



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

“When Jesus, praying on a mountaintop, was transfigured in the presence of Peter, James, and John, they saw Moses and Elijah with Him. Moses had heard the voice of God on the top of Sinai; later, Elijah had been brought to that same mountain to hear God speak, not in the fire and the tempest, but in the quiet whisper of God’s sovereign word. The cloud of glory that had surrounded Moses on Sinai again enveloped Jesus and His disciples. God’s voice again spoke from the cloud. But God did not proclaim another ten commandments to be added to the words of His covenant of old. Rather, the voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him’ (Luke 9.35).”

—EDMUND CLOWNEY

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: Isaiah 35:1-10

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Jason Nong

Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming

Traditional German Carol

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming, from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright. She bore to men a Savior
When half-spent was the night.

This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor the darkness ev'rywhere;
True Man, yet very God, from sin and death He saves us,
And lightens every load.

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

Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you and one another in both our actions and our inactions. We recognize that in Jesus our light has come, yet often we choose to walk in the shadows and ignore the light. Gracious God, forgive our sins and remove from us the veil of darkness which shrouds our lives. Illumine us by your word so we may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

John 12:46

I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

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.**

SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR CHRISTMAS

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 Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker 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 at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

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 - 10 AND 11:30 A.M. SERVICES

Hear the Angels, Hear them Sing

J. Paul Williams · Vicki Bedford

Youth and Children's Choirs

OFFERTORY - 5 P.M. SERVICE

O Come, All You Unfaithful

Bob Kauflin · Lisa Clow

O come, all you unfaithful.
Come weak and unstable.
Come, know you are not alone.
O come, barren and waiting ones.
Weary of praying, come,
See what your God has done.

*Christ is born, Christ is born,
Christ is born for you.*

O come, bitter and broken.
Come with fears unspoken.
Come taste of His perfect love.
O come, guilty and hiding ones.
There is no need to run.
See what your God has done. *Chorus*

He's the Lamb who was given,
Slain for our pardon.
His promise is peace
For those who believe.

So come, though you have nothing.
Come, He is the offering.
Come see what your God has done. *Chorus*

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

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

The passage can be found on page 161 of the pew Bible.

¹⁵“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— ¹⁶just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ ¹⁷And the Lord said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.’”

SERMON

The Promised One | The Promised Prophet

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. ☺

REQUEST FOR CARE

If you have a financial or practical care need for which you'd like to request assistance from Central, our deacons are readily available to discuss that with you. Please email care@centralchurchnyc.org and detail your situation so one of our deacons can contact you directly.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2025 Projected Expenses: \$4,360,000

Year-to-Date Giving: \$3,584,000

2025 Remaining Need: \$776,000

NOMINATING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Central's Nominating Committee, chaired this year by John Moon, enthusiastically encourages members of the congregation to offer recommendations for the positions of elder, deacon, and trustee to serve the church. Given the essential work of the officers, all individuals recommended to the committee should demonstrate an unabashed commitment to Jesus Christ and to the ministry of Central, as evidenced by active involvement in the life of the church as well as personally appropriate levels of financial support; to reformed theology as expressed in the Scriptures, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms of the Church; to the Presbyterian form of government and the polity of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; along with proven leadership ability in areas necessary for a church officer and a willingness to serve.

Please note that, in accordance with our by-laws, all potential candidates must undergo a course of instruction and be approved by the Session before being nominated and presented to the congregation. We invite you to contact John Moon (moonjohnj@gmail.com) or Jason Harris (seniorpastor@centralchurchnyc.org) if you have any questions, if you would like to recommend an individual, or if you personally would like to participate in a course of instruction covering topics such as: church government, the sacraments, the faith of the church, the worship of the church, the discipline of the church, the history of the church, and an understanding of the various offices of the church. We highly value and deeply appreciate your active involvement in this important process.