



My faith is not a magic charm, like garlic to chase away vampires. It is, instead, what sustains me in the midst of all the normal joys and tragedies of the ordinary human life. It is faith that helps my grief to be creative, not destructive.... It is faith that what happens to me matters to God as well as to me that gives me joy, that promises me that I am eternally the subject of God's compassion, and that assures me that the compassion was manifested most brilliantly when God came to us in a stable in Bethlehem.

- Madeleine L'Engle, The Rock that is Higher

To those joining us on line today...THANK YOU!

We are made to worship together, but we find ourselves living in a particular and unprecedented moment that has not touched American lives in generations. The good news is that while we are made to worship God together, we do not need to be in a particular place to meet with God. So I hope you have gathered together with your housemates, family, and maybe a couple others. God is present with us at all times, and He delights to meet with you today regardless of where you are or how many people you are with. We seek to offer this service as an encouragement to you amid these difficult times. We look forward to worshiping together again, breaking bread and giving hugs to one another. You are missed.

As an encouragement to others, please take a picture of your home gathering, post it to social media with the hashtag *#abbottchurchathome* and tag us on Instagram *@abbottchurchbaltimore*

NEED PRAYER? From 12:00 PM until 1:00 PM, Monday through Friday, someone will be available to pray for anyone in need of prayer. The time will also be focused on praying for the ministry of our church and for God's Spirit to be at work in our midst. If you would like to be part of this new prayer ministry, please let the pastor know. Please text prayer requests to the pastor, Julius and/or George.

You can access children's bulletins at the following address:
www.childrensbulletins.com/Covid19-childrens-activites-for-churches

ORDER OF WORSHIP

The Christian Year

Christian-year spirituality is nothing less than the calling to enter by faith into the incarnation, the life and ministry, the death and resurrection of Jesus. God's saving action is not only presented to us through the practice of the Christian year, it also takes up residence within us and transforms us by the saving and healing presence of Christ in our lives. As we enter the saving events of Jesus, he shapes us by the pattern of his own living and dying so that our living and dying in this world is a living and dying in him.

-Robert Webber

Advent

Advent is a season of hopeful expectation and preparation, as the Church anticipates the coming of Christ – both at his birth in Bethlehem many years ago, and at his future, final coming to judge the world at the end of time. During Advent, we prepare our hearts for the Lord, so that when he comes, he may find us watching and waiting.

WELCOME TO ABBOTT CHURCH

CALL TO WORSHIP (read responsively)

Psalm 126 (selected verses)

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,

we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,

and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then it was said among the nations,

"The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,

like the watercourses in the Negeb.

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

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,

shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

SILENT PREPARATION

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE - Litany of Joy

- The Ellen's Family

Leader: Why do we light the Advent candles?

All: **The light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world who comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life and joy.**

Leader: What is the meaning of the third lighted candle?

All: **The third lighted candle is the candle of Joy. It draws attention to the promised joy of life in God's kingdom. Isaiah prophesied, "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. The Apostle Paul also proclaimed that, "the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."**

Leader: Who were some of the first to experience the joy of Christ's incarnation?

All: **Luke describes the announcement of Jesus' birth, "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."**

Leader: What does Jesus coming mean for us now?

All: **Peter writes that, "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.**

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;

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

God of God, Light of Light;
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb:
Very God, begotten, not created;

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;
"Glory to God, in the highest!"

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning:
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n;
Word of the Father, late in flesh appearing;

CONFESSION OF SIN (in unison)

God our Father, you sent your Son full of grace and truth: forgive our failure to receive him. Jesus our Savior, you were born in poverty and laid in a manger: forgive our greed and rejection of your ways. Spirit of Love, your servant Mary responded joyfully to your call: forgive the hardness of our hearts.

(Please confess your sins silently to the Lord)

WORDS OF COMFORT AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will, and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **AMEN**

How my happy heart rejoices
I can hear the angel voices
"Christ is born" they all are singing
From the sky this good news bringing
Let the earth rejoice
O come and lift your voices

Christ the Lord is born today
He came from heaven's throne
God is born a man today
To bring His children home
To bring His children home

Death and darkness surely tremble
Light has come to all the people
The Lion comes to crush the serpent
He comes a Lamb, a lowly servant
Let the earth rejoice
O come and lift your voices

God has sent His greatest treasure
Shown His love in greatest measure
Sending Christ to bleed and suffer
Purchasing our peace forever
Let the earth rejoice
O come and lift your voices

Words and Music by Mark Altrogge, 2006

EXTENDING GOD'S WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS and GREETING

Minister: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: **And also with you.**

How sweet the day when Christ was born
 When God Himself took human form
 He came to wash our sins away
 Our death to die, our debt to pay

Oh sing for joy, lift up your voice!
 Let us sing for joy, the whole earth rejoice.
 Let us sing for joy to the Son,
 for Jesus our Savior has come.

How sweet the day when Hope appeared
 The One who frees us from our fears
 He came to break the power of sin
 And give us power to follow Him

How sweet the day when Christ returns
 We'll see the One for whom we yearn
 Then we'll look full upon His face
 Our hearts will burst with songs of praise

Words and Music by Stephen Altrogge, 2006

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Members of the congregation lead us in prayer.

God of mercy, faithful to the faithless, grant peace and hope
 to the downtrodden and oppressed, and use us to bring justice to our
 broken world. For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Great Physician, comforter of the nations, provide healing and tender
 care to the lonely and afflicted, and help us better care for those in need.
 For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

(continued)

Holy Spirit, sustainer of the church, move in the hearts and minds of our brothers and sisters, and inspire us to be messengers of your truth and love. For this, O Lord, we pray:

All Lord, hear our prayer.

And for what else should we pray?

Members of the congregation may add their own intercessions at this time, ending with, For this, O Lord, we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Now gathering our prayers into one, let us pray boldly as our Savior has taught us:

**All 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 and ever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE FOR THE SERMON

Luke 1:5-17

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

(continued)

11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Pastor Paul Warren

Advent Role Models: John the Baptist

OFFERING

The offering is a way for members and friends of Abbott Church to support the church's mission and ministry. If you are our guest today, please feel under no compulsion to give. If you would like to give online, you may do so at www.abbottchurch.org/giving

~~CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER~~

-Let's take a moment to mourn the fact that our church body is not able to assemble together this Sunday.

-Pray that the Lord would work to enable us to return to a fuller communion with one another soon.

-Give thanks that though we do not celebrate the sacrament of communion together today we have true communion with Jesus and one another through the power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every believer giving us union with Christ and all his people.

Joy to the world! the Lord has come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns:
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods,
Rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
and wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders of His love.

Isaac Watts 1719

BENEDICTION

PRAYERS FOR REFLECTION

Prayer for those searching

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weak and sinful, but through you I am loved and accepted. I thank you for taking my place in death, in order to offer me forgiveness and renewal. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and my Lord. Amen.

Prayer for those struggling with sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in you the fulfillment of all my need, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on you, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and faithfully follow you in life. Amen.

Prayer of commitment to God's people

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you in baptism and in a life of committed discipleship in your church. Grant that I may take the steps necessary to be one with your people and live in the fullness of your Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Lord, you have put gladness in our hearts; you have satisfied our hunger with good things. In giving all, you have not withheld from us your own dear Son. How can we withhold anything from you, our Lord and our God? Renew us day by day with the gift of your Spirit, that we may give ourselves completely to your service and walk with joy in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Today is the **third Sunday in Advent**. We want to encourage everyone to find ways to fully engage in a this season of the church year. One helpful tool can be found at www.thecommonrule.org, where they have a downloadable advent guide.

WE NEED YOU! There are currently many areas of service and leadership that you may be able to fill. Some areas of need are immediate and can be done during this time of COVID and limited in person activities, others are more strategic and longer term. Ministries such as "WeCare", children's ministry, social media, diaconal programs, teaching, and more all have needs. If you know of someone that you believe would make a good elder or deacon, we would encourage you to speak to that person and encourage them towards that ministry. Also speak to one of the elders or the pastor about them and let us know so that we can follow up as well.

HE HEARS

"This is the assurance we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." — 1 JOHN 5:14

"The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth."

— PSALM 145:18

Please pray for:

- Your church staff, officers and leaders
- Men and women of the military, police and fire departments
- Family members and friends who are not walking with Christ
- Ongoing health concerns for the following members and friends:
Larry Halterman, Milly Flynn, Gene and Diane Shaw, Phyllis Brown, Dawn Brewer, Brent Schepleng, Clint Neuder, Brenda Neuder, Robin and Toni (Billie Mitchell's granddaughters), Narouz family (especially Vicky), Don Sapp, Jackie Lubin
- *Raj Mohan's wife, dementia, and granddaughter, mental health issues*
- *Lydia Frasca, chemotherapy and radiation treatment*
- *David Files, pain management*
- *Mike Brooks, son of Earl and Betty Brooks, fighting a rare cancer.*

MISSIONARIES AND MINISTRIES WHICH WE SUPPORT:

- Andy and Bev Warren with MTW in Ethiopia
- Jason and Liz Polk with MTW in Ethiopia
- Jessica Ringsmuth with MTW in Kenya
- Bert and Nancy Williams with MTW in Uganda
- Bruce and Pat with MTW in France
- Chris Garriott with RUF at the University of Maryland
- Jacob Jasin with RUF-I at Johns Hopkins University
- Mountain View Bible Camp — Abbott Center for the Arts
- Abbott Tutoring Center — We Care Ministry

Welcome to Abbott.

We're glad we worshiped
with you today!

December 13, 2020

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

How may we serve you?

(please check the appropriate box)

- I am a visitor
- I would like to find out how
to become a Christian
- I am interested in membership
(Abbott schedules classes regularly)
- I would like a call from the pastor
- I would like prayer
- I would like to join a
community group
- My contact information has changed

Staff Contacts

PASTOR:

J. Paul Warren
410-299-6929
polowarren@gmail.com

MINISTER OF MUSIC:

Julius Fischer Jr.
443-722-2525
julejr88@gmail.com

OFFICE ADMIN:

Phyllis Warren
abbottchurchoffice@gmail.com

TREASURER:

Al Rode Jr.

SEXTON:

Clint Neuder

Abbott Memorial Presbyterian Church

A congregation of the Presbyterian
Church in America (PCA)

3426 Bank Street
Baltimore, MD 21224
410-276-6207
abbottchurch.org