

Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church

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Rev. M. Muriel Burrows, Pastor
Rev. Dr. Louise Johnson, Director of Christian Education
David Shedden, Seminary Intern
Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, Lector

Beverly Owens, Music Director
Amy Shortt, Interim Organist
Linda Jones, Guest Soloist

December 3, 2006

10:00 a.m.

First Sunday of Advent: Hope

*Enter Reverently, Meditate Quietly, Worship Devoutly,
Leave Gratefully, Serve Christ Faithfully*

PRELUDE

INTROIT

Come Emmanuel

Price/Besig

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CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 50:1-5)

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: The Almighty One, God the Lord, speaks.

People: He summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Leader: God shines forth from Zion, the city perfect in its beauty.

People: Our God is coming, but not in silence.

Leader: He calls to the heavens above and to the earth below, that he may judge
his people.

People: Our God is coming, but not in silence.

Leader: He says, "Gather to me my faithful ones, you who have made covenant
with me by sacrifice."

People: We gather for our God is coming.

All: Let us worship the living, loving God!

**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!**

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE Agnes Benjamin and Deloris Brooks

Reader: Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means “coming” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. One of the ways we prepare for his coming is by making an Advent wreath and lighting its candles to remind us of the gifts Christ brings to the world.

Reader: The Advent wreath includes many symbols to help us think about Christ and his gifts. The wreath itself is in the shape of a circle. A circle has no beginning and no end. This reminds us that there is no beginning and no end to God and that God’s love and caring are forever.

Reader: The light from the candles – which grows stronger each Sunday in Advent – reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world.

Reader: Today we light the candle of hope. The people of Israel hoped in God’s promises and were not disappointed. Again and again God delivered Israel from its enemies. We too have the same experience of salvation. That is why we believe in God’s promise to send Jesus to us once again to judge the world and establish his kingdom forever upon the earth.

*** (Light the first candle) ***

Reader: Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

Reader: Let us pray: Thank you God for the hope you give us. We ask that as we wait for all your promises to come true, and for Christ to come again, that you would remain present with us. Help us today, and everyday to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your hope with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.

CANDLE LIGHTING SONG

A Candle Is Burning
by Sandra Dean, 1986

(tune: *Away in a Manger*)

**A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of hope in December’s dark night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven’s starry sky,
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (based on Psalm 25:1-4)

Leader: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

People: I put my trust in you, O God, do not let me be put to shame;

Leader: Do not let my enemies exult over me.

People: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;

Leader: Let those be ashamed who neglect your faithfulness and who act with evil intent.

People: Teach me your ways, O God, and guide me in your paths.

Leader: We bring to mind all these things for which we are ashamed – for willfully acting with less than good intentions – for abusing the faithfulness of God by our failure to live faith-full lives.

All: *Forgive us, O God – cleanse our hearts and minds of all that prevents us from loving you and loving our neighbor. May our lives be marked by faith active in love as we watch and wait for your breaking into our world once more. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR REFLECTION AND SILENT CONFESSION

Congregational Response (Sung):

#2

**Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The apostle Paul prayed that the Lord may make our love overflow for each other and for everyone...that the Lord may strengthen our hearts in holiness so that we will be blameless before God (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). The good news, therefore, is this: in and through Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

*GLORIA PATRI (kids' pink page)

#579

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WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

People: And also with you!

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of peace!

(Students in grades 1-12 are dismissed for their Bible classes.**)**

*HYMN

Rejoice, the Lord Is King

#155

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Page 738

Luke 21:25-36

Pages 85-86

SPECIAL MUSIC

Linda Jones
Guest Soloist

SERMON

God's ETA

Rev. Muriel Burrows

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

*Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
and put your trust in the Lord.*

*(Please note that the Ushers will take the weekly tithes and offerings –
followed immediately by the Deacons who will take
the monthly offering for their particular ministry.
Please hold your Deacons' offering and put it into the second plate.)*

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY (kids' red page)

#592

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All: God, fulfiller of promises, we come to this warm and colorful season of Advent with expectant and thankful hearts. We welcome the renewed promise of your love, justice and righteousness breaking into our world. We offer these gifts and the witness of our lives in gratitude for all you have done, are doing, and will do. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

ADVENT COMMUNION LITANY

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to our Lord God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Leader: Loving God, in many and various ways you have visited and redeemed your people – finally sending to us your Son, Jesus. We thank you, Lord God, for sending him to us: As one of us he came, at first a tender infant, then a child, a youth, and an adult. He rejoiced with those who rejoiced, he wept with those who wept. To the despairing he spoke a word of hope, to the sick he gave healing, to the rejected he was a friend. And yet he was betrayed and nailed to a cross. But you, O God, lifted him from the grave and restored him to life that he might be with us and we with him – alive – forevermore. Therefore, with all the saints and with the angels in heaven we praise you, saying:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might,

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest.**

Leader: Eternal God, King of heaven and earth: the life and death of thy Son, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we proclaim; his resurrection from the dead and his ascension we confess; his coming in triumph we await.

People: **Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come!**

Words of Institution

Merciful God – as we await the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do as he commanded us to do – and we spread this Holy Feast before you – remembering how on the night that Jesus was betrayed he took the bread and gave you thanks, saying: *Take and eat: this is my body which will be broken for you.* We recall as well how, in the same way, when the meal was over, he took the cup, the cup of blessing and gave it to his disciples, saying: *Take, drink this is my blood, the blood of a new covenant, which will be shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. When you do this, do it in memory of me.*

The Prayer for the Spirit

Leader: Let us proclaim the mystery of our faith:

People: **Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

Leader: Loving God, we pray Thee to send thy Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here – that these gifts – this bread and this wine – may be for us the body and the blood of Christ Jesus our Lord. Give us the mind of Christ as we partake of this sacrament of life and hope that we may follow him faithfully as we await his return in glory. We ask it in his name.

People: **Amen.**

The Distribution of the Elements

| | | |
|--------------|--|------|
| HYMNS | <i>For the Bread Which You Have Broken</i> | #509 |
| | <i>You Satisfy the Hungry Heart</i> | #521 |

Prayer after Communion

Leader: Let us pray: We give you thanks, O Lord, for receiving us at your table.

People: **We thank you for the life you have bestowed on us and the life that you have promised to us.**

Leader: So it is that we proclaim to you our faith and our hope.

People: **We are not alone. We live in God's world. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church, to celebrate God's presence, to live with respect in creation, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our Judge and our Hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death,**

God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

*HYMN *O for a World* #386

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION *Christmas Peace* Blank

* Congregation stands
** Latecomers ushered in

ANNOUNCEMENTS



WELCOME - The Pastor, Elders and Deacons of Witherspoon welcome most warmly all worshippers. Our fellowship is enriched by your presence. If you do not have a church home of your own, we do sincerely invite you to be a part of our fellowship. Please contact the church office for further information if you are interested in church membership (609-924-1666 or witherspoon@verizon.net).



SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGE GROUPS! Adults will meet on their own schedule each month in the Fellowship Hall at 9:00 a.m. All other Sunday school classes for students in grades 1-12 begin immediately after the children's message in morning worship. (A nursery is available for children in preschool and kindergarten.)

FLOWERS - If you would like to provide flowers in honor or memory of a loved one, or simply to beautify the church, please sign up on the chart located on the door of the sound room (left-hand entrance from the sanctuary to the parish house). After worship service, the donor may take the flowers home. At present, it is the responsibility of the person giving the flowers to make his/her own arrangements for preparation and delivery of the flowers for the Chancel. The next available date is December 31.

USHERS for this morning's service are Terry and Kim McEwen. Next week's ushers are members of the Junior Usher Ministry: Jasmine McEwen and Diamond Holland with Jessyca Hart, manager.

COMMUNION SERVERS for this morning are Joan Davis, Jaime Escarpeta, Jean Escarpeta, and Barbara Flythe.



COFFEE HOUR - Host for the month of December is Vicki Meisel. Anyone who wishes to contribute to the Coffee Hour should contact Vicki (609-637-9417).

LECTIONARY TEXT for next Sunday, December 10, is Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; 3:1-6; Philippians 1:3-11.



FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THIS WEEK – Luke 21:25-28, 34-35

Today's reading might seem to be a real "downer." Just as we are beginning the new liturgical year, we hear Jesus' reminders to "be vigilant" and "pray." Advent is a time of preparation for Jesus' final coming. Jesus, the just one, who will judge us in the final days of human history, wants us to be able to stand up like true Christians when that time comes. Decide how you will show that you have heard Jesus' words on this first day of Advent. Jesus does not want us to be afraid at the time of judgment. He wants us to "stand...and raise our heads." He wants us to greet him as our "ransomer," for it is he who will lead us from captivity. Advent is a good time to ask:

† *What holds me captive?*

† *Why do I need someone to ransom me or rescue me?*

† *And what is my attitude toward this Someone who, when he comes, will set me free?*

DOLLAR\$&CENTS COUNTERS FOR DECEMBER are Terry McEwen (Team Leader), Anthony Bullett, Christo Claassens, Pamela Espenshade, Ruppert Hawes, Audrey Mack, Paul Stephens. Counters for the Deacon's Benevolence Offering are Alyce Bush, Vicki Meisel, and Doris Burrell.



STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN – The Stewardship Committee thanks Witherspoon members who have submitted pledge cards. We are still collecting! Please give your pledge card to any member of the Stewardship Committee.



CHRISTMAS AT WITHERSPOON – Our annual *Christmas at Witherspoon* concert will be held at 7:00 p.m. **this Saturday, December 9**, in the Sanctuary. We will feature the Chancel Choir, Men's Chorus, Chime Choir, Verse Speaking Choir, Jubilante Trio, and Young Voices of Faith in festive music of the season. A free-will offering will be taken. Please join us in celebration of our Lord's nativity.



A BLUE CHRISTMAS – Next Saturday, December 16, we will have *A Blue Christmas* – a special worship service for those mourning or otherwise "blue" – who have lost someone and wish to remember them at this time. The service will begin at 4:00 p.m. with a soup and bread dinner. The dinner and service will be informal and held in the Fellowship Hall. Those who attend are encouraged to bring a memento (e.g. picture, piece of jewelry, etc.) to remember their loved one; this will be placed on a table during the service. For more information, please contact Rev. Burrows.



KWANZAA AT WITHERSPOON – Join us for the *Kwanzaa Celebration* on **Friday, December 29**, at 6:30 p.m. at the church building. We are planning for a very exciting event. Anyone who has new ideas or is interested in helping may contact: Barbara Flythe (732-274-9435), Grace Kimbrough (609-386-1410), and Shirley Satterfield (609-924-2010). The event is again being sponsored by the Junior Usher Ministry and the Peacemaking and Social Justice Team.



FOOD DONATIONS FOR CRISIS MINISTRY – The Deacons are collecting nourishing food for the Crisis Ministry. *****NO GLASS JARS, PLEASE.***** Checks made payable to the Crisis Ministry are always welcome and may be placed in the offering plate or given to a deacon.

Please consider an extra purchase during your next grocery shopping trip and place items in the wooden box in the Narthex.



Trenton Area
**Habitat
for Humanity®**

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORK WEEK – Our Habitat for Humanity project needs your help. To participate, please contact Meg Coghlan (609-651-2945 or meg_coghlan@yahoo.com).



PROPERTY ACQUISITION UPDATE

(as of June 30, 2006)

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Total collection for property acquisition* | \$143,359.43 |
| Total expenses* | <u>84,313.17</u> |
| Balance | \$59,081.26 |

*2004 to present