

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

*December 15, 2024*  
*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

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Luke 3:7-18

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

### BUILDING THE BODY OF CHRIST

GATHERING HYMN 85 *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*

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

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

### THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Kalee O'Conner, Maddux Fite, Tyler Allen

THE CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

Minister: Into our world, as into Mary's womb...

**Congregants: come, Lord Jesus.**

Minister: Into dark and forgotten places, like stables...

**Congregants: come, Lord Jesus.**

Minister: To people broken and bruised by life, like lowly shepherds...

**Congregants: come, Lord Jesus.**

Minister: To people searching, people seeking answers,  
people hungry for God...

**Congregants: come, Lord Jesus.**

Minister: Into our worship in this place and on this day,  
that we might know you and be your people...

**Congregants: come, Lord Jesus.**

Minister: Come, let us worship our God!

\*HYMN OF PRAISE 102 *Savior of the Nations, Come*

\*PRAYER OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION (unison)

**God of all that is, and of each one of us,**

**God of past, present, and future, holding all in Your hands,**

**God of goodness and of light, You shine in the deepest darkness,  
bringing life and joy, hope and peace, to all.**

**Our hearts long to greet You as we gather before Your throne,  
and to receive Your mercy and Your grace.**

**We hear You call us from despair to hope,  
we hear You call us from barrenness into life,  
but so often we are frightened by Your call,  
we are afraid to follow where Your light leads,  
because it leads us to places where You need us,  
to serve, to share, to give of ourselves to others.**

**We confess there is much in us that is not ready yet  
to follow where You lead and to receive Your invitation.**

**Continue to work on us, we pray.**

**Give us tenacity, courage, and openness to Your Spirit.**

**Forgive us our sinfulness, and put a song in our hearts.**

**Hear these our silent prayers.**

#### **\*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

God's Word for us to hear is simple, and difficult.

Though we were and are sinners, God has and does love us,

He has come into this world to be with us, one of us,

to take our sins on Himself, to assume the finality of our death,

that we might be forgiven, made new, and promised life,

life with Him through eternity. God is good, and in Jesus Christ,

we are saved. Praise be to Him!

#### **\*RESPONSE HYMN 107**

*Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn (Verse 4)*

**Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night. Though dark the winter and cheerless,  
the rising sun shall crown you with light; be strong and loving and fearless.**

**Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story; may God fill  
every day we share and bring us at last into glory.**

### **GROW SPIRITUALLY**

THE FIRST READING OF GOD'S WORD Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim

liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup> to provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. <sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup> For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup> Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

<sup>10</sup> I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

#### THE 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

*The Angel Gabriel*

arr. Robert Sieving

The angel Gabriel from heaven came. His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame; "All hail," said he, " thou lowly maiden Mary," "Most highly favored lady," Oh, Gloria!

"For known a blessed mother thou shalt be, All generations laud and honor thee, Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleaseth God, she said, "My soul shall laud his holy name." Most highly favored lady, Oh, Gloria!

#### MESSAGE FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

THE SECOND READING OF GOD'S WORD Luke 1:26-38

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God.' <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

THE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

**Gracious and holy God, open for us Your truth and wisdom,  
that we might listen, and learn, and be transformed,  
for Your Word is the light unto our path throughout life.  
Through the Living Word, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.**

SERMON

THE MESSAGE OF MARY

Russ Merritt

\*HYMN OF COMMITMENT *The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came* (Insert)

\* PRESENTATION AND DEDICATION OF GIFTS (unison)

**Gracious God, in gratitude for all that You have given to us,  
we bring our tithes, offerings, gifts, and our service,  
to bring healing and hope, renewal and reconciliation  
to a world hungry for the presence of Your coming Kingdom.  
Bless what we bring and who we are, that Your love will abound.  
Through Christ we pray. Amen.**

\*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*

\*CHARGE

\*THE BENEDICTION

THE POSTLUDE

YOUR SERVICE

\*Indicates the People Standing

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Our Men’s Fellowship Breakfasts will meet Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, at 8:30 a.m. at Pete’s Deli. It’s a great way to start your day; come join us!

The FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS will be held on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> during our 11am worship service. The service includes the reading of nine lessons, carols by the choirs and seasonal hymns.

A SPECIAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP will be held on Christmas Eve, December 24, at 4:00, and will include special music, candle lighting, and the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion, as well as a special Christmas message. Please make your plans to attend, and to bring family and friends!

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

We are again collecting pies for the Rescue Mission. The pies can be of various flavors. If you would like to donate a pie, please bring it to the church kitchen by Sunday, December 22. The Rescue Mission is always very appreciative of the pies we collect for them. Thank you for helping with this project.

### Calendar

Today	10:00 am	Seekers Class
	11:00 am	Worship Service
	12:00 pm	Joy Gift Luncheon
Thursday	8:30 am	Men’s Breakfast at Pete’s Deli
Next Sunday	10:00 am	Seekers Class
	11:00 am	The Festival of Lessons and Carols

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

Russ Merritt, Pastor                      Melissa Hudson, Music Director  
Susie Tallmage, Secretary  
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**

Bill Bailey	Frances Bowling	Ellen Brumfield
Pam Claterbaugh	Marie Haines	Walt Haines
Jake Hayes	Hayes Family	Mary Ann Huff
Jyke Jones	Dennis Kincer	Skylar Kirby
Patsy Linton	Floyd Moretz	Ann Pace
Mac Pace	Justin Plymale	Buddy Smith
Sandy Smith	Vicki Whitworth	

**Friends and Family**

Nancy Assaid	Joaquin Bielawski
Shirley Basham	Donna Betters
Lucy Collier	Terry Foss
Issac Franklin	Gladys Hughston
Vicki Widener	Dan Cone
Glenna Myers	Frankie Williams

\*THE SESSION \*

Clerk of Session: Holly Woodson  
Elders: Pam Claterbaugh, Richard Claterbaugh, Dana Esworthy, Matt Graybill, Joe Gwitt,  
Maggie Hambrick, Gary Harris, Jyke Jones, Lynn Kirby, Chuck Lockard, Judy Moore, Dora  
Slee, Dave Snider, Greg Theimer



