

People, Look East

Love, the

Guest

Rose

Bird

Star

Lord

is on the way

105 People, Look East

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more
5 An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth, Christ who

crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
seed - be plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley

Peo ple, look
a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
nour - ish that in course the flour may flour - ish.
fro - zen God has fled; - ing time has, tho - son.
wealth - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

10:30am

GATHERING

Chimes

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Prelude

Opening Prayer

Call to Worship – based on Isaiah 61:1-11

Once again in Advent we embrace the words of the prophet
as we see them come alive in our Lord and Savior Jesus:

The Spirit of the Lord, the Eternal, is on me.

The Lord has appointed me for a special purpose.

God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

God has sent me to repair broken hearts,

And to declare to those who are held captive and bound in prison,

“Be free from your imprisonment!”

God has sent me to announce the year of jubilee, the season of the Eternal’s favor.

For those who mourn it will be a time of comfort.

As for those who grieve or lament,

God has sent me to give them a beautiful crown in exchange for ashes,

To anoint them with gladness instead of sorrow,

to wrap them in victory, joy, and praise instead of depression and sadness.

People will call them magnificent, like great towering trees

standing tall for what is good and right.

They stand to the glory of the Eternal, who planted them.

Praise be to God!

*Hymn #88, verses 1-5

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Wisdom from on high, who orderest all things mightily:
to us the path of knowledge show; and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Root of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

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.

CONFESSING

Call to Confession

Prayers of Confession

**O promised Christ:
We are a world at war.
Our peace depends on your coming.
We are a sinful people.
Our pardon depends on your coming.
We are full of good intentions but weak at keeping promises;
our only hope of doing God's good will
is that you should come and help us do it.**

**Lord Jesus,
Word made flesh,
our world waits
for your peace,
for your pardon,
and for your grace.
Even so: come, Lord Jesus.**

Hear our prayers ...

Prayer in Song #88

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

verses 6-7

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.

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.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Response to Forgiveness #113

Angels We Have Heard on High

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Affirmation of Faith – Brief Statement of Faith

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

*Passing the Peace

Announcements and Invitations

Gathering of our Offerings

Offertory Music

*Response #147

The First Nowell

Refrain

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

LISTENING

*Prayers of Thanksgiving and for Illumination

Hymn #105 (remain seated)

People, Look East

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able; trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Rose, is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

Scripture – various

Sermon – Love, the Rose ... Love, the Bird ... is on the way

*Hymn #129

Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung, of Jesse's lineage coming,
by faithful prophets sung. It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind; with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore for us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.

DEPARTING

*Charge and Benediction

*Sung Response #377

I Want to Walk as a Child of Light

I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.
In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

Congregational Meeting



Information & Announcements

Welcome to our guests!

Whether you are sharing in the worship of God with us for the first time, visiting with family or friends, or returning for a visit to your home church, we welcome you today in the name of Jesus. Please share some contact information with us so we can follow up with you and make a place for you in our weekly fellowship. You may email our church office at admin@northminstermacon.org.

PRAYER CONCERNS

If you have a need or a request for prayer, please contact the church office.

Current Member Concerns: Ann R. Smith; Jane Prentice; Ann Hall; Jane Ebey; Kathy Wheeler; Frank & Evelyn Clark; Nancy Miles; Annette Hutto - Current Friends and Family Concerns: Margaret Yawn; Donna Carole Kitchens; Joel Jones; Nelda Crow; Sara Walcott; Laurie King (Diboll); John & Louise Sallstrom; Betty Shuford - Military Personnel Prayer List: Austin Riley; Joshua Sulkers; Isaac Falkenstine (Bonnie Diboll's grandson); James Watwood

Caroling – December 21st

Northminster Youth and young adults invite everyone to join them for Christmas Caroling to our homebound! Everyone will meet at the church to leave at 6:30pm. Drivers for carpooling are appreciated. Please let Donna Shuford know if you have suggestions of who to visit.

Sunday Studies Continue

We will have our final Advent season study next Sunday, December 17th. Beginning January 7th, we will start three 6-week sessions of multi-generational Sunday studies! These sessions will be led by some of the amazing faculty of Mercer's Department of Religion. The first, Christian Ethics as faithful Innovation, will be led by Paul

Lewis. The second series, Lent for Everyone, will be led by Brian Whitfield. The third series, Do Pharaohs Still Exist, will be led by Janell Johnson. We hope you will plan to come. We'll be gathering at 9:00 with a light continental breakfast. Childcare will be provided for our youngest members, and we're hard at work on more plans for children and youth.

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve, we will have a simple worship service in the morning at 10:30 and our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 6:00^{PM}. If you or someone you know would like transportation to and from the evening service, please let Jennifer know in the office. (admin@northminstermacon.org)

Christmas Joy Special Offering

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need. Donations can be made any time this month, and a special offering envelope will be provided with your December 17th bulletin.

Christian Ethics as Faithful Innovation – Sunday Study

Paul Lewis will be leading our first six-weeks of Sunday Study beginning January 7th. Paul has been a professor in the School of Religion at Mercer since 2002 with a specialty in Theological Ethics. We'll share more biographical details later. If you would like a copy of the book that Paul will be using in this study, please indicate this on your blue response sheet and we will order them as a group. Each hard-copy book is \$18 and the ebook is \$9. The link to information about the book can be found at <https://www.helwys.com/sh-books/faithful-innovation>. The book is certainly not required for this study, but is simply being made available for those interested.

5th Sunday Lunch – December 31st

Sunday, December 31st, your personnel committee will be hosting lunch immediately following the service. We hope you can join us as we fellowship on this last day of 2023!

NORTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Our calling at Northminster is to make disciples, to grow in faith together, and to serve others in Christ.

CONGREGATION: Ministers of the Good News; SESSION of Ruling Elders: Kari Alderman; Jeff Denny; Barbara Fatkin; Nita McCord; Jinny McDuffie; Ray Mosely; Michael Napier; Donna Shuford; Minor Vernon; Genny Whitaker

RALPH HAWKINS, Pastor and Teaching Elder PAUL EVANS, Parish Associate GUNNER CHANCEY, Director of Music
KAREN JONES, Clerk of Session JENNIFER WHITEHEAD, Ministry Assistant

Office hours this week: 9:00-3:00 Tuesday-Thursday; 7:00-1:00 Sunday
Jennifer Cell: 478-318-7911

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