

Welcome! We're glad you joined us today.

Whether you're a first-time visitor, a longtime member or you join us from time to time, we're delighted to celebrate Sunday worship with you. If you have any questions about the church, an usher or member of consistory with a blue name tag will be happy to assist you.

We offer a nursery for all infants and toddlers, and Church School for children two and up. Nursery room leaders can contact parents on their cell phones if any issue arises. Children of any age are welcome to stay throughout the service, but parents with a fussy child may choose to listen to the service in the Narthex or Choir Room, both outfitted with speakers. Ask an usher to direct you.

Restrooms are available in the parlor off the Narthex; inside the Choir Room; at the bottom of the staircase next to the Choir Room; near the Senior Minister's office; and in the administrative wing between the church office and the Calvin Room. A fully accessible restroom is located next to the Copenhaver Room. Please follow signs or ask ushers for assistance.

---

### **Today's Ushers and Greeters**

Before the service, Nina Richter and Elder David Harris are greeting in the Narthex, and Judi McCandless and Ava Gaston are greeting at the Cloister door near the Music Room. Immediately following worship, Elder Bill Hertlein and The Reverend Jill Ver Steeg will be greeting in the Narthex, and Elder David Harris and Carol Godfrey will be greeting in the Edwards Room. Muriel and Joe Aragona will be serving coffee and tea in the Edwards Room after service.

---

*Today is the fourth Sunday in Advent. The Chancel is adorned with purple paraments (from the Latin paramentum, meaning "adornment"), marking a season of preparation and penitence as we look forward to Christ's return. Purple represents humility, introspection and royalty. Some churches feature blue during Advent, recalling the Virgin Mary, representing hope and anticipation. Thanks to our Chancel Guild for preparing our Sanctuary for worship.*

## ORDER OF SERVICE

Sunday, December 18, 2016

10:30am

PRELUDE            *Ding Dong, Merrily on High*            Arr. Fred Gramann  
Concert Ringers

INTROIT            *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*            Johannes Olearius

### ADVENT WREATH

Our Advent Wreath this morning is lit by the Buttigieg family.

L: This morning we relight the first three candles of the Advent wreath: the candles of hope, peace and joy. Now we light the fourth candle of Advent, the candle of love.

Jesus demonstrated self-giving love in his ministry as the Good Shepherd. Advent is a time for kindness, thinking of others, and sharing with others. It is a time to love as God loved us, by giving us his most precious gift. As God is love, let us also be love.

L: In the book of Deuteronomy we find these words:

*“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” —Deuteronomy 10:17-19*

From the Gospel of John, we hear:

*“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” —John 13:34-35*

*\*Indicates that those who are able may stand*

Let us pray:

**P: Teach us to love, O Lord. As we follow in Christ's footsteps, may we always remember to put you first. May we know your love and show it in our lives. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth, fill our hearts with love for the world, that all may know your love and the one whom you have sent: your son, our savior. Amen.**

**\*HYMN 7**

***Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth***

MIT FREUDEN ZART

**\*GATHERING PRAYER**

*(The congregation shall be seated at the conclusion of the Gathering Prayer.)*

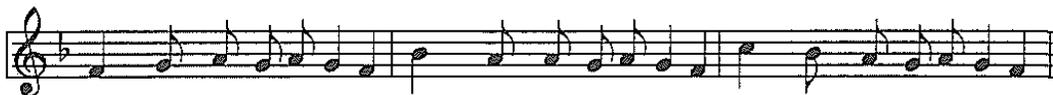
**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of Advent,  
We continue this season of waiting  
with expectant hearts and hopeful prayers.  
We confess the fears that cloud our judgment,  
the resentments that keep us from loving,  
and the habits that hold us back.  
Come, thou long-expected Jesus.  
Forgive us, heal us, and free us.  
In your name we pray, Amen.**

*(Silence is kept for personal confession.)*

**All sing:**

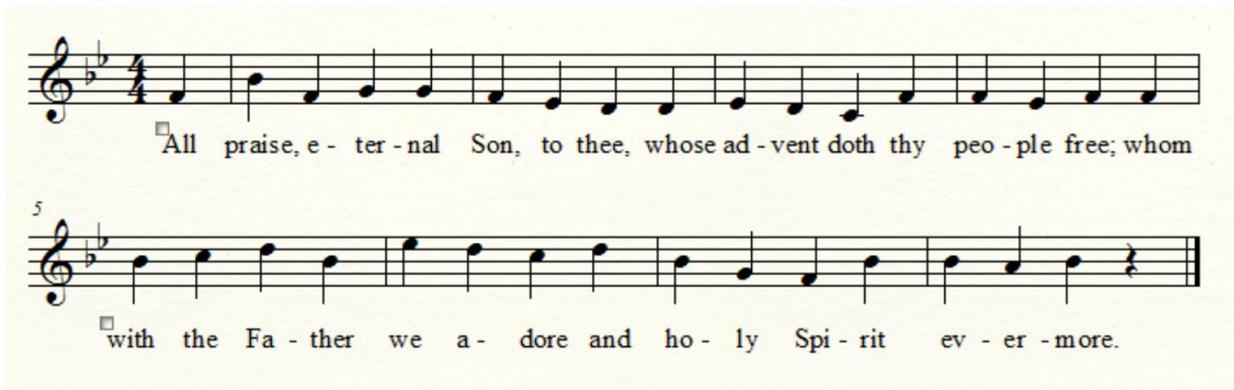


Lord, have mer-cy up-on us. Christ, have mer-cy up-on us. Lord, have mer-cy up-on us.

**ASSURANCE OF GOD'S PARDON**

Hear the good news...  
Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel:  
**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven**

\*RESPONSE OF PRAISE



All praise, e - ter - nal Son, to thee, whose ad - vent doth thy peo - ple free; whom  
with the Fa - ther we a - dore and ho - ly Spi - rit ev - er - more.

ANTHEM *In the Bleak Midwinter* Arr. Michael Helman  
Concert Ringers

MOMENT FOR MISSION Richard Pink

CHILDREN'S BLESSING

*(After the Children's Blessing, the students are invited to Church School.)*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON Genesis 4:1-16, Hebrews 12:22-24  
The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

SERMON *A Better Word* The Reverend Jill Ver Steeg

\*HYMN *Angels We Have Heard on High* Arr. Cynthia Dobrinski  
Concert Ringers

*The congregation is asked to remain seated and sing the 1st and 4th verses of the hymn.*

- 1. Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains  
And the mountains in reply echo back their joyous strains.  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

*(Verses 2 and 3 will be sung by Jennifer Ribeiro and Dale Walker.)*

4. **See within a manger laid, Jesus, Lord of heav'n and earth!  
Mary, Joseph lend your aid: With us sing our Savior's birth  
Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

SHARING OUR FRIENDSHIP AND GIFTS

*(As we prepare to receive the offering, please sign the friendship pad,  
pass it along your pew, and greet each other following worship.)*

OFFERTORY

ANTHEM

*E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come*

Paul O. Manz

**\*HYMN 592**

***Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*** (DOXOLOGY) OLD HUNDREDTH

\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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 22**

***Angels, from the Realms of Glory***

REGENT SQUARE

\*BENEDICTION

CHORAL

RESPONSE

*Amen*

Roland M. Carter

*All are encouraged to enjoy the postlude, and are welcome to come to the Chancel  
to listen. For those who wish to leave, please do so quietly in respect for others.*

POSTLUDE

*Carillon-Sortie*

Henri Mulet

**PARTICIPATING IN THE SERVICE**

The Reverend Jill Ver Steeg  
The Reverend Jonah Smith-Bartlett  
The Reverend Cari Pattison  
The Reverend Samuel T. Clover  
Dr. Sándor Szabó, Minister of Music  
Lee Corbett, Director of Handbell Choirs  
Jennifer Ribeiro, soloist  
Elder Dale Walker, soloist  
Concert Ringers  
The Chancel Choir

**GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

The flowers at the Lord's Table are given in loving memory of Helen M. and Berkeley D. Johnson and Craig M Johnson, by Lee J. Corbett, Gay J. Rogers and Berkeley D. Johnson, Jr.

The wreath at the pulpit is given in loving memory of W. Paul and Alice O. Rogers, by their family.

**Please keep the following individuals in prayer:**

*Ongoing challenges with cancer, chronic disease or other health conditions:*

Michael Amato

Doris Blair

Tony F. Civale

Enrico DiLello

John Corry

Sevgi Erman

Elizabeth Fulton

Shirley Georgiou

Jo Ann Hertlein

Liz Masterson

Barbara Morrow

Sally Nazzaro

Susan Pink

Eunice Reed

Anthony Ricciardi

Richard Rogers

Casimira Stricker

*People who have lost loved ones:*

Michael Amato on the loss of his godfather, Gerard Cirone

Dawn Ravella and family, on the death of her mother, Dorothy

Family and friends of John Duffy

Family and friends of Barbara Poe Inman

Susan Burke and family, on the death of her mother, Helen

Family and friends of Elsie Hall

Jim Hoch and family on the death of his wife Mary Hoch and mother Shirley Hoch

To add a name to this prayer list, please contact

The Reverend Cari Pattison at [cari@reformedchurch.org](mailto:cari@reformedchurch.org).

*Names will be kept on the public prayer list for two months,  
unless requested otherwise.*