



## Service of Worship

*First Sunday of Advent*

December 3, 2023

### Assemble in God's Name

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We joyfully welcome you to worship this morning!  
All are invited to use the Reflection and Prelude as a time of preparation.

#### *Prayerful Reflection*

by Ted Loder (*adapted*)

*Come, O God, come!  
Tear down the heavens and come down!  
As we enter this Advent amid these days of worry and anxiety,  
Break through our illusions of independence and autonomy.  
Reveal yourself once more,  
that we might again catch sight of your light  
revealing  
who and whose we've been created to be!*

#### *Prelude*

*Savior of the Nations, Come, BWV 659*

J.S. Bach

#### *Welcome*

#### *\*Lighting the First Candle of Advent—Hope*

The Lovo/Testa Family

*Leader: Today we welcome Advent—a season of hopeful expectation:  
People: a time to look back at God's first incarnation,  
while looking ahead for when Christ will come again.  
Leader: On this first Sunday of Advent, we light the Candle of Hope,  
rejoicing in the truth that God is still at work.  
People: We look for God's inbreaking among us and within us,*

holding fast to the promise that nothing can extinguish  
the light of God's love.

*Leader:* We remember the promise of God through the prophet Isaiah: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights. I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations..."

~ Candle is lit ~

*Leader:* Let us pray. God of Glory, God of Hope, shine your light of hope within us. Help us serve as a light to all around us, that we might embody your promise of light and love for all the world.

*People:* Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

*Hymn #88*

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
(stanzas 1, 2, 6, 7)

Veni Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som  
 2 O come, thou Wis - dom from on high, who or - derest  
 3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy  
 4 O come, thou Root of Jes - se, free thine own from



cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile  
 all things might - i - ly: to us the path of knowl - edge  
 tribes on Si - nai's height in an - cient times didst give the  
 Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple



here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 show; and teach us in her ways to go. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 law in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.  
 save and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,  
 and open wide our heavenly home;  
 make safe the way that leads on high,  
 and close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
 our spirits by thine advent here;  
 disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
 and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

7 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.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 shall come to thee, O Israel.

*\*Invitation to Confess*

*\*Prayer of Confession*

Bruce Prewer (*adapted*)

Leader: *Eternal One, we confess that we want*

to have more of you in our lives.

**People:** But we're unwilling to assume the discipline or sacrifice  
to prepare your way and receive you in our lives.  
Forgive our evasions and faintheartedness.

**Leader:** *Incaruate One, we confess that we get lured in  
by those false prophets who promise us  
an easy discipleship and a cheap grace.*

**People:** Forgive our desire for cheap substitutes,  
**Leader:** *Coming One, we confess that we even fool ourselves into believing  
that many of our rough ways and crooked paths are justified.*

**People:** Forgive our excuses and defiance.  
Lead us in the way of Christ—Emmanuel—  
who came revealing your Kingdom of grace,  
mercy and peace for all.

*~ silent prayers of confession ~*

*\*Assurance of Grace*

**Leader:** *Now this is true love:  
God moved from heaven to earth to offer us grace-filled redemption.  
By the grace of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven and redeemed.*

**People:** **Our hope is in Christ!**  
**Our new life is through Christ!**  
May our living proclaim his glory as we pursue  
the hope of his Kingdom for all.

*Response to Grace*

Isaiah 9

The peo - ple who walked in dark-ness a - wak-en to  
 see a great light. The peo - ple who dwelt in the  
 land of the shad-ow rise to a star shin-ing bright.  
 His name is Won - der-ful, Coun-sel - or, Al-might-y God,  
 Fa - ther for - ev - er, Prince of Peace. Peace.

*\*Passing of the Peace*

Leader: In steadfast hope, we prepare the way for the one named,  
 “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,  
 Prince of Peace.” May the peace of our coming Lord be with you all.  
 People: And also with you!

- those worshipping virtually are invited to share peace and greetings in the “comments” section -

*Children’s Message*

Proclaim God’s Word

*Prayer for Illumination  
 Scripture Lesson*

Mark 1:1-13

Leader: For the word of God in Scripture,  
 For the word of God among us,  
 For the word of God within us,  
 People: Thanks be to God.

*Sermon*

Rev. Rob Carter

# Respond in Thanks & Faith

*Hymn #163*

*Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice*

*Aberystwyth*



1 Wild and lone the proph-et's voice ech-oes through the des - ert still,  
2 "Bear the fruit re - pen-tance sows: lives of jus - tice, truth, and love.  
3 With such preach-ing, stark and bold, John pro-claimed sal - va - tion near,



call - ing us to make a choice, bid - ding us to do God's will:  
Trust no oth - er claim than those; set your heart on things a - bove.  
and his time-less warn-ings hold words of hope to all who hear.



"Turn from sin and be bap-tized; cleanse your heart and mind and soul.  
Soon the Lord will come in power, burn-ing clean the thresh-ing floor:  
So we dare to jour - ney on, led by faith through ways un - trod,



Quit-ting all the sins you prized, yield your life to God's con - trol.  
then will flames the chaff de - vour; wheat a - lone shall fill God's store."  
till we come at last like John to be - hold the Lamb of God.



## *Offering Our Gifts to God*

Ways to offer financial gifts:

- Towsonpres.org – click orange “Give to TPC” button at top of page
- Text “CheerfulGiver” (one word; no spaces; case sensitive) to 73256
- Drop off or mail check to the church
- Scan this QR code →



*Offertory*

*Rise, Shine!*

arr. Garrett, Trenney

## *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*

The Invitation

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Leader: May the God of new life be with you.*

*People: And also with you.*

*Leader: Lift up your hearts.*

*People: We lift them to God.*

*Leader: Let us give thanks to the God we love.*

*People: We freely give God thanks and praise.*

*(The prayer continues...)*

The Institution

The Communion of the People

*Jesus welcomes all to share in his feast. Those in the sanctuary may open and consume the individually sealed wafer and juice. All worshipping remotely may take a piece of bread (any kind), dip it into a cup with wine, juice, or water, and consume it.*

Prayer of Response

**Gracious God, thank you for this feast of grace.**

**Send us out from Christ's table**

**to answer his summons into new life**

**and to follow him with joy and gladness.**

**Set our feet in his holy way,**

**that all we do may show forth his love. Amen.**

*Hymn #348*

*Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending*

Helmsley



1 Lo, he comes with clouds de - scend - ing,  
 2 Now re - demp - tion, long ex - pect - ed,  
 3 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore thee,

once for our sal - va - tion slain; thou - sand,  
 comes in sol - emn splen - dor near; all the  
 high on thine e - ter - nal throne; Sav - ior,

thou - sand saints at - tend - ing join to  
 saints this world re - ject - ed thrill the  
 take the power and glo - ry; claim the

sing the glad re - frain: Al - le -  
 trum - pet sound to hear: Al - le -  
 king - dom as thine own. Come, Lord

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
 lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -  
 Je - sus; come, Lord Je - sus; come, Lord

lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.  
 lu - ia! See the day of God ap - pear!  
 Je - sus. Thou shalt reign, and thou a - lone!

*Benediction*

*Postlude*

Toccata on "Veni Emmanuel"

Adolphus Hailstork

# Towson Presbyterian Church

Inclusive ~ Curious ~ Compassionate ~ Courageous

[www.towsonpres.org](http://www.towsonpres.org) || 410-823-6500 || @TowsonPres

Ministers	All Members of the Church
Senior Pastor	Rev. Rob Carter
Associate Pastor	Rev. Joel Strom
Director of Music and Organist	Stephen Harouff
Director of Children, Youth, & Family	Jeness Hall
Ministries	McKenzie Waldhauser
Director of Communications & Connections	Kathryn Bojanowski
Business Administrator	Barbara Patrick
Administrative Assistant	Walter Austin
Sexton	Rev. Harold Cahill
Parish Associate	Rev. Mary Gaut
Parish Associate	Rev. Roger Rice
Parish Associate	Rev. Dr. George Gray Toole
Parish Emeritus	

## Our Mission:

Towson Presbyterian Church is an inclusive community of faith,  
growing as disciples of Christ

TPC is a PC(USA) *Earth Care Congregation*,  
and a member of the *Covenant Network* (striving for a fully inclusive church).

**New Here? Welcome**—*just as you are.*

We're so glad you're here! We hope you find meaning in our worship and connection within our community of faith. TPC offers two worship opportunities on Sundays: 10:00am in-person and 10:00am live-stream via Facebook, YouTube, and [towsonpres.org](http://towsonpres.org).

While children are whole-heartedly welcome at all TPC's worship services, our professionally staffed nursery is available for children 0-4 (see a deacon with a red nametag for directions).

We'd cherish the chance to connect with you. If you feel led, please fill out a visitor form at [towsonpres.org/contact](http://towsonpres.org/contact), so we can get to know you! We appreciate your presence here today, and we hope you are blessed by your time worshipping with us.

## Prayer List:

Bob Adams, Laura Adams Wentling, Bob Buck, Barbara Davis, Jim Flick, Rocky Gaut, Bob Latshaw, John Lewis, Tad Lyon III, Julie Mertus, Ann Phillips, Phillip Pugh, Patty Rath, Janice Searles, Jeanette Spratley, Calvin Symons, Mitzie Tyrie.

## TPC News, Mission, and Ministry Updates

**Assisting in Worship** || \*Rob Culp, Steve Swift, Matt Hemm, Jill Thomas, Karen Drake, Karen Morris, Carol Whiteford, Dianne Thompson.

**Intergenerational Advent Festival** || **Sunday, Dec. 3, 11:00am–12:00pm** || Friends of all ages are invited to Thompson Hall, immediately following today's service, to celebrate the Christmas season with crafts, gingerbread house making, and a "show-and-tell" of beloved Christmas items around our tables.

**Christmas Ornament Sale** || **Sunday, Dec. 3, 11:00am–12:00pm** || Revisit TPC's past and celebrate the new at the Christmas Ornament and Decorations Sale happening today in Thompson Hall, during the Advent Festival. Proceeds will benefit our 2023–2024 Needlepoint Ornament Project.

**Advent Spiritual Practices** || **Sundays, 7:00–7:30pm, Dec. 3; Dec. 10** || Join Patricia Jackson on Zoom tonight or next Sunday for a brief, guided spiritual practice of listening for God's voice, a voice of hope, in the waiting time of Advent. Visit [towsonpres.org/christmas](https://towsonpres.org/christmas) for the Zoom link.

**Sacred Space** || The Chapel will be open for silent prayer and reflection this Advent at the following times (come and find peace and stillness before God):

- **Sundays, 9:00–9:45am** || Dec. 3, Dec. 10, Dec. 17, Dec. 24
- **Mondays, 12:00–1:00pm** || Dec. 4, Dec. 11, Dec. 18
- **Wednesdays, 12:00–1:00pm** || Dec. 6, Dec. 13, Dec. 20
- **Fridays, 7:30–9:00am** || Dec. 8, Dec. 15, Dec. 22

**The Birth of Christ: A Comparative Gospel Study** || **Tuesdays, 7:00–8:00pm, Dec. 5–Dec. 19** || Led by the Rev. Harold Cahill on Zoom, this three-week study will

explore Jesus' birth narrative found in the gospels of the Bible. Please RSVP at [towsonpres.org/adults](https://towsonpres.org/adults) to receive the Zoom link.

**Advent *Messiah* Study** || Thursdays, 11:00am–12:00pm, Nov. 30–Dec. 14 || In preparation for Christmas, preceding a presentation of the work by our own Chancel Choir in worship on Sunday, Dec. 17, join Stephen Harouff for a discussion of Handel's *Messiah* on Zoom. RSVP at [towsonpres.org/christmas](https://towsonpres.org/christmas).

**Christmas Poinsettia Donations** || Now–Friday, Dec. 8 || Memorialize or honor your loved one(s) by purchasing a \$15 poinsettia. Forms can be found in the Narthex, Thompson Hall, and at [towsonpres.org/christmas](https://towsonpres.org/christmas).

**Christmas Wreath Fundraiser** || Now–Saturday, Dec. 9 || Visit [towsonpres.org/christmas](https://towsonpres.org/christmas) to purchase a holiday wreath through Lynch Creek Farm and help underwrite the cost of Montreat for our youth this summer.

**Alternative Gift Market** || Sunday, Dec. 10, 11:15am–1:00pm || Grab a cup of coffee in Thompson Hall and purchase fair trade products for someone on your Christmas list, to support organizations making a positive impact.

**Men's Group and Monday Night Football** || Monday, Dec. 11, 7:30pm || Men's Group (normally meeting on first Mondays) and MNF is combining at Barley's Backyard Uptown on York Rd. Come hangout and watch the game!

**McKim Center Giving Tree** || Now–Wednesday, Dec. 13 || Grab a tag from the tree in Thompson Hall or by the Chapel and bless a child with gifts from their Christmas list. (*This is a great service opportunity for families to do together!*)

**Caroling and Chili with the Youth Group Christmas Party** || Saturday, Dec. 16, 5:00–7:00pm || Spread Christmas cheer about the neighborhood in conjunction with the Southland Hills celebration, with a chili dinner to follow. *Youth are invited to stay afterwards for their Christmas Party and gift exchange.*

**Advent Cantata** || Sunday, Dec. 17, In-Service || Join us for this beautiful, music-filled worship service, featuring choral pieces from Handel's *Messiah*.

**Children's Pageant Rehearsal** || Sunday, Dec. 17, 11:15am–12:00pm || Sign your child or teen up to participate in this year's Christmas Pageant, performed at the 4:00pm Family Service on Christmas Eve. Age 2–5<sup>th</sup> Grade are assigned non-speaking roles, and 6<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Graders act as narrators.

Christmas Eve || Sunday, Dec. 24 || Come and celebrate the birth of Christ! All three services will take place in the sanctuary and virtually. Children's programming for birth-5<sup>th</sup> grade will be provided at the 10:00am service only. *We will not gather on Christmas Day this year.*

- 10:00am || Sunday Service (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent)
- 4:00pm || Family Service with Children's Pageant
- 8:00pm || Lessons and Carols Service in Candlelight

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### TPC This Week

<b>Sun 12/3:</b>	9:00am	Sacred Space (Chapel)
	10:00am	Worship (Sanctuary and Livestream)
	10:15am	Church School (Children's Classrooms)
	11:00am	Coffee Hour (Thompson Hall)
	11:00am	Advent Festival (Thompson Hall)
	11:00am	Christmas Ornaments Sale (Thompson Hall)
	11:30am	Children's Music (Choir Room)
	11:30am	Family Music (Rm. 212)
	12:00pm	Sunday Community Lunch (Thompson Hall)
	7:00pm	Advent Spiritual Practices (Zoom)
<b>Mon 12/4:</b>	12:00pm	Sacred Space (Chapel)
	4:00pm	Mary, Martha, and Me (Thompson Hall)
<b>Tue 12/5:</b>	7:00pm	Birth Narrative Study (Zoom)
	7:30pm	Handbells Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
<b>Wed 12/6:</b>	12:00pm	Sacred Space (Chapel)
	7:00pm	CORE Comm. Mtg. (Zoom)
	7:00pm	ASF Comm. Mtg. (Zoom)
<b>Thu 12/7:</b>	11:00am	Advent <i>Messiah</i> Study (Zoom)
	7:30pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
<b>Fri 12/8:</b>	7:30am	Sacred Space (Chapel)
		Last Day to Donate a Poinsettia
<b>Sat 12/9:</b>		Last Day to Purchase a Christmas Wreath