

BLACKSBURG PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE LORD'S DAY

DECEMBER 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

We are a community that welcomes all.
We are committed to experiencing beautiful worship,
nurturing lifelong growth,
and pursuing justice and love in the world.



Pastor - Rev. Sarah Wiles
Director of Music & Organist - Alice Brooks Sanders
Director of Children & Youth Ministries - Susan Hunter
Coordinator of Church Life - Sarah Windes
Office Manager - Rhonda Waller
Parish Associate - Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter

❖ Please rise in body or in spirit. We invite you to join in with the words in **bold**.

❖ GATHERING AROUND THE WORD ❖

Thought for Meditation: “To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations. True listeners no longer have an inner need to make their presence known. They are free to receive, to welcome, to accept.” — Henri J.M. Nouwen

Prelude: “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

arr. Jason Krug

Jenn Engelke and Zeena Engelke, handbells

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Sarah Wiles & Sarah Windes

Centering Music: “While We Are Waiting, Come”

WAITING

**While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.**

**Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.**

❖ **Call to Worship**

Jan McGilliard

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

This is the day the Lord has made. **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

How does a weary world hope?

**By telling stories of hope,
by lighting candles in the night,
and planting seeds in the winter that will bloom in the spring.**

By praying for children as they grow,
and picking up trash on the sidewalk.

By insisting that small acts can make a difference.

There are a million ways to practice hope.

**So, today we sing and pray, speak and listen,
as a way to spark hope in a weary world.**

❖ **Hymn 82:** “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

**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 every nation,
joy of every 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.**

Call to Confession

God says, “Don’t be afraid.”

The angels say, “Don’t be afraid.”

Jesus says, “Don’t be afraid.”

Prayer of Confession

Holy One,

in this time of preparing, we struggle to make time for your arrival.

When there are presents to get, we forget your presence among us.

With "so much" to do, we forget the mystery of your Being.

Slow us down. Loosen us up.

Let us laugh at ourselves more freely and love each other more generously.

In the midst of the tinsel and the bustle,

help us see the twinkling joy.

(Silent prayer)

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear and trust the good news:

by grace our sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

❖ Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

(Worshippers may exchange signs of God's peace, and children may come forward for a time of sharing faith together.)

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Song of Advent: "He Came Down"

HE CAME DOWN

He came down that we may have love; *(sing 3 times)*

hallelujah forevermore.

He came down that we may have hope; *(sing 3 times)*

hallelujah forevermore.

❖ HEARING THE WORD ❖

Sharing Faith with Children

Ben Corl

(Children in 1st grade age and up are invited to remain in the sanctuary. Children in kindergarten or younger may stay in the sanctuary or go downstairs to God's Garden or the nursery for nurturing and care. Please complete a sign-in sticker for each child.)

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Luke 1:5-13, 18-20, CEB

5 During the rule of King Herod of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. 6 They were both righteous before God, blameless in their observance of all the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7 They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to become pregnant and they both were very old. 8 One day Zechariah was serving as a priest before God because his priestly division was on duty. 9 Following the customs of priestly service, he was chosen by lottery to go into the Lord's sanctuary and burn incense. 10 All the people who gathered to worship were praying outside during this hour of incense offering. 11 An angel from the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear. 13 The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to your son and you must name him John.

18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are very old." 19 The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. I was sent to speak to you and to bring this good news to you. 20 Know this: What I have spoken will come true at the proper time. But because you didn't believe, you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day when these things happen."

God be in our listening,

God be in our understanding. **Amen.**

Sermon: The Gift of Silence

Rev. Sarah Wiles

Hymn 90: "Wait for the Lord"

(Sing as directed by the cantor)

WAIT FOR THE LORD

Refrain:

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear?
the Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?

When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who stumbled and fell.
Though an army should encamp against me,
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
and though war should rise up against me,
yet will I put my trust in the Lord.

One thing have I asked of the Lord;
one thing I seek;
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life;
to behold the fair beauty of the Lord,
to seek God in the temple. (Refrain)

For on the day of trouble the Lord shall shelter me in safety;
the Lord shall hide me in the secrecy of the holy place
and set me high upon a rock.
Even now the Lord lifts up my head
above my enemies round about me.
Therefore I will offer in the holy place an oblation
with sounds of great gladness;
I will sing and make music to the Lord. (Refrain)

Hearken to my voice, O Lord, when I call;
have mercy on me and answer me.
You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face."
Your face, Lord, will I seek.

Hide not your face from me,
nor turn away your servant in displeasure.
You have been my helper;
cast me not away;
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.
Though my father and my mother forsake me,
the Lord will sustain me. (Refrain)

Show me your way, O Lord;
lead me on a level path, because of my enemies.
Deliver me not into the hand of my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen up against me,
and also those who speak malice.

What if I had not believed
that I should see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living!
O tarry and await the Lord's pleasure;
be strong, and the Lord shall comfort your heart;
wait patiently for the Lord. (Refrain)

Call to Offering

Offertory: "Creator of the Stars of Night"

Creator of the stars of night, your people's everlasting light.
O Christ, Redeemer of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.

arr. Michael Burkhardt
9th century hymn

When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in splendor bright,
not as a monarch, but the child of Mary, blessed mother mild.

At your great name, O Jesus, now all knees must bend, all hearts must bow:
All things on earth with one accord, like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.

Come in your holy might, we pray, redeem us for eternal day;
Defend us while we dwell below from all assaults of our dread foe.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,
praise, honor, might and glory be from age to age eternally. Amen.

❖ **Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all creatures here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God whom we adore. Amen.**

❖ **Prayer of Dedication**

Celebration of Communion

Jan McGilliard, Missional Commissioned Pastor & Rev. Sarah Wiles

(All are welcome at Christ's table. Use the center aisle to reach a station in the front of the sanctuary and return by the side aisle to your seat. Gluten-free bread is available at the center station in front. If you need to remain seated, the elements will be brought to you.)

❖ **Communion Hymn (vv.1-2): "Come to the Table"**

COME TO THE TABLE
Hymn 508

**Come to the table, all you praise God.
Laid in a stable, God's gift of love:
Jesus our Savior poured out his life's blood.
Our sins forgiven, God's gift of love.**

**Come eat this bread now, my broken body.
My vow remember: I am your Lord.
Drink of this wine, the cup of salvation,
for you are mine, and I am your Lord.**

Invitation to the Table

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Sharing of Bread and Cup

Prayer After Supper

❖ **Hymn 93:** "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ,
adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide
my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.
Let me thy inner presence feel;
thy grace and love in me reveal.

❖ **Benediction**

Postlude: "Angels We Have Heard on High"

arr. Ben Roundtree



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WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

This is a space for everyone. No matter who you are, no matter what your story is, no matter what--you are welcome here. May this be a time where your breathing slows, your heart opens, and you connect with the Holy One. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to explore some of what happens in the life of this community.

Serving: Church Opener: Brent Opell

Ushers: Chris Lawrence, Heidi Swartzwelder, Reed or Ella Lawrence, and Marcia Parks

Elder Serving Refreshments: Susan Bailey

Nursery and God's Garden Sign-in Stickers (one per child): Complete information about each child and parent(s) on the sign-in sticker.

Headsets for the hard of hearing are available. Speak to an usher to use them for the worship service.

You can send prayer requests for Prayers of the People in Sunday worship and/or to be added to the *MidWeek Update* and website prayer list to Rhonda at rhonda@blacksburgpres.org.

Text or QR Code to Give: To give by text, send keyword **bpcva** and an amount to phone number **77977** (e.g., bpcva 20). If it is your first time, there will be a brief registration process. To give via QR code, use the camera app on your phone and follow instructions. Thank you for your support of BPC's ministry.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Observing Advent at Home: Advent begins today. You can pick up materials in the Gathering Space or narthex to help you observe Advent at home - devotional guides, Advent calendars, and Advent wreath materials for both paper and traditional versions. There are items for children, and there are items for households of all shapes and sizes.

Christmas Joy Offering - Supporting our past, present, and future leaders.

Did you know . . . ? ❖ The Christmas Joy Offering provides critical financial support and grants for current and retired Presbyterian church workers in their times of need. ❖ Gifts from this offering are being used to provide education and leadership development skills at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Menaul School in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the Presbyterian Pan American School in Kingsville, Texas, are two such high schools receiving support. Watch each week for more info about this offering which will be received on **Sun., Dec. 17.**





Montgomery County Baby Shop Christmas Tree, Nov. 27-Dec. 17: The Baby Shop Christmas tree has returned to the Gathering Space. As in years past, the tree is decorated with ornaments representing clothing and items most needed by our less fortunate Montgomery County families. **The last day to bring your item is December 17.** To participate, take an ornament, purchase that item, and place it (unwrapped) under the tree. BPC's generous participation in this tradition always makes a huge difference in what the Baby Shop can offer to children in need during the coldest time of the year. Thank you!

Gingerbread House Decorating Potluck Dinner, Wed., Dec. 6, 2023, at 5:30 pm: Friends are welcome!

Email Susan Hunter (susanh@blacksburgpres.org) for more information. Help is needed: **Bakers** - to prepare the gingerbread house parts. Paper copies of the recipe and pattern are in the Gathering Space window. Bake gingerbread house parts and bring to the BPC freezer by Dec. 3. **Builders** - to assemble houses at 12:30-3:30pm, Dec 4 & 5, in Hatcher conference room. **Beaters** - four people and stand mixers to whip frosting at 5:30pm, Dec. 6.



THIS WEEK

FH-Fellowship Hall, **HCR**-Hatcher Conference Room,
WM-Westminster, **SNC**-Sanctuary, **GS**-Gathering Space

All activities are open to everyone.

Contact Rhonda at rhonda@blacksburgpres.org for more information.

Sun., Dec. 3: First Sunday of Advent

- 9:00 am: Children and Youth Sunday School, various rooms
- 10:00-10:30 & 11:30-12:30: Annual Alternative Gift Fair
- 10:30: Worship Service, SNC
- 11:30: Alternative Gift Fair & Advent Festival, with service projects and crafts, FH
- 11:30: Youth Group lunch and service project, HCR

Mon., Dec. 4:

- 1:30-3:00 pm: Lydia Circle meeting, FH

Tues., Dec. 5:

- 7:30-9:00 am: Morningstars Bible Study, Zoom. Contact Pastor Sarah for link.
- 9:30-2:00 pm: Quilters, FH
- 7:00-8:30 pm: Blacksburg Master Chorale Holiday Sing-A-Long to benefit Interfaith Food Pantry, SNC

Wed., Dec. 6:

- 5:30 pm: Gingerbread Decorating Potluck Dinner, FH
- 6:30: Handbell choir rehearsal, FH
- 7:00: Choir rehearsal, choir room

Sun., Dec. 10: Second Sunday of Advent

- *Last meeting of year* - 9:00 am: Children and Youth Sunday School, various rooms
 - 10:30 am: Worship Service, SNC. The BPC Choir and Handbell Choir with BPC Music Director Alice Sanders present *Savior of the Nations, Come - An Advent/Christmas Hymn Festival* by Michael Burkhardt, SNC
 - *Last meeting of year* - 5:30 pm: Youth Group Christmas Party, FH
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Sat., Dec. 16:

- 4:00 pm: Chocolate & Cheer, meet at BPC. Hot chocolate in FH prior to caroling and visiting with folks in need of Christmas cheer. All are welcome! See the *MidWeek* and December newsletter for more information.

Sun., Dec. 17: Third Sunday of Advent

- 9:00 am: Congregational Breakfast, prepared with love by Men of the Church, FH. More information to come!

Sun., Dec. 24: Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve

- 10:30 am: Family Christmas Eve Service, SNC. There will be a pageant that every child (and child at heart!) who wishes can participate in. There's no rehearsal. Pick out a costume when you arrive and join the fun! We will also light candles at this service. (There is no childcare. All children are welcome in worship--especially the squirmy, noisy ones.)
- 7:00 pm: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, SNC. (There is no childcare. All children are welcome in worship--especially the squirmy, noisy ones.)

Sun., Dec. 31:

- 10:30 am: Worship service, SNC (no childcare; all children are welcome in worship)

Sun., Jan. 7:

- Sunday School and Youth Group resumes
 - 10:30 am: Epiphany worship with Epiphany stars, SNC
 - 11:30: Epiphany luncheon, FH
-