



Modern Americans have little patience for anything but the present. Events of the past seem irrelevant and dated; the future is unclear and speculative. Awash with endless products to consume, experiences to indulge, and cultural and political drama to scrutinize, we focus on the here and now.

For the Christian community, all our myopic focus on the present comes to a halt in Advent, the very beginning of the Christian year. Advent literally means "coming," and the season calls us to slow down and meditate on the two comings of Jesus: one past, one future.

First, we look back to the first coming of Jesus in the Incarnation. In Advent, we imagine ourselves as the people of Israel, hoping and longing for the coming Messiah over many centuries.

Second, we look forward to the second coming of Jesus when he will return as Judge and King. We reflect on the fact that though the Messiah Jesus has already come and his Kingdom is advancing, he has not yet consummated his Kingdom in fullness. The broken world still rages on, and yet we believe in and anticipate the renewal of all things.

Looking back, looking forward. Each of the four Sundays of Advent we'll be looking back and looking forward through some famous and beautiful images of the coming Messiah in the Book of Isaiah. In each of these images, we recognize ways they were fulfilled in Jesus' first coming, but we also see how they will be ultimately fulfilled in his final coming again.

Celebrating Advent puts us out of step with the culture around us. As Christmas lights flash and carols get sung and parties are thrown, we take these weeks before Christmas to get in touch with the fact that we live in a profoundly broken world. We are a people filled with lament and longing even as we are people of great hope.

Lo, he comes! Do you believe this, dear family? It is our song and hope.

[Continued]

THIRD —

training disciples to love and transform the world through Jesus Christ.

Rev. Corey Widmer
Lead Pastor

Rev. Ed Satterfield
Associate Pastor for Congregational
Care & Administration

Rev. Rick Hutton
Associate Pastor for Students
(grades 6 - 12)

Laurie Jaworski
Mission Pastor

Andrea Woie
Student Ministry Associate

Alan Ware
Director of Finance & Administration

Tom Barila
Director of Christian Education

Tracie Meadows
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Kathy White
Associate Dir. of Family Ministry

Dr. John White
Director of Music

Kim Taulbee
Associate Music Director

Beth Nichols
Director of Lay Ministries

Becca Payne
Director of Communications

Alex Sawyer
Technical Director

Tim Latham
Director of Young Adult Ministries

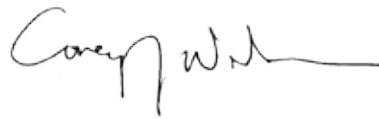
Rev. Richard Haney
Parish Associate

Rev. Nan Clarke
Parish Associate
Care Ministries

“With tempered impatience,
eager to see injustice ended,
we expect the Day of the Lord.
We are confident
that the light
which shines in the present darkness
will fill the earth
when Christ appears.
Come, Lord Jesus.
Our world belongs to you.”

- “Our World Belongs to God,” Christian Reformed Church

Grace and peace of our Savior+



Corey Widmer

Lo, He Comes! 2016 ADVENT SERMON SERIES

DATE	TITLE	VERSE
November 27	The Mountain	Isaiah 2:1-5
December 4	The Branch	Isaiah 11:1-10
December 11	The Stream	Isaiah 35:1-10
December 18	The Sign	Isaiah 7:10-16
December 24	The Light	Isaiah 9:2-7

THIRD PRESS DEADLINE FOR

January: Friday, December 9

Submit to: beccap@thirdrva.org



ADVENT SEASON at THIRD CHURCH

*Join us as we anticipate the coming of Christ,
and turn to celebrate his birth at Christmas.*

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, December 4, 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary

Traditionally, a Lessons and Carols service is a unique opportunity to hear and sing songs that the larger culture mostly ignores. Join us for this special interactive service of worshiping and reading scripture together. It is a great opportunity to begin the Advent season reflecting on scripture and praying for God's coming son.



WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS DINNER

Tuesday, December 6, 6:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall

Women of Third are invited to bring a potluck dish to join in our Christmas celebration. In addition to sharing a meal together, the program will include worship and stories of service shared by three women. Registration is free, but we ask that you 1) bring a dish to share, and 2) bring a small gift to donate to Stocking Stuffer Initiative for the Covenant Woods Retirement Home Community.



THE ORIGINAL CHRISTMAS STORY

An Advent Class

Sundays, December 4, 11, 18, 10:00 a.m., Room 217

Join us for this special three week class that will tell the Advent story in an interactive way, as if it were written for a play production. Follow this cast of characters through the Old Testament prophecies and through the story of Jesus' birth.



A CELEBRATION OF CAROLS

Wednesday, December 14 | Dinner: 5:45 p.m. Fellowship Hall | Music: 7:00 p.m. Sanctuary

We'll begin the evening with a Christmas meal together in the Fellowship Hall. Then, in the Sanctuary, our children's choir, Sanctuary choir, and orchestra will present "A Celebration of Carols," music for the entire family, perfect for the Advent season. RSVP for dinner: thirdrva.org/events.



CHRISTMAS EVE
— & —
CHRISTMAS MORNING

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

On Christmas Eve, we'll host four services. Please come, invite your friends and family, and worship with us on this special evening.

4:00 p.m. - Family Friendly service in the Fellowship Hall

6:30 & 8:30 p.m. - Candlelight service in the Sanctuary

11:00 p.m. - Candlelight and Communion service in the Sanctuary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

Since Christmas day falls on a Sunday this year, we're keeping one service for our church family to celebrate and worship the newborn King. Join us at **11:15 a.m. on Christmas morning** for this special service.

An Advent Reflection

Written by Becca Payne

I find my soul mirroring Advent this year— waiting, anticipating, embracing the almost but not yet. I'm thirsty for this Advent season. I'm wanting to join into an ancient tradition that acknowledges hope is coming, a light in this darkness, but it's not quite here.

We've had a life-in-exponents year, life and death and joy and sadness. Never one thing, but many things, compounded and multiplied on themselves. And the thing is, so many of my nearest and dearest have had a terrible year. Sickness, broken relationships, compounding anxiety. And this season doesn't take away that pain. It doesn't magically clean up the dust and wreckage and make us whole again. It doesn't, with its tinsel and sparkle, fix us.

What it does do is remind us that the Savior that comes is coming to be present with us in the pain or uncertainty. Nadia Bolz-Weber reminds us to keep Herod in Christmas, and I love that. "...The world into which Jesus was born was not a Norman Rockwell painting. The world has never been that world. God did not enter the world of our nostalgic, silent-night, snow-blanketed, peace-on-earth suspended reality of Christmas. God slipped into the vulnerability of skin and entered our violent and disturbing world. This Christmas story, the story of Herod, is as much a part of Christmas and Epiphany as the shepherds and angels."

I cannot control this season, my friends' pain, nor even the good (albeit overwhelming) raveling and threading of new life within me right now. But in this time, we get to remember that we don't have to. And in the not-holding-it-all-together, a Savior comes who binds up the wounds of the broken-hearted.

Now, here, in this time and place, we need only to be still.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

WORKING GROUP 4: MODERNIZE OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Where is your favorite place? What kinds of things contribute to it being your favorite? The people, location, activity, sights, smells, sounds, solitude, or familiarity?

Third is entering a process designed to think carefully and creatively about the idea of place and more specifically the physical place and property where we all gather weekly on Forest Avenue; the Tuckahoe area of Henrico. We're engaging the idea that every individual property contributes to an area. For example, think of a bustling neighborhood bakery. What aromas, sights, conversations, and personal interactions emerge from such a small plot of property! Think of the smell of warm, fresh-baked bread wafting down the street and immersing pedestrians as they go about their day. What kind of aroma are we generating daily to the Tuckahoe community as members of Third Church?



Third has engaged a nationally known land planner, Mike Watkins, to help guide us and the surrounding community through a process of articulating what we all value about the Tuckahoe area and thinking creatively about how we can all continue to build on those things which make the Forest Avenue corridor such a special place. This work is a part of a Strategic Planning committee working group which has been tasked with "Modernizing Infrastructure" on the Forest Avenue campus. One of the working group's key objectives is to develop a plan that guides the use of our land and facilities.

Practically, Mike Watkins will be engaging the community through a series of meetings and working sessions including Tuckahoe Elementary School officials and PTA representatives, the surrounding residential neighborhood, Henrico County officials, area commercial property owners, our Third congregation and Third's leadership.

The result of the working sessions will be a community area plan showing Third's property as well as the surrounding area. This plan will serve as a guide as we consider specifics of how to use our land, update our facility and improve or expand our internal space. The plan will serve as a gift to the community as we help the Tuckahoe area stakeholders think together about what makes this area uniquely valuable and how we can collectively take steps towards making it even better. The process will generate healthy conversations and strengthen relationships with those whom Third shares the Tuckahoe area.

We invite your participation in this process in several ways:

- Pray that this process would bear spiritual fruit in relationships and practical guidance as we update our facility and grounds.
- Participate in an initial discussion led by Mike Watkins on December 1st, 2017, 7:00 p.m. in Room 101 of 600 Forest Avenue.
- Participate in the working sessions led by Mike Watkins on January 18-21st, 2017. Please watch the church website and communication for further details.

If you have any questions or would like to be more involved, please feel free to contact Rob Lanphear (641-4947; roblanphear@gmail.com) or Andrew Moore (va011101@gmail.com, 283-6819).

MISSIONS

ISRAEL TRIP 2017



Join us for this beautiful opportunity to visit the Holy Land and walk where Jesus walked. We will tour Israel, Galilee, the Dead Sea and the city of Jerusalem.

WHEN: April 24 - May 4, 2017

WHERE: You'll stay in first class hotels in the following places: 1 night on the Mediterranean, 3 nights on the shore of Galilee, 1 night at the Dead Sea, and 4 nights in Jerusalem.

TOURING: You'll tour the sites of Israel in a comfortable tour bus, with a Biblically-knowledgeable tour guide.

COST: \$3895

For the full itinerary, visit: thirdrva.org/news-events/experience-israel-tour-2017

There are only 30 spots, and we expect them to go fast, so learn more and sign up today! And if you're ready to sign up, contact Tom Barila at tomb@thirdrva.org or by calling the office 282-4645.

Still thinking about it? Read through Becky's blog, a member of Third, who was on our 2016 trip: rkwetznel.wordpress.com/2016/05/27/links-for-the-trip-of-a-lifetime

FAMILY MINISTRY

SECOND GRADE BIBLE PRESENTATION

Each year Third Church presents a personalized Bible to the second graders at a special dinner and Bible presentation. This year we gave Bibles to 24 children! It has been exciting to see these children bringing their Bibles to church on Sundays and to hear stories of students even taking their new Bibles to school. Over the years, these second graders have seen older siblings and friends receive their Bibles, which has created excitement and a desire for them to receive their own Bible! Our prayer is that God's word will become a rich source of encouragement and learning for these students. Please join us in praying that they will continue to dig deep in God's word and to learn new truths!





NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



END OF YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS

All 2016 contributions must be postmarked or in to the office by December 31. For any questions, please contact Lynley Steadman: lynleys@thirdrva.org.



PRAYER & COMMUNION SERVICE

Beginning in January, we will no longer be holding the Sunday morning prayer and communion service that was held in Room 101 at 8:00 a.m. We look forward to continue meeting you at the Communion table on the first Sundays of the month!

SAMARITAN'S PURSE GATHERING - 22 Boxes Shipped!

On Tuesday, November 15, twelve women of the Third Dinner Bible Study Group met in the 500 Forest Building Cafe to pack 22 shoeboxes. They were full of toys, games, and necessities to delight the hearts in impoverished countries all over the world. This is an annual ministry of Samaritan's Purse, an arm of Franklin Graham's missionary organization. We are grateful for these ladies and their servant hearts!

COMMUNITY POSTINGS

OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE CROSSOVER MINISTRIES

There is an opportunity for individuals, families, or small groups to serve families at CrossOver during the Winter and Christmas season. Crossover's social worker has identified 40 families that are in the greatest need. She is going to match each of them with a person or group (i.e. family, small group, etc) to assist with their needs. In past years, the assistance offered has ranged from Christmas presents for kids to emergency rent assistance for a few months. People interested can email our social worker Abby Dini at adini@crossoverministry.org.

JOB OPENINGS AT 4.2.20 FOUNDATION

The 4.2.20 Foundation, which is based out of Richmond and Israel, is a non-profit organization committed to advancing access and engagement with the full Word of God to every language, culture, and people and works with translation and training partners around the world. They have two exciting job opportunities available currently: Business Manager and Special Projects & Research Assistant. For full job descriptions and to learn more about the organization, visit: 4220foundation.com/job-opportunities.

Third Church
500 Forest Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23229
804.282.4645

DID YOU KNOW?

Each week, we publish:

- **A Sermon Meditation** that helps to prepare our hearts for the upcoming worship service. The meditation, which is posted on Thursday mornings, is a brief overview of the sermon, along with the scripture, so you can begin praying through the message before Sunday morning.

- **A recording of the sermon.** It's posted on the Sermon Post page (thirdrva.org/sermons), and can also be found in the main Podcast app by searching [Third Church Sermons](#).

- **A Reflection Guide.** Each week, the Reflection Guide, posted Sunday afternoon, provides thoughtful questions and ways to engage with the week's message. This is a great tool to use personally in your devotional times, or with a Small Group that week.

- **A copy of our Weekly Worship Guide (bulletin).** The worship guide is posted in advance of the service (on Thursdays) so you can prepare for the upcoming service, and help to guide your time with the Lord throughout the week.



For all these great resources, visit:
THIRDRVA.ORG/SERMONS