

*(As we enter the sanctuary, let us quietly prepare our hearts and minds for worship.  
Please sign the attendance pads at the end of the pew and turn off cell phones.)*

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

### SOUNDING OF THE HOUR

#### GREETING

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

### CONGREGATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**PRELUDE** "Jesus Ahatonia" Proulx  
*Une Jeune Pucelle*

\***HYMN OF PRAISE # 41** "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Advent is a time to praise.  
**People: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**  
Leader: During Advent we remember God's past faithfulness.  
**People: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**  
Leader: During Advent we remember God's present goodness.  
**People: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**  
Leader: During Advent we remember God's future promises.  
**People: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH** David, Melanie, Blake & Mark Jones

**Hymn** "Lighting the Flame of Hope" (Choir)  
Lighting the flame, sing praise today, eagerly we watch and pray.  
Savior, Redeemer, come to earth! We await Your humble birth.

#### Candle Lighting

#### Prayer

**Hymn** "Lighting the Flame of Hope" (Congregation & Choir)  
Lighting the flame, sing praise today, eagerly we watch and pray.  
Savior, Redeemer, come to earth! We await Your humble birth.  
*Traditional French Carol, arr. Ruth E. Schram, © 2008 by Alfred Publ. Co.*

#### \*CALL TO CONFESSION

#### \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Gracious God, in whom all things are possible,  
we confess that we have doubted what we cannot explain.  
We have sought strength and enjoyment apart from you.  
We have taken pride in ownership  
more than giving praise through stewardship.  
We have neglected to thank you, either in good times  
or when you have supported us during days of uncertainty.  
We have resisted the newness you offer.**  
**Forgive us, we pray, for installing ourselves as reigning deities.  
Lead us, rather, in paths of trust and obedience. Amen.**

#### \*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

\***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE # 23**, refrain "Angels We Have Heard on High"  
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

## HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**GOSPEL READING** pg. 56 Luke 1:26-38

**SOLO** "Magnificat" Plainsong  
My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.  
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.  
For behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his Name.

**GOSPEL READING** pg. 57 Luke 1:47-55

**SERMON** Waiting Back to the Future The Rev. Barbara Edema

**SOLO** "Mary Did You Know?" Lowry/Greene  
Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?  
Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?  
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new;  
this Child that you delivered, will soon deliver you?

Mary did you know that your baby boy will give sight to the blind man?  
Mary did you know that your baby boy would calm a storm with His hand?  
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod,  
and when you kiss your little baby, you've kissed the face of God?

Oh, Mary did you know?  
The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again.  
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak, the praises of the Lamb.

Mary did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?  
Mary did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?  
Did you know that your baby boy was Heaven's perfect Lamb,  
and the sleeping Child you're holding is the great I AM?  
Mary did you know?

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## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

\***HYMN # 53** "What Child Is This"

\***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (pg. 14 – traditional version) The Apostles' Creed

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER** pg. 16 (Trad. version)

### GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

**Offertory** "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" Powell  
\***Doxology # 22** (v. 4) "Angels, from the Realms of Glory"  
All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising To the eternal Three in One:  
Come and worship, come and worship, Worship Christ, the newborn King!

#### \*Prayer of Dedication

## GOING OUT TO SERVE

\***HYMN # 23** "Angels We Have Heard on High"

#### \*BENEDICTION

Leader: Inspired by God's presence, spread Advent good news.  
Strengthened by the gospel, go out to serve.  
**People: Our spirits rejoice in the Savior's coming.  
Our lives are blessed by a merciful God.**  
Leader: God has granted a beautiful earth for our home.  
God appoints us as care-givers of the land and its people.  
**People: We are a covenant people, shaped by love.  
Wherever God sends us, we will go.**  
Leader: God's steadfast love will go with you every day.  
You will know the strength of God's mighty hand.  
**People: We will work with God to lift up the lowly.  
We will share good things with those who are hungry.**  
Leader: Amen.  
**People: Amen.**

\***POSTLUDE** "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" Pachelbel

\*For those who are able, please stand.

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**Hearing devices and large-print Hymnals are available in the back of the sanctuary; and a limited number of large-print bulletins are on the table in the Narthex.**

**Please remember that the thermostat has been set to 68 degrees for the winter season. Lap blankets are available under the table in the Narthex for those who need them.**

There will be **no Gateway to Worship** for the children during the Advent season. We hope they enjoy the beauty of the sanctuary, Christmas carols, and the anticipation of Christmas!

**WELCOME VISITORS!** We are glad you are here. If you are seeking a church home, we invite you to join with us in service to Christ.

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

*The congregation expresses its deepest sympathy to the Jones family  
in the death of their aunt, Louise Chandler Brown.*

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING – TODAY!

Please meet at the church at 4:30 to carol at various members' houses and nursing homes. After caroling we will bring snacks to share at the Sutter home.

**This morning we again welcome the Rev. Dr. Barbara Edema to the pulpit.** Barb is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America (RCA). She has served churches in Pella, Iowa, and Grand Rapids & Chelsea in Michigan. She received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Western Theological Seminary in 2005. She is married to Dr. Doug Edema, is the mother of Elise, Lauren, Alana and Wes, and stepmother to Becky and Todd. Barb, Doug and Wes moved to Johnson City in November 2010. (Wes has since moved back to Chelsea to finish high school.)

**Next Sunday will be Jenni Marshall's last day with us.** Jenni Marshall, our wonderful accompanist, has submitted her resignation effective December 26, 2011. When she accepted the position she stated clearly she did not know how long she would be able to be with us, and the decision was made to enjoy her talents as long as she could stay. In her own words, "My husband, Zach's position as a music professor at ETSU has only been granted for one school year. In the meantime the position of organist of First Baptist Church Knoxville has become available to me. Zach and I feel that this is an opportunity that could provide some security for us as he discovers God's will for his employment for the next school year. It has been an honor and a blessing to serve as organist/accompanist at Covenant, and both Zach and I appreciate the warm welcome we have received in this congregation!" We will miss Jenni, but wish her and Zach God's blessings for their future.

**Our congratulations to Jenni!** At the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony on December 12<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Jennifer Marshall graduated from the University of South Carolina with a DMA in Organ Performance.

## GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

The Christmas Joy Offering is split evenly between the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and scholarship funds for Presbyterian-related ethnic schools and colleges. Help us support these faithful servants and students in their hour of great need and hour of great promise. **Look for the Christmas Joy Offering envelope in today's bulletin and then please give generously. Thank You!**

**NOTES:**

- There will be **no Sunday School classes** next week (Christmas Day).
- There will be **no After Church Coffee Fellowship** next week (Christmas Day).
- The Church office will be **closed on Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup> and Monday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SCHEDULE – DECEMBER 24, 2011**

Please join us for refreshments in the Fellowship Hall from **4:00 to 5:30**. 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.*

At **5:30 p.m.**, the **Pre-Service Music** will begin in the **Sanctuary**. The **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** will begin in the **Sanctuary at 6:00 p.m.**

|               |  |                  |
|---------------|--|------------------|
| 4:00 – 5:30p: | Annual Christmas Eve Reception           | Fellowship Hall  |
| 5:30 – 6:00p: | Pre-Service Music                        | Sanctuary        |
| <b>6:00p:</b> | <b>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</b> | <b>Sanctuary</b> |

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Each year we are given the opportunity to provide monetary gifts to the Elder's 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. Just mark "Elder's Fund" on your checks 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, Max Wilson, Chair.

**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 "2011" Pledge. To those who have made your 2012 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 December 31, 2011, for the gift to be included as a "2011" contribution. All donations must be delivered or mailed (and postmarked) on or before December 31, 2011 in order to receive a charitable tax donation for "2011". Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2012 will not qualify for a charitable tax contribution deduction in 2011. However, checks that are written, mailed and postmarked in "2011" will be deductible in 2011 even if not received by the church until 2012. Thank you for your generous gifts to the church, the Stewardship Committee.

**Please note:** Your **2012 offering envelopes** are on the table in the Narthex.



**ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR**

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: **Missionaries Kristi and Bob Rice, The River, Interfaith Hospitality Network and Living Waters for the World.** Alternative Gift forms and Brochures describing these missions are on the table in the Narthex. (Cards and envelopes for your use are available in the church office.) These forms may be turned in any time during Advent. Thank you.

**CHRISTMAS EVE NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

We are looking for older teenagers (14+) to help with toddlers (aged 2+) on **Christmas Eve during the service.** We know that there will be several toddlers arriving with visitors for this Service, and want to ensure that the childcare areas are sufficiently staffed. **Please meet in the hallway by the Nursery on Christmas Eve,** and Linda Dulin will help get things organized in both the Nursery area (where Jeanne Gamble will be) and the Toddler Room. Thanks for your help!

**TODAY AT COVENANT :**

|                          |                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Morning Greeter:         | Jim Starr                           |
| Liturgist:               | Jerry Nagel                         |
| Soloists:                | Lynnea Hunter and Dr. Zach Marshall |
| Nursery:                 | Sharon Benner                       |
| Coffee Fellowship Hosts: | Phyllis Thompson and David Wood     |

**THIS WEEK AT COVENANT :**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <u>Today, December 18</u>                    | <b>Christmas Caroling</b>                   |
| <b>4:30p</b>                                 |   |
| <u>Monday, December 19</u>                   |   |
| 7:00a  | AA Meeting                                  |
| <u>Tuesday, December 20</u>                  |   |
| 7:00p  | Al-Anon Meeting                             |
| <u>Wednesday, December 21</u>                |   |
| 7:00a  | AA Meeting                                  |
| 7:15p  | Choir Practice                              |
| <u>Thursday, December 22</u>                 |   |
| 8:00a  | Men's Bible Study                           |
| 9:30a  | Women in the Bible                          |
| Noon   | Al-Anon Meeting                             |
| <u>Friday, December 23</u>                   |   |
| 7:00a  | AA Meeting                                  |
| <u>Saturday, December 24 – Christmas Eve</u> |   |
| <b>4:30p</b>                                 | <b>Holiday Reception in Fellowship Hall</b> |
| <b>5:30p</b>                                 | <b>Pre-Service Music</b>                    |
| <b>6:00p</b>                                 | <b>Christmas Eve Worship Service</b>        |

**CHURCH STAFF:**

|                             |                       |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Director of Youth Ministry: | Lynnea Hunter         |
| Music Director:             | Melodye Sparks        |
| Accompanist:                | Dr. Jennifer Marshall |
| Secretary:                  | Tina Simon            |
| Financial Secretary:        | Anne Webb             |
| Custodian:                  | Marie Britt           |
| Nursery Worker:             | Jeanne Gamble         |

**PEOPLE IN OUR PRAYERS**

The Jones Family, Rose Willis, Eileen Madden, Doris Sanders, Mary Bell Orr (the Underwood's daughter's mother-in-law), Bill Hagood (Sharon Amstutz' father), Amy Hecht, Margaret Sullenger, Arlene Wilkinson, Chris Adler Hillhouse, Helen Davis, Pat Wiley, Betty Maletich, Sue Sheffield, Hugh Underwood, Everette Dale Thompson (Phyllis Thompson's uncle), Jon Christiansen (missionary), Bob Rice (missionary), Peggy Underwood, Eric Smith (son of former members Keith & Pam Smith), Barbara & Jerry Ladich, Jack Fletcher, Bob Maletich, Corrine Broyles, Elva McCartt, Marie Britt, Hazel Hinkle (John Merriss' sister-in-law), Patsy Young (Butch Carr's cousin), Arthur "Bud" & Eileen Kelsey; Tim Jones, Joyce Ford & her family (all friends of Butch & Harriette Carr))

*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.*

# COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – December 18, 2011

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**PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP**

Loving God,  
for each one who leads us in worship today,  
we pray that they may be so filled with your Spirit  
that they will clearly reflect  
the glory of Christ in all they say and do.  
We pray that everyone in this place  
will know you are with us  
and be drawn to bring you all honor and praise. Amen.

