

PARK CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Third Sunday of Advent

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 17, 2023 10:30 AM

Chiming of the Hour

The ringing of the bell invites us to quiet our hearts & minds as we gather for worship.

Words of Welcome & Announcements

Welcome to worship at Park Central Presbyterian Church!
May you experience God's grace and love within the worship service.

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

“Sinfonia”

J. S. Bach

from *Weihnachtsoratorium* (Christmas Oratorio) BWV 248

Dan Blumenthal, *violin*

Sandra Murphy, *keyboard*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Our God set the stars in the sky.

God hears our voices when we cry.

Our God can part the sea.

God can bring water from a rock

and provide food in the desert.

Our God has done great things for us.

May we rejoice with awe.

Let us worship God with wonder.

***HYMN**

While We Are Waiting, Come

WAITING

Please see hymn insert

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God,

we can be so busy.

**We often get so wrapped up in our plans and schedules
that we do not allow ourselves to notice
and take in the amazing wonders in each day.**

**Forgive us when we are too numb or anxious
to recognize your signs of awe and wonder
all around us.**

**Let the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth
turn us once again to amazement, joy, and praise
as we witness the wonders of your love. Amen.**

SILENT PRAYER

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

***WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE**

VENI EMMANUEL

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

PASSING OF THE PEACE

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

RESPONSE

The Park Central Ensemble

Light three candles to watch for Messiah:

Let the light banish darkness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gateway

For the King of glory.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts,

as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but

**deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

THE FIRST LESSON

Psalm 126

¹ When God restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

² Then our mouth was filled with laughter
and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then it was said among the nations,
“God has done great things for them.”

³ God has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

⁴ Restore our fortunes, O God,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.

⁵ May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

⁶ Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

Leader: This is the word of God.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

MUSICAL MEDITATION

Sweet Little Jesus Boy

Sweet little Jesus boy,

They made you be born in a manger.

Sweet little holy child,

Didn't know who you was.

Didn't know you'd come to save us, Lord,

To take our sins away;

Our eyes was blind, we couldn't see.

We didn't know who you was.

Michael Spencer, *tenor*
Robert MacGimsey

*Long time ago you was born,
Born in a manger low,
Sweet little Jesus boy.
The world treats you men Lord,
Treats me mean, too,
But that's how things are down here.
We don't know who you are.*

*You done told us how,
We are tryin'
Master, you done showed us how,
Even when you was dyin'.
Just seems like we can't do right,
Look how we treated you.
But please, sir, forgive us, Lord.
We didn't know 'twas you.*

*Sweet little Jesus boy,
Born long time ago.
Sweet little holy child,
And we didn't know who you was.*

THE SECOND LESSON

Luke 1:57-66

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that God had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John."

⁶¹ They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." ⁶² Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed.

⁶⁴ Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For indeed the hand of God was with him.

Leader: This is the word of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

SILENT MOMENT OF REFLECTION

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

INVITATION TO ENGAGEMENT

You may place donations to the church in the offering plate as you exit. You may also send in a check or click Donate on the church website.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN 12 People, Look East

BESANÇON

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Scherzino on a French Carol” - based on NOEL NOUVELET arr. David Paxton

*During the postlude, some people sit or stand quietly and listen to the music.
Others prefer to connect with those around them or greet visitors as they leave.
Please feel free to make the transition between worship and re-entering the world
in whatever way is meaningful to you.*

*Please join us in the Gathering Hall following worship
for a Christmas party.*

Announcements for December 17, 2023

Sunday, December 24

4:00 pm Christmas Eve worship

Monday, December 25 – Tuesday, January 2

Church office closed

Christmas Eve

Christmas Eve worship will be held at 4:00 next Sunday. That will be the only worship service held that day.

Get Involved!

There are sign-up sheets at the Fayette St. entrance for greeters and Fellowship Hour hosts (Fellowship Hour will resume in the new year). The instructions for each role can be found below! If you are interested in reading during worship, please contact the office. Don't hesitate to ask questions about these roles.

Greeting Instructions

Greeters should arrive at the church by 10:10. The bulletins will already be placed at each entrance. One person should stand in the narthex (the foyer at the Townsend St. entrance) and one person should stand at the Fayette St. entrance. The person at the Fayette St. entrance should open the door for everyone who arrives. Both greeters should greet and welcome everyone who arrives and hand them each a bulletin. The Townsend St. greeter should ring the bell at 10:25 and stay in the narthex until Kenneth arrives at the narthex. The Fayette St. greeter should stay at that entrance until a few minutes after worship starts. If there is only one person signed up to greet, they should do so in the narthex.

Fellowship Hour Instructions

Before Sunday morning, the host can check with the office to see if any snacks are left over from the previous Sunday. The host can provide store-bought snacks, homemade treats, or a combination of the two. Things to consider are providing both savory and sweet options and making sure there are drinks. The Mission, Membership, and Outreach Committee has funds to subsidize Fellowship Hour purchases as well. On Sunday morning, the host should bring whatever snacks they choose and put them in the kitchen. When the final hymn begins, the host should leave worship and set up the food, cups, plates, and napkins in the Gathering Hall. Kenneth is always available to help!

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Liturgist.....Najwa Webster

Gratitude bestows reverence,
allowing us to encounter everyday epiphanies,
those transcendent moments of awe that change forever
how we experience life and the world.

~ John Milton

Today's liturgy is adapted from resources for Advent from A Sanctified Art.

Park Central has accepted the invitation
from the Presbyterian Church (USA) to become a Matthew 25 congregation.
We are answering Christ's call to become even more a church of action,
where God's love, justice, and mercy shine forth and are contagious.

To learn more about Matthew 25, please visit pcusa.org/matthew25

Robert Allen.....Director of Arts and Technology
Brigid Boyle..... Parish Associate
Sarah McTyre.....Pastor
Sandra Murphy.....Keyboard Musician
Kenneth Pfeffer.....Building Manager
Michael Sayles..... Finance Manager
Briana Vaught.....Office and Communications Manager

Church Office Phone: (315) 475-1677 • 504 East Fayette Street, Syracuse, NY 13202-1922

Church Office Hours: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, M-Th

Church Office Email: office@parkcentralchurch.org

Website: www.parkcentralchurch.org • Facebook: Park Central Presbyterian Church

Instagram: [parkcentralsyr](https://www.instagram.com/parkcentralsyr) • TikTok: [parkcentralchurch](https://www.tiktok.com/@parkcentralchurch)