

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Communion

Second Sunday in Advent

**WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE**

Musical Prelude

Welcome &amp; Announcements

Call to Worship

Lighting the Candle of Peace (see insert)

Instrumental Hymn: "Come, thou long-expected Jesus" #110

\*Opening Prayer:

God of all times and places, you are holy and loving. You prepare us to receive wonders beyond imagining. In every time and every place, you have raised up leaders who point to your glory and honour your greatness. You have called us by name, baptized us with water and with the Holy Spirit. You bless us for abundant living and set us in the world to serve you. We are your people, and so we worship you as our Creator, our Redeemer, and the Breath of our lives, one God, now and always. John the Baptizer called people to repent and so, we join together in confession, seeking God's grace.

God of mercy, we confess that we resist changing our hearts and minds, even when your Word compels us to reconsider cherished opinions. We are more comfortable remaining as we are than taking up your challenge. Forgive us for being set in our ways seeing others only in light of popular opinion and past experiences. Forgive us our reluctance to forgive each other as we have been forgiven. By the power of your Holy Spirit, transform us by your great love and mercy. Give us new eyes for seeing, new ears for hearing. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Special Music:

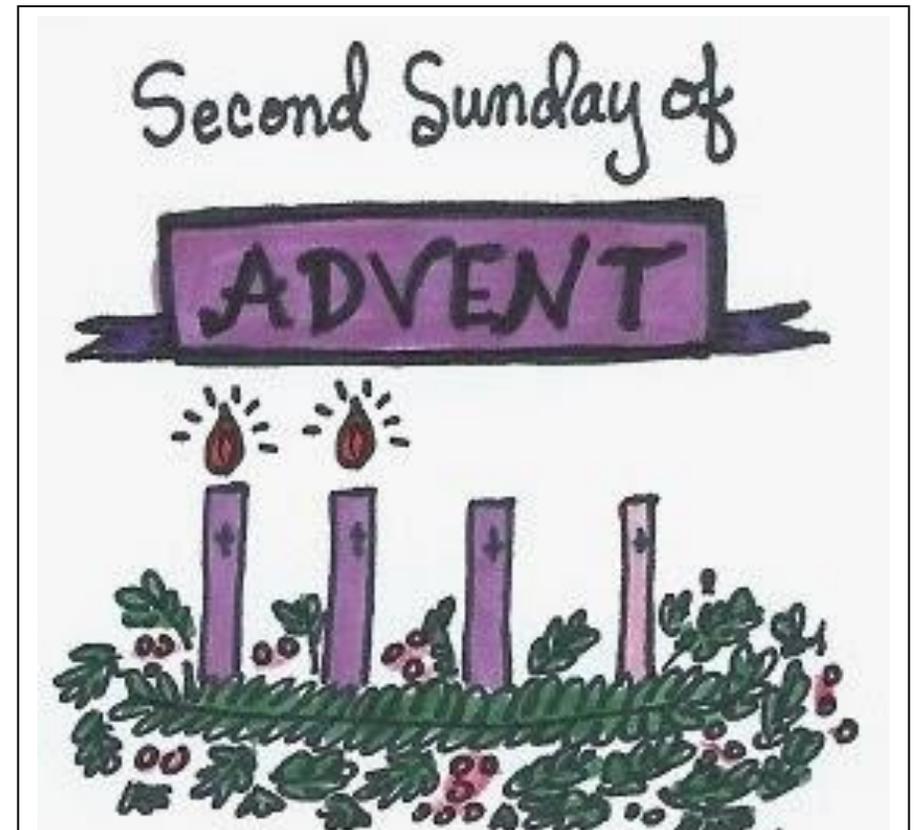
Please stand at items marked \* if you are able. Passages in **Bold Print** are to be spoken in Unison

**Upcoming Events at First**

Dec 10 <sup>th</sup>	Bible Study	10:00 am
	Session Meeting	7:00 pm
Dec 11 <sup>th</sup>	Crafts & Conversation	1:00 pm
Dec 13 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Worship	11:00 am
	Third Sunday of Advent	



**"Welcome to worship!** We're glad you're here with us this morning. A video devotional based on the same scriptures and sermon topic is available on our Church website and Facebook page.



John appears every Advent to remind us that God is at work— or did you forget?

The time is at hand—or have you lost track?

The Lord is with us—or have you already checked out?

All flesh shall feel, every eye shall see the salvation of God.

This is good news, the best news really. God brings freedom to the captives, healing to the wounded, rest for the weary and life to the dying.

But why with John does God sound like such bad news?

“Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

If God loves us, why would God, through the prophet John, judge us?

Yet through John and even more through the one John prepares us to welcome, we are shown that God does indeed both love and judge us. Because God loves us, God judges us, And who better? For God judges us but never condemns, instructs but never destructs, challenges but never chides. God confronts us with the truth that there is a better way to live our lives. There is a better way to treat this world. There is a better way to use our words and minds and hands and gifts.

There is the way revealed by Christ.

The Rev. Derek Macleod is a minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada serving at St. Andrew's Covenant Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, North Carolina

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

### **Bible Readings:**

**Isaiah 40:1-11 pg. 667 OT**

**Psalm 85:8-13 pg. 543-544 OT**

**Mark 1:1-8 pg. 34 NT**

### **Sermon: “Preparing for Christ’s Arrival”**

**Instrumental Hymn: “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed” #115**

## WE RESPOND TO GOD

### **Tithes and Offerings**

#### **\*Prayer of Dedication for Offering:**

God of promise, we bring you our gifts in Jesus’ name, for we know his peace through forgiveness and faithfulness. Receive our offering and bless our gifts and our lives. Help us share the peace you offer us with our neighbours throughout the world you love. Amen.

## SACREMENT OF COMMUNION

### **Invitation**

#### **Affirmation of Faith:**

Jesus is Lord! The Word of God is made real and human in our midst. All things are possible with God. Our thanks and praise rise into the heavens. Even in the midst of this world’s darkness, we believe that God’s love will never be defeated, and that peace will come and be found among us. We believe that God has entered human life. Our journeying is forever accompanied by Jesus, who is the light of the world and is understood in kindness. This we believe and from this we live.

## Remembering the Meal with Jesus

### Great Prayer of 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 God thanks and praise.**

We give you thanks and praise, almighty God, for the gift of a world full of wonder, and for our life which comes from you. By your power, you sustain the universe.

**Glory to you for ever and ever.**

O God, You created us to love you with all our heart, and to love each other as ourselves, but we rebel against you by the wrong that we do. In Jesus, your Son, you bring healing to our world and gather us into one great family. Therefore, with all who serve you on earth and in heaven, we praise your wonderful name, as we say,

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

We give you thanks and praise, loving Father, because in sending Jesus, your Son, to us you showed us how much you love us. Jesus cares for the poor and the hungry. He suffers with the sick and the rejected. Betrayed and forsaken, he did not strike back but overcame hatred with love. On the cross he defeated the power of sin and death. Raising him from the dead, you show us the power of your love to bring new life to all your people.

**Glory to you for ever and ever.**

God our refuge and our strength, receive all we offer you this day, and through the death and resurrection of your Son transform us into his likeness. Send your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts, that we may know the presence of Jesus in the breaking of bread, and share in the life of the family of your children.

**Glory to you for ever and ever.**

Father, you call us to be your servants; fill us with the courage and love of Jesus, that all the world may gather in joy at the table of your kingdom. We sing your praise as we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**Christ has died.  
 Christ is risen.  
 Christ will come again.**

Glory to God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Sharing the Meal

**Pastoral Prayer & Lord's Prayer (see back of bulletin)**

### WE GO OUT TO SERVE

**Blessing**

**"Postlude:(Please maintain a reverent silence and stillness)**