

WEPC LECTIONARY PROJECT: UNION WITH CHRIST

In this 25th Anniversary year of West End Presbyterian Church, we are using the Scripture readings recommended by the Revised Common Lectionary as a framework for our corporate worship, and our personal and family devotion. The Lectionary gives us access to the whole counsel of Scripture and these texts are a means for us to grow in our understanding of our union with Christ.

WEPC Weekly Readings

To subscribe to a daily email of these readings, register online at wepc.org/lectionary.

December 15, 2019 | The Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-10

The Ransomed Shall Return

Psalms 146:5-10

The LORD will Reign Forever

James 5:7-10

Patience

Matthew 11:2-11

My Messenger

Reflection on Sunday, December 15

Monday

Isaiah 29:17-24

A Very Little While

Acts 5:12-16

Signs & Wonders

Tuesday

Ezekiel 47:1-12

Wherever the River Goes

Jude 1:17-25

Waiting for the Mercy

Wednesday

Zechariah 8:1-17

In the Midst

Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34

He Took our Illnesses

Daily

Psalms 42

I Shall Again Praise Him

Preparation for Sunday, December 22

Thursday

II Samuel 7:1-17

Established Forever

Galatians 3:23-29

Faith Has Come

Friday

II Samuel 7:18-22

None Like You

Galatians 4:1-7

Sons & Heirs

Saturday

II Samuel 7:23-29

Concerning His House

John 3:31-36

From Above

Daily

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Restore Us

PASTOR'S NOTE

Dear Ones,

I can relate to the question John the Baptist asks of Jesus in this week's Gospel reading:

Are you the one, or should we look for another?

A poignant question for a man in prison for telling the truth.

Where is the everlasting joy upon my head? Where is the gladness and joy? When will sorrow and sighing flee away? Isaiah says these things will be true and mine when the Messiah comes.

If you are struggling this Advent (I am), a discipline I have been practicing might be helpful. Everyday I take a few moments to pray Psalm 13:

- ¹ How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- ² How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
- ³ Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
- ⁴ lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.
- ⁵ But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
- ⁶ I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Happy Advent!

Warmly,
Steve

Sunday Worship Services: 9 AM and 10:30 AM
Sunday School: 9 AM

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PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP & Communion

The Third Sunday of Advent

We are now in the season of Advent, a time that helps us to remember Christ's first coming and reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation. It also teaches us to look eagerly for His second coming when He will come to redeem His creation and exercise His rule with all power and authority.

SHALL RETURN

"Where the understanding is outraged, where human nature rebels, where our piety keeps a nervous distance: there, precisely there, God loves to be; there He baffles the wisdom of the wise; there He vexes our nature, our religious instincts. There He wants to be, and no one can prevent Him. Only the humble believe Him and rejoice that God is so free and grand, that He works wonders where man loses heart, that He makes splendid what is slight and lowly. Indeed, this is the wonder of wonders, that God loves the lowly. "God has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden." God in lowliness-- that is the revolutionary, the passionate word of Advent."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

CALL TO WORSHIP

from James 5:7-8

The First Word

Because we believe God initiates with sinners, we begin worship with His Word: His invitation to us to gather in His name.

Be patient, until the coming of the Lord.

Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

INVOCATION

DECLARATION OF FAITH

Article 17, of the Belgic Confession (1561)

We believe that our good God, by His marvelous wisdom and goodness, seeing that man had plunged himself into both physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, set out to find him, though man, trembling all over, was fleeing from Him. And He comforted him promising to give him His Son, "born of a woman," to crush the head of the serpent, and to make him blessed.

SONG OF ADORATION

MAGNIFICAT

1. My soul magnifies the Lord.
My spirit rejoices in God.
My soul magnifies the Lord.
My spirit rejoices in God.

2. For He who is mighty
Has done great things for me.
Holy Holy, Holy Holy,
Holy Holy, is His name.

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior..." -Luke 1:46-47*

Music by Flo Paris Oakes
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Welcome

Visitors, we are glad you are here. Following the service, please join Pastor Steve Shelby for coffee in the Gallery.

Presentation of New Members (10:30am)

Evangeline Bouknight
Scott Dicken
Tucker Hunn

GOSPEL READING

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

*"Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you."*

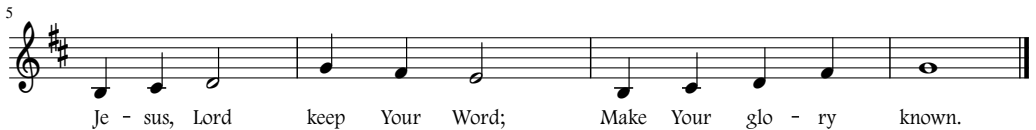
Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:2-11

MINISTRY OF PRAYER

SAVIOR, COME

Kevin W. Greene, Advent 2019; "Our Lord, come" (1 Corinthians 16:22) and "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20) were early Christian cries for the personal return of Jesus Christ. The Church has long understood these exclamations to be the fundamental Advent prayer of longing for His appearing.



PSALM 146:5-10

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,

Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,

Who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

**The LORD watches over the sojourners; He upholds the widow and the fatherless,
but the way of the wicked He brings to ruin.**

The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

OFFERING

If you miss today's offering and wish to give, or if you would like to submit your tear-off, the elders at the front of the sanctuary who are available for prayer following the service will be glad to receive them.

The offering isn't just about money. Our response to the Gospel goes much deeper—God demands our whole selves. The act of giving in worship is a part of offering ourselves as “living sacrifices” to God (Rom. 12:1).

SONG OF PRAISE

LET ALL MORTAL FLESH KEEP SILENCE

1. Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
And with fear and trembling stand;
Ponder nothing earthly minded,
For with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
Our full homage to demand.
2. King of kings, yet born of Mary,
As of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
In the body and the blood;
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heavenly food.
3. Rank on rank the host of heaven
Spreads its vanguard on the way,
As the Light of light descendeth
From the realms of endless day,
That the powers of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away.
4. At His feet the six winged seraph,
Cherubim with sleepless eye,
Veil their faces to the presence,
As with ceaseless voice they cry:
“Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most high!”

*“But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.”
-Habakkuk 2:20*

Words from the Liturgy of St. James, 4th Century; Adapted by Gerald Moultrie; Music from Picardy; Arrangement by Ross Byrd; © 2007 High Street Publishing; CCLI# 708363

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP (10:30 am)

During the 10:30 AM service, children (pre-K to second grade) are dismissed for Children's Worship.

SCRIPTURE Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; ²it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you." ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Sermon

A Worship Guide with sermon notes and recordings is posted each Sunday at wepc.org/sermons.

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus. They did as He had directed them, and prepared the Passover. Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

from Matthew 26:17-29

CONFESSION OF SIN

"Arise, shine: for your Light has come."

Heavenly Father, forgive us; we have lived as if the Light of the World had not overcome the darkness of our sin.

"And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Lord Jesus Christ, redeem us; We confess that we sought our own glory as we grew impatient for Your advent.

"For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you."

Holy Spirit, renew us; We have often grown accustomed to darkness, and so hardened the true yearnings of our waiting hearts.

"And nations shall come to Your light, and kings to the brightness of Your rising."

Almighty God, You came to us in the fullness of time. Draw us to live in Your presence and grace. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Silent Confession of Sin

based on Isaiah 60:1-3

Confession & Encouragement

Often we find that our hearts worship something other than God. In confessing our sins, the Holy Spirit probes our hearts and minds and graciously shows us what we mistakenly believe will give us life. Jesus is good to lead us from sorrow over our sin to the sweetness of His grace.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

First Communion (10:30 AM)

Evangeline Bouknight

Tucker Hunn

Evangeline & Tucker recently met with the Elders, who heard their testimonies of faith in Jesus Christ. We invite the Bouknight & Hunn families to receive communion first.

West End Presbyterian Church welcomes all baptized Christians who actively trust in Jesus Christ for salvation, who are willing to forsake their sin and heart-idols, and who are members of congregations that proclaim the Gospel to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with us.

Wine is in the outer ring of the communion tray, grape juice is in the inner rings. All bread is gluten-free.

Please come forward as you are ready to participate in the Lord's Supper individually, with a friend, or as a family.

If you need special assistance and are not able to come forward for Communion, raise your hand and we will come to you at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper.

Elders & Deacons are glad to pray for your children who have not yet become communing members. If your child is ready to make a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ, please mark today's tear-off or contact the WEPC office.

SONGS OF RESPONSE TO GOD'S GRACE

JUST AS I AM

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

2. Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee Whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

4. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

5. Just as I am Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." -John 6:35

Text: Charlotte Elliott (1871)
Music: William Bradbury (1868)
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Guy Music
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*"I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me
will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life."
-John 8:12*

Words: Anonymous, 7th Century
Additional Lyrics: Alex Mejias
Music: Alex Mejias
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CREATOR OF THE STARS OF NIGHT

1. Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people's everlasting light,
O Christ, Redeemer of us all,
We pray you hear us when we call.

*Come, oh come.
Come, oh come.
Come, oh come, to us.*

2. When this old world drew on toward night,
You came, but not in splendor bright,
Not as a monarch, but the child
Of Mary blameless mother mild.

O HOLY NIGHT!

1. O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till He appeared and the Soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

*Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night divine!*

2. Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother;
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name.

3. Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name forever,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born;
O night divine, O night, O night divine!

*"For today in the town of David a
Savior has been born to you;
He is Christ the Lord."
-Luke 2:11*

Text: Placide Cappeau (1844)
Music: Adolphe-Charles Adam
(1856)

DOXOLOGY



Praise God from whom all bles - sings flow; Praise Him, all crea - tures
here be - low Praise Him a - bove ye heavn - ly host; Praise
Fa - ther Son and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

*"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD."
– Psalm 150:6*

Text: Thomas Ken (1709)
Tune: OLD HUNDREDTH
(Bourgeois, 1551)

What does "doxology" mean?

It's derived from two Greek words meaning "glory" and "word." A doxology, then, is a spoken word or song that ascribes glory to God. Today's doxology calls all of creation to praise God as the source of all blessing and acknowledges His Trinitarian (three-in-one) nature.

BENEDICTION

The Last Word

God always has the last word in our worship. For those who are in Christ Jesus, these are always words of blessing.

After the service, the Elders are available at the front of the sanctuary to pray with you or for you, and to answer questions about the sermon or West End Presbyterian Church.

Pastor Steve Shelby preached today's sermon. Pastor Kevin Greene led worship. Music was led by Kevin Shaffer, along with Georgia Collier, Becca Wethered, Hill Shore, Mark Crutcher, Jamison Taggart, and Gordon Collier.