



Third Sunday of Advent December 17, 2023

A Service of Word and Sacrament

WE GATHER AT GOD'S INVITATION

*Worshippers are invited to stand in body or spirit. **Bold text indicates unison readings.**

WELCOME AND INVITATIONS TO DISCIPLESHIP

The Rev. Dr. Robert Wm Lowry, Pastor

PRELUDE

David Austin, Director of Music

†LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Jim and Katy Phillips

When I look around, I see shadows of sadness, families who have lost loved ones, people in prison, people who are isolated and feel on their own...

When I look around, I see shadows of grief, people dreading the holidays because of painful memories, or because they don't want to spend another Christmas alone...

In the face of sadness, we light a candle of joy...

In the face of grief, in the face of loss, we light a candle of joy...

The third (pink) candle is lit.

May the light from this candle overwhelm the world.

May the light from this candle say to all that God's joy is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Friends, be not afraid, God's joy is at hand!



+SUNG ADORATION

“Sometimes a Light Surprises (Modern)”

AURELIA

Text by Sally Browder

But there's a new di- rec- tion il- lu- mined by God's glow. Make love our pre- de-
lec- tion, have con- fi- dence to know. Light drives our hope, em- bold- ens, makes
room for kind-ness shared. As- sures, as it en- folds us, that what we need is here.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

+OPENING PRAYER

H.K. Stewart, Liturgist

Holy Light, God of faithful witnesses,
please shine in our hearts with all the joys of your coming Son.

May we be delivered from trusting the artificial lights of our generation,
and from the ephemeral, decorative lights of this season.

Bring us into the open place where, dazed yet not afraid,
we may praise you with wonder and adore you with profound joyfulness.

Through Jesus of Nazareth, our Christ and Saviour. Amen.

+HYMN OF PRAISE #2

“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

HYFRYDOL

CALL TO CONFESSION

Brothers and sisters, we are complicated creatures. We have the capacity to love and to disdain, a propensity to cherish and ignore, a willingness to see what we want and be blind to what we do not. We are at times sinners and saints, heroes, heroines, and heretics.

But at all times, in every moment of every day of creation, we are children of God. And as children of God, we are children of God's compassion. Together, with confidence that God's word of mercy

is true, let us acknowledge where we fall short of the glory of God and recall where the mercy of God touches our lives.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**We confess to you, Gracious God,
that too often we look on your law as a burden, not a gift;
an inconvenience, not a blessing.
Rather than seeing your love revealed,
we feel our own guilt magnified.
Instead of rejoicing in your good news,
we focus on our own shortcomings.
Turn us around, Redeemer,
and do not let our fears have dominion over us.
Enlighten us, so that our words and deeds may be acceptable to you. Amen.**
Silence is kept.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

...in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

+THE PEACE OF CHRIST

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

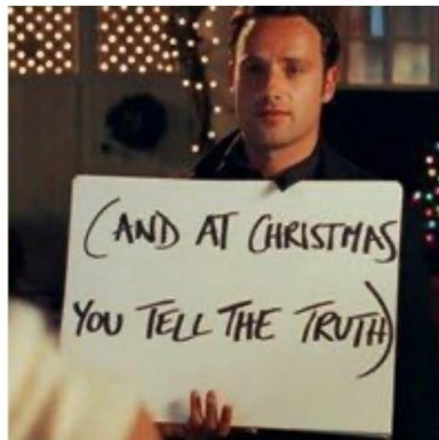
WE PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13

Because it's Christmas...



SERMON

Dr. Lowry

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

†HYMN OF RESPONSE *"Who Would Think That What Was Needed"*

WHITE ROSETTES

1 Who would think that what was need - ed to trans -
2 Shep - herds watch and wise men won - der; mon - archs
3 Cen - tu - ries of skill and sci - ence span the

form and save the earth might not be a
scorn and an - gels sing; such a place as
past from which we move, yet ex - pe - rience

plan or ar - my, proud in pur - pose, proved in
none would reck - on hosts a ho - ly help - less
ques - tions wheth - er, with such prog - ress, we im -

worth? Who would think, de - spite de - ri - sion, that a
thing. Sta - ble beasts and by - passed strang - ers watch a
prove. While the hu - man lot we pon - der, lest our

child should lead the way?
 ba - by laid in hay; God sur - pris - es earth with
 hopes and hu - mor fray,

heav - en, com - ing here on Christ - mas Day.

†AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in one God, who is Creator,
 maker of all we see and all we don't see.
 Who is Ruler of the universe: Source of all creation!**

**We believe in one God, who is Jesus Christ,
 God from God, Light from Light, true God and true human.
 He is one with the Creator;
 the Word made flesh, our Messiah: Savior of all creation!**

**We believe in one God, who is Holy Spirit,
 Breath of God moving among us;
 Who is one with the Creator; one with the Christ;
 our Comforter and our Guide: Mentor of all creation!**



OFFERING
OFFERTORY

“Song of Mary”

Patricia Mock and Fay Lopez

*My soul exalts the Lord, my God, and my spirit rejoices in praise to God my Savior.
For He has chosen me, the handmaid of the Lord.
Age to age, generations will call me blessed, for the favor of the Mighty One has shown to His servant,
for He has honored me, the bond-slave of the Lord
In His goodness, His kind compassion, He sends the Promised One the vow to pay.
In remembrance of His great mercy, The Holy One has done great things for me.
O magnify His holy name.
My soul magnifies the Lord, my God, and my heart rejoices in praise to God, my Savior.
For He has chosen me, the bond-slave of the Lord. Amen.*

WE GATHER AT GOD'S TABLE

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE SURSUM CORDA

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION



WE DEPART IN GOD'S NAME

†PARTING HYMN

"Sing of God Made Manifest"

SALZBURG

1 Sing of God made man - i - fest in a child ro - bust and blest,
2 Sing of God made man - i - fest when at Jor - dan John con - fessed,
3 Sing of God made man - i - fest when Christ came as wed - ding guest
4 Sing of God made man - i - fest on the cloud - capped moun - tain's crest,

to whose home in Beth - le - hem where a star had guid - ed them,
"I should be bap - tized by you, but your bid - ding I will do."
and at Ca - na gave a sign, turn - ing wa - ter in - to wine;
where the law and proph - ets waned so that Christ a - lone re - mained:

ma - gi came and gifts un - bound, signs mys - te - rious and pro - found:
Then from heaven a dou - ble sign—dove - like Spir - it, voice di - vine—
fur - ther still was love re - vealed as he taught, for - gave, and healed,
glimpse of glo - ry, pledge of grace, given as Je - sus set his face

myrrh and frank - in - cense and gold grave and God and king fore - told.
hailed the true A - noint - ed One: "This is my be - lov - ed Son."
bring - ing light and life to all who would lis - ten to God's call.
towards the wait - ing cross and grave, sign of hope that God would save.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal lines.

†CHARGE & BENEEDICTION

†POSTLUDE

Welcome

We are so glad to be worshipping with you today. If this is your first visit, welcome! If you have been with us before, welcome back! Whether you are a life-long Presbyterian, a brand-new Christian, or someone who is just trying to make sense of this world we share, we hope you will feel at home at Westover Hills Presbyterian.

Let us know you are worshipping with us!

In the pew you will find an information card. Please leave us information on how we might be in touch with you to share more about life at Westover Hills. We would love to share a little about our story and hear more about yours. If you do not see a card in the pew near you, please ask one of the ushers you saw when you came in and we will be sure to get one for you.

Midweek Manna

Midweek Manna has resumed on Wednesdays at noon in the New Chapel downstairs and via Zoom. We are reflecting each week on the previous Sunday's lectionary text. This week our focus will be on Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-4, 10-13. Zoom information is available in the CareLine.

Yoga

Yoga is for everyone! Our yoga group meets at 10am on Thursday in the New Chapel (downstairs). This class is for beginners and experienced alike. All you need is a yoga mat and an open mind.

Online Giving

You can now make donations online! By donating you can choose to give to Westover Hills and/or our nested New Worshipping communities, The Table and The Queer Collective. You may find the link in the CareLine, and simply click the "funds" tab to pick which you'd like to give to. You can make a

BLUE CHRISTMAS/LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE
THURSDAY DECEMBER 21 5:30PM

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
SUNDAY DECEMBER 24 10:30AM

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE
SUNDAY DECEMBER 24 5:30PM

one-time donation or schedule a recurring gift. Also, by setting up an account, you can keep up with your digital records online. Our communities are so grateful for your generosity and hope this platform is helpful for you.

OUR WORK BEYOND THE WALLS

Reverse Advent Calendars

This year for the season of Advent we have adopted a “reverse Advent calendar” program to benefit our mission partners. While a traditional Advent calendar has a little treat hidden for each day of the season, the reverse Advent calendar is an invitation to *add* a little treat for one of our neighbors in need. There will also be weekly reflections, a suggested way to offer a gesture of love and goodwill each Saturday, and a special prayer request for each Sunday of Advent.

Each weekday you are invited to add to your reverse Advent calendar bag an item that is needed by one of our partners. This may be a bag of dry beans for El Zócalo or a pair of mittens for the Mitten Tree. Each item on the list has been identified by our partners as a particular need for either the season or on an ongoing basis. We will collect the bags on Christmas Eve at our candlelight service and offer a blessing over them. If you are unable to attend or will be travelling, you may bring your filled bags by the church before Christmas Eve or after January 1.

The mission partners benefitting from the reverse Advent calendars are:

- El Zócalo food pantry
- Ferncliff (international summer staff)
- WHPC Mitten Tree
- The Jail Ministry
- Vera Lloyd Presbyterian Family Services (specifically the boys’ houses)

Tornado Recovery Long-term Relief

Volunteers, under the auspices of the Pulaski County Long Term Recovery Committee, are needed to do door-to-door assessment of emotional and spiritual health of people impacted by the March 31, 2023 tornado in Pulaski County. The date will be Saturday, December 9, 2023. Compassion and active listening skills are required; professional training and/or disaster response experience are extremely helpful.

Schedule for the day: training in the Hardie Chapel at Westover Hills on Saturday, December 9, from 10am-12noon, enjoy pizza lunch at noon and go to assigned neighborhoods from 12:30–3pm.

For information, contact Liz Branch at erbranch@comcast.net.

Stewpot

The Stewpot needs clothes and personal items to replenish the shelves due to a sharp increase in need. The following items are particularly in demand:

- Ball caps
- Men’s athletic shoes

- Men's jeans and Docker's (khaki-type) pants size 30-36
- Travel size toothpaste, shampoo, lotion, and soap
- Daypack/bookbag style backpacks

Donations may be left in the Narthex on Sundays or in the donation bin in the church office.

Stewpot is also in need of volunteers for the clothes closet.

Volunteers are needed Tuesdays 9:00-11:00 and Thursdays from 9:00-1:00. Please contact Nancy Sherman Carter if you can help; her email is nesherman57@yahoo.com

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Prayer and Meditation

There are two important traditions at Westover Hills that join our voices in prayer every week. The first is *Prayer on the 9's*. Every day you are able, join us by taking a minute to pause at 9am and 9pm to offer a short prayer for the church, the world, or someone you know who needs comfort.

We also share every Sunday in the bulletin and every Wednesday in the Careline e-newsletter the list of pastoral care concerns known to the church. Members and friends are invited to pray for those people and world issues named on the list. Prayers of comfort, for healing, and for peace are always appropriate ways to remember our friends and neighbors. This week we remember:

Helen Hughes following the death of her husband and our friend Doyle; Ann Bell following the death of her brother Henry Hunt III in Delaware on the 10th; Shayne Smith (friend of Pastor Robert and Brian) following a double lung transplant in Dallas; Catherine Lowry (Pastor Robert's mother, at home recovering from a stroke); Pete Welch (friend of Ann Patterson, undergoing triple bypass surgery); Doyle Hughes (at St. Vincent); Kristi Craddock (Cindy Hamilton's cousin who is out of the ICU but still in the hospital); Aaron and Paige Hall (friends of Robert and Brian) on the death of Paige's father; Judy Lyle; Courtenay Jackson; Debbie Waltermire (friend of Betty Deere; diagnosed with breast cancer); family of Barbara Polite (manager of Clothes Closet; who died recently); Jason Chrisman (son of Mary Chrisman); Duke Monroe and family (death on October 29th of Duke's wife, Barbara); Douglas Ponce (director of El Zócalo; his mother is hospitalized in El Salvador); The Garcia family (friends of Sydney, recent passing of daughter/sister and the father is recovering in the hospital from two strokes); Christiana Esem-Kuwong; Mary Ellen Holder; Anna Grace Clark (brain cancer); Reverend Doug Kanney (heart issues); family of Vivianna McAtee, who died on October 6; Jim Miller (broken ankle, at home); Lila Quinn; Deran Abernathy (son-in-law of former member Judy Huffman; stage 4 lung cancer); Rev. Carol-Ann Blow (health issues); Johnny Rhodes; the people of Maui, who are recovering from a wildfire; the people impacted by wildfires in the Presbytery of South Louisiana; FPC DeRidder, LA, and the Korean New Worshipping Community of DeRidder (providing shelter and support for evacuees); the WHPC Staff: Robert, Tammy, David, Ulysses, Shawn, and Sydney; WHPC Preschool, children, and families. If you or a loved one would like to be added to the prayer list, please

contact the church office at office.westoverhills@gmail.com Names remain on the prayer list until we are notified to remove them or until the end of the quarter.

Doyle Hughes

It is with deep sadness that we share that Doyle Hughes died early Thursday morning at St. Vincent following an extended illness. Doyle was a cherished member of our church family and a committed member of the choir. Arrangements are pending and will be shared when they become available. Please keep Helen and her family in your prayers.

Deacon's Ministry

The Deacons for December are Shirley Garlington and Brenda Lelansky. Please contact them with any pastoral care needs or updates. You may also contact Pastor Robert with any updates.

STAY CONNECTED

CareLine

Stay up to date with news and pastoral care updates with the CareLine. If you do not already receive this now once-weekly email newsletter, please contact the church office to add your name to the distribution.

If you have information to be included in the CareLine, please contact the office. The deadline for the Careline is 5pm Tuesday.

Calendar Updates and Session Reports

All updates to the church calendar and any information for the church session should be sent to the office.

STAFF AND MINISTRY LEADERSHIP

Dr. Robert Wm Lowry Pastor/Head of Staff

David Austin Director of Music

Shawn Mittedorf Preschool Director

Tammy Pflug Treasurer

Sydney McEwen Administrative Assistant

Ulysses Neyland Sexton

Elder Liz Branch Recording Clerk & Christian Education Ministry

Elder Candice Misenheimer Corresponding Clerk & Matthew 25 (Yard Sign Ministry)

Elder Ray Stephens Worship and Arts

Elder Bob Quinn Building and Grounds

Elder Ann Patterson Stewardship and Finance

Sally Browder Matthew 25 (Church Vitality)

Elder Betty Glenn and Deacon Alice Ahart Presbyterian Women

Elder Bill Smith Personnel

Deacon Alice Ahart Kitchen

Deacons Rosemary McGinnis and Laura Whitmore Board of Deacons

AFFILIATED MINISTRIES

Rev. Michael Gallup The Table

Rev. Marie Mainard O'Connell The Central Arkansas Queer Collective

Rev. Deacon Carol-Ann Blow Sister Thea Bowman Ecumenical Catholic Church

Westover Hills Presbyterian Church

6400 Richard B. Hardie Drive

Little Rock, AR 72207



Church Calendar and Website