebrating His grace and glory**

**as we turn our hearts to Him.**

**I believe in the gifts of the Magi and in all gifts of the heart,  
for they are responses to the greatest gift of all,**

**God's gift of His Son and our Savior.**

**Most of all, I believe in Jesus,  
without whom there would be no Christmas,  
and I believe in using this season to discover again  
my relationship with and commitment to him,  
so that this will be a time of great joy,  
and I too can be born again at the manger.**

#### THE OFFERTORY

\*THE DOXOLOGY

**GO FAITHFULLY**

\*HYMN OF DEDICATION 105 *People, Look East*

\*THE CHARGE (Minister)

#### THE BENEDICTION

\*THE POSTLUDE

\*Indicates the People Standing

If standing is difficult, please remain seated. Larger print bulletins are available.

*Ushers*

OUR ADVENT SERMON SERIES is entitled "Christmas Visions", and each week we will consider an advent vision from a familiar Old Testament prophecy, looking at the promises of God that are fulfilled in the coming of Jesus.

Announcements

Ushers for December 30, 2018 – Allen Kling

THE SESSION WILL MEET AFTER THE WORSHIP SERVICE. Anyone seeking to join in membership with the congregation, or having matters for the Session to consider, is invited to attend.

**OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE will be held tomorrow Monday, December 24, at 4:00, and will include worship experiences for all ages. We will be joined by our fellow Presbyterians from Green Ridge and Fifth Avenue congregations. The service will include celebration of the sacrament of holy communion, special music, special readings, and candle lighting, amidst the beauty of the sanctuary decorations. Make your plans to join us in worshipping the babe in the manger, and bring your friends and family!**

Have you checked the decorations in the narthex? The mitten tree is waiting for you to cover it with mittens, gloves, scarves, socks, etc. for children at the Presbytery Center, Rescue Mission, Ram and Salvation Army. Our snow last week may be just a beginning. The little ones need you!!!

THE CHURCH LIBRARY HAS MANY BOOKS available to church members, to guide you in your respective spiritual journeys, Members are encourage to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to deepen their spiritual knowledge and understanding of the faith.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PLEDGE CARD for your 2019 financial support of God's work at Northminster, please contact Barry Ferrell, Stewardship Chair.

Today	9:45 am 11:00 am 12:15 pm	Sunday School Worship Service Session Meeting
Monday	4:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service Communion
Next Sunday	9:45 am 11:00 am	Sunday School Worship Service

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
3911 Greenland Avenue, Roanoke, Virginia 24012-3250  
WEBSITE:WWW.NORTHMINSTERPCUSA.ORG

Russ Merritt, Transitional Pastor      Melissa Hudson, Music Director  
Susie Tallmage, Secretary              Lauren Godsey, Nursery Attendant  
Ministers...Members of Northminster

**Let us keep those listed below in our prayers.**

**Members**

Bobby Brammer	Betty Dixon	Michael Hambrick
Jake Hayes	Betty Hinkle	Rose Howard
Tom Kirby	Jim Maile	Floyd Moretz
Ramona Ortiz	Ann Pace	Mac Pace
Buddy Smith	Sandy Smith	Frances Stevens
Jo Ann Threlkeld	Bill Waddell	George Wingeier
Shirley Wynn		

**Friends and Family**

Mike Duckworth-(Holly Woodson's brother-in-law)  
Cindy Lanford – (daughter-in-law of Stan and Elise Lanford)

**\*THE SESSION \***

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson

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

Class of 2020: Bob Bielawski, Frankie Bielawski, Lynn Kirby, Bob Newman,  
Dave Snider

**NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
Welcome to Christ's Service of Worship for the Lord's Day

***December Twenty third the Year of Our Lord  
Two Thousand Eighteen  
Fourth Sunday of Advent***

***A PRAYER FOR ADVENT***

*God of abundant life and loving kindness,  
during this Advent season, we bow down  
before Your throne, in humble anticipation,  
made hopeful through the promise of Your  
prophets, inspired by the preaching  
of John the Baptist, awed by Your annunciation  
to the young woman Mary, and praying that  
in our hearts we can say along with her,  
"Let it be with us according to Your Will."*

*Jill Duffield*

**WE WELCOME YOU TO WORSHIP! You are special, because  
God brought you here today. Together we celebrate and rejoice  
in God's blessings in our lives!**

