

KIRK IN THE HILLS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 12, 2021



*As the gang gathered around the tree, they began to sing.
Charlie Brown heard them and came running back.
— Narrator, A Charlie Brown Christmas*



Whose light is it anyway? This is the season of lights. Cultures around the world experiencing winter (north of the Equator) would observe the daylight in decline and the longer nights. In response, anthropologists say that groups created communal practices to remember that the light had not faded forever but would return. Hence, we find in several pre-Christian communities holding festivities of all kinds, especially ones featuring candles and services around sunrise and sunset. Many of these rituals are still practiced today! When Christians encountered these communities and witnessed their festivals of lights, they used this as an opportunity to convey that Christ was the light they sought to overcome the darkness. Last month, our **November Service Challenge** registered over 5,000 hours of volunteer service from partner churches, with over half coming from the Kirk (and more hours still being submitted, so submit yours online if you have not had a chance). The theme of our Challenge was “Let your Light Shine” from the Gospel

of Matthew. Advent marks the Light that came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, who overcame the darkness, and also the Light that continues to enter our hearts so that we too can shine and the darkness could be overcome. When we serve hot meals to the food insecure, when we spend time with people who are isolated, care for the sick, provide warm clothing to the house insecure, and tutor kids who struggle with literacy, we let God’s light shine. When we foster and adopt children, fight against human trafficking, and look after our veterans, we let God’s shine. On December 5, for those of you who made it to the Kirk’s own **Festival of Lights and Carols**, you caught a glimpse of God’s light. The wonderful Advent and Christmas carols sung by children, the reading and hearing of the story of Christmas, the food and fellowship we shared afterward, as Accent Pontiac and Kirk Tutor kids mingled with Kirk youth—a glimpse of God’s light. There is so much darkness that it can be discouraging—school violence, continued poverty, politics that divide, and bigotry that harms—how can we let our light shine? By remembering that we’re not the source of the light—we merely let God’s light shine through us! It means that even when we’re not at our best and far from perfect, the light of God’s love is still working in us and can shine through. When we open ourselves to the holy in our midst, to the task of helping others, however small, to follow Jesus no matter the cost, we let the light shine through. Let us join together then, in this Advent and Christmas season, that God’s light would be glimpsed by all. Amen!

This week: 1) pray and thank God that the Christ is the source of our light 2) pray for the Spirit to show you how you can let God’s light shine through you during this season 3) Read Matthew 25 for inspiration for ways to let our light shine 4) Connect with Outreach and Mission for ways you can become a volunteer!



THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

9:00 & 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary Service

*Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken
of the entire Roman world. — Luke 2:1*

GATHERING

THE CARILLON

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Christmas Images

Terry Herald

arr. Bob James, Ervin Monroe, and Alexdandra Zonjic

CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY

from Awake, Transform, Reveal, Be Born Anew

Michael Burkhardt

The Wolfe family, 9:00 a.m. ~ The Pinson family, 10:30 a.m.

At every beginning there is a yearning.

O Emmanuel, open us up to your coming.

Reveal yourself to us.

O Emmanuel, open us up to your coming.

Soloist:

Christ the Lord is coming, sent from God above
to reveal God's mercy, justice, truth and love.

Please join the choir singing the refrain:

All:

"No - ël" sing with glad - ness, "No - ël" sing with cheer, put a -
way all fear and sad - ness, Christ the Son of God is near!
"No - ël" sing with glad - ness, "No - ël" sing with cheer, put a -
way all fear and sad - ness, Christ the Son of God is near!

Let us pray.

We welcome your presence now with the lighting of these
candles whose flames brings warmth to winter and fill
this place with the glow of hope, peace, and joy. **Amen.**

* *Please rise in body or spirit at the ringing of the tower bell.*

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN 108

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Divinum Mysterium

Stanza 1 – Men and boys only

Stanza 2 – Soloist

Stanza 3 – Women and girls only

Stanza 4 – All

Stanza 5 – All

Stanza 6 – All

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

from Isaiah 64:5b-7

Prepare the way of the Lord!
Let us make our confession to God.

**God-with-us,
even in Advent,
we confess you can seem far away.
You are hidden when we need you near.
In our hurt, doubt, and fear,
we do not try to draw closer to you;
instead, we lash out –
against you, our neighbor, even those we love.
Forgive us, we pray, and come to save us!
Let your face shine until our tears are dried,
our sins are faded, and our hope is restored.
After all, we belong to you,
and in your hands, we can be made new.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

from 1 Corinthians 1:4, 8, 9

The grace of God, given to us in Christ Jesus,
strengthens us to the end
so that we may be blameless when Christ comes again.

**Thanks be to God, who is faithful
and has called us into the fellowship of the Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord!**

* GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

ANTHEM (9:00 a.m.)

The Savior Comes

Johann Franck

The prophets long foretold his coming;
they spoke of Jesus, Holy Child.
He comes to bring us life and laughter,
he comes to bring us peace and joy.
Prepare the way, the way of the Lord; the Savior comes.
O sing a song, let all be joyful;
the day soon comes, the Lord is near.
From every home, from every city,
let music ring; the Savior comes.
Prepare the way, the way of the Lord; the Savior comes.
The Treble Boys' Choir

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORD WITH CHILDREN AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (9:00 a.m.)

**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.**

Following the Word with the Children, children and youth, ages 4 through grade 8, will be dismissed for Sunday school.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM (10:30 a.m.)

Donald Winston Johnson, Jack Henry Schnicker, Robert "Beau" Allan Tremain III

CHORAL ORISON

Liebster Jesu

Dearest Jesus, we are here,
gladly Your command obeying.
With this child we now draw near
in response to Your own saying
that to You it shall be given
as a child and heir of heaven.

PRESENTATION

*** THE APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

THE BAPTISM

WELCOME OF THE NEWLY BAPTIZED

With joy and thanksgiving
we welcome you into Christ's church
to share with us in his ministry,
for we are all one in Christ.

PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Please sing with the choir:

A - men. Come, — Lord Je - sus, come, Ho - ly One.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The musical notation consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. The first staff is for the first line of lyrics, the second for the second line, and the third for the third line. The lyrics are: "A - men. Come, — Lord Je - sus, come, Ho - ly One." followed by "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." and "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." The music is simple and melodic, with a final double bar line at the end of the third staff.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (10:30 a.m.)

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.

THANKSGIVING

HYMN 92

While We Are Waiting, Come

Waiting

*Please remain seated as the soloist sings Stanza 1.
Please rise in body or spirit to sing Stanzas 2-3.*

PRESENTATION OF PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS

Our giving is an offering to God. All offerings, whether made in the worship service or outside of it, are part of our worship of God and are used to support the Kirk's ministry here and in other parts of the world.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

ANTHEM

And the Glory of the Lord from "Messiah"

George Frideric Handel

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.
And all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

* DOXOLOGY

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

WORD

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.
Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.**
*Please sing several times.
This prayer for illumination is Hymn 91.*

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:46-56 and Luke 2:1-3
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Hometowns: The Throne in Rome

Dr. Nate Phillips

SENDING

* HYMN 92

Joy to the World

Antioch

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

* CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing...**

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

Joy to the World
*Stanza 1 – harmony
Stanza 2 – harmony
Stanza 3 – unison
Stanza 4 – unison*

Hugo Gehrke

Assisting with worship leadership for today’s music are Junior Girls Choir; Treble Boys Choir; Chancel Choir; Handbell Ensemble; Carol Beth Litkouhi and Jill Steiner, flutes; Dennis Curry, organ and carillon; and Nicole Joseph, soloist.



Kirk in the Hills will present the Christmas portion of Messiah with orchestra members from Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, the Kirk Chancel Choir and soloists, and directed by our Interim Chancel Choir Director and Organist, Tom Granum.

This will be an afternoon of beautiful music with congregational hymns and other anthems. Come enjoy the familiar sounds of your favorite holiday tradition, or if you've never experienced Messiah before, come join us and fall in love with this timeless work that tells of the coming of our Savior!

This event is offered free of charge. No registration required.

Sunday, December 12 • 3:00 p.m.
1340 W. Long Lake Rd. Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

Masks are mandatory for all in attendance.

Worship

Advent

November 28 • First Sunday in Advent
December 05 • Second Sunday in Advent
December 12 • Third Sunday in Advent
December 19 • Fourth Sunday in Advent

Advent worship times:

8:00 a.m. • Cedarholm • In-person
9:00 a.m. • Sanctuary • In-person & livestreamed
10:30 a.m. • Sanctuary • In-person & livestreamed

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2021 • The Sanctuary

11:00 a.m. • Service for families with young children
4:00 p.m. • Christmas Pageant Family Service
6:00 p.m. • Family Service
8:30 p.m. • Holy Night Candlelight Service
11:00 p.m. • Holy Night Candlelight Service

In-person & livestreamed

*Masks required: 11:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.
Masks strongly recommended: 8:30 p.m. & 11:00 p.m.*

Service of Comfort and Hope

Tuesday, December 21 • 7:00 p.m.

A service for remembrance and healing for those needing God's special touch during the holidays. If joy is hard to find this year, if sadness or loss are clouding your thoughts at Christmastime, then join us for this very special service with a gathering time in the Fireside Room after the service. This service is sponsored and led by Stephen Ministry.

WORSHIP NOTES

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Notes on worship and music

“The season of Advent, a season of waiting, is designed to cultivate our awareness of God’s actions – past, present, and future. In Advent we hear the prophecies of the Messiah’s coming as addressed to us – people who wait for the second coming. . . . A deliberate tension must be built into our practice of the Advent seasons. Christ has come, and yet not all things have reached completion. While we remember Israel’s waiting and hoping and we give thanks for Christ’s birth, we also anticipate his second coming at the end of time.” from *The Worship Sourcebook*

Several threads weave together for today’s worship:

Hometowns: The Throne in Rome

Past and Future – Celebrating Christ’s coming 2000 years ago and our looking for Christ to come again.

Prepare – “help us prepare some room in our hearts,” “Prepare the way of the Lord,” and “Let every heart prepare him room.”

Joy – Joy candle, “Joy to the world,” and “He comes to bring us peace and joy.”

Over many centuries, these threads have found their expression in a variety of contexts but come together today here in Bloomfield Hills.

Dr. Phillips continues the series about hometowns related to the birth of Christ with *The Throne in Rome* and the decree for registering.

The late Sue Ellen Page (Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton, N.J.) wrote the music for the text of her husband, Dr. Eric Johnson; their collaboration resulted in *The Gift of Love*. Note how this text with “Father, help us prepare some room in our hearts” bookends the service with the phrase from *Joy to the World*, “Let every heart prepare him room. . . .”

Perhaps no text better illustrates the breadth of time than the first stanza from *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*: “Of the Father’s love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega; he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!” With a text first written in the 5th century by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, this expression sharing the wonder of the Incarnation, created in the era when the Apostles’ Creeds were being codified and debated, has been set to a plainchant melody from the late Middle Ages.

Long-time Presbyterian music Hal H. Hopson has combined a 17th-century melody with a text that together bring several expressions of preparation and joy.

Part of the Isaiah text about preparation includes the text for today’s offertory anthem, “And the Glory of the Lord,” from Handel’s *Messiah*. The Chancel Choir and soloist will present *Messiah* this afternoon with chamber orchestra.

We begin today’s worship with lighting the Joy candle of the Advent wreath, and we end with *Joy to the World*. Although intricately linked to our Christmas traditions, the text is a paraphrase of Psalm 98:4-9, not a New Testament text. Linking this morning’s worship with the afternoon presentation of *Messiah*, we will also sing *Joy to the World* at the conclusion of our time together this afternoon.

Stephen Ministers are available for personal, confidential prayer in Melrose Chapel (to the left, when facing forward in the sanctuary) immediately following service each Sunday. If you or someone you know is in need of prayer please contact Nancy Lau at 248-835-6691.



Coffee Hour - Join us for fellowship in Heritage Hall from 10:00 -11:00 a.m. each Sunday!

Tour Kirk in the Hills each Sunday! Those interested in a brief tour are asked to meet in the Baptistery, to the right of the Chancel, after the 10:30 a.m. service. See an usher for direction or further details.

About today’s cover art

Mary and Joseph Register as Part of the Census of Quirinius | artist unknown | public domain

This Byzantine mosaic was created between the years 1315 - 1320 and resides in the Church of the Holy Saviour, Istanbul Turkey.

From left to right: Rev. Kelsey Sorge, Rev. Dr. Nate Phillips, Rev. Angela Ryo, Rev. Edwin Estevez



We envision a world where every heart experiences God's transforming love.



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Kirk in the Hills

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