



Hangings of
the Greens
Worship
Service



New Covenant Presbyterian Church
November 22, 2020 10:00am Service



1125 Jamison Corner Road Middletown, DE
(302) 378-4446 www.newcov-church.org

The Worship of God

Hanging of the Greens &

Stewardship: Live Simply - Sharing Enough

Welcome, Announcements and Sharing of Our Vision

Lay Leader: Brian Lindgren

Preparing to Meet God

Ringing of the Bells

Come, Christians Join to Sing

Preparing Ourselves for Worship During the Prelude...

For most of us, Christmas is a favorite time of year. There is just something special about the season - gathering with family and friends, sharing love and gifts with one another, being surrounded by beautiful displays of decorations, the familiar carols we enjoy, and the special worship services we have to give thanks for the birth of Jesus. There is no command in scripture to celebrate Christmas, but we happily join with millions of Christians around the world to remember the birth of our Savior. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

Advent is about preparing ourselves for this important season in the liturgical year. So, this Sunday, which is Christ the King Sunday, is the last Sunday of this liturgical year, and it is the perfect time to prepare for the Advent season which begins next Sunday. We gladly anticipate Advent, and Jesus being born in Bethlehem, in order that "the hopes and fears of all the year" will be met in him.

Preparation of the Sanctuary

Call to Worship

L: In the days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hill; all the nations shall stream to it. Many people shall come and say:

P: ***"Come, let us go up the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God's ways, and that we may walk in God's paths."***

L: With what shall we come to God's house?

P: ***Bring branches of cedar and holly, bring evergreens and a pine tree, hand wreaths and garlands.***

L: Make the church fragrant with the smell of living things. Bring candles and light to dispel the darkness.

P: ***In acts of hanging greens and lighting candles and listening to the words of prophets and seers, let us make our hearts, and this space, a place of inward and outward preparation, for the One who comes to give us second birth.***

(The Advent Wreath is placed by Jane Adams during the singing of the hymn.)



***Hymn of Praise**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, vs. 1&6

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 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.

Unison Prayer of the Day

God of mercy and grace, we know that ours is a world of darkness, in need of your light and hope. We also know that our lives are so cluttered, that we often miss the signs of your presence with us. We thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, through whom we experience hope and grace. We pray that you would fill our hearts with anticipation and longing, as we prepare to welcome our Savior and Lord once again. Help us prepare our homes, our lives, and our church for his coming. Teach us how to open our eyes and hearts, to see the light and life which only he can bring. Allow the life and hope symbolized in the hanging of these greens today, to be a sign of the greater life that is possible in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, in whose name we pray. Amen.

(Pat Wright carries in candles which will be placed on the communion table as symbols of the Light of the World.)

**Hanging of the Greens**

L: People of God, all around us are the doors of our church, where we enter and exit week after week. Today we stand at the doorway to the Christian year which begins next Sunday, on the first Sunday of Advent. Today, on Christ the King Sunday, we finish up this year, and we prepare ourselves and our church, to receive again the promise of new life and light. In a moment, we will mark the entrances of the sanctuary with wreaths.

P: **So, let us also mark our hearts and minds, as portals for Christ to enter as we pray, Come, Lord Jesus, come!**

L: As the psalmist writes: Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,

P: **That the Ruler of glory may come in.**

L: Who is the Ruler of glory?

P: **The Lord of hosts, the Lord is the Ruler of glory!**

L: Friends, how will we make this sanctuary a reminder of our need for forgiveness and new life – of God's constant faithfulness – and of the hope that we have in Jesus Christ?

P: **Let us hang greens, and place seasonal plants, as Hosea speaks the Word of God.**



(Wreaths and poinsettias will be hung/placed by Karen Urban and Cheryl Shields during the singing of the following hymn.)

***Hymn**

Prepare the Way, O Zion vs. 1&2

*Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley, a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.*

*He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.*

First Lesson

Hosea 14: 4-9

I will heal their disloyalty; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily, he shall strike root like the forests of Lebanon. His shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like that of Lebanon. They shall again live beneath my shadow, they shall flourish as a garden; they shall blossom like the vine, their fragrance shall be like the wine of Lebanon. O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; your faithfulness comes from me. Those who are wise understand these things; those who are discerning know them. For the ways of the Lord are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

The Lighting of the Christmas Tree

Barbara Montazella

L: God, the Holy One of Israel, is a God of comfort and compassion. With the Christmas tree, we remember God's everlasting promises to the poor and needy. Isaiah spoke of God's making of the wilderness a place of blessing – one where water and plants, even pine trees, would manifest God's loving action to save and provide for all of creation.

(The lights on the tree will be lit by Carol at the end of the following reading.)

Second Lesson

Unison Reading of Isaiah 41: 17-20

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive; I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, so that all may see and know, all may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.

**Hanging Chrismons as Symbols of Christ and Faith**

L: Here is this place, we prepare for the coming of the Lord. Here we will remember his advent, his birth in Bethlehem, weak and helpless as an infant. And here we rekindle our prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus" as we await his coming as the bright and morning star.

P: We will hang symbols and signs of Christ – ruler, prophet, priest. Hang stars, crosses, triangles, the alpha and the omega to remind us of his identity, his story, and the light of his love.

(Kathy H, Norma D and Nancy Carol W. hang chrismons that speak of Christ, as the congregation sings the hymn.)



Preparation of the Heart

*Hymn

People, Look East, vs. 1&5

*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: Love, the Guest, 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: Love, the Lord is on the way.*

Seasonal Drama

The Surprise Solution

By Gini Moritz

Cast:

Director – Cheryl Shields

Mom - Carol McBride

Dad - Michael Easter

James - John Easter

Julia – Jaclynn Easter

Uncle Andrew - Jay Fisher

Francesca - Cheryl Shields

Third Lesson

Matthew 24: 36-44 & Philippians 4: 12-13

'But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Meditation

Waiting, Hoping, and Trusting

Unison Congregational Response

Here is a place for you, Lord Jesus. Just as our hands have made it ready, so make our hearts ready to love and welcome you. Be born again, not in a manger, but in us. Make us your Bethlehem, where you dwell within us, and all things, and all people, are made new.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Cares Chorus:

*I cast all my cares upon you. I lay all of my burdens down
at your feet. And anytime I don't know what to do, I cast all my cares upon you.*

The Call to Celebrate Our Gifts

The Invitation *You are invited to place your offering in the basket in the back of the sanctuary.*
Prayer of Dedication

Sending

*** Hymn**

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates, vs. 1&2

*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.*

*** Blessing**

L: God of kindness and compassion, we have come to the conclusion of this time of prayer and worship, mindful of our role as your children and servants.

P: *We throw open the window of our hearts, so that the hope we have in you, may pour out in all four directions, showering its blessing upon all the earth.*

L: Inflame those hearts that have grown cold; reawaken within those who are weary of soul, your spirit of youthfulness and joy. Stir up your breath of freshness and enthusiasm that slumbers in tired hearts.

A: *May this blessing flow forth from our hearts, in your holy and infinite name, in the redeeming name of your Son, and in the living presence of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

***Response**

*He Is Lord
He is Lord, He is Lord!
He is risen from the dead and he is Lord!
Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.*