



Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024 || Virtual Campus

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Assemble in God's Name

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 Joanna Harader (*adapted*)

O come, O come, Emmanuel—
God-with-us.
Come into our brokenness, O God;
come into our joy.
Come into our captivity, O God;
come into our freedom.
Come into our fear, O God;
come into our compassion.

Prelude

The Bells of St. Mary's

arr. Douglas Wagner

Welcome

**Lighting the Second Candle of Advent—Love*

Leader: When all looked bleak and hope seemed lost, God sent the prophet
Isaiah to reassure God's people, proclaiming,
"God loves you. God is coming to you!"

People: Let us prepare the way for Love Incarnate!

Leader: When the time was right, God entered the world in the flesh
to redeem creation and reveal the ways of God's kingdom:

People: "Love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind,
and love your neighbor as yourself."

~the candle is lit ~

*Leader: O God, we yearn for your kingdom in which all know your love—
a kingdom that values the last and the least,
where the hungry are fed first and the excluded are embraced.*

**People: We wait with your hope as we watch for your love.
Come, Lord Jesus! Come!**

Hymn #87

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

Genevan 42

1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook-ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.

"Com-fort those who sit in dark-ness mourn-ing un - der sor-row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen-tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.

To my peo - ple now pro-claim that my par - don waits for them!
 O, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre-pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a-broad,

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war-fare now is o - ver."
 Let the val - leys rise in meet-ing and the hills bow down in greet-ing.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

**Invitation to Confess*

**Prayer of Confession*

God of Love,
You have revealed the power of love
to comfort and heal,
to redeem and make new.
You even enfleshed yourself out of love for us.

So we are reluctant to admit how much we struggle to love.
While we love you, Lord,
we are far too enamored with pursuits of this world
to love you with all that we are.
While we love those to whom we're closest,
we don't always love them well;
and we quickly abandon our neighbors,
refusing to risk the sacrifices love requires.

Forgive us, God-with-us.
Help us repent
until we see anew the way of love you intend
and learn to live it out not sometimes,
but always.

- silent reflection and confession -

**Assurance of Grace*

Thom M. Shuman (*adapted*)

Leader: *In God's Kingdom, all are loved for who they are, not what they do;
all are forgiven for what they have and haven't done;
and all are welcomed and fed by God's grace and hope.*

People: **Forgiven, loved, sent forth—
we are not far from God's Kingdom! Thanks be to God.**

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!

Children’s Message

Proclaim God’s Word

*Prayer for Illumination
 Scripture Lessons*

Luke 3:1-18

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

Sermon

Playing the Prophet, Part 2
 “Love”

Respond in Thanks & Faith

Anthem

Is Your Heart Prepared for A King?

Robert Lau

Offering Our Gifts to God

- Towsonpres.org – click orange “Give” 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 →



Anthem

“Waltz of the Flowers” from Nutcracker

Tchaikovsky
arr. Mitchell Eithun

Prayers of the People & 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 us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn #106

Prepare the Way, O Zion

Bereden Vag For Herran



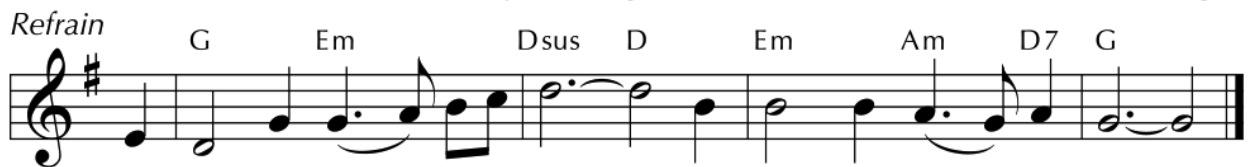
1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

Benediction

Postlude

Prepare the Way

Towson Presbyterian Church

Inclusive - Curious - Compassionate - Courageous

www.towsonpres.org || 410-823-6500 || @TowsonPres

Ministers
Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Director of Music and Organist
Business Administrator

All Members of the Church
Rev. Rob Carter
Rev. Joel Strom
Stephen Harouff
Kathryn Bojanowski

Director of Communications and Connections
Mission Coordinator
Administrative Assistant
Sexton
Parish Associate
Parish Associate
Parish Associate
Pastor Emeritus

McKenzie Allison
Dave Britt
Barbara Patrick
Walter Austin
Rev. Harold Cahill
Rev. Mary Gaut
Rev. Roger Rice
Rev. Dr. George Gray Toole

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.

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, so we can get to know you! We appreciate your presence here today, and we hope you are blessed by your time worshiping with us.

Prayer List:

Bob Adams, Laura Adams Wentling, Dotsie Bregel, Walter Cesewski, Jim Flick, Jennifer Gettier, Aldean Howard, Bill Kladky, Julie Mertus, Phillip Pugh, Jim Ransom, Janice Searles, Calvin Symons, Sue Thompson, Mitzi 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.

Church Center Training || **Today, 11:20am–12:00pm** || For many years, we have used ACCESS for our online giving, people database, calendar, and registrations. After careful considering and research, our leadership has decided to transition to a new, cloud-based church management system and mobile app called *CHURCH CENTER*. We encourage you to explore the new platform by scanning this QR code or by visiting towsonpres.org/churchcenter, and stay in the Sanctuary after worship today for a quick Church Center training!



Changes to Online Giving || You can continue to give online through ACCESS until Dec. 31, 2024. Starting Jan. 1, 2025, all online giving will take place through Church Center. Visit towsonpres.org/give for more details, to make a 2025 pledge of giving, and to set up a recurring giving pattern for 2025. Recurring giving patterns previously scheduled in ACCESS that extend into 2025 will need to be re-scheduled in Church Center by the end of this year.

Children’s Christmas Pageant Rehearsal || **Today, Dec. 8, 11:20am–12:30pm, and Dec. 22** || Children interested in participating in this year’s pageant, performed on Christmas Eve at 4:00pm, are invited to gather in Room 212 after worship today to discuss the Christmas story and to begin deciding what roles and characters they’d like to play.

Circle 13 || **Tomorrow, Dec. 9, 7:00–9:00pm** || Women are invited to gather in Thompson Hall this Monday evening for a time of brief fellowship and to discuss chapters 5–6 of *The Universal Christ* by Richard Rohr.

Virtual Alternative Gift Market || **Now–Sunday, Dec. 15** || This year’s Alternative Gift Market is virtual! The Mission and Outreach Committee selected ten nonprofits for us to support this holiday season. Visit towsonpres.org/AGM to explore the list of organizations and to donate. Equal Exchange fairtrade chocolate will also be available in Thompson Hall after worship today and next Sunday.

Youth Group || **Tonight, Dec. 8, 5:30–7:00pm** || 6th–12th graders are invited to Pastor Joel’s house tonight for Youth Group, to check out the Christmas lights in Rodgers Forge, and for ice cream at The Charmery. Parents are welcome to come too, or they can pick up their student from Pastor Joel’s house at 7:00pm.

Christmas Caroling and Chili || Sunday, Dec. 15, 5:00–7:00pm || All are invited to spread Christmas cheer next Sunday evening with Southland Hills. We'll meet in Thompson Hall, go out to sing around the neighborhood, then meet back in Thompson Hall for a chili dinner around 6:30pm. 6th–12th graders are asked to bring a wrapped gift (that they did not buy, but found at home) for a White Elephant Exchange after dinner.

Christmas Wreath Fundraiser || Now–Sunday, Dec. 15 || Purchase a holiday wreath through Lynch Creek Farm to help underwrite the cost of the Montreat Youth Conference for our high school students this summer. Check Friday's eNews or visit towsopres.org/forms for the direct link.

Advent Cantata || Sunday, Dec. 15, 10:00–11:00am || You don't want to miss worship next Sunday! During our usual 10:00am service time, our Chancel Choir and musicians will present "Fantasia on Christmas Carols" by Ralph Vaughan Williams. There will be no sermon, but children's programming will still be available for ages 0–5th grade.

Men's Group and Monday Night Football || Monday, Dec. 16, 8:15–10:00pm || MNF and Men's Group is combining for a special December gathering at Barley's Backyard Uptown (408 York Road). We'll meet upstairs for appetizers, while drinks and additional food can be purchased on your own. No RSVP is required.

Advent Devotional Discussions || Sundays, 5:30–6:00pm, Dec. 1–22 || The Adult Spiritual Formation Committee invites you to read along in *Presbyterians Today's* devotional this Advent. A brief Zoom gathering will take place each Sunday evening during Advent to discuss that day's devotional reading. Download the devotional and access the Zoom call at towsopres.org/christmas.

Diners Club || Register by Jan. 7 || During the cold winter months, join a small group of 8 people and take turns hosting at least 3 warm and cozy potlucks (or new this year, you can also meet for breakfast/brunch). Register at towsopres.org/adults.

Christmas Eve Services || Tuesday, Dec. 24, 4:00pm Children's Pageant and 8:00pm Service of Lessons and Carols || Come celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ this Christmas Eve at TPC! Both services will take place in-person in the Sanctuary and livestreamed. *Childcare will not be offered, but infants and children are always wholeheartedly welcome to remain in worship with their families.*

2025 Summer Youth Trips || Save-the-Dates || Mark your calendars for these summer youth trips! Registration will open in early January.

Massanetta Springs || Jun. 19–22 || Grades 5th–8th

Montreat Youth Conference || Jul. 6–12 || Grades 8th–12th

Camp BeeTree || Jul. 14–18 || Grades K–12th

Presbyterian Youth Triennium || Jul. 28–31 || Grades 8th–12th

TPC This Week

Sun 12/8:	10:00am	Noah's Nursery, 0–4 (Lower Level)
	10:00am	Worship (Sanctuary/Livestream)
	11:00am	Coffee Hour (Thompson Hall)
	11:20am	Church Center Training (Sanctuary/Livestream)
	11:20am	Children's Pageant Rehearsal (Room 212)
	12:00pm	Sunday Community Lunch (Thompson Hall)
	5:30pm	Advent Devotional Discussion (Zoom)
	5:30pm	Youth Group (Pastor Joel's House)
Mon 12/9:	10:00am	Bible Study: New Testament Letters (Zoom)
	7:00pm	Circle 13 (Thompson Hall)
Tue 12/10:	10:30am	Staff Mtg. (Library)
	2:00pm	Parish Visitors Mtg. (Library)
	7:00pm	<i>The Only Prayer You'll Ever Need</i> (Zoom)
	7:30pm	Handbell Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
Wed 12/11:	7:00pm	Communications Mtg. (Zoom)
	7:00pm	Deacons Mtg. (Zoom)
	7:00pm	Adult Spiritual Formation Mtg. (Zoom)
	8:00pm	CORE Mtg. (Zoom)
Thu 12/12:	1:00pm	Worship, Music, and Arts Mtg. (Zoom)
	7:30pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)