

Community Presbyterian Church

open hearted, open minded



**Through the tender
mercy of our God, the
dayspring from on high
has visited us, to give
light to those who sit in
darkness.**

Luke 1:78-79

**First Sunday in Advent: Hope
Sunday, November 23, 2025**

Welcome to worship this morning!

Bulletin Cues: **Bold** indicates congregational response, * indicates please stand, if able
An offering plate is placed near the door to the church to receive your offerings. It is
available before worship, during the hymn of the day and shortly following the service.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Watch and wait for Christ's coming!

Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

We light this candle in hope.

Light the first candle.

Hear God's promise of hope from Isaiah 2:2-4:

*In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.
Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.*

Let us pray

Faithful God, out of war's chaos, you bring the order of peace. Renew us in hope, that we may work toward Christ's advent of peace among all nations. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

ADVENT RESPONSE GTG 88

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

vs. 1

**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.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 2:5

Come, let us walk

in the light of the Lord!

Keep awake. Be ready. For the Son of Man is coming.

Thanks be to God! We will worship and prepare.

OPENING HYMN GTG 83

Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

1 Come, thou long - ex-pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

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CONFESSION AND PARDON

Let us honestly examine our lives and our hearts before Christ comes. Let us turn to God in prayer to confess our sins.

Prince of Peace, the wars and rumors of wars betray our addiction to violence, our destructive and dehumanizing ways. We deserve your judgement and condemnation. Yet, you remain faithful, a steadfast source of peace amid our

warring madness. Holy God, turn us from evil. Return us to Christ and his path of peace. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Amen.

“Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun.”
Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. **Amen.**

LISTENING FOR GOD’S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Savior God, guide us by your Word and Spirit that we might hear your truth, heed your call and be prepared for Christ’s coming this Christmas. **Amen.**

RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 122

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together.

**To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord,
as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.**

For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.

Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.”

For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, “Peace be within you.”

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.

SCRIPTURE READING Romans 13:11–14

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

GOSPEL READING Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he returned to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, "This is what the Lord has done for me in this time, when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty savior for us

in the house of his child David,

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors

and has remembered his holy covenant,

the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,

might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness

in his presence all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

to give his people knowledge of salvation

by the forgiveness of their sins.

Because of the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

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

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Elizabeth & Zechariah Said Yes

Rev. Tim Gerarden

RESPONDING TO GOD’S GRACE

*HYMN OF THE DAY GTG 137 He Came Down



came down that we may have love; he came down that we may

have love; hal-le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.

Leader: Why did he come?

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Additional stanzas:

... that we may have light
 ... that we may have peace
 ... that we may have joy

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe there is no condemnation
 for those who are in Christ Jesus;
 for we know that all things work together for good
 for those who love God,
 who are called according to God's purpose.
 We are convinced that neither death, nor life,
 nor angels, nor rulers,
 nor things present, nor things to come,
 nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
 nor anything else in all creation,
 will be able to separate us from the love of God
 in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

Book of Common Worship

INVITATION TO OFFERING

All things in heaven and earth belong to God, who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation. Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

DOXOLOGY GTG 606

Praise God

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise *him, all creatures here below;
praise *him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of every good gift, We offer what we have back to you, knowing that your son is the greatest gift we will ever receive. Grant us glad and generous hearts, ever and always,
Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE / JOYS AND CONCERNS

Christ is coming. He is coming to make all things new.

Eternal God, during this season of Advent, help us prepare Christ's way, help us center our hearts, minds and prayers on your holy presence in our midst. God of our salvation,
hear our prayers...

As a people of faith, we lift these prayers to you, trusting you hear us and receive us. Finally, hear us now, as we pray the prayer Christ taught us by saying together

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

SENDING INTO THE WORLD TO LOVE AND SERVE

*CLOSING HYMN GTG 105

People Look East



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
5 An - gels, an-nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who



crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley



a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.



east and sing to - day:

Peo-ple, look east:

Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Bird, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

May God bless you with courage, as you seek the YES within you;
May Christ be born again in every risk you take for the sake of the world;
And may the Holy Spirit remind you, again and again, that you are never alone,
and that you are loved beyond measure.

Amen.

POSTLUDE



Advent is here! Pick up your devotional in the narthex. Info about how to sign up for daily texts is in the newsletter (hint: if you've signed up before, you should still receive them). Enjoy this season of preparation!



**Ronald
McDonald
House®**

Southeastern MN
& Western WI

Gan Preschool (the preschool that meets at CPC) is hosting a food drive for the Ronald McDonald House. The collection bin is in the back hallway. They will collect food through the first week of December and then deliver it. CPC members and friends are invited to participate. From the updated list from the Ronald McDonald House, they are collecting: Individually Wrapped Snacks, Heat & Serve Soups, Pastas & Meals Macaroni & Cheese | Hamburger Helper | Cereal | Pop-Tarts Applesauce | Fruit Cups | Fruit Snacks | Granola Bars | Popcorn | Sports Drinks | Coffee Creamer | K-Cup Coffee Pods | Baking Essentials Baking Mixes | Vegetable Oil | Jelly



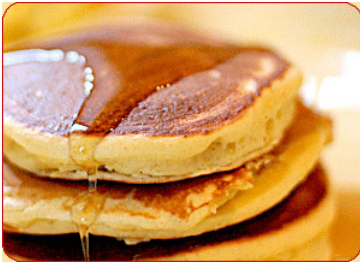
Stay after worship today to decorate our space. Many hands make light work!



Stewardship Packets were mailed out this week. Intentions are requested by Sunday, December 7th.



There will be a **Christmas Tea on Sunday, December 14th at 2:30 pm** at Plainview Community Presbyterian Church for the women of both churches. They will be serving a lunch with cookies, social time, and music. Please sign up in the narthex. We need to RSVP by December 3rd!



Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, December 7th after worship! Sign up in the narthex if you are interested and available to help!



How about an outing with your CPC church family to Mankato, Minnesota?!

"This celebration of holiday lights for the Greater Mankato area and region builds on past traditions and promotes the communities we serve, while raising non-perishable food donations for those in need. Admission is free for everyone. Non-perishable food and cash donations are accepted and appreciated."

Sign up in the narthex if you are interested and check off dates that you are available! We'll also need some drivers for this fun adventure! Tentatively, we will plan to gather at 4 pm at CPC to carpool. You can either bring a sack dinner to eat in the car or plan to eat at the concession stand in Mankato. The event runs from November 28-December 31 in the evenings. More information about the event can be found here:

<https://www.kiwanisholidaylights.com/>



PRESENTED BY MAF AND CHS

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Sunday, November 30 Advent I

9:30 am Worship - Onsite and Online

10:30 am Greening of the Church

2:30 pm Great Room Use: Labranza de Dios

Tuesday, December 2

9:00 am Bulletin Items Due

7:00 pm Great Room Use: Mission Aid Net.

Wednesday, December 3

8:00 am Prayer Group

6:30 pm CPC Choir Rehearsal

7:30 pm Jubellation Handbell Rehearsal

Thursday, December 4

5:30 pm Great Room Use: Labranza de Dios

Sunday, December 7 Advent 2 &

Stewardship Sunday

9:30 am Worship with Communion

Onsite and Online

10:30 am Pancake Breakfast

2:30 pm Great Room Use: Labranza de Dios



Judy Leal

Jane and Ed Burgstaler family,
especially daughters Jenny & Elissa
Nellie Brovold's mother, Jacqueline

Jennifer Hall and Sage Hall

Amy Ward and family

Sherrie Wilson

Vera Atkinson

To be added to the prayer list, please contact the office: 507-280-9291 or via email: office@cpcrochester.org.

Serving in Worship Today

Guest Preacher Rev. Tim Gerarden

Liturgists Peggy McCarty

Candle Lighter Carol Jones

IT Support Louis Bouchard

& Bruce Felger

Church Staff

Music Director Jennifer Taylor

Pianist Tianyao Xie

Custodian Nancy Sanford

Office Manager Stephanie Pasch