

December 3, 2023
First Sunday of Advent
Sacrament of Holy Communion

WELCOME

PRELUDES

Communion in D Major
Come, Blessed Jesus

Alexandre Guilmant
Joseph Prentiss

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER CONCERNS AND REQUESTS

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Gracious God, awaken the earth,

All: We wait for signs of peace.

One: Surprising God, open the heavens and come,

All: We wait for signs of joy.

One: Mysterious God, enliven our hearts with wonder,

All: We wait for signs of love – on this day and in this season.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES (Psalm 96, 80, 97)



Mary Ball and
Marilyn Rodenhausen

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let all creation sing for joy at the coming of the Lord.

The Lord of hosts is coming to restore us; God's face will shine, and we will be saved.

CONGREGATION SINGS #92

While We Are Waiting, Come
(verse 1)

Waiting (Cason)

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

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Light dawns for the righteous, and joy to the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord! Give thanks to God's holy name.

***OPENING SONG #291 (PH)**

O God of Earth and Altar
(verse 1)

Llangloffan

O God of earth and altar, bow down and hear our cry; our earthly rulers falter, our people drift and die; the walls of gold entomb us, the swords of scorn divide; take not your thunder from us, but take away our pride.

*Please stand as you are able.

(verse 2)

From all that terror teaches, from lies of pen and voice, from all the easy speeches that make our hearts rejoice, from sale and profanation of honor and the sword, from sleep and from damnation, deliver us, good Lord!

(verse 3)

Awaken us to action and forge us into one, defying sect and faction; O God, your will be done! Oppressive systems snare us; our apathies increase. Great God, in mercy spare us for justice and for peace!

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CALL TO CONFESSION (Isaiah 12:2)

One: “Surely God is our salvation. Have faith, and do not be afraid.” Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sin:

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of light, we again enter the season of Advent unprepared. Like your people of old, we do not call upon your name. We are not alert to signs of your peace, joy, and love. Instead, we are busy with preparations of our own design. We are exhausted by trying to do everything ourselves. Yet, you are our maker, and we are the work of your hand. Forgive and restore us. Illumine our lives that we may be witnesses to your faithfulness.

(Moment of Silent Confession)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Isaiah 12:3-4)

One: “With joy, let us draw water from the springs of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord! Call on God’s name.” In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

***SONG OF RESPONSE #137** *He Came Down*
(verse 1)

He Came Down

He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

One: May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

All: And, also, with you.

WORD

UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, our hope and strength, prepare the way in our hearts for the coming of your Word, so that we may see glorious signs of your promises fulfilled; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Please stand as you are able.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 80:1-7

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth ² before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh. Stir up your might, and come to save us! ³ Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved. ⁴ O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. ⁶ You make us the scorn of our neighbors; our enemies laugh among themselves. ⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Hodie

McPheeters

(Hodie means "Christ is Born")

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—² as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! ³ When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence. ⁴ From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. ⁵ You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. ⁶ We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. ⁷ There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. ⁸ Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. ⁹ Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

SERMON

"Coming Down"

Rev. Dr. John Wahl

UNISON AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (from Scripture)

This is the good news which we have received, in which we stand, and by which we are saved, if we hold it fast: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, and that he appeared first to the women, then to Peter, and to the Twelve, and then to many faithful witnesses.

We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the beginning and the end; he is our Lord and our God. Amen.

WITNESS

INVITATION TO OFFERING

We take this time to reflect and recognize all contributions of time, talent, and treasure. A basket is available for making monetary donations.

OFFERTORY *Jesus, Thy Church with Longing Eyes*

Johann Sebastian Bach

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE / PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: God of grace, ever faithful to your promises...The Lord be with you.

All: And, also, with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: O Lord, our God, creator and ruler of the universe...with all the faithful of every time and place, proclaiming:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

One: You are holy, O God of majesty...to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service. According to Christ's commandment:

All: We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory.

One: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us...All glory and honor are yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

LORD'S PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

UNISON PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Faithful God, your promises stand unshaken through all generations. Renew us in hope, that we may be awake and alert for the glorying coming of Jesus the Christ. And having been fed at this table, let us offer ourselves in service to others. Amen.

***SENDING SONG #372**

*O for a World
(verse 1)*

Azmon

O for a world where everyone respects each other's ways, where love is lived and all is done with justice and with praise.

(verse 2)

O for a world where goods are shared and misery relieved, where truth is spoken, children spared, equality achieved.

(verse 5)

O for a world preparing for God's glorious reign of peace, where time and tears will be no more, and all but love will cease.

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

Light Your Light

Fairman / Latta

*Please stand as you are able.

*Please stand as you are able.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CFPCC Food Bank Needs

Please consider donating the following items to help stock the shelves at Chagrin Falls Park Community Center:



Ham or turkey, cake / brownie mix, frosting, butter, brown sugar, flour, oil, oranges, apples, green beans, corn, eggs, yams / sweet potatoes, turkey gravy, anything else that you would have for Christmas, or anything you would like to donate.

CFPCC is receiving donations at your car. Someone will come out and retrieve donations.

Community Meal – Tuesday, December 5



Continuing this month, we will be engaging in our community meal program: preparing dinners to be available for pick-up or Community Meal delivery. These meals are our gift to the community: to anyone who is in need of the food or the love that goes into making it.

The menu for the December 5th meal is: Honey glazed ham, cheesy potatoes, green beans, roll, and assorted Christmas cookies.

If you are interested in helping, we will be cooking meals from 9:30-11:30 a.m.; assembling from 3-4 p.m.; and distributing / delivering from 4-5:30 p.m. In addition, if you would like to bake Christmas cookies (your recipe of choice) at home, please drop off by 10 a.m. on December 5th.

Sign up for the meal or to help on the church website, via the email from Pastor John, or call the church office.

Youth C•O•N•N•E•C•T Event

Sunday, December 17 ★ 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

If you know a young person, between 6th and 12th grades, who would enjoy an Ugly Sweater Showcase, Hot Chocolate Bar, Free Gift Exchange and more, bring them!

You may register through the church website, the newsletter, or call the church office.

Pass-it-on Resale Store



The **store will be open** on:

Friday, December 15, 2023 (1 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

Saturday, December 16, 2023 (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

Pass-it-on is accepting donations. Please contact Brenda Wahl at 440-829-7841 or passitonamissionoflove@gmail.com.

Valley Festival Choir



Christmas is like no other season! Everyone seems to be more united by traditions and faith. Hearts are more connected as there is a stronger feeling of goodwill toward all. It is, also, a time to reflect on the gift of Jesus Christ. So, come and celebrate "*COMING HOME*" with the Valley Festival Choir on

December 10th during the **10:30 a.m.** worship service. Come Home to our sanctuary and share in the life that came and changed all of our lives forever, the GIFT to all mankind.



Also, in the Narthex are index cards. Please take one and fill out your name and where you were born (city and state), and drop the card in the basket. I will be putting up a map in the Narthex and marking the locations where each person was born. Then, we can see where everyone started from and where we now call home. Any

questions, contact Nancy Sullivan or the church office.

Christmas Giving Opportunities

- **\$5 for Feet, Fingers and Fares for North Church**



Help give the gift of warmth to our North Church partners this winter. Your cash donations will be used to purchase adult gloves, hats and socks. Also, cash will be provided for the purchase of bus fares. Collection boxes will be

located in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your warm response to our neighbors in need.



- **Giving Gifts that Help Others**

Looking for gifts to give that are meaningful and help others at the same time? Heifer, Habitat, and Presbyterian Giving are three ways to do this. Please see the Mission bulletin board in the hall for more information. Online addresses are posted there. You can shop at Heifer.org, Habitat.org, and PresbyterianGiving.org and give a gift that will make someone's life better.

- **Annual Christmas Angel Tree Project**



Each Christmas season, Valley has an Angel Tree project. This year, we will be participating in the Pajama Project for Chagrin Falls Park Community Center. Please select an Angel for either a child or a teen. They need pajamas for children sizes 4-18 and for teens adult sizes. Teen boys like leisure pants. Also, they are giving teens a gift card for places like Subway, McDonalds, Target, etc. Please return the unwrapped gift under the tree in the Church Narthex. There is a box for the gift cards beside the tree. Please return your gifts by Sunday, December 10.

Thank you,
Mission Commission

Sarah Circle – Tuesday, December 12, 2023

This year's Bible study is:

Sacred Encounter: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ In the Gospel of Luke.

Study books are \$10.00. Large print is \$11.00.

**Meeting: VPC Library, The 2nd Tuesday of the month
10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m., September through May**

All women interested are welcome to join.

To purchase a study book, please contact Glenna Pool at 419-789-9446.

December Events



Sunday, December 10

Music Program – during worship

Sunday, December 17

Christmas Dinner – following worship

Sunday, December 24

Morning Worship – 10:30 a.m.
Lessons and Carols – 8:00 p.m.

VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.valleypresbychurch.org

VPC Guest Wifi Password: VPC12345

17560 Chillicothe Road
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023
Phone: (440) 543-1071
Email: valleypc@netlink.net

Rev. Dr. John Wahl, Pastor
Cell Phone: (216) 287-2405
Email: revjohnwahl@netlink.net

Heart of Valley Preschool
Heidi Cregar, Director
Phone: (440) 708-2572
Email: hovcp@netlink.net

Director of Music: Nancy Sullivan
Liturgist: Bernice Denham

Organist: John Kautzman
Greeter: Donna Bush