

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, eleven o'clock

3rd Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2009

RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP AND CONGREGATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Phyllis Thompson

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE

"A Merry Heart"

Cynthia Dobrinski

CHORAL INTROIT

"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Truro

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Listen –

People: God invites us to prepare the way.

Leader: Watch –

People: Signs appear in the wilderness.

Leader: Prepare –

People: Good news is on the way.

Leader: Rejoice –

People: Our hard times are over.

Leader: Be at peace –

People: We rest in God's promises, and exult in God's coming.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

***HYMN OF PRAISE # 13**

"Prepare the Way"

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Leader: Loving Lord, we realize that we don't always act like your children.
We rarely factor you into the most important decisions we make.

People: Lord, forgive us.

Leader: We rarely think about you outside of the church, and when we do it seems out of place.
We have forgotten how to recognize your direction in our lives.

People: Lord, forgive us.

Leader: Advent is a time of preparation, but we do not take the time
to think about what we are preparing for.

People: Lord, forgive us.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 23**

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

THE ILLUMINATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Cameron Hopkins & Jim Amstutz

UNISON PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

**Loving God, give us the desire, the willingness, and the courage
to be part of your vision for a world made new.**

We pray in the name of Jesus, our hope incarnate. Amen.

A READING FROM THE PROPHETS pg. 877

Zephaniah 3:14-20

ANTHEM

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

Robert Clatterbuck

Text: see Hymn # 36

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

****Gateway to Worship**

***HYMN OF PREPARATION # 10**

"On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS pg. 60

Luke 3:7-18

SERMON

It's a Good Thing the Women Were Along
to Ask for Directions

The Rev. Sharon Amstutz

RESPONDING FAITHFULLY TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Offertory

"Softly and Tenderly"

Will L. Thompson

***Doxology # 4, verse 4**

"Creator of the Stars of Night"

***Prayer of Dedication**

GOING OUT TO SERVE

***HYMN OF CONSECRATION # 411**

"Arise, Your Light Is Come!"

***BENEDICTION**

***SENDING RESPONSE** (see insert)

"Soon and Very Soon"

***POSTLUDE**

"Adeste Fidelis"

arr.: R. Adams

*For those who are able, please stand.

****Gateway to Worship** is our worship program for 4-year olds through first graders. The Gateway leader will take the children to their classroom in the Fellowship Hall after the Children's Moments.

Service Notes:

- The Advent Candles will be lit by this year's Confirmands and their Mentors.
- The prayers of confession this Advent season were written by members of the high school group: John Cary, Melissa Freeman, Ellen Hagelberg and Nik Hopkins.
- The bulletin covers for Advent were created by the elementary school children with the able assistance of their teacher, Eileen Madden.
- Many thanks to the team who worked long and faithfully to plan for worship in Advent: Randy Adams, Ellen Hagelberg, Nik Hopkins, Eileen Madden and Sue Sheffield.

Please join us in the library immediately after worship for a time of fellowship and refreshments.

Next Sunday we receive the **Christmas Joy Offering**. This offering supports the education of students at Presbyterian racial-ethnic schools and colleges and helps families of active and retired church workers in need through the assistance programs of the Board of Pensions.

ADVENT SUNDAY EVENING SCHEDULE

Everyone is welcome on Sunday nights for food, fellowship & fun and we observe Advent. **All events begin at 6:00 p.m.**

Sunday, December 13 (tonight): Church Night Potluck Supper – Supper will be followed by the youth-led Christmas program.

Sunday, December 20: Christmas Caroling – Meet at the church to carol at various members' houses and nursing homes. After caroling we will bring snacks to share at the Amstutz home.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Thursday, December 24th – 5:30 p.m. Music, 6:00 p.m. Service

TODAY AT COVENANT

Morning Greeter:	Jim Starr	Chimer:	Cameron Hopkins
Liturgist:	Nik Hopkins	Gateway:	Melissa Hopkins
Soloist:	Jim Amstutz	Nursery:	Kathi Cary
Acolytes:	Blake Jones & Sean Madden	Coffee Hosts:	Congregational Life
	Youth Ensemble		Chime Choir

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

<u>Today, December 13</u>		<u>Wednesday, December 16</u>	
9:00a	Chime Rehearsal	NO WNL!	
6:00p	Advent Activity	7:30p	Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday, December 15</u>		<u>Thursday, December 17</u>	
COURIER DEADLINE		8:00a	Men's Bible Study
7:00p	Christian Ed. Comm. Mtg.	9:30a	Women in the Bible
7:30p	Al-Anon Meeting	Noon	Al-Anon Meeting

CHURCH STAFF:

Pastor:	Rev. Sharon H. Amstutz	Secretary:	Tina Simon
Director of Youth Ministry:	Andy Irvin	Nursery:	Jeanne Gamble
Choir Director:	Randy Adams	Custodian:	Marie Britt
Pianist:	Amy Jones		

PEOPLE IN OUR PRAYERS

John Merriss, Rod Irvin (Andy's father), the Dulin family, Elva McCartt, Roger Hecht, Peter Block, Pat Adams, Will Favre (friend of David Wood & Phyllis Thompson) and family in the death of Will's dad, Marvin Parker (Evelyn Kemp's cousin), Bob Hunter (Hal's brother), Christian James Ward (baby of friend of Sue Crandall), George Gardner (the Willis' brother-in-law), Lane Johnson (CB Willis' cousin), Harriette Carr, Ed & Marie Britt, Bill Bader (Steve's brother), Stephanie Muncie (friend of Hines family), Shelly Thornton (Gwen Hunter's cousin's 4-year old granddaughter), Corrine Broyles, Julia Trifiletti, Aneita Carr, Agnes Plank, Helene Herbert

If you know of other reasons for rejoicing or concerns you would like to share with others please complete a prayer card with your requests.

Next Sunday, **December 20th**, the **Good Samaritan Food Offering** will be received. This month they need: dish soap, laundry detergent, paper towels, toilet paper, cleanser, deodorant, bath soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and shampoo.

Each year we are given the opportunity to provide monetary gifts to the **Elders' Fund**, the majority of which is used for Christmas honoraria for our fine staff. Our congregation has always been very generous in providing donations to the fund. Our members are appreciative of the dedication of our staff members, and this is a wonderful opportunity to show that appreciation. We ask that each member consider making their donations as generous as possible and, since it would be helpful for the staff to have their gifts well before Christmas, to make their donations as soon as they can. Please make your check out to Covenant and note "Elders' Fund" on the memo line and place in the offering plate or send to the church office. We know we can count on our membership, as we always have. Thanks so much, **Karen Mabe**, Chairperson.

Annual Christmas Reception: You and your family and friends are invited for refreshments in the Fellowship Hall before the Christmas Eve Service on **Thursday, December 24th from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm**. It will be a great time to visit with folks that you don't get to see very often who are in town for the holidays! **Please bring a plate of your favorite cookies or snacks to share and enjoy this time of fellowship with us! Punch and lemonade will be provided.**

Is it too late?! Not for **Alternative Gift** giving. Each mission could still use and appreciates your help, this year more than ever. If you missed the Alternative Gift Fair and would like to give a gift in a friend or family member's name, there is still time. Missions are: **Grandfather Home for Children, Heifer Project International, Holston Presbytery Camp, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Living Waters for the World, The River, and Youth & Young Adult Ministry at ETSU**. You may use the **enclosed Alternative Gift form** to indicate your support. (Cards and envelopes for your use are available in the church office.) These forms may be turned in any time during Advent. Thank you.

The Mitten Tree is in the hallway across from the church office! Please bring hats, scarves and mittens for children in our area who need a little warmth.

We're about to begin a new year and with that comes the need for **ushers and for elders to volunteer to serve communion**. New calendars for the coming year are posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex. Please use them to let us know when you will be available to help out. Many thanks.

Good Samaritan--We will continue to collect good, used **men's pants** and **winter coats** thru the end of the year, so you still have time to go through your closets and storage bins!