

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

December 18, 2022
Fourth 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

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7

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

BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST

May the presence of Christ be with you, this day and always.

GATHERING HYMN 85 *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (Verse 4)

Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

He is coming; tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Dora Slee and Gayle Wise

*THE CALL TO WORSHIP

(responsive, from Zechariah 2 and Romans 13)

Minister: Sing and rejoice, for I come, and I will dwell in your midst,
says the Lord our God.

Congregants: Now is our salvation nearer than we have believed.

Minister: The night is spent, the new day is at hand.

**Congregants: So let us cast off the works of darkness,
and put on the armor of light.**

Minister: Come, let us worship our God.

*HYMN OF PRAISE 93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION AND CONFESSION (unison)

Prepare our hearts, O God, for the coming of Jesus Christ,

Your Son and our Savior, the babe in the manger, the victor over death.

**Deepen our joy this morning as we prepare again
for the anniversary of his lowly birth at Bethlehem.**

**By true faith in him as our divine redeemer,
strengthen this day our commitment and our hope.**

**Let us be washed clean of our sinfulness and brokenness,
and made new to follow and to serve where we are called.**

**May our gathering in worship and praise bring us closer to You.
Hear these our silent prayers.**

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Our Lord comes as life--not merely a cupful of life, or even a cup overflowing. He comes as the fountain of life for all. Our Lord comes as light, the light that shines in the darkness of our making, showing us the way. Our Lord comes as love, divine love, found in a babe lying in a manger. And He comes to us now, in the grace of His forgiveness, through and crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Praise be to God!

***RESPONSE HYMN 132** *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (Verse 3)

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not
fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!**

Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

GROW SPIRITUALLY

THE FIRST READING OF GOD'S WORD Isaiah 43:1-7

¹But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my sight, and honoured, and I love you, I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; ⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up', and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.'

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.

ANTHEM

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

THE SECOND READING OF GOD'S WORD Matthew 2:1-11

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶ "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." ' ⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

THE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

THE SERMON

THE PERFECT GIFT

Russ Merritt

*HYMN OF COMMITMENT 107 *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

*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.

GO FAITHFULLY

*HYMN OF DEDICATION 105 *People, Look East*

THE BENEDICTION

THE POSTLUDE

OUR SERVICE

*Indicates the People Standing

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

THERE WILL BE NO MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE this coming week-end. WORSHIP WILL BE HELD the evening before--Christmas Eve, December 24--at 4:00, when we will gather at the Lord's Table to celebrate his birth.

JOY GIFT FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON – You are invited to join our Joy Gift Luncheon after church today following our worship service.

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. You will find Joy Gift offering envelopes in your bulletin.

The following items were purchased through the Presbytery Giving Catalog in December: An Emergency Life Pack that will support churches in border regions to supply essential items to refugees. A Community Irrigation Water Pump that will help farmers in Nigeria restore their land. A Latrine, something we all take for granted, but many rural areas lack. The Discipleship

Committee wants to thank our members for supporting our church with their time and money so that we can give to others in need.

THE SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR BETTY HINKLE giving witness to the resurrection will be held Saturday, December 31, at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary.

ADDRESSES: Karen Gwitt, UVA Medical Center, 1215 Lee St.
Charlottesville, VA 22903, Room 8193

Joe Gwitt, Homewood Suites by Hilton, 2036 India Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22901, Room 133

The Mitten Tree is up in the narthex and ready to be decorated with hats, gloves, pjs, underwear and anything other small piece of clothing a needy family would need.

The Ronald McDonald House has collected tab tops for many years. Both Northminster and Green Ridge Collected in the past. We are now collecting all tab tops for the Ronald McDonald House. Please start saving them now. Put a container in your kitchen and start collecting today.

If you and your family would like to participate in the 2 cents a meal program, please pick up a box in the narthex. You will also find an explanation of what the 2 cents a meal is all about. Our church received grant money from this fund to help defray expenses to put food in our Blessing Box. Once your box is full, you can return it to the church.

We are looking for volunteers to help Lauren in the nursery each Sunday. if you would like to help, please sign up on the bulletin board across from the church office.

Calendar

Today	10:00 am	Sunday School
	11:00 am	Worship Service
	12:00 pm	Joy Gift Luncheon
Saturday	4:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service
Sunday		NO SERVICE

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Russ Merritt, Pastor Melissa Hudson, Music Director
Susie Tallmage, Secretary Lauren Axelson, 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 Pastor. If prayers have been answered and we can celebrate God's goodness by removing your name from the list, let the Pastor know.

Let us keep those listed below in our prayers.

Members

Ann Bailey	Bill Bailey	Frances Bowling
Pam Claterbaugh	Barry Ferrell	Joe Gwitt
Karen Gwitt	Maggie Hambrick	Jake Hayes
Barbara Jones	Dennis Kincer	Sheila Lancaster
Homer Linton	Floyd Moretz	Ann Pace
Mac Pace	Ken Riding	Buddy Smith
Sandy Smith		

Friends and Family

Nancy Assaid	
Joaquin Bielawski	Annette Daughty
Shirley Basham	Terry Foss
Donna Betters	John Morris
Mabel Bowman	Vicki Widener
Jay Taylor	
Owen Merritt	

*THE SESSION *

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson

Elders: Pam Claterbaugh, Richard Claterbaugh, Trent Cundiff, Matt Graybill, Joe Gwitt, Tom Hale, Gary Harris, Jyke Jones, Daniel Kirby, Lynn Kirby, Sherry Moses, Debbie Newman, Dora Slee, Gayle Wise

