

CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

NOVEMBER 29, 2026
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PREPARATION

November 29, 2026
First Sunday of Advent

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

"A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes, does various unessential things, and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened 'from the outside,' is not a bad picture of Advent."

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came among us in great humility; that on the last day, when he comes again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9
PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Charles Wesley

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain;
Thousand, thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Ev'ry eye shall now behold him,
Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold him,
Pierced, and nailed him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall the true Messiah see.

Ev'ry island, sea, and mountain,
Heav'n and earth, shall flee away;
All who hate him must, confounded,
Hear the trump proclaim the day:
Come to judgment! Come to judgment!
Come to judgment, come away!

Now Redemption, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear!
All his saints, by man rejected,
Now shall meet him in the air.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
See the day of God appear!

Yea, amen! let all adore thee,
High on thine eternal throne;
Savior, take the pow'r and glory,
Claim the kingdom for thine own.
O come quickly, O come quickly;
Alleluia! Come, Lord, come.

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Latin, 12th c., translated by J. M. Neale

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

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 2:1-5

LEADER It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

PEOPLE **"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."**

LEADER For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples;

PEOPLE **And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.**

HYMN

O Come, O Come Emmanuel (continued)

Latin, 12th c., translated by J. M. Neale

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 hid, 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

Lord, have mercy on us. We are not ready for your coming. We live in sin, as though there were no justice. We live in fear, as though there were no grace. Forgive us, Lord. Show us your mercy and steadfast love. Lead us in your truth, and teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Isaiah 40:1

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Tell her that her sad days are gone and her sins are pardoned.

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

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Traditional French Carol

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly-minded,
For with blessing in his hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.

Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We regularly pray for needs in our congregation, our neighborhood and city, and the world. Please submit prayer requests to centralchurchnyc.org/prayerrequest.

MOMENT FOR MISSION

At Central, our mission extends beyond the walls of our church to our neighborhood, our city, and our world. When you give to Central, your giving enables the furthering of every aspect of this mission.

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

Light of the World

Paul T. Duncan · Lauren Daigle · Paul Brendon Mabury

The world waits for a miracle.
The heart longs for a little bit of hope.
O come, O come, Emmanuel.

A child prays for peace on Earth,
And she's calling out from a sea of hurt.
O come, O come, Emmanuel.

And can you hear the angels singing?

Glory to the light of the world!
Glory, the light of the world is here!

The drought breaks with the tears of a mother.
The baby's cry is the sound of love.
Come down, come down, Emmanuel.
Oh, he is the song for the suffering.
He is Messiah, the Prince of Peace
Has come, he has come, Emmanuel.

Glory to the light of the world!

For all who wait,
For all who hunger,
For all who've prayed,
For all who wander,
Behold your King.
Behold Messiah.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel. *Chorus*

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

Luke 1:5-25; 57-66

The passage can be found on pages 855-856 of the pew Bible.

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named
Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from
the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they
were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the
commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child,
because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division
was on duty, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was
chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.
10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside
at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared to him an angel of
the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And
Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon
him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah,
for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear
you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have
joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will
be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong
drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his
mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel
to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and
power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,
and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for
the Lord a people prepared."

18 And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For
I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." 19 And the
angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of
God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good
news. 20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until

the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." [21]And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. [22]And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. [23]And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

[24]After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, [25]"Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

[57]Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. [58]And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. [59]And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, [60]but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." [61]And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." [62]And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. [63]And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. [64]And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. [65]And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, [66]and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

SERMON

The God of the Unexpected | The Unexpected Promise

Rev. Andrew Smith (9:30 and 11 a.m. services)
Gabriel Jasso (5 p.m. Service)

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

O Come All Ye Faithful (His Name Shall Be)

Passion Music

O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the King of angels.

O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
O come let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation.
Sing all ye citizens of heav'n above.
Glory to God, glory in the highest. *Chorus*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning.
Jesus to thee be all glory giv'n.
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. *Chorus*

His name shall be wonderful, Counselor.
His name shall be everlasting Father.
His name shall be Prince of Peace, mighty God.
His name shall be Emmanuel.

We'll praise your name forever.
We'll praise your name forever.
We'll praise your name forever.
Christ, the Lord!

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 avaialble 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

2026 Budgeted Expenses: $4,740,000

Year-to-Date Giving: $3,717,000 (78.4%)

2026 Remaining Need: $1,023,000 (21.6%)

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.

FEATURED ANNOUNCEMENTS

Year-End Generosity



As we approach the end of 2026, we encourage you to prayerfully consider building into your financial plan a year-end gift to Central that is above and beyond your regular giving. Nonprofit organizations (churches included) tend to raise 30% or more of their annual operating income during the last quarter of the year, so we invite you to play a part in helping us reach and even exceed our remaining need.


CENTRAL'S ANNUAL CHILDREN'S
Christmas Pageant
In lieu of our p.m. service, join us in the sanctuary Sunday, December 6 at 5 p.m. for a festive start to the evening as our children help us celebrate the Advent season by performing in our annual Christmas pageant.
CAROLING AND DINNER TO FOLLOW

CENTRAL PRESENTS



Blending beloved carols, original songs, and fresh arrangements of Advent and holiday favorites, singer-songwriter and hymn writer Sandra McCracken brings her signature warmth, folk-rooted sound, and thoughtful storytelling to the season.

PURCHASE TICKETS ON OUR WEBSITE
OR USE THE QR CODE
Discount Code: CENTRAL