

COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, eleven o'clock

4th Sunday of Advent

December 20, 2009

RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP AND CONGREGATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

MINUTE FOR MISSION

Jerry Nagel

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE

"Thou Wilt Not Let Me Go"

arr.: Cindy Berry

CHORAL INTROIT # 9, Stanza 3 (Congregation & Choir)

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;

Bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

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*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 # 12

"People, Look East"

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord of the past, present, and future, we ask you today to forgive us for the sins we have committed, sins against our neighbors, enemies, and you, O Lord.

Against our neighbors, forgive us for coveting, blaspheming, and boasting. Against our enemies, forgive us for hating, punishing and hurting. And against you, O Lord, forgive us for any wrong we have done to the world you created. In Jesus' name we pray.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 23

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

THE ILLUMINATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Blake Jones & Hal Hunter

UNISON PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Dear God, so many people need your strength and hope. In this season of giving, and on every day of the year, help us to say and to do those things that continue Christ's ministry of compassion and caring. Amen.

A READING FROM THE PROPHETS pg. 865

Micah 5:2-5a

ANTHEM

"There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob"

Felix Mendelssohn

There shall a star come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel;

With might destroying princes and cities!

There shall a star come out of Jacob.

As bright the star of morning gleams,

So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams

Of light and consolation.

Thy Word, O Lord, radiance darting,

Truth imparting, Gives salvation;

Thine be praise and adoration!

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CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

**Gateway to Worship

Deborah Lewis

*HYMN OF PREPARATION # 600

"Song of Mary"

A READING FROM THE GOSPELS pg. 57

Luke 1:39-55

SERMON

Leaping for Joy

Rev. Sharon Amstutz

RESPONDING FAITHFULLY TO GOD'S WORD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Offertory

"O How I Love Jesus"

Early American Melody

*Doxology # 4, verse 4

"Creator of the Stars of Night"

*Prayer of Dedication

GOING OUT TO SERVE

*HYMN OF CONSECRATION # 44

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

*BENEDICTION

*SENDING RESPONSE (see insert)

"Soon and Very Soon"

*POSTLUDE

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

arr.: Cindy Berry

*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.

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

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 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.

This morning we will receive the **Christmas Joy Offering**. This offering helps students at racial-ethnic schools and colleges develop their gifts and find their calling to serve God through serving their community. This offering also helps support the unmet needs of families who have responded to God's call by giving their lives to the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Some of those needs emerge during their service, others after their retirement. As we celebrate Jesus' love flowing into, through, and beyond our lives this Christmas, our gifts bear joyful witness to the power of that uncontainable love to change lives.

Join us tonight for Christmas Caroling! Meet at the church at **5:00 p.m.** to carol at various members' houses and nursing homes. After caroling, we will meet at the home of Jim & Sharon Amstutz, 611 Sharon Drive, Towne Acres neighborhood, for food and fellowship. Please bring a snack to share.

The church office will be closed on **Monday, December 28th** for the Christmas holiday, and **Tuesday through Thursday** (Dec. 29, 30 & 31) for regular business as we close the financial records for 2009. Telephone and e-mail messages will be checked frequently, so please do not hesitate to call if you have an emergency.

The pastor will be out of the office the week of December 28th. If you have an emergency, please call the church office at 282-5324.

TODAY AT COVENANT

Morning Greeter:	Jim Starr	Chimer:	Sean Madden
Liturgist:	Sue Sheffield	Gateway:	Kathi Cary
Acolytes:	Drew Amstutz	Nursery:	Melissa Hopkins
	Cameron Hopkins	Coffee Hosts:	Congregational Life

THIS WEEK AT COVENANT

<u>Today, December 20</u>		<u>Thursday, December 24</u>	
9:00a	Chime Rehearsal	Noon	Al-Anon Meeting
5:00p	Christmas Caroling	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	
<u>Tuesday, December 22</u>		5:30p	Music Service
7:30p	Al-Anon Meeting	6:00p	
<u>Wednesday, December 23</u>		<u>Friday, December 25</u>	
NO WNL!		Christmas Day	
7:30p	Choir Practice		

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.

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.

Reminder for Pledges: Next year is almost around the corner. Here are just a few reminders as you consider your year-end contributions to the church. If possible, please consider fulfilling your "2009" Pledge. To those who have made your 2010 Pledge, thank you for supporting the church and its mission. If you are planning on giving a contribution of stock, please have a broker statement in the Church Office no later than Thursday, December 31, 2009, for the gift to be included as a "2009" contribution. All donations must be delivered or mailed (and postmarked) on or before December 31, 2009 in order to receive a charitable tax donation for "2009". Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2010 will not qualify for a charitable tax contribution deduction in 2009. However, checks that are written, mailed and postmarked in "2009" will be deductible in 2009 even if not received by the church until 2010. Thank you for your generous gifts to the church, the Stewardship Committee.

Please note: Your 2010 offering envelopes are on the table in the Narthex.

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.**

It's not too late for **Alternative Gift** giving. 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. You may use the **enclosed Alternative Gift form** to indicate your support. These forms may be turned in any time during Advent. Thank you.

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** through the end of the year, so you still have time to go through your closets and storage bins!

The **Annual Meeting of the Congregation** will be held as a **Church Night Potluck Supper at 6:00p on Sunday, January 24th**. Highlights of 2009 will be reviewed, the 2010 budget will be presented, and we will elect members of the church Nominating Committee as well as officers of the corporation. Please plan to attend! It will be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about what's happening at Covenant.