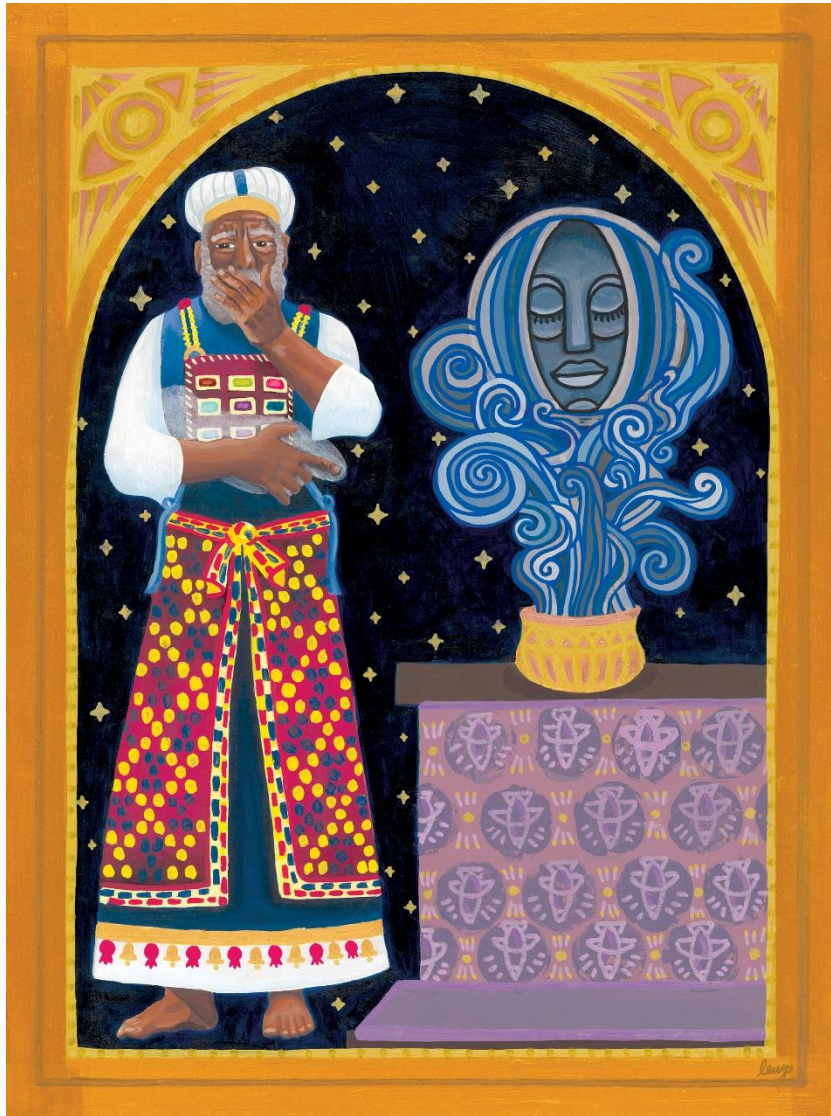


THE SERVICE FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Annunciation to Zechariah by Lauren Wright Pittman

CONCORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1800 FAIRFAX BLVD.

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19803

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Guest Wi-Fi: *ConcordGuest*, password: *welcome2Concord*

ORDER OF WORSHIP

December 3, 2023

10:00 a.m.

* All who are able may stand

Congregation reads aloud the **BOLD** print

PRELUDE

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus/Come Thou Fount
Sinae Yun Lee, piano

Joel Raney

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Steve Clark

INTROIT

Creator of the Stars of Night
Chancel Choir

NO. 84, v. 1

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: *THE CANDLE OF HOPE*

Sharon Bruckman, Nancy & Ashley Tieste

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: In God's house, we can be joyful.

ALL: WE CAN BE GRATEFUL. WE CAN BE HOPEFUL.

One: In God's house, we can be weary.

ALL: WE CAN BE ANXIOUS. WE CAN BE GRIEVING.

One: In God's house, we can be honest—

**ALL: INSPIRED OR TIRED, DELIGHTED OR DOUBTFUL,
CONNECTED OR CURIOUS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN.**

One: This is God's house. You are welcome exactly as you are.

ALL: LET US WORSHIP OUR LOVING GOD.

*HYMN NO. 84

Creator of the Stars of Night

v. 2 – choir only

vs. 3 & 4 – all sing

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Bettye Shirar

One: Gracious God, we are weary.

For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray:

ALL: FORGIVE US FOR PUSHING OURSELVES TOO HARD.

REMINd US THAT WE DESERVE SABBATH REST.

One: For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with news, we pray:

ALL: FORGIVE US FOR CREATING SO MANY DISTRACTIONS.

REMINd US THAT IN THE QUIET, WE CAN HEAR YOU.

(cont'd)

One: For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we pray:

ALL: FORGIVE US FOR BEING IMPATIENT WITH OURSELVES.

REMINDE US THAT HEALING TAKES TIME,

AND THAT JOY AND GRIEF CAN COEXIST.

One: For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto hope,

ALL: FORGIVE US. REMIND US OF ZECHARIAH AND ELIZABETH.

REMINDE US THAT YOUR GOOD NEWS KNOWS NO BOUNDS. AMEN.

***WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

ALL: ... WE ARE LOVED. WE ARE CLAIMED.

WE ARE FORGIVEN.

THANKS BE TO GOD. AMEN.

***RESPONSE (all sing)**

Angels We Have Heard on High

NO. 113, refrain only

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO!

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO!

***SHARING THE PEACE**

One: Since God has forgiven and welcomed us in Christ.

ALL: LET US FORGIVE AND WELCOME ONE ANOTHER.

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

ALL: AND ALSO WITH YOU.

[Turn to those around you and share with them words and signs of peace.]

WONDERING TIME

Christina Pressley

[There is no J.A.M. Session on Communion Sundays. Children remain in worship with their families. Quiet activities are available in the back of the sanctuary.]

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

[This morning we receive the offering for the Deacons' Fund. Your contributions provide immediate assistance to individuals in our community in financial crisis – real people, real needs, real help. Any loose offering and designated checks go toward this fund. Let us give with grateful hearts.]

OFFERTORY

And the Glory (from *Messiah*)

G. F. Handel

Chancel Choir

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.

*RESPONSE (all sing)

What Child Is This

NO. 145, v. 3

So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:5-23 (CEB)

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

ALL: THANKS BE TO GOD.

SERMON

Pastor Steve Clark

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

ALL: WE BELIEVE IN A GOD WHO HEARS OUR PRAYERS,

WHO KNOWS THE SHAPE AND FORM OF OUR WEARINESS.

WE BELIEVE IN A GOD WHO WANTS JOY AND DELIGHT FOR US,

NOT JUST SURVIVAL AND EXISTENCE.

WE BELIEVE IN A GOD WHO LOOKS AHEAD,

WHO IS NOT DONE DREAMING FOR THE WORLD —

A GOD WHO SENDS HOPE IN THE FORM OF PEOPLE AND CHANGE,

MOVEMENTS AND SPIRIT.

AND SO WE RETURN TO THIS SPACE.

WE BRING OUR JOY AND OUR WEARINESS

LIKE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN,

AND WE TRUST THAT GOD IS ALREADY AT WORK.

YES, WE BELIEVE IN A GOD WHO HEARS OUR PRAYERS.

THANKS BE TO GOD FOR A LOVE LIKE THAT.

AMEN.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

GREAT THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

(cont'd)

SHARING THE MEAL

*All are welcome to receive communion. Please come forward using the center aisle.
When you reach the Table, take a piece of bread from the basket and dip it in the cup.*

Eat immediately, then return to your pew via the side aisles.

(We serve grape juice instead of wine and offer gluten-free bread so that all may partake.)

COMMUNION MUSIC

Panis Angelicus

César Franck (1822-1890)

Chip Hazel, baritone; Ruth Tauber, mezzo-soprano

Thus the angelic bread is made, the bread of humankind today:

this Living Bread reaks the boundaries of heaven

O wondrous gift indeed!

That the poor and lowly

Should partake of their Lord and Master.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*HYMN NO. 82

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

*BENEDICTION

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

[Please remain for a brief meeting of the congregation.]

Welcome visitors! We're glad you're here today. If you'd like to learn more about what's happening at Concord, how you can get involved, or how we can help or support you, fill out one of the Connection Cards in the pew with your contact information. You can place the card in the offering or give it to a greeter as you leave. The peace of Christ be with you.

About today's bulletin cover: *Annunciation to Zechariah* by Lauren Wright Pittman (inspired by Luke 1:1-23): *I ruminated on this image... a weary priest wrapped in layered fabrics, colors, symbols, textures, and rare stones that proclaim God's providence and power.*

The contrast is not lost on me. I often try to neglect my weariness by putting on a veneer of unwavering trust in God—while feeling like I may suddenly unravel into a pile of beautifully-curated threads, stones, and gold accessories.

In this image, I decided to depict the angel as smoke from the altar of incense. Zechariah has one hand over his mouth in fear and disbelief, while his other hand cradles the notion—not yet hope—of his son's existence.

Do you bind up your weariness in a neat and tidy bow, put your head down, and project okay-ness like me? What would it look like to acknowledge our weariness, quit powering through, and open ourselves up to what God might have in store for us? Perhaps we'll meet an angel.

Assisting in the service of worship are:

Deacon-in-Charge: Jim Silvius

Liturgist: Bettye Shirar

Greeter: Dottie Harding

Livestream Team: Bob Brown, John Barineau, Marj Johnson, Ron McKinney

J.A.M. Session



(Jesus and Me!)

The first Sunday of each month is Communion Sunday, so J.A.M. Session will not be held. **After Wondering Time, children will remain in worship with their families and take part in communion after the sermon.** There are quiet activities at the back of the sanctuary that children may take to the pews.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Session has called a meeting of the congregation for today following worship:

- To receive the report of the Nominating Committee and elect officers for the coming term –
 - **Elder, Class of 2026:** Liane Gehret
 - **Deacons, Class of 2026:** Nancy Tieste, Bonnie Twilley
- To concur in the request of Pastor Steve Clark for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, effective January 31, 2024.



AdventFest

Today, 11:15am-12:45pm in Fellowship Hall

ENJOY...

- ❖ **Chef Fran's fabulous pasta and meatballs** served with Caesar salad, roll & butter, drink, and dessert. (\$10 – adults/\$5 – children)
- ❖ **Make and Take crafts** for all ages
- ❖ **Christmas Marketplace** (Concord Concert Series CDs, Water Is Life Kenya merchandise)
- ❖ **Christmas music** provided by Bob Brown

All are welcome!

Contributions for the Flower Fund for Christmas: If you would like to contribute to the Flower Fund for the upcoming holiday season, please make your check for \$15/poinsettia payable to Concord Church, memo: "Christmas Flowers." Place it in a designated envelope in the offering or the Church Office mailbox. Be sure to include a note stating how you wish the acknowledgment to read in the bulletin. Contributing to the grace and beauty of the Christmas decorations is a lovely way to remember or honor a loved one. Questions? [Contact the Church Office.](#)



Share the Spirit 2023

This Christmas season we are donating gift cards to the women in Friendship House's Transitional Housing Program. We are also collecting gift cards for the Asadis, the Afghan family we have helped support. Please visit our [SignUpGenius](#) page (see link below) to choose one or more cards to donate, then drop the cards off in the Church Office by next Sunday, Dec. 10.

[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0A49AAAE2EAA8-46347327-share#/
Questions? Please contact Holly Reuther \(302-377-6776\) or Dottie Lund \(302-478-4209\).](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0A49AAAE2EAA8-46347327-share#/)

Advent Is the Season of Giving!

We invite you to take part in this *Reverse Advent Calendar* activity to benefit our community! Instead of receiving a little daily gift as we count down the days to Christmas, we will *give back daily* by placing a non-perishable food item in a bag each day at our own homes. (Use your own bag from home or **take a decorated bag from the narthex to use**, courtesy of our friends in J.A.M.!)



Bring your items to church each Sunday in Advent and place them by the empty manger in the narthex. We will be sharing these gifts with the community by placing them in the Blessing Box outside Concord Church.

Suggestions: dry pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned tuna & chicken, cereal, PB&J, canned fruit & vegetables, canned soup & broth, oatmeal packets, boxed mac & cheese, granola/protein bars. Smaller containers are best, as the box provides for short-term needs and space inside is limited. (No glass or expired items, please.)

*A Service of Hope and Light
for those experiencing loss or grief
during the Advent season*

*Scripture reading, quiet reflection, prayer,
candle lighting, and special music*

Today, December 3 – 3:00pm

Trinity Presbyterian Church

Naamans & Darley Rds.

Wilmington, DE 19810



Concord Concert Series'

**Annual Christmas Gala Concert
Sunday, December 17, 7:00pm**

*featuring Handel's Messiah
and other Christmas favorites*

Profession chamber orchestra

Professional soloists and

The Concord Concert Choir

Concord Presbyterian Church (Sanctuary)

~ Free admission ~

An offering will be taken to benefit
the Concord Concert Series

Saturday, December 9 @ 3:00pm

Concord Church sanctuary

Pianist Sinae Yun Lee &

Special Guests

Featuring music by Rachmaninoff,
Tchaikovsky, Chopin, Gershwin & more.

~ Free admission ~

WINTER CONCERT

The Piano Story

