

greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.’

THE PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

THE SERMON *WHY ME?* Dr. Merritt

*HYMN OF COMMITMENT 347 *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *The Apostles’ Creed* (Unison)
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 *Love Has Come* Hymn 110

*THE DOXOLOGY Hymn 708 Verse One
We give thee but thine own, whatever the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

GO FAITHFULLY

*HYMN OF DEDICATION 87 *Comfort, Comfort Now My People*

*THE CHARGE (Minister)

*THE BENEDICTION

*THE POSTLUDE

*Indicates the People Standing

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

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

*December Fifteenth the Year of Our Lord
Two Thousand Nineteen
Third Sunday of Advent*

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!

GATHER JOYFULLY

THE PRELUDE

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR PRAYER AND PREPARATION

Psalm 146:5-10; James 5:7-10

(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* (Verse 1)
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 ADVENT CANDLE Joe and Karen Gwitt
Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah, Hymn 85 Youth

THE CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

Minister: Comfort, comfort my people,
says the Lord.

**Congregants: We ponder Your steadfast love,
O God, as we gather in Your sanctuary.**

Minister: The name of God reaches
to the ends of the earth.

**Congregants: For God alone we wait,
from God alone comes our salvation.**

Minister: Let us worship our God!

THE PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND ADORATION (Unison)

**Glory to You, Almighty God,
for You sent Your only-begotten Son,
that we might have new life.
Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for you became flesh and dwelt among us
that we might become your people.
Glory to You, Holy Spirit,
for You direct and rule our lives.
Be with us now in our worship,
bless us with Your presence,
and bring us closer to the manger,
for we pray in Your blessed name. Amen.**

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

*THE CALL TO CONFESSION (Liturgist)

The prophet Isaiah writes that
surely God is our salvation,
He alone is our strength and refuge,
and we can trust in Him and not be afraid.
So let us come to Him in repentance,
seeking His grace and forgiveness.

* CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

**Advent God, You enter into our weary world
to lift up the lowly and fill the hungry,
to establish peace and joy throughout the earth.
Yet, as doubting and reluctant disciples,
we scarcely believe that You can save our world.
We see suffering and sorrow and sin
and wonder if creation is beyond repair.
But You promise healing, wholeness, and hope.
You drive out despair and free us from fear.
Broaden our visions to understand Your Word.
Expand our hearts that we might know Your love.
Touch our lives that we might prepare Your way,
and welcome Your coming into our world with gladness.
Hear these our silent prayers.**

*THE ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS (Liturgist)

Be strong, do not fear, our God is with us!

The glory of the Lord shines upon us!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven,
and we are given new life.
Praise be to God!

* RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS 96 *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* (Verse Two)

**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.**

GROW SPIRITUALLY

THE FIRST READING OF GOD'S WORD Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.' ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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 *Awake! Awake, and Great the New Morn* Hymn 107

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

THE SECOND READING OF GOD'S WORD Luke 1:39-45

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's

Ushers

Frankie Bielawski, Greg and Margie Cundiff, Chuck Lockard

Liturgist

Betsy Robison

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Susie Tallmage, Secretary Lauren Godsey, Nursery Attendant
Ministers...Members of Northminster

If you or someone you know should be included in the list of those needing special prayer, please contact the Minister. If prayers have been answered and we can celebrate God's goodness by removing your name from the list, let the Minister know.

Let us keep those listed below in our prayers.

Members

Rod Bittner	Bobby Brammer	Charlotte Cooley
Michael Hambrick	Jake Hayes	Betty Hinkle
Barbara Jones	Bob Lancaster	Floyd Moretz
Ann Pace	Mac Pace	Gladys Presson
Buddy Smith	Sandy Smith	Frances Stevens
Jo Ann Threlkeld	Olive Whisner	

Friends and Family

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

***THE SESSION ***

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson

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

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

Class of 2021: Vee Hayes, Judy Ferrell, Chuck Lockard, Jeremy Newman,
Ray Williams