

# WESTOVER HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



ADVENT III

A SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

DECEMBER 11, 2022 10:30AM

## Grace Notes

**Welcome to WHPC!** If you are visiting us today, we are so glad you joined us for worship. If you have not already, please take a moment to record your contact information on the visitor card you will find in the pew and drop it in the offering box or hand it to a greeter at the door. We are always glad to share the great things happening at WHPC!

If you are looking for a new church home and would like to join in fellowship with Westover Hills, please join us in the Parlor (outside the sanctuary doors) and we will gladly share more about life at WHPC or, if you are ready, receive you into membership.

**Childcare** is available in the nursery. Please check with a greeter.

# WESTOVER HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*\*Indicates the congregation is invited to stand.*     **Bold text** indicates unison readings.

## WE GATHER AT GOD'S INVITATION

### GATHERING MUSIC

David Austin, Music Director

### WELCOME

#### **& OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCIPLESHIP**

The Reverend Dr. Robert Wm Lowry

### OPENING PRAYER

Holy Light, God of joy, fill our hearts with expectation and anticipation.

Deliver us from vain desires and into holy hope.

Bring us to the sacred place where, in awe but never fear, we stand before you with open hearts and are received in your open arms. We pray all these things in your holy name. Amen.

### CHORAL INTROIT

#### *"The Call"*

George Herbert, Text

Ralph Vaughan Williams, Music

*Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: such a way as gives us breath, such a truth as ends all strife, such a life as killeth death.*

*Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength: such a light as shows a feast, such a feast as mends in length, such a strength as makes his guest.*

*Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart: such a joy as none can move, such a love as none can part, such a heart as joys in love.*

### LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Ellen McEwen and Debbie Cooper

We know the story by heart, almost by rote. We can retell it in our sleep; census, innkeeper, manger, baby, star, angels, shepherd, wise men...

We know the story by heart, and that is a good thing because the heart is where the story belongs. The heart is where joy lives and this is a story of joy; a story of joy that fills our hearts with expectation and hope.

Today we light the third candle; the candle of joy.

Joy for the story.

Joy for the gift.

Joy for the season that lives in our hearts and reminds us God's gift of joy arrives in unexpected ways and in unexpected places.

*The third candle is lit.*

Let us pray. God of joy and gladness, fill our hearts today.

Fill our hearts with expectation for the joyful arrival of Christ in the world.

Fill our hearts with hope for the joyful kingdom of heaven.

Fill our hearts with longing for the justice, reconciliation, hope, and love that make up our greatest joy, your true shalom in the world. Amen.

## Grace Notes

The second verse of this modern hymn uses the imagery of a garden rose to help explain the purpose of Advent.

During this season we are invited to prepare ourselves for Christ as a gardener prepares the soil for a seed, and then, in the fullness of time, to nurture that seed to grow into mature faith like a rose.

**Advent** is the season of expectation not only of the birth of Christ but of his return as well. The litany of expectation draws on imagery of both the expected birth and reign of Christ.

## RESPONSE TO CANDLE LIGHTING "People, Look East"

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing of the  
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plant - ed  
 3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be

year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble; trim the hearth and set the  
 there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in course the flower may  
 filled. E - ven the hour when wings are fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has

People, look east and sing to - day:

ta - ble. Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
 flour - ish. Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
 cho - sen. People, look east and sing to - day: Love, the Bird, is on the way.  
 People look east (Love is on the way.)

## + LITANY OF EXPECTATION

Julie Naylor, Liturgist

The LORD, your God, is in your midst,  
 a warrior who gives victory;  
 he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
 he will renew you in his love;  
 he will exult over you with loud singing  
 as on a day of festival. (Zephaniah 3:17-18)

**Yet ours is an upside-down victory.**

In those days and at that time  
 I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David;  
 and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. (Jeremiah 33:15)

**Ours is a story of power in humility.**

For God has ordered that every high mountain  
 and the everlasting hills be made low  
 and the valleys filled up to make level ground,

## Grace Notes

Commonly referred to as Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah, chapters 40-55 of this epic biblical book were likely written during the time of the Babylonian exile.

The series of “servant songs” that begin this section of the book are thought to reference Israel as a blessing to the nations.

In Christian communities, the reference to the servant is thought to be a reference to Christ.

so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. (Baruch 5:7)

**Ours is a story of strength in vulnerability.**

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure,

for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth;

and he shall be the one of peace. (Micah 5:4-5)

**Ours is a story of a baby deemed king,  
of a carpenter's son praying alone,  
of a Roman execution.**

**The Lord, our God, is in our midst.**

**May we have eyes to see and ears to hear.**

**Amen.**

+HYMN OF EXPECTATION #9 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

VENI EMMANUEL

+THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ which passes all understanding be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## WE PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 42:1-9

*“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.  
A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”*

*This is what God the Lord says—  
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,  
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,  
who gives breath to its people,  
and life to those who walk on it:*

*“I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;  
I will take hold of your hand.  
I will keep you and will make you  
to be a covenant for the people  
and a light for the Gentiles,  
to open eyes that are blind,*

## Grace Notes

This 20th century hymn is written in the style of Celtic prayers known as loriga (Latin for armor or breastplate).

Notable for their language of petition for the presence and protection of God, they are commonly sung during the Advent and Christmas seasons as reminders that we await the coming of the one who is guardian of God's good work in the world.

*to free captives from prison  
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.*

*"I am the Lord; that is my name!  
I will not yield my glory to another  
or my praise to idols.  
See, the former things have taken place,  
and new things I declare;  
before they spring into being  
I announce them to you."*

SERMON

"Holy Servanthood"

Dr. Lowry

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

+HYMN OF RESPONSE "O CHRIST, SURROUND ME"



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to  
2 Bind to my-self the Name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness-  
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light-ning,  
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to  
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:  
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:  
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:  
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:  
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur-round me; O Christ, sur-round me.

+AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in God, creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.**

**We believe in Jesus the Christ—God coming to us in the fragile promise of a newborn baby—**

**who emerges as the herald of hope, God's laughter in the face of despair.**

**Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way to the land of promise where justice and peace will flourish.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the body of Christ, and empowers us to confront and transform all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.**

## Grace Notes

Like many popular Christmas hymns, this text reflects an English rather than Palestinian winter. The writer is not merely mistaken in his description but using a device to make the nativity of Christ feel more immediate and personal to the hearer.

**We believe in the coming reign of God.**

**Announced by the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus, and will be consummated in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven, when all who have passed through the world's deep sorrow will be raised from the waters, robed in righteousness, and gathered into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire.**

**For the coming of that day on this day, we work and pray:**

**Come, Lord Jesus, Come!**

### OFFERTORY

### OFFERTORY

*"In the Bleak Midwinter"*

Harold Darke

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan.*

*Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone.*

*Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow,*

*in the bleak midwinter long ago.*

*Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor earth sustain.*

*Heaven and earth shall flee away, when He comes to reign.*

*In the bleak midwinter, a stable place sufficed,*

*the Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.*

*What can I give Him, poor as I am?*

*If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.*

*If I were a wise man, I would do my part.*

*Yet what I can give Him, give my heart.*

## WE GATHER AT GOD'S TABLE

### INVITATION TO THE TABLE

God's banquet is coming. The time we await when all will gather from North, East, West and South.

**A banquet where the rich and powerful will sit with the weak and poverty-stricken. A table where young and old will learn from each other. A time when all will sit together in peace, "and the wolf will lie down with the lamb."**

Here at this table we get a foretaste of God's banquet. This is indeed God's table, not the church's, and so all who seek to follow The Way are welcome to eat and drink from it.

**Come and taste the grace eternal, come and see that God is good.**

### SURSUM CHORDA

God is with us

**We are not alone**

Christ is present here

**The Spirit moves within us**

Let us give thanks to God

**In memory and in hope**

### THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Blessings be to you, Creator God, who in the beginning brought light and life to

## Grace Notes

**This liturgy** incorporates many parts of the Christ story from the gospels including the promise of the Christ-child, the cry for messiah to come, the liberating work of Jesus, and the story of his final meal with his disciples.

The table is a foretelling of the Kingdom of God told by a recalling of the story of Christ.

the world and who continues to bring it love and light everlasting.

**Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages, your ancient promise still brings us hope.**

Over the ages you have called people to embrace your hope and share your love. But even when they have closed their ears to the song you did not stop singing. You sent prophets and messengers to your people, reminding them of the promised time of peace and justice that would surround the world.

**They came in the midst of our despair and filled us with hope.**

And then you came to a young woman named Mary and laid out the promise in a new way

**Promising her a son, who would be called Jesus  
Promising her that in her son the world would be changed**

And now as we prepare for that child to be born, we echo the ancient cry:

**O come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth, we remember the life that this baby will live.

**We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition to show all what the Banquet of Hope could be as he ate openly with the despised and the outcast of his world.**

And we remember one special meal, foretaste of the banquet that is to come, that he ate with his closest friends.

**Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation, he prepared them for liberation.**

And at the end of the meal he took bread, blessed and broke it, then passed it to them saying:

**Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world. Eat it in remembrance and in hope.**

After that he took the cup, blessed it, and passed it to them saying:

**This cup is the sign of the New Covenant. Whenever you drink it remember me, for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.**

Remembering the birth of the child in the stable, we remember also his life, his death and his resurrection.

**We remember how he poured his love out on all he met and look forward to his return and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.**

God, you poured your Spirit on Mary and she sang words of defiance and hope. Pour out your Spirit upon us gathered here.

As we eat and drink may we know your presence. As we eat and drink may we be opened to the possibilities of your hope and power and may we be strengthened in our time of waiting for peace and justice so that we will have the courage to make the Christmas promise a reality. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,**

*Grace Notes*

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.

BREAKING THE BREAD

The Bread we break is the Bread of Life  
The Cup we Share is the Cup of Promise  
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**  
Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION *Crowded Table*

Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby, Lori McKenna

*You can hold my hand, when you want to let go.  
I can be your mountain, when you're feeling valley low.  
I can be your streetlight, showing you the way home.  
You can hold my hand, when you need to let go.*

*(Refrain)*

*I want a house with a crowded table  
and a place by the fire for everyone.  
Let us take on the world while we're young and able  
and bring us back together when the day is done.*

*If we want a garden, we're gonna have to sow the seed.  
Plant a little happiness, let the roots run deep.  
If it's love that we give, then it's love that we reap.  
If we want a garden, we're gonna have to sow the seed.*

*(Refrain)*

*The door is always open, your picture's on my wall.  
Everyone's a little broken and everyone belongs.  
Yeah, everyone belongs.*

*(Refrain)*

THE PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**WE DEPART IN GOD'S NAME**

+PARTING HYMN #41

*"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

ADESTE FIDELES

+CHARGE & BENEEDICTION

+POSTLUDE



**Elders will be** in the Parlor (outside the sanctuary doors) following worship if you would like to learn more about WHPC or if you are ready to join as part of the congregation.

**Announcements** and pastoral care concerns may be found on the insert.