

# WILLOW CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 | 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT | 10:00AM



## OUR APPROACH TO GOD

*Come, celebrate the love of God in Jesus Christ with us! All are invited to sing, pray and participate in liturgy.*

IF YOU ARE ABLE, WE INVITE YOU TO HONOR GOD BY STANDING.

PRELUDE

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

ARR. GROTH & MCCHESENEY

Willow Creek Ringers

WELCOME AND SHARING

REV. LAUREN PATRUS-BETZEL

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING: JOY

CLASS OF 2024 ELDERS & DEACONS

Two weeks ago we lit the candle of hope, a reminder to offer hope to others in any way we can while always looking forward with hope to the fulfillment of the promises from the days of old. Then, last week, we lit the candle of peace, a reminder that the way of Christ is the way of peace: a way of humility and confessing our need for God and others.

**Are we still waiting on the fulfillment of the promises of hope and peace?**

Yes - we don't know how long the wait will be, but we are still waiting. The waiting started long ago. Our ancient ancestors in the faith waited on the Messiah, the One the prophets promised would be in our midst, a warrior who gives victory, rejoices over us with gladness, renews us in love and exults over us with loud singing.

**But didn't the Messiah come? Isn't Jesus the One who rejoices over us and renews us?**

Yes! That's what we celebrate at Advent - that Christ came and fulfilled the promises *and* Christ made more promises that are still lingering. Some have already come true, while some have not yet come true.

**That's a strange kind of waiting.**

It is! But we wait in joy, because we reflect on all that God has done since the days of old. And even while we look forward to the promise of peace, hope and joy we get to experience peace, hope and joy.

**We get to experience the promises fulfilled before they're actually fulfilled?**

Yes! In those indelibly joyful moments that we especially experience during this season - the laughter of loved ones, the delight of giving gifts to others in celebration of the best gift ever given, and the warmth of a kitchen that smells like memories and promises as favorite recipes are re-created.

**We light this candle of joy as a reminder to look for those already moments, while we look forward with hope, peace and joy to the promises that are not yet fulfilled. Come, let us worship God!**

INVITATION TO CONFESSION & PRAYER OF CONFESSION

APRIL ROTTMAN

**O God you are merciful and compassionate and just and wrathful, and we confess that not every word in that list sits right with us. Forgive us, Merciful Creator, for not always liking all of who you are. Forgive us for getting nervous about how just you might be, because if you are truly just, and truly wrathful, we worry that we don't stand a chance. Forgive us for wanting the Good News to be about how good we are, and forgive us for being slow to admit that we are not as good as we wish to be. We are impatient and we are stubborn and we could always be a little - perhaps a lot - more loving. Forgive us, and help us to find joy once more in the Good News of all of who you are.**

A PERIOD OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON - FROM ISAIAH 35

The wilderness will rejoice; the dry land will blossom.  
**The people of God will return with joy and singing.**  
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!  
**Thanks be to God!**

I GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

I PASSING OF THE PEACE OF CHRIST

May the Peace of Christ be with you; **And also with you.**

INVITATION TO THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

READING OF PROPHECY

ZEPHANIAH 3:14 - 20

MATTHEW RALSTON

This is the promise of God to our ancestors and to us. **Thanks be to God.**

PAGES 1466 - 1467

SPECIAL MUSIC

IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR

ARR. GROTH & MCCHESEY

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

READING OF FULFILLMENT

LUKE 3:7 - 18

PASTOR TANYA MUZZARELLI

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PAGES 1593 - 1594

SERMON

"REJOICE! REPENT!"

OUR RESPONSE TO SERVE

A MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

I LITANY: *O ANTIPHONS*

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
pervading and permeating all creation,  
**you order all things with strength and gentleness:**

**Come now and teach us the way to salvation.**

O Adonai, Ruler of the House of Israel,

**you appeared in the burning bush to Moses and gave him the law on Sinai:**

**Come with outstretched arm to save us.**

O Root of Jesse, rising as a sign for all the peoples;

**before you earthly rulers will keep silent, and nations give you honor:**

**Come quickly to deliver us.**

O Key of David, Scepter over the house of Israel; you open and no one can close;

**you close and no one can open: Come to set the prisoners free.**

O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light,

**Sun of justice: Come, shine those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

O Ruler of the nations, Monarch for whom the people long,

**you are the cornerstone uniting all humanity: Come, save us all, whom you formed out of clay.**

O Emmanuel, our Sovereign and lawgiver, desire of the nations Savior of all:

**Come and save us, O Lord our God. Come, Lord Jesus.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

PREPARE THE WAY, O ZION

THE SWEDISH PSALMBOOK, 1697

Elizabeth O'Leary, Piano

I DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessing flow; Praise God all creatures here Below;  
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

I PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 our debts, as we forgive our debtors, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and glory forever. Amen.**

I HYMN #100

MY SOUL CRIES OUT WITH A JOYFUL SHOUT

IRISH MELODY; ARR. COONEY, 1990

I CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

JOY TO THE WORLD

ARR. GROTH & MCCHESENEY

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THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO SERVED TODAY! LITURGIST: APRIL ROTTMAN  
USHERS: ABBY GUTHRIE, STEVE PICKEN, MATTHEW RALSTON AND CAROLYN L. WHEELER

Join us after service for our annual **Cookie Walk!**  
All proceeds benefit the very important **Family in Need** Fund.

Remember the **special Christmas trees** that help us celebrate and give this season:  
The *small tree on the landing* is for your Christmas cards for your church family, and you can put any money you may have used on postage in the can to benefit Kemmerer Village.  
The *tree in the Education Wing* is for hats and mittens to warm those in need.  
The *tree by the Mission Drive Closet* is for Tessa's family's Christmas.  
**Thank you for the many ways you share and give throughout this season!**

Throughout Advent, we light the candles on the Advent wreath, symbolizing light growing in the darkness, leading up to the coming of Christ, the light of the world.

Today's candle lighters represent this year's group of outgoing officers.  
Thank you so much for your faithful service and leadership as Elders & Deacons:  
*Lucas Greenlee, Abby Guthrie, Gyneth Lamont, April Rottman & Carolyn J. Wheeler*

**O Antiphons** comes from the Greek word antiphon (ἀντίφωνον, ἀντί "opposite" and φωνή "voice"), which is a short chant sung as a refrain. The antiphons were designed to concentrate the mind on Advent with a complex series of references from the Old and New Testaments. In Latin, the first letters of these seven images of Christ - *Sapientia* (wisdom), *Adonia* (Lord), *Radix Jesse* (root of Jesse), *Clavis David* (Key of David), *Oriens* (Radiant Dawn), *Rex Gentium* (Ruler of the nations), *Emmanuel* (God with us) - make up a backward acrostic, spelling *ero cras*: "tomorrow I will [come]." We are most familiar with these seven images from the hymn *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. By reciting them, we are lifting our hearts and voices in an Advent tradition that dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. With the prayerful refrain "Come..." we confess our belief that Christ has come and Christ will come again, and we describe the One whose return we anticipate.

**Make a Local Family's Christmas Merry & Bright!** Visit the tree by the Mission Closet door and choose an item or two to purchase and gift wrap and return to church by **Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**.

If you would prefer to give money to this cause, you can put it in the offering plate (please mark on the memo line of the check or an envelope: "Tessa's Family"). Let Shannon know if you have any questions.  
Thank you for your generosity and willingness to spread the joy of the season!

#### **GRATITUDE BAGS**

Please write a note of thanks for each Gratitude Bag in the Fellowship Hall.


*The bags will be given to the staff after December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.*

There are many folks who are not on staff who give lots of time and energy to our congregation.

Individual notes of thanks are always appreciated.

Let the Church Office know if you need anyone's contact information.

#### **WEEKLY CHURCH CALENDAR**

<b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup></b>	10a	Worship, 11a Cookie Walk
<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	6:30p	Elders & Deacons Christmas Party
<b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	8a	Buildings & Grounds, 6p Pipe Band & Drums: Lessons & Rehearsals
<b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	8a	Men's Coffee at Boone County Family Restaurant
<b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup></b>	6p	Bell Rehearsal
<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup></b>		 <b>Argyle Preschool Winter Party</b>
<b>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	10a	Worship - <b>Lessons &amp; Carols</b> , 11a Fellowship, 11:30a Youth Caroling

**"A Faith Community, Growing Together, Sharing the love of Christ"**

#### **MINISTERS: ALL MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**

For more information about our staff and volunteers, visit our website.

The Church Office is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30am - 3pm. If you'd like to set up a time to visit Pastor Lauren or Pastor Tanya, please reach out to the Church Office.

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