

Joy



hope

peace

DECEMBER 14, 2025
+ THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT +
A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

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A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

PRELUDE

O Thou of God the Father
J.S. Bach
Brian Ward, Organ

WELCOME

Jeff Hunter and Libby Piotrowski



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The Smith Family

Sometimes, when we look around, it is easy for us to feel less than joyful. We get bogged down with the very real cares of this world and find ourselves grumbling with one another and even against one another. But the prophet Isaiah reminds us that there will be a day when: *The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.*

Lord, help us find joy in the waiting.

On that day: *The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

Lord, help us to find joy in the waiting.

As we light this candle of joy, we are reminded that God is never far from us and that the day is surely coming when joy will be all we know.

The third candle is lit.

Prayer: **God of joy, let us rejoice this day in all that is good and beautiful in your world. Make us seekers and purveyors of joy wherever we go, trusting your eternal promises. We say come, Lord, Jesus, come. Amen.**

We sing together verse 3 of Hymn 136, Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers!

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

The Peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you.
And also with you.

* OPENING HYMN 175

Once in Royal David's City

Please refrain from applause until the service has ended.

+ THE FIRST LESSON +

Genesis 3:8-15

Christine Olfelt, Reader

God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

CHORAL ANTHEM

Carol of the Bells
arr. Peter J. Wilhousky

Chancel Choir, Brian Ward, Director

Hark how the bells, sweet silver bells
all seem to say, "Throw cares away."
Christmas is here, bringing good cheer
to young and old, meek and the bold.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, that is their song,
with joyful ring, all caroling.
One seems to hear words of good cheer
from ev'rywhere, filling the air!
Oh, how they pound, raising the sound,
o'er hill and dale, telling their tale.
Gaily they ring while people sing
songs of good cheer, Christmas is here!
Merry, merry, merry, merry Christmas!

+ THE SECOND LESSON +

Genesis 22:15-18

Libby Piotrowski, Reader

God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.

CHORAL ANTHEM

God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen
arr. David Willcocks

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
for Jesus Christ our Saviour was born upon this day,
to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray:

Chorus: O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

From God our heav'nly Father a blessed angel came,
and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same,
how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name:

Chorus

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
this holy tide of Christmas all others doth deface:

Chorus

+ THE THIRD LESSON +

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Sebastian Berg, Reader

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

CHORAL ANTHEM

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
Hymnal Selection 153

Uniting Voices Chicago, Alex Bravos, Director

+ THE FOURTH LESSON +

Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9

Kristen Engebretson, Reader

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN 148

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

+ THE FIFTH LESSON +

Luke 1:26-35, 38

Harry Piotrowski, Reader

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

* CONGREGATIONAL SONG

Behold
David Kauffman

Led by Kristen Hunter, Anders Johnson, and Brian Ward

+ THE SIXTH LESSON +

Luke 2:1-7

Emily Cody, Reader

St. Luke tells of the birth of Jesus.

CHORAL ANTHEM

How Great Our Joy!
arr. John Rutter

Jordan Pfeiffelman, Soprano

While by the sheep we watched at night,
glad tidings brought an angel bright.

Chorus: How great our joy! (Great our joy!)

Joy, joy, joy! (Joy, joy, joy!)

Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!

There shall be born, so he did say,
in Bethlehem a child today.

Chorus

There shall the Child lie in a stall,
this Child who shall redeem us all.

Chorus

This gift of God we'll cherish well,
that ever joy our hearts shall fill.

Chorus

+ THE SEVENTH LESSON +

Luke 2:8-16

Jeff Hunter, Reader

The shepherds go to the manger.

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Invitation to Generosity

The Trustees will come by at this time to receive physical offerings.

Giving online at any time is also an option at www.npcovenant.org/give.

Offertory

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

J.S. Bach (BWV 700), Hymnal Selection 161

Sam Parnin, Organ

* Song of Presentation 141

Come, Lord Jesus

* Prayer of Dedication

+ THE EIGHTH LESSON +

Matthew 2:1-11

Linnea Applequist, Reader

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

CHORAL ANTHEM

As with Gladness Men of Old

Hymnal Selection 192

+ THE NINTH LESSON +

* John 1:1-14

Jeanette Mottl, Reader

St. John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

* CLOSING HYMN 167

The First Noel

All sing verses 1, 2, 4, and 6; Choir sings verses 3 and 5

* BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Toccata on *Veni Emmanuel*

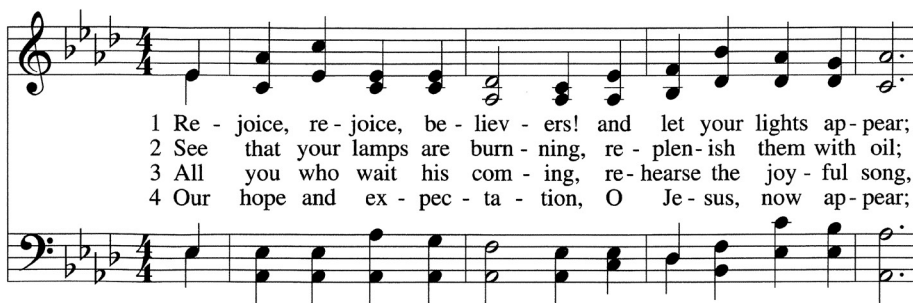
Andrew Carter

*Please remain seated for the postlude, pausing as the light of Christ is carried out
and imagining how you might carry that light into the world this week.*

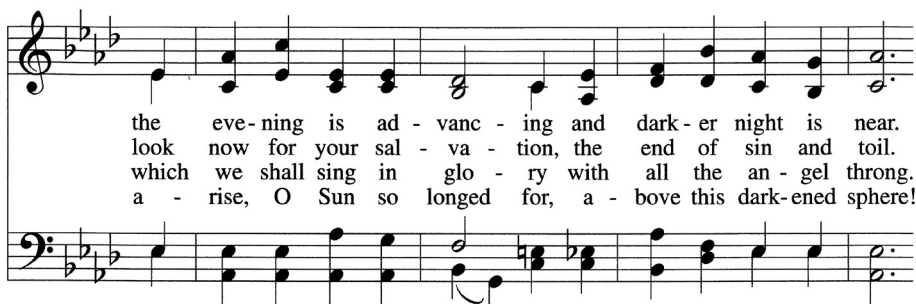
** Please rise, in body or in spirit.*

*All are invited to our parlors on the lower level for
refreshments and fellowship following the service.*

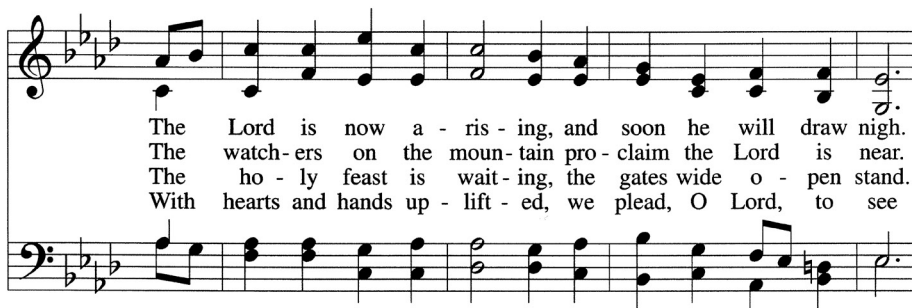
Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers!



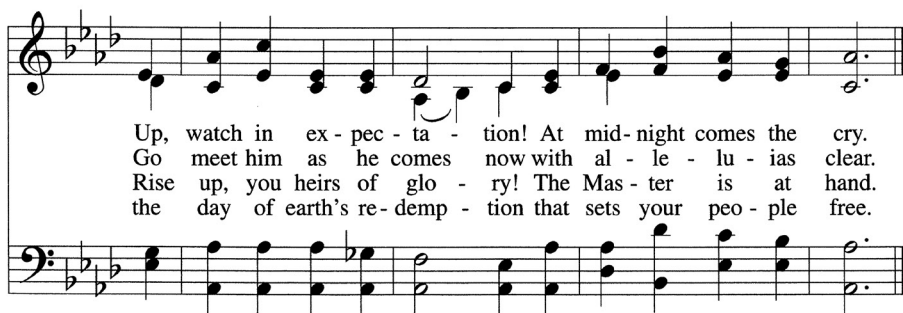
1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers! and let your lights ap - pear;
2 See that your lamps are burn - ning, re - plen - ish them with oil;
3 All you who wait his com - ing, re - hearse the joy - ful song,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing and dark - er night is near.
look now for your sal - va - tion, the end of sin and toil.
which we shall sing in glo - ry with all the an - gel throng.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, a - bove this dark - ened sphere!



The Lord is now a - ris - ing, and soon he will draw nigh.
The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the Lord is near.
The ho - ly feast is wait - ing, the gates wide o - pen stand.
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, watch in ex - pec - ta - tion! At mid - night comes the cry.
Go meet him as he comes now with al - le - lu - ias clear.
Rise up, you heirs of glo - ry! The Mas - ter is at hand.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free.

Once in Royal David's City

Descant

4 And our eyes at last shall see him through his own re -

1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en who is God and
 3 Je - sus is our child - hood's pat - tern, day by day like
 4 And our eyes at last shall see him through his own re -

deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle

cat - tle shed, where a moth - er laid her ba - by
 Lord of all, and his shel - ter was a sta - ble,
 us he grew; he was lit - tle, weak, and help - less,
 deem - ing love; for that child so dear and gen - tle

is our Lord in heav'n a - bove: and he leads his chil - dren

in a man - ger for his bed: Mar - y was that moth - er
 and his cra - dle was a stall: with the poor and meek and
 tears and smiles like us he knew: and he feels for all our
 is our Lord in heav'n a - bove: and he leads his chil - dren

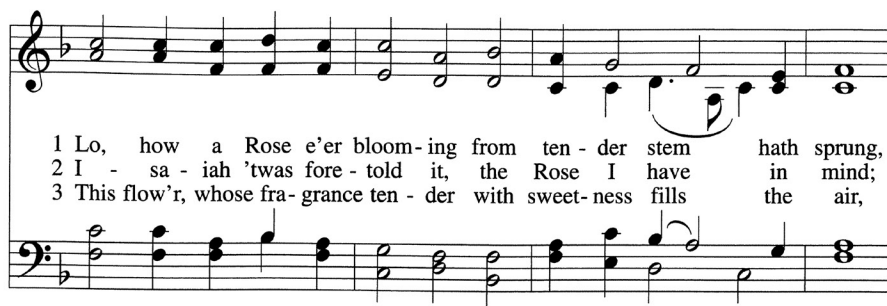
CHRISTMAS: BIRTH

on to the place where he is gone.

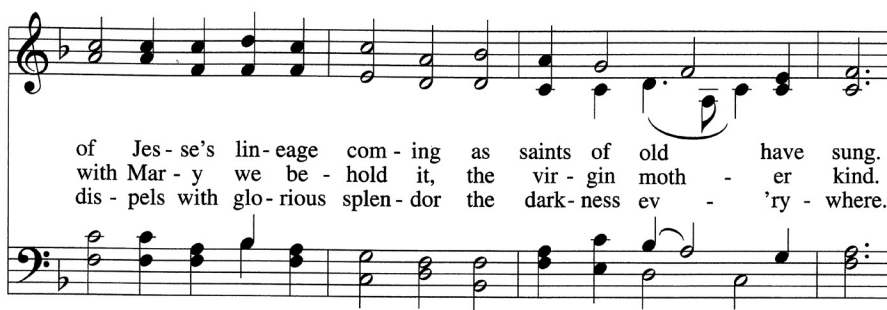
mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.
on to the place where he is gone.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single melodic line in G major (one flat) with a key signature of one flat. The middle staff is a vocal line with lyrics, featuring a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff is a bass line with lyrics, featuring a mix of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are arranged in three lines, with the first line ending with a period and the second and third lines ending with a period. The lyrics are: 'on to the place where he is gone.', 'mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.', 'low - ly, lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.', 'sad - ness, and he shares in all our glad - ness.', 'on to the place where he is gone.'

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



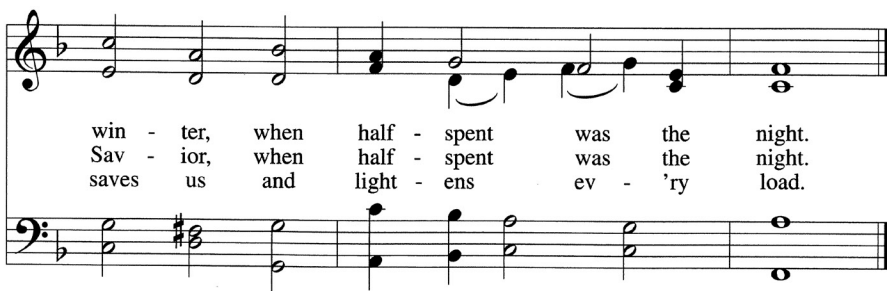
1 Lo, how a Rose e'er bloom-ing from ten - der stem hath sprung,
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the Rose I have in mind;
 3 This flow'r, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the air,



of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as saints of old have sung.
 with Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind.
 dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the dark - ness ev - 'ry - where.



It came, a flow'r - et bright, a - mid the cold of
 To show God's love a - right she bore to us a
 True man yet ver - y God, from sin and death he



win - ter, when half - spent was the night.
 Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.
 saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.

WORDS: German, sixteenth century, tr. sts. 1, 2, Theodore Baker, 1851-1934; st. 3,
 Harriet Krauth Spaeth, 1845-1925
 MUSIC: *Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Cologne, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

7.6.7.6.6.7.6.
 ES IST EIN ROS'

Behold

David Kaufmann

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Be - hold, be - hold the



migh-ty one has done great things for me. Be - hold, be - hold the



migh-ty one has done great things for me. and Ho - ly is Your name and



Ho - ly is Your name. My soul ex-alts You, be - hold my Lord whose



mer - cy lies on me. 1. My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord. My



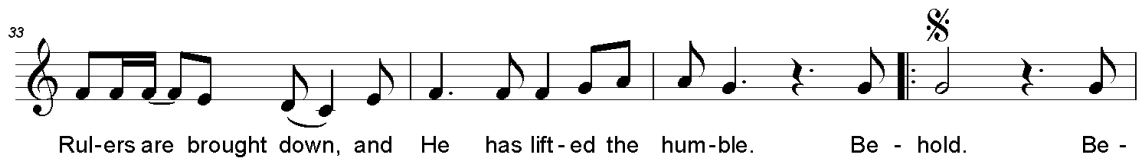
spir-it-re-joic-es in my Sav-iour. He looks at me with kind-ness as with ho-ly eyes of blind-ness, and



all will call me bles - sed. Be- me. 2. Com - pas-sion in-hab-its those who



fear Him. He has done great deeds with His arms. Scat-tered the proud.

33 

Rul-ers are brought down, and He has lift-ed the hum-ble. Be - hold. Be -

37 

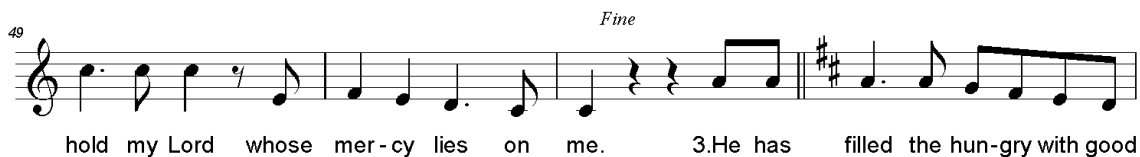
hold. The migh-ty one has done great things for me. Be - hold. Be -

41 

hold. The migh-ty one has done great things for me, and Ho - ly is Your

45 

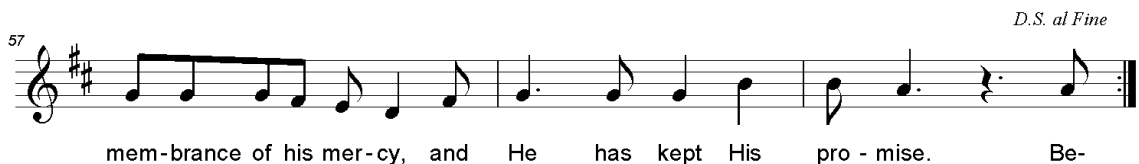
name and Ho - ly is Your name. My soul ex-alt's You. Be -

49 *Fine* 

hold my Lord whose mer-cy lies on me. 3.He has filled the hun-gry with good

53 

things and sent a-way the self-ish emp-ty hand-ed He has sent his ser-vant in re-

57 *D.S. al Fine* 

mem-brance of his mer-cy, and He has kept His pro - mise. Be-

Come, Lord Jesus

141

In unison

1 Come, Lord Je - sus; come, Lord Je - sus;
2 Come, O Prince of Peace; come, O Prince of Peace;
3 Come, Em - man - u - el; come, Em - man - u - el;

come, Lord Je - sus; come and be born in our hearts.
come, O Prince of Peace; come, and be born in our hearts.
come, Em - man - u - el; come, and be born in our hearts.

WORDS: Carey Landry, twentieth century, © 1976 North American Liturgy Resources, 1955-

MUSIC: Carey Landry, twentieth century, © 1976 North American Liturgy Resources; arr. Jonathan D. Larson, 1955-
© 1989 Jonathan Larson

The First Noel

1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to cer - tain poor
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing in the
 3 And by the light of that same star three wise men
 4 This star drew nigh to the north - west, o'er Beth - le -
 5 Then en - tered in those wise men three, full rev - 'rent -
 6 Then let us all with one ac - cord sing prais - es

shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where they lay
 east, be - yond them far; and to the earth it
 came from coun - try far; to seek for a king was
 hem it took its rest; and there it did both
 ly up - on the knee, and of - fered there, in
 to our heav'n - ly Lord; for Christ has our sal -

keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's night that was so deep.
 gave great light, and so it con - tin - ued both day and night.
 their in - tent, and to fol - low the star wher - ev - er it went.
 stop and stay, right o - ver the place where Je - sus lay.
 his pres - ence, their gold and myrrh and frank - in - cense.
 va - tion wrought and with his blood our life has bought.

Refrain
 No - el, No - el, No - el, No - el, born is the King of Is - ra - el.

2025 Christmas Greetings



By their gifts to camping scholarships, these members and friends of North Park Covenant Church express their warm wishes to one another—and to you—for the blessings of Christmas and joy in the new year!

Mary Ann Ahlgren

Sue & Kevin Anderson

Helen & Garry Arkema

Julie & David Bromley

Will & Nancy Bromley

Karen Darelus

Susan & Dave Dawson

Nancy & Wally Ebner

Ken Gebhardt

Nabil & Marti Hindaileh

Barbara, Francis, and Ayden Hunt

The Hunter Family

Lori Johnson

Larry H. Knipp

Doug Nystrom & Jane Swanson-Nystrom

Ann-Marie Olson

Chuck & Jan Olson

Don & Kay Olson

Joline & Steve Paska

The Piotrowski Family

Carol & David Schlensker

Paula & Christian Schuetz

Bruce & Ann Marie Strom

Sue Vandervoort

Bill & Ruthanne Werner

Welcome to North Park Covenant Church online!

We're glad you're here.

If you're new here today, we invite you to email the co-pastors at copastors@npcovenant.org to learn more about us and, perhaps, get a little more connected.

Childcare is available in the toddler room (lower level, off the hallway south of the parlors) during the worship service for any wee ones ages 0 through 5 needing a place to wiggle and play. We welcome children in the service but recognize that sometimes parents need a break to focus on worship.

For your prayers this week:

- **our neighborhood**, specifically Northeastern Illinois University, its professors, staff, students, and families; and our neighbors west of St. Louis Avenue
- **our immigrant brothers and sisters**, as ICE activity continues in the area
- **Tami Losey**, Marti Hindaileh's sister, anticipating bloodwork and a PET scan on December 24 to determine whether a lesion on her spleen is cancerous
- **Millie Lungren and family**, mourning the passing of her brother-in-law, Don Bruland, on Friday
- Michael Shawn Sanders' friend **John C.**, on hospice after being diagnosed with an untreatable tumor
- **Lori Johnson and family**, mourning the passing of her niece Shannon
- **Lynn Pearson**, home again following another hospitalization
- **Bruce Strom**, dealing with sciatica and awaiting next steps
- **Donn Engebretson**, recuperating after knee-replacement surgery on December 3
- **Andrea Feijoo**, Janice Kelly's niece, diagnosed with an aggressive liver cancer
- Joline and Steve Paska's friend **Maggie**, diagnosed with stage 3 endometrial cancer
- **Melanie Jones**, for strength to live with chronic pain
- **Steve Brown**, dealing with pancreatic cancer
- **Zeynab and her two sons**, awaiting word about their asylum case
- Zeynab's daughter, **Soofia**, who remains in a detention center in California

Offering envelopes available today: If you requested offering envelopes for 2026, they are available in the parlors today. If you need yours delivered, let Ann-Marie know, and she can coordinate that for you.

Vida Plena, a Spanish-speaking Covenant church plant that meets here, invites you to worship every Sunday at 1:30 pm. For more information, contact Pastor Dany Flores at 872-357-9080.

Advent Spiritual Practice Concludes: Emily Cody, our pastoral intern, will lead us in a final spiritual practice to help us rest and listen during this Advent season. We will gather on Wednesday, December 17, at 6:30 pm after Gather. Come, rest together and listen for God in the waiting of Advent!

Members and friends are invited to be a part of a Saturday-morning trash brigade, working to clean up the block mentioned in today's neighborhood prayer. Please reach out to Janette and Roderick Smith at rjonberber@sbcglobal.net for more details.

Christmas for Our Missionaries: Throughout the year, we as a church support missionaries in five areas of the world. Now it's time to remember these servants with a special Christmas gift. To make a special donation, write "missionary gift" in the memo line on your check and drop it in the offering plate or select "Missionary Gift" from the drop-down menu at www.npcovenant.org/give. *Contributions are due in by the end of the day today, December 14.* Thank you!

**Lectionary texts for
Sunday, December 21:**

Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-25

From Church Co-chairs, Nancy Ebner and Susan Dawson: The season of giving thanks and giving to others is upon us, and we at North Park Covenant Church are grateful for the ministry of the staff throughout the year. In this season, we have a tangible way to express our thanks to them. *Contributions for the staff gift will be received through tomorrow, Monday, December 15.* You can contribute by using the "Staff Gift" option at www.npcovenant.org/give, writing a check with "Staff Gift" in the memo line, or by using the green envelopes stamped with "a Christmas gift for our staff".

Advent & Christmas Worship Schedule

We invite you to join us for the following Advent and Christmas services!

Sunday, December 21, 10:30 am - Advent IV Worship Service

Sunday, December 21, 7 pm - Blue Christmas Worship Service

We recognize that Advent and Christmas are not joy-filled for everyone. This service offers a time to acknowledge the pain so many feel around the holidays.

Wednesday, December 24, 5 pm - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

This whole-family celebration of Christmas will center on singing Christmas carols together and reading a Christmas story with all the children, and we'll close with a candle-lit singing of *Silent Night*.

Thursday, December 25, 6:30 am - Julotta Worship Service and Fika

You're invited to return on Christmas morning at 6:30 am for our traditional Julotta service. Come for worship (which will take place mostly in English, but with a little Swedish thrown in), followed by coffee and a continental breakfast (the Swedes call it *fika*). Reservations are required for the breakfast so we can plan ahead and seat those who are there. Please RSVP by Thursday, December 18, [using this link](#).

The Church Calendar This Week

The calendar is available at www.npcovenant.org/calendar and is updated as changes occur.

Monday, December 15

9:15 am	Women's Bible Study (Hybrid/Large Conference Room)
10:30 am	Staff Meeting (Staff Conference Room)
4 pm	Tutoring (Parlors)
6:30 pm	Geezerball (Gym)
7:30 pm	Centering Prayer (Staff Conference Room)

Tuesday, December 16

8 am	Men's Bible Study (Hybrid/Large Conference Room)
4 pm	George Soccer Practice (Gym)
4:30 pm	Uniting Voices Chicago Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
6 pm	Cudahy Basketball (Gym)
7 pm	Executive Council Meeting (Large Conference Room)
8:15 pm	George Soccer Practice (Gym)

Wednesday, December 17

10 am	Wednesday Women's Bible Study (Edstrom Home)
4:30 pm	George Soccer Practice (Gym)
6 pm	Gather Dinner (Parlors)
6:30 pm	Chancel Handbell Choir Rehearsal (Side Balcony, Sanctuary)
	Contemporary Music Rehearsal (Choir Room)
7 pm	Knit or Not (Coffee Lounge)
	Middle-school Youth Group (Youth Room near the Gym)
7:15 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)

Thursday, December 18

4:30 pm	George Soccer Practice (Gym)
	Uniting Voices Chicago Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

Friday, December 19

10:30 am	NPCCP Caterpillars Holiday Party (Gym)
1 pm	Prayer Group Gathering (Edstrom Home)
2:15 pm	NPCCP Butterflies Holiday Party (Gym)
4:30 pm	George Soccer Practice (Gym)
7:30 pm	LTAC Girls' Basketball Practice (Gym)

Saturday, December 20

8 am	Geezerball (Gym)
10 am	Lane Tech Scandinavian Club Dance Rehearsal (Parlors)
10:15 am	Cudahy Basketball (Gym)
12:30 pm	George Soccer Practice (Gym)
6:30 pm	Vida Plena Covenant Church Posada (Parlors)

Sunday, December 21 - The Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:30 am	Worship (Sanctuary)
1:30 pm	Vida Plena Covenant Church Worship Service (Parlors)
7 pm	AA Meeting (Parlors)
	Blue Christmas Worship Service (South Chapel)

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2711 West Lawrence Avenue
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info@friendshipcenterchicago.org
www.friendshipcenterchicago.org

Missionaries We Support

Chris Peterson,
Regional Coordinator for Europe

Peter and Anna Kim, Taiwan

James and Rachel Ventress, Alaska

Paul and Sheryl Noren, Congo

Eugenio and Pia Restrepo,
Regional Coordinators for Latin America

Welcome Statement

We welcome all people to begin or deepen their relationship with Christ through worship and study. We invite all believers to fully participate in the life and ministry of our church as members, leaders, and lay staff. We celebrate the gifts and presence of diverse Christians among us—whether those differences be race, ethnicity, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, or socioeconomic status. We are blessed by our diversity and are unified in Christ.

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NPCC@NPCOVENANT.ORG • (773) 463-0055 • WWW.NPCOVENANT.ORG