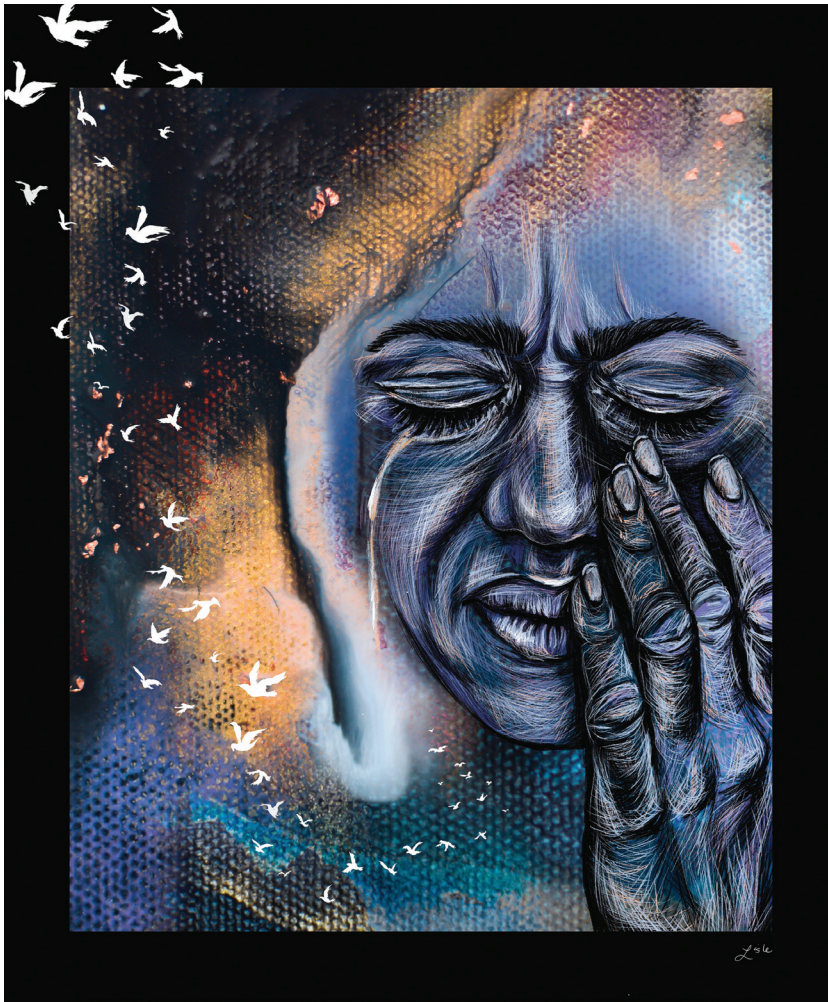


Community Presbyterian Church  
open hearted, open minded



**December 3, 2023**  
**First Sunday of Advent**

Welcome to worship this morning!

Bulletin Cues: **Bold** indicates congregational response, \* indicates please stand, if able

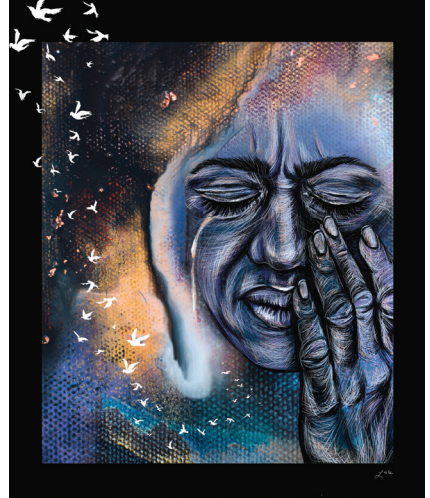
## *Make Your Face Shine*

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Acrylic painting on canvas with digital drawing

For this Advent series, I created a collection of paintings inspired by the Hubble telescope images of the cosmos. The telescope renderings invite you to peer into worlds unknown. The beauty of it all is a balm for the weary. When you gaze upon the colors of the cosmos, how can you keep from rejoicing? Inspired by the luminescent textures of nebula and star clusters, I painted washes of vibrant colors and metallic gold amidst a backdrop of beautiful blackness. These paintings have become the backgrounds for each of my digital drawings in this series.



The day I began working on this image, another mass shooting terrorized our country. This time it happened at a church preschool. One of the children slain was the pastor's daughter. By the time you read this, there will have been more shootings, more unnecessary and completely preventable deaths. The weight of that prediction makes every bone in my body weary beyond repair.

As I read and reread Psalm 80 on that day of mourning, I remembered that politeness is not the language of the weary. The psalmist supplied me with the words I wanted to pray, the words I wanted to scream: Wake up your power, God! Save us! How long?!

Then, I began to draw. What emerged was a face shining from the cosmos. I imagined God as Holy Mother or Holy Parent weeping for her creation. I imagined the parents weeping for their children who were so suddenly and brutally taken from them. The mere thought of their grief knocks the wind out of me.

As I completed the image, I added a flock of doves flying out from the void into which God's tears fall. The doves represent the Spirit let loose in our world, flapping their wings into every desperate corner. I added them not as a statement, but as a plea: please, God, make your face shine so we might be saved. —Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

# WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRELUDE

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

In God's house, we can be joyful.

**We can be grateful.**

**We can be hopeful.**

In God's house, we can be weary.

**We can be anxious.**

**We can be grieving.**

In God's house, we can be honest—

**inspired or tired,**

**delighted or doubtful,**

**connected or curious,**

**and everything in between.**

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

**Let us worship our loving God.**

## OPENING HYMN GTG 106

## Prepare the Way, O Zion

*verse 1*



1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.

### *Refrain*



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Ron Murray

How does a weary world hope?

**By telling stories of hope,  
by lighting candles in the night,  
and planting seeds in the winter that will bloom in the spring.**

By praying for children as they grow,  
and picking up trash on the sidewalk.

**By insisting that small acts can make a difference.**

There are a million ways to practice hope.

So today we light the candle of hope as a reminder and a charge.

**With God's help, may we bring hope into a weary world. Amen.**

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Friends, in today's scripture passage, a man named Zechariah is given good news from God and his response is to ask, "How can this be?" Have any of you ever felt that way when receiving good news? It can be hard to receive good news when we don't expect it. It can be hard to accept God's grace and God's love when we think we don't deserve it. But friends, scripture tells us over and over again of a loving, generous, and gracious God. So may we come to the prayer of confession today, not with fear, but with an awe so deep that we ask ourselves, "How can this be?"

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we are weary.

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

**Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard.**

**Reminds us that we deserve Sabbath rest.**

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

**Forgive us for creating so many distractions.**

**Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you.**

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

**Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves.**

**Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and grief can coexist.**

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

**Forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth.**

**Remind us that your good news knows no bounds. Amen.**

Family of faith, no matter how many times we wear ourselves thin,  
no matter how many times we lose ourselves to distractions,  
no matter how many times we ask ourselves, "How can this be?"

God's love keeps showing up for us. So say this with me:

**We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven.**

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Loving God, the source of our joy, as we turn our hearts toward your Word, we ask that you would soften us. Soften the callouses on our hearts. Weave yourself in between the cracks in our spirits. And plant hope where there is room. And as you do this, like flowers toward the sun, we will turn ourselves toward you, eager to hear a Word so good that we cannot help but ask ourselves, "How can this be?" With openness and gratitude we pray, Amen.

### RESPONSIVE READING

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,  
you who lead Joseph like a flock!

**You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth  
before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.**

Stir up your might, and come to save us!

**Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

O Lord God of hosts,

how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?

**You have fed them with the bread of tears  
and given them tears to drink in full measure.**

You make us the scorn of our neighbors;  
our enemies laugh among themselves.

**Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

But let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
the one whom you made strong for yourself.

**Then we will never turn back from you;  
give us life, and we will call on your name.**

**Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

*Dona Nobis Pacem*

CPC Choir

GOSPEL READING

Mark 13:24-37

“But in those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
and the stars will be falling from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Heaven and earth will pass away but the word of the Lord stands forever.


**Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Pastor Julie

**RESPONDING TO GOD’S GRACE**

\*HYMN OF THE DAY GTG 350 Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning vs 1,3,4



1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing; keep your  
 3 We are climb - ing Ja - cob's lad - der; we are  
 4 Ev - ery round goes high - er, high - er; ev - ery



lamps trimmed and burn - ing; keep your lamps  
climb - ing Ja - cob's lad - der; we are climb - ing  
round goes high - er, high - er; ev - ery round goes

trimmed and burn - ing, for the time is draw - ing nigh.  
Ja - cob's lad - der, for the time is draw - ing nigh.  
high - er, high - er, for the time is draw - ing nigh.

*Refrain*

Sis - ters, don't grow wea - ry; broth - ers, don't grow wea - ry;

chil - dren, don't grow wea - ry, for the time is draw - ing nigh.

**JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

God, our Savior,  
**hear our prayer.**

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION WITH ALL GOD'S SAINTS**

**INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE AND GREAT THANKSGIVING**

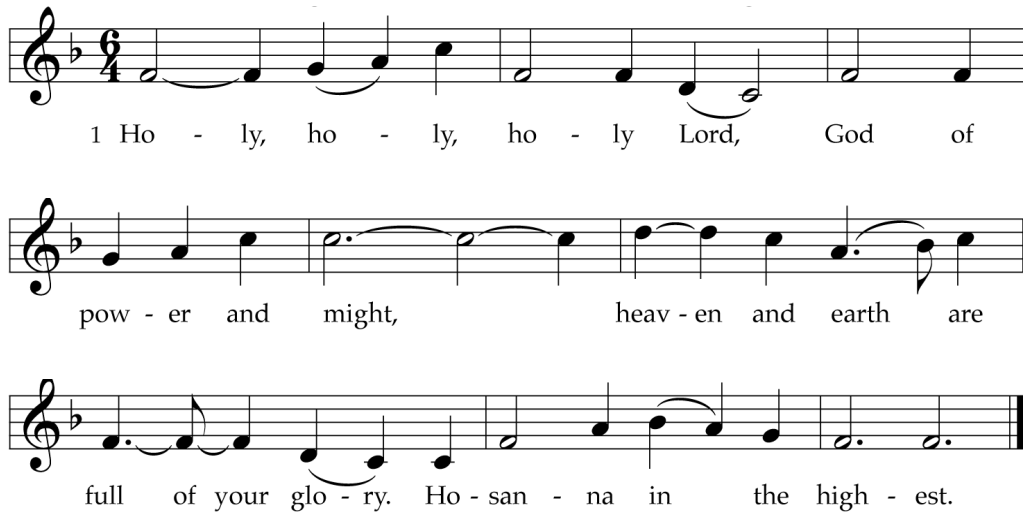
The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise...** and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:



1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
 pow - er and might, heav - en and earth are  
 full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION/BREAKING OF THE BREAD

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father and Mother in heaven, hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;**

**and let us not be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen**

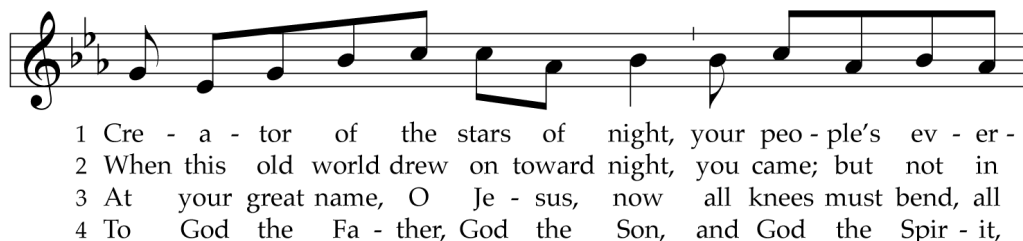
## THE BREAD AND CUP ARE SHARED

*For communion, gluten free bread and grape juice are served for all who partake.*

*Please take and eat the bread as it is served, and then as a sign of unity, hold the cup until all are served so that we might partake together.*

## HYMN DURING DISTRIBUTION 84

## Creator of the Stars of Night



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -  
 2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in  
 3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all  
 4 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,





last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,  
splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child  
hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,  
Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you, hear us when we call.  
of Mar - y, blame - less moth - er mild.  
like those in heaven, shall call you Lord.  
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Patient God, thank you for accompanying us in our waiting and feeding us on our journey. We have received the bread of life and the cup of blessing with joy. As we await the full reality of your realm, may this food and drink sustain us and give us courage to be your faithful people bearing witness to your great love. **Amen.**

### SENDING INTO THE WORLD TO LOVE AND SERVE

\*CLOSING HYMN GTG 366

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

*next page*

\*CHARGE AND BLESSING

Family of faith,  
as you leave this place,  
you go into a weary world—so speak tenderly.  
Do the good that is yours to do.  
Choose connection. Hold onto hope.  
And remember that Christ took on flesh for you.  
You are God's beloved.  
So go rejoicing.  
The world needs it.

**Amen. Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

# Love Divine, All Loves Excelling



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heaven, to  
2 Breathe, O breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - ery  
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy  
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion; pure and spot - less



earth come down, fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing; all thy  
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us  
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -  
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion;  
find the prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;  
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,  
ly re - stored in thee: changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with  
Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as  
serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee  
till in heaven we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion; en - ter ev - ery trem - bling heart.  
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.  
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.  
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise.

During Advent, daily messages will be available “to expand and deepen your spiritual walk through Advent towards Christmas.” You’ll be able to pick up a devotional beginning Advent I (December 3). The same devotional will be available on our website. Another option is to receive daily messages via text. Please see the information below about signing up for texts/notifications. There will also be different daily messages on Facebook. Check it out in December!



Pick a way to receive messages for Daily Texts:

A) If you have a smartphone, get push notifications. On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link: [rmd.at/ga2hfb](http://rmd.at/ga2hfb) Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You’ll be prompted to download the mobile app.

B) If you don’t have a smartphone, get text notifications. Text the message @ga2hfb to the number 81010. If you’re having trouble with 81010, try texting @ga2hfb to (608)467-4108. Note: you’ll be asked if you are a student (s) or a parent (p). Choose either one. The application was designed for schools, but will work for our purposes.

If you received daily texts in the past, you’re likely still on the list and you don’t need to re-sign up.

\* Standard text message rates apply.

CPC is collecting gift cards and monetary donations for Gage East residents, both children and adults. Target and Walmart gift cards worth \$25 are preferred, but other donations will be accepted. The deadline has been extended from Dec. 3 to Sunday, Dec. 10. Donations may be given at church or sent through the mail.



A Christmas party for Gage East residents will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 13.

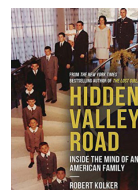
Volunteers are needed to help serve food and coordinate activities. To volunteer, please contact Mark Neville or Sherrie Wilson.



BOOK DISCUSSION  
GROUP



The book discussion group will read and discuss *Hidden Valley Road* by Robert Kolker for the December book group. The discussion will take place on Sunday, December 17th following worship.



# Community Presbyterian Church

open hearted, open minded

## Sunday, December 3 Advent I

9:30 am **Worship with Communion**  
- **Onsite and Online**

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

## Monday, December 4

9:30 am Mission Prayer Group

6:00 pm Building Usage: Med City Tai Chi

## Tuesday, December 5

12:00 pm Bulletin Information Due

6:30 pm Christian Education Committee

7:00 pm Building Use: Mission Aid Network

## Wednesday, December 6

6:30 am Prayer Group at CPC

## Thursday, December 7

5:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

## Sunday, December 10 Advent II

9:30 am **Worship - Onsite and Online**

2:30 pm Building Usage: Labranza de Dios

Vera would like to say "Thank You" for thinking of her and sharing cards and notes with her while she was healing. Thanks for being a great community of care!



Judy Leal  
Jane and Ed Burgstaler family,  
especially daughter Jenny  
Connie Holst  
Vera Atkinson's daughter, Teresa  
Shannon Cisewski  
Ron Murray  
Dick and Nancy Massaro  
Nellie Brovold's mother, Jacqueline  
Glenna Muir's sister, Annie  
Mary Alice Richardson and family

*To be added to the prayer list,  
please contact the office via email:  
office@cpchester.org.  
Emergency Pastoral Support:  
Rev. Carla Nelson: 507-254-1254*

### Church Staff

Bridge Pastor	Rev. Carla Nelson
Pianist	Glenna Muir
Custodian	Nancy Sanford
Office Manager	Stephanie Pasch

### Serving in Worship Today

First Sunday Pastor	Rev. Julie Beck
Liturgist	Peggy McCarty
Special Music	CPC Choir
IT Support	Louis Bouchard