



You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

To those joining us in person and online today...THANK YOU!

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest; to all who mourn and long for comfort; to all who struggle and desire victory; to all who sin and need a Savior; to all who are strangers and want fellowship; to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to all who will come, Abbott Church opens wide her doors and offers welcome in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

(NOTE: Masks are required in the church in accordance with a health ordinance effective August 9, 2021 that reintroduced an indoor mask requirement for all Baltimore City residents and guests, regardless of vaccination status.)

While we are made to worship together, sometimes that is not possible for everyone. The good news is that we do not need to be in a particular place to meet with God. Those those of you who are not able to attend in person can join us on our YouTube channel. The worship service is streamed live every Sunday at 10:45 a.m. 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.

View or subscribe to our YouTube channel:

https://youtube.com/channel/UC-1TC7_CBWDdZi8gGPNsqXw

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

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.

GREETING & GOD'S WELCOME AND WORKINGS AT ABBOTT

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

People: **And also with you.**

Responsive Call to Worship

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

People: **For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;**

Leader: But the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

People: **And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.**

Leader: Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you;

People: **Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.**

Leader: They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord.

People: **I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;**

Leader: he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

People: **For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,**

All: **So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE - Litany of Joy

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 hope.

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."

OPENING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

#147

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.

(continued)

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
Who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law
In cloud and majesty and awe. [Refrain]

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave. [Refrain]

O come, thou Dayspring from on high
And cheer us by thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. [Refrain]

O come, thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. [Refrain]

SONG OF PRAISE

His Name is Wonderful

Come see the baby, crib for a bed
His mother Mary lay down His sweet head
The starlight was shining, the wise men were led
Come see the baby and worship Him

Chorus:

His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of
Peace

Everlasting Father, Em-man-u-el, Holy One, Son of God
Savior of the world

Come and adore Him on bended knee
He came to ransom someone like me
What could I offer? What could I bring?
Come and adore Him King of Kings.

[Chorus]

(continued)

Bridge: And the greatness of
 His reign will never end
 Let there be peace on earth
 And all goodwill to men
 Come let us worship Him

[Chorus]

CONFESSION OF SIN

LORD, our LORD, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Almighty Father, King of Glory, you created us in love that we might know you and find our rest in You. You sent your only Son to redeem us. How we thank you for the redemptive hope of the Christmas story. We acknowledge that we need the love, the care and the salvation of Jesus. Father, we realize that Jesus your son is our very life, our hope, our sure foundation. Thank you for sending the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

(Silent reflection for personal confession)

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Hebrews 8:10&12

¹⁰ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹² For I will be merciful towards their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

PASTORAL PRAYER

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 now and forever. Amen**

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. You can mail your giving to the church or if you would like to give online, you may do so at www.abbottchurch.org/giving.

SONG OF WORSHIP

Love Came Down to Earth

**When Love came down to earth
And made His home with men,
The hopeless found a hope,
The sinner found a friend.
Not to the powerful
But to the poor He came,
And humble, hungry hearts
Were satisfied again.**

**Refrain: What joy, what peace has come to us!
What hope, what help, what love!**

**When every unclean thought,
And every sinful deed
Was scourged upon His back
And hammered through His feet.
The Innocent is cursed,
The guilty are released;
The punishment of God
On God has brought me peace. [Refrain]**

**Come lay your heavy load
Down at the Master's feet;
Your shame will be removed,
Your joy will be complete.
Come crucify your pride,
And enter as a child;
For those who bow down low
He'll lift up to His side. [Refrain]**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SCRIPTURE FOR THE SERMON

Acts 22:1-22

"Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you."

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said:

3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. **4** I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, **5** as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. **7** And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' **8** And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' **9** Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. **10** And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' **11** And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

12 "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, **13** came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. **14** And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; **15** for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. **16** And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

17 "When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance **18** and saw him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' **19** And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue

after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. **20** And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ **21** And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

22 Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Stan Long

“Saul’s Story and Your Story”

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Communion, also called the Lord’s Supper, is the family meal of Christians. We invite all baptized followers of Jesus Christ to participate. If you are not a follower of Jesus or are not prepared to share in the meal, we encourage you to spend this time in prayer. We hope this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with his people, the church.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENT

SONG OF ADORATION

Go Tell It (This Is Amazing Grace)

Who breaks the power of sin and darkness?
Whose love is mighty and so much stronger?
The King of glory, the King above all kings

Who shakes the whole earth with holy thunder
And leaves us breathless in awe and wonder?
The King of glory, the King above all kings

Chorus: Go tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and ev'rywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born

Who brings our chaos back into order?
Who makes the orphan a son and daughter?
The King of glory, the King of glory

Who rules the nations with truth and justice?
Shines like the sun in all of its brilliance
The King of glory, the King above all kings

[Chorus]

Bridge: Go tell it, go, go tell it
 Go tell it, go, go tell it

 Go tell it, go, go tell it
 Go tell it, go, go tell it

 Go tell it, go, go tell it
 Go tell it, go, go tell it

 Go tell it, go, go tell it
 Go tell it, go, go tell it

[Chorus 2x]

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.

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
- Abbott Center for the Arts
- We Care Ministry
- Mountain View Bible Camp

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When Love Came Down words & music Stuart Townend Copyright © 2001 Thankyou Music CCLI#1442252

Go Tell It (This is Amazing Grace)
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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:

- Julius and George, for strength, stamina and rest as they give extra time and support to our congregation
- Craig, Stan, and Ben as they minister to us through this season of renewal
- The future pastor of Abbott church; our Lord knows who he is
- Family members and friends who are not walking with Christ
- Ongoing health concerns for the following members and friends:
Larry Halterman, Milly Flynn, Gene & Diane Shaw, Jackie Lubin, Phyllis Brown, Dawn Brewer, Brent Schepleng, Clint Neuder, Brenda Neuder, Robin & Toni (Billie Mitchell's granddaughters), Narouz family (especially Vicky), Don & Lorraine Sapp, David Files
- Lawrence Choate's wife Joann who is battling cancer.
- Angela Jones (Angela Fischer's mother), diabetes, other health concerns
- Rose Shrader (Angela Fischer's sister) cancer, chemotherapy
- Raj Mohan caring for his wife with dementia; granddaughter, mental health
- Lydia Frasca, chemotherapy and radiation treatment
- Tom Lubin caring for his wife Jackie
- Mike Brooks (son of Earl and Betty Brooks) fighting a rare cancer
- Rob Armel (Tracey Brown's husband) taking chemotherapy
- Karen Nines, hernia; surgery scheduled for September has been postponed
- Patty Mifsud (friend of George Lenning) cancer, intense chemotherapy
- Those in our military, police, and fire departments
- Leaders of our City, State, and Nation

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Fellowship Luncheon — Following the worship service today in Room 8. Come eat, fellowship, and learn about the Flourish Church Assessment and our next step in moving forward.

Mid-Week Prayer Meeting — Wednesdays on Zoom from 12-12:30 p.m. The link is on the Abbott FaceBook Group. You can also email abbottchurchoffice@gmail.com to submit a prayer request or for the link to be sent to you. You can sign on and off any time during the half-hour.

Adult Sunday School — Classes meet at 9:45 a.m.

Bible study — Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. in Room 8. All are welcome! We close with a time of prayer, concluding around noon.

Community Group — We will resume gathering informally inside the church in January.

Ordained deacons, non-ordained deacons assistants, & deaconesses are needed at Abbott. This is a mercy ministry that calls men and women of God to manage and disburse the deacons fund to those in need, oversee the Building-Maintenance Committee, and assist in serving communion. If you feel God's call to this ministry, let George or Julius know. If you are asked to serve in this capacity, please give it prayerful consideration.

We Care Center — Open the first two Saturdays of each month from 10:00 a.m. until noon to give food to the needy. Non-perishable food donations can be placed in the box in the vestibule.

Welcome to Abbott.

We're glad we worshiped with you today!

December 12, 2021

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 about 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

Contacts

CHURCH OFFICE:
abbottchurchoffice@gmail.com
410-276-6207

MINISTER OF MUSIC:
Julius Fischer Jr.
443-722-2525
julejr88@gmail.com

CLERK OF THE SESSION:
George Lenning
804-931-6323

TREASURER:
Al Rode Jr.

OFFICE ADMIN:
Debbie Halterman
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