

# ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## THE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS:

### *The Gift of Joy*

Isaiah 35:1-10

## CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

Please note that all text in *bold* is spoken in unison.

† Worshipers are asked to stand in body or spirit.

December 15, 2024

Third Sunday of Advent

10:30AM

**WELCOME!** What a delight that you are here! We hope you will experience the love of Jesus and the joy of community in this time of worship. If we can be of help to you, please let us know. We would love to assist you in finding ways to get involved and grow in your faith.

**PRAYER OF PREPARATION** (*You are invited to pray this prayer in silence.*)

Holy God, at the dawning of this day, confirm my resolve to worship You, strengthen my hands to serve Your people, and keep me always in Your holy way; through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

**PRELUDE**

*Advent Prelude*

by Charles Callahan

**LIFE AT ST. ANDREW'S**

† **Call to Worship**

Based on Zephaniah 3, Isaiah 12, & Philippians 4

One: God comes! So don't let go of all the reasons to rejoice.

**Many: We will sing a song of Advent to the One who fills our lives with joy.**

One: God comes! So don't stop lifting your prayers with thanksgiving.

**Many: We will sing a song of Advent to the One who hears our words and silence.**

One: God comes! So don't stop giving your hearts to God.

**Many: We will sing a song of Advent to the One who loves us beyond measure.**

**All: With joy, we will praise God's holy name!**

† **HYMN**

*Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

REJOICE, REJOICE

Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning.  
Sing out your joy, for soon He is born, behold! The Child of our longing.  
Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together,  
He opens wide the heavenly door and lives now inside us forever.

To us, to all in sorrow and fear; Emmanuel comes a-singing;  
His humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing;  
Music to heal the broken soul and hymns of loving-kindness.  
The thunder of His anthems rolls to shatter all hatred and violence.

In darkest night His coming shall be, when all the world is despairing,  
As morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring.  
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder,  
The weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night. Though dark the winter and cheerless,  
The rising sun shall crown you with light; be strong and loving and fearless.  
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story;  
May God fill every day we share and bring us at last into glory.

† INVITATION TO CONFESSION

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of majesty and glory, we are thirsty for Your grace. You made a way for us in the wilderness, and still, in our foolishness, we go astray. We hide our eyes from Your presence. We do not listen to Your Word. We are lifeless when we ought to dance and speechless when we ought to sing. Forgive us, Lord. Speak peace to our fearful hearts, strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees as we seek to follow in Your holy way.

† ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

† HYMN 579

*Glory Be to the Father*

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

† PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.  
And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Leisa and Jason Stokes

ADVENT SONG

*Light the Advent Candle*

arr. Ruth E. Schram

As we light the Advent candle with the light of joy burning bright,  
Faithfully we wait for His coming; faithfully it shines through the night.  
In our humble hearts, a fire burns as well;  
Hear the prayer these flames would tell.  
O come, O come, Emmanuel.

TIME FOR CHILDREN

ANTHEM

*Bring Us Hope*

by Ruth Elaine Schram

Bring us hope, bring us love; Bring us peace, from above.

Bring us light, take our darkness away. Bring us light, turn our night into day.

Hope to replace our hopelessness, love to refill our emptiness,  
Peace in the midst of our distress; oh, how we need Your joy!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 35:1-10

Pew Bible p. 615  
Large Print p. 1072-1073

SERMON

The Gift of Joy

† HYMN 466

*O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*

AZMON

O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,  
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of God's grace!

Jesus, the name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease;  
'Tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life, and health, and peace.

Christ breaks the power of reigning sin, and sets the prisoner free;  
Christ's blood can make the sinful clean, Christ's blood availed for me.

My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,  
To spread through all the earth abroad the honors of Thy name.

## 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.

### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

[GIVE ONLINE](#)

† HYMN 592

*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

### † PRAYER OF DEDICATION

† HYMN 8

*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

TRURO

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates, Behold, the King of glory waits;  
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here!

Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple, set apart  
From earthly use for heaven's employ, Adorned with prayer, and love, and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide.  
Let me Thy inner presence feel; Thy grace and love in me reveal.

### † BENEDICTION

† SENDING SONG

*While We Are Waiting, Come*

CASON

While we are waiting, come; While we are waiting, come;  
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.

*You are encouraged to sit and enjoy the postlude after the sending song.*

### POSTLUDE

*Joyful, Joyful*

arr. Mark Hayes

We thank Martha Giarratano for sharing her gift of music with us in worship today.

The chancel flowers today were given to the glory of God and  
in loving memory of Nelson Jones, by Barbara and Michael Warren.

Please use the **C O N N E C T** cards in the pews to let us know about prayer requests or areas of interest. If you are a visitor, please also include your contact information and help us get to know you better! You can place completed cards in the offering baskets.

The **NURSERY** is located near the sanctuary and is available for children ages 0-5. Children's activity bulletins and **LARGE PRINT** bulletins, Bibles, and hymnals are available on the sanctuary tables.

The **CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON** is TODAY, following worship. Join us for chicken enchilada soup, tamales, chips and dip, and fellowship. For dessert, we will decorate cookies.

Following our Christmas Luncheon TODAY, join us in making a difference by assembling **WINTER KINDNESS KITS** for the homeless.

The **YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY** is TODAY, from 5-7PM. Join us for food, games, and fellowship! Wear your most festive outfit and bring a gift to exchange (no more than \$10).

The Golden Triangle Handbell Ensemble **WINTER CONCERT** is TODAY, at 7PM, in the sanctuary.

We will collect the **CHRISTMAS JOY** special offering on Sunday, December 22. This offering provides assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need, and also goes to developing future leaders of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges.

### St. Andrew's Prayer List

**MEMBERS:** Evelyn Lord, Bobbie Wied, Greta Ott, Lee Plunkett, Susanne Nichols, Linda Sparkman, Beth Ann Mistrot, Bob Fisher, Barbara and Dalton Abel, Kay Long

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY:** Don Linn, Jerry Linn, David Nelson, Kenna Gordon, Jacob Walton, Charlie Monaghan, David Fertitta, Geneva Broussard, Ellen Wiemers, Madeline Johnson, David Cobble, Erika Russell, Karen Thompson Butler, Mary Kennedy, Thomas Fisher, Jack Dillard, Erin Lenhart, Janie Niederstadt Verderame

## St. Andrew's Calendar

### Sunday, December 15, 2024

- 9:15AM Sunday School
- 10:30AM Worship
- 11:30AM Church Luncheon
- 12:00PM Choir Rehearsal
- 12:00PM Deacons' Meeting
- 3:00PM Boy Scouts
- 5:00PM Youth Christmas Party
- 7:00PM GTHE Concert

### Monday, December 16, 2024

- 12:30PM Staff Christmas Party
- 5:30PM Strings After School
- 6:00PM GT Square Dancers

### Tuesday, December 17, 2024

- 5:30PM Strings After School

### Wednesday, December 18, 2024

- 9:30AM Day School Chapel
- 5:30PM AA Group
- 5:30PM Board of Trustees

### Thursday, December 19, 2024

- 8:30AM MOW Cooks
- 10:00AM MOW Delivers
- 11:00AM Day School Christmas Program

### Saturday, December 21, 2024

- 3:30PM Boy Scout Eagle Ceremony

### Sunday, December 22, 2024

- 9:15AM Sunday School
- 10:30AM Worship
- 11:45AM Choir Rehearsal
- 3:00PM Boy Scouts

### CHURCH STAFF

Tara Thompson, Pastor  
Thomas Furlow, Music Director  
Gloria Pierce, Day School Director  
Rachel Stiles, Organist  
Joyce Stillwell, Admin Assistant  
Katrina Strong, Custodian  
Patricia Williamson, Pianist

Hours: Monday - Thursday, 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
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