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First  
Sunday  
of  
Advent





# West Richmond Church of the Brethren

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December 1, 2024

First Sunday of Advent

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Happy New Year! Today the church calendar begins anew with Advent as we celebrate Jesus' coming in the past, present and future. Welcome to worship.

## Welcome

### Choral Prelude

#### *Call to Advent*

J. Jerome Williams

Call to Advent by J. Jerome Williams  
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## GIVE PRAISE TO GOD

### \* Call to Worship (Leader/People)

A new season dawns, a time of hope and promise.

**We gather to anticipate the coming of our Lord.**

Let us open hearts and minds to receive the light of Christ

**With joyful hearts, we welcome the Advent season.**

### \* Opening Prayer

Gracious God, as we embark on this Advent journey, we lift our hearts in anticipation of your coming. Fill us with hope, a hope that shines brighter than the darkest night. May your love dispel the shadows of despair and fear. Grant us the grace to live as faithful disciples, eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of your promises. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

### \* Lighting our Advent Wreath

\* Opening Carol

*Hope Is a Candle* (verses 1 & 5)

#211<sup>VT</sup>

Hope Is a Candle by Richard Leach  
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- 1: Hope is a candle, once lit by the prophets,  
never consumed, though it burns through the years;  
dim in the daylight of power and priv'lege  
when they are gone, hope will shine on.
- 5: Christ is the light that the prophets awaited,  
Christ is the lion, the lamb, and the child.  
Christ is the love and the mystery and laughter  
candles, make way! Christ is the day.

CELEBRATE GOD'S FAMILY

Time with Our Children

Carol

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

#241<sup>VT</sup>

- 1: O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold him, born the king of angels.

*Refrain:*

*O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him,  
O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

- 2: True God of true God, Light of light eternal,  
our lowly nature he hath not abhorred;  
born of a woman, here in flesh appearing. *Refrain*
- 3: Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above:  
"Glory to God, all glory in the highest!" *Refrain*
- 4: Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, begotten, not created. *Refrain*

## Prayer

# WORSHIP IN GIVING

## Thoughts on Giving

As we offer our gifts today, let us remember the true meaning of giving. It is not just about material possessions, but about sharing our time, talents, and love with others. May our offerings reflect our hope and faith in the coming of Christ. As we give, let us also receive the gift of hope, a gift that can transform our lives and the world around us.

## Song

*Praise God* (Doxology)

#71B<sup>VT</sup>

B: Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

# LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED

## Scripture Lesson

Daniel 6:6-27 NLT

<sup>6</sup>So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius!" <sup>7</sup>We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. <sup>8</sup>And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked." <sup>9</sup>So King Darius signed the law.

<sup>10</sup>But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had

always done, giving thanks to his God. <sup>11</sup> Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help. <sup>12</sup> So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"

"Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."

<sup>13</sup> Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

<sup>14</sup> Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

<sup>15</sup> In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed."

<sup>16</sup> So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."

<sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. <sup>18</sup> Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.

<sup>19</sup> Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. <sup>20</sup> When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "Long live the king! <sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

<sup>24</sup> Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.

<sup>25</sup> Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world:

“Peace and prosperity to you!

<sup>26</sup> “I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel.

For he is the living God,  
and he will endure forever.

His kingdom will never be destroyed,  
and his rule will never end.

<sup>27</sup> He rescues and saves his people;  
he performs miraculous signs and wonders  
in the heavens and on earth.

He has rescued Daniel  
from the power of the lions.”

## Carol

### *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks*

#253 <sup>VT</sup>

- 1: While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
the angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around, and glory shone around.
- 2: “Fear not,” said he, for mighty dread  
had seized their troubled mind.  
“Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
to you and humankind, to you and humankind.
- 3: “To you, in David’s town, this day  
is born of David’s line  
the Savior, who is Christ the Lord,  
and this shall be the sign, and this shall be the sign:
- 4: “The heav’nly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,

all humbly wrapped in swathing bands,  
and in a manger laid, and in a manger laid.”

- 5: The angel spoke, and suddenly  
appeared a shining throng of angels  
praising God, and thus  
addressed their joyful song, addressed their joyful song:
- 6: “All glory be to God on high  
and to the earth be peace,  
goodwill henceforth from heav’n to earth  
begin and never cease, begin and never cease!”

## Sermon

“Dare to Be Daniel”

## GO IN GOD’S NAME

### \* Carol

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

#218<sup>VT</sup>

- 1: Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee:  
Israel’s strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of ev’ry nation,  
joy of ev’ry longing heart.
- 2: Come, thou universal Savior;  
come, redeem the human race.  
Life and joy spring from thy favor;  
cheer each soul in need of grace.  
Still we wait for thine appearing—  
make our senseless struggles cease.  
Guide us from our weary wand’ring  
into paths of perfect peace.

3: Born thy people to deliver,  
 born a child, and yet a king;  
 born to reign in us forever,  
 now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
 By thine own eternal Spirit,  
 rule in all our hearts alone.  
 By thine all-sufficient merit,  
 raise us to thy glorious throne.

## Saying Farewell to a Family Member

\* **Choral Postlude**     *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*     Peter C. Lutkin

*\* Please stand as able and led*



*Our thanks to all who have helped to prepare and lead this morning's worship service:*

<b>Ministers</b> .....	<b>All Members</b>
Pastor .....	David Whitten
Minister of Music .....	Vanessa Morton
Worship Leader .....	Susan Robertson
Time with Our Children .....	Sarah Hartman
Guitarist .....	David Whitten
Director of Media & Technology .....	Kevin Beers