



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

December 15, 2024
Third Sunday of Advent

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“The implicit apostolic faith of early Christianity revolved around the scandal of the deity of Christ. The reason Christians held on to it tenaciously in the face of pagan ridicule and Roman persecution as well as all kinds of attempts to water it down was that it was the linchpin of the gospel. If it were removed in any way, then the hope for eternal participation in God’s own life and for forgiveness and restoration to the image of God would fall apart. The gospel itself would be wrecked.”

—C.S. LEWIS

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, at your first coming you sent your messenger to prepare the way before you: Grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise make ready your way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the ways of the righteous, that at your second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in your sight; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

PSALM: Isaiah 12:2-6

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7

GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Doori Na

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (Traditional)

Charles Wesley · Rowland H. Prichard

Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's Strength and Consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a Child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit, rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit, raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners! Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me, He, my Savior, makes me whole.
Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving, He is with me to the end.

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Traditional English

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.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 40

LEADER Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her

PEOPLE **That her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.**

LEADER A voice cries:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our
God.

PEOPLE **Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;**

LEADER The uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

PEOPLE **And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."**

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (continued)

Traditional English

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
And order all things far and nigh;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And cause us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease;
Fill the whole world with Heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Heavenly Father, you created us to be complete and whole people. But we have become fragmented and broken by sin. We have sinned against you and against one another, in thought, word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us, forgive us and renew us. Let your light shine through our cracks and scars so that we might bring light to the world, showing that in you we are made whole. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

John 12:46

We are waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

LEADER Hear and receive the good news of the gospel:
 in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

LEADER The peace of the Lord be with you always.

ALL **And also with you.**

HYMN

Angels from the Realms of Glory

James Montgomery · Henry T. Smart

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with man is now residing;
Yonder shines the Infant light. *Chorus*

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen the Infant star. *Chorus*

Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear;
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear. *Chorus*

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
The only Son of God,
Eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God,
Begotten, not made,
Of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven:
By the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was
made man.
For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
And His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - 10:00 A.M. SERVICE

Lucas Lima McMillan

Son of Matthew Tate McMillan and Karina Pereira Lima

Baptismal Vows

- 1 Do you acknowledge your child's need of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit?
- 2 Do you claim God's covenant promises on his behalf, and do you look in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ for Lucas' salvation, as you do for your own?
- 3 Do you now unreservedly dedicate your child to God, and promise, in humble reliance upon divine grace, that you will endeavor to set before him a godly example, that you will pray with and for him, that you will teach him the truths of the Christian faith, and that you will strive, by all the means of God's appointment, to bring Lucas up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Congregational Vow

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting Matthew and Karina in the Christian nurture of their child?

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - 11:30 A.M. SERVICE

Mark Lee

Membership Vows

- 1 Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in God's sight and without hope for your salvation except through his sovereign mercy?
- 2 Do you believe in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
- 3 Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ?
- 4 Do you promise to serve Christ and His church by supporting this congregation in its worship of God and its ministry to others to the best of your ability?
- 5 Do you promise to accept the spiritual guidance of the church, to walk in a spirit of Christian love with this congregation, and to seek those things that make for unity, purity and peace?

Congregational Vow

Will you, the members of this congregation and witnesses of these vows, acting on behalf of yourself and as representatives of the whole body of Christ, do everything within your power to encourage Mark to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

OFFERING

If you are our guest today, please feel no obligation to give. For members and regular attenders of Central, give generously as you are able. We give because all we have has been graciously given to us by God. Our offerings express our joyful dependence upon God and our commitment to join God in his work of renewal.

*You can give online by texting **centralchurchnyc** to **833-737-6262** or visiting **centralchurchnyc.org/give**.*

OFFERTORY

Go Tell It (Gloria)

Matt Maher · Dwan Hill · John W. Work Jr.

Youth and Children's Choirs

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN

All preschool and elementary age children are invited to the front of the church and will be dismissed to Children's Church with their teachers where they will read, sing, learn, and play in an environment suited to their language and style. Alternatively, children are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary to worship alongside the adults for the duration of the service.

THE DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth LM

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 1:1-18

The passage can be found on page 886 of the pew Bible.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) ¹⁶For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

SERMON

***How Not to Be a Heretic* | How Not to Be an Arian**
Rev. Jason Harris

THE THANKSGIVING

LEADER Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE **We lift them up to the Lord.**

LEADER Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

PEOPLE **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

LEADER It is indeed right, our duty and joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

We do not presume to come to this, your Table, O Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but solely in your great mercy. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your Table, but you are the same Lord who always delights in showing mercy. Grant us, therefore gracious Lord, that we who now receive these gifts of bread and wine, according to our Savior's Word, may share in the body and blood of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we may dwell in him forever and he in us. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus Christ, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that you are so holy and I am so sinful that you had to die for me. Yet you are so merciful and I am so loved that you were willing to die for me. I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have failed to do. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, I know that if I do not love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that by loving you first I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties and have you as my first love, my chief good, and my final joy. Amen.

*Communion is served with wine and gluten-free bread.
Individually wrapped wafers and grape juice are available at
each station.*

COMMUNION HYMN

His Name Is Wonderful

Chris Tomlin

Come see the Baby,
Crib for a Bed.
His mother Mary,
Lay down His sweet head.
The starlight was shining.
The wise men were led.
Come see the baby,
And worship Him.

*His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Mighty God, Prince of Peace,
Everlasting Father,
Emmanuel.
Holy One, Son of God,
Savior of the world.*

Come and adore Him,
On bended knee.
He came to ransom
Someone like me.
What could I offer?
What could I bring?
Come and adore Him,
King of Kings. *Chorus*

And the greatness of His reign
Will never end.
Let there be peace on Earth
And all goodwill to men
Come let us worship Him! *Chorus*

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.

BENEDICTION

We begin our worship with God's gracious invitation, and we conclude with God's blessing, his good Word. It is appropriate to look up and open our palms as we receive the Benediction to symbolize how Jesus Christ lifts our heads and to demonstrate our eagerness to receive God's blessing.

DISMISSAL

LEADER Let us go forth to serve the world as those who
 love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Members of our prayer team will be available immediately following the service at the front of the sanctuary to pray confidentially for you about any need or concern you might have. We encourage you to avail yourself of this opportunity to receive prayer. ☞