



Centenary

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

*As the Prelude begins, you are invited to enter a time of prayer and meditation
as we prepare to worship God together.*

Prelude

Wake, Awake for Night is Flying

J. S. Bach

Choral Introit

Creator of the Stars of Night

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, people of faith, come join your hearts in worship.

People: We hear the invitation and hunger to join in the feast.

Leader: God is faithful and calls us into the loving presence of Jesus,
who is the Christ.

**People: We come to join with those who watch
and wait and celebrate. Amen.**

Hymn No. 202

People Look East

BESANÇON

1. People look east the time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able trim the hearth and set the table.
People look east and sing today: Love the Guest, is on the way.
2. Furrows be glad though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish
People look east and sing today: Love, the Rose is on the way
3. Stars, keep the watch when night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as the sun and moon together.
People look east and sing today: Love, the Star is on the way.
4. Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming
People look east and sing today: Love, the Lord is on the way.

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Opening Prayer

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

**All: O Holy God, maker of every thought and thing, open our hearts this day,
that we may know your presence in this time and place.**

**Restore us now, so we may see the special gift and calling
that you have for each of us.**

Masterful potter of life, mold us into the vessels you would have us be.

**Help us be ready for your promised return,
when you will be among us and within us
with new, creative, healing energy. Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Candle with Children

Leader: We light this candle as a symbol of Christ our Hope.
May the light sent from God shine in the darkness
to show us the way of salvation.

People: O come, O come, Emmanuel.

Announcements

Prayer of Illumination

Epistle Reading

[1 Corinthians 1:3-9](#)

Hymn No. 626

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

PICARDY

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!

Gospel Reading

[Mark 13:24-37](#)

Homily

It's Not Too Early to Open Your Gifts!

Dr. Matt Bates

Invitation

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another.
Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Confession and Pardon (in unison)

Merciful God,

we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against your love,

we have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

All pray in silence.

Leader: Hear the good news:
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God's love towards us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

All: Glory to God. Amen.

Offertory Anthem

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

Claude Goudimel

Great Thanksgiving

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts,

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

The pastor gives thanks appropriate to the occasion, remembering God's acts of salvation, and concludes:

And so, with your people on earth
and with all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

William Mathias

5 Ho - ly, ho - ly,

8 ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might.

12 Heaven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

16 Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the

Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Music © 1976 Oxford University Press

(The congregation may be seated.)

The pastor continues the thanksgiving. The institution of the Lord's Supper is recalled. The pastor concludes:

And so,
in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

William Mathias

Christ has died, Christ is ris-en, Christ will come a-gain!

Music © 1976 Oxford University Press

The pastor invokes the present work of the Holy Spirit and then praises the Trinity, concluding:

All honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and for ever.

William Mathias

A - men, a - men, a - men.

Music © 1976 Oxford University Press

Lord's Prayer No. 895

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Giving and Receiving of Communion

Communion Music

Hymn No. 730

O Day of God, Draw Nigh

ST. MICHAEL

1. O day of God, draw nigh in beauty and in power;
come with thy timeless judgment now to match our present hour.
2. Bring to our troubled minds, uncertain and afraid,
the quiet of a steadfast faith, calm of a call obeyed.
3. Bring justice to our land, that all may dwell secure,
and finely build for days to come foundations that endure.
4. Bring to our world of strife thy sovereign word of peace,
that war may haunt the earth no more, and desolation cease.
5. O day of God, draw nigh as at creation's birth;
let there be light again, and set thy judgments on the earth.

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Benediction

Choral Response

Creator of the Stars of Night

*The altar flowers this morning are given in memory of Jack Hill
by Nancy Hill.*

Reminder!

Help us know that you worshiped with us this morning by signing the online attendance pad [here](#).

*Thank you to all the volunteers who helped us throughout the week to make all the worship services
this week possible.*

Scripture

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— ⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark 13:24-37

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering,

the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,

²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then 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.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

²⁸“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. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It 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. ³⁵ 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, ³⁶ or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷ And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

Welcome!

Centenary United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation, extending hospitality and encouraging full participation of all, regardless of age, race, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, education, economic background, and physical or mental ability.

We are glad that you have joined us today! If you are a new guest, we hope that you experience a warm welcome! Please return soon and consider us for your church home. If you are interested in church membership, please speak with a pastor.

Announcements

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS - It is Centenary's tradition at Christmas to express honor and remembrance by donating poinsettias. The plants will be in the sanctuary for Dec. 24 and 31. They will be available for pick up after worship on Dec. 31. Order forms are available at the back of the sanctuary and downstairs by the kitchen bulletin board. You may also order online. See the newsletter for the link.

CENTENARY FAMILY CHRISTMAS LUNCH – Join us December 10 following the Advent Lessons and Carols service. Ham and biscuits will be provided. Please bring your favorite holiday side to share.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR MCGUIRE HOSPITAL. We will once again send Christmas greetings to our military veterans at McGuire Hospital this year. There will be a box located at the entrance to the Sanctuary for your cards. Deadline to contribute cards is December 17. Please address the envelopes with: To a Veteran, To a Hero, To a Brave Person, etc. Inside the card, please thank them for their service to our country, their devotion to freedom, their sacrifice, admiration for their service, etc. Please sign your card. Thank you for taking the time to acknowledge these women and men after all they have done in service to our country.

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING – As our tradition, our Christmas Eve offering will go to United Methodist Family Services. UMFS is an unwavering champion for high-risk children and families in Virginia. UMFS serves children in foster care and children struggling with mental health and behavioral challenges. They provide foster care and adoption programs, specialized education schools, and mental health programs. Your support of UMFS through this offering will help high-risk children achieve a brighter future. Thank you for supporting this transformative ministry.

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY – Wednesdays at 10:00am. Each week we will look at the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. An email is sent out every Tuesday with the Zoom link and all the details. If you would like to join us, contact the church office to be put on the email list.

Upcoming Events

December 4	5:00 pm	Change the World/RVA
December 5	Noon	AA

December 6	10:00 am	Bible Study - Zoom
	7:00 pm	Choir Rehearsal
December 8	10:30 am	Friday Lunch Program
	Noon	AA
December 10	10:30 am	Worship – In person and online
	Immediately following	Church Family hristmas Lunch