

Announcements and Prayer Requests

- ✚ **December WestFed Food Pantry needs:** Cereal, crackers, canned corn.
- ✚ **The Stewardship Pigs** are here and set up in the narthex, hungry for your contributions to the church ministry/ministries of your choosing: Mission, Building and Operations, Worship, and Per Capita.
- ✚ **It's time to order Christmas poinsettias** to decorate the sanctuary for the Dec. 18, 24, 25 services. Orders must be received by Dec. 11, along with payment. Order forms are available in the narthex.
- ✚ **Flowers are given in memory of:**
 - ♥ Margaret Brewsaugh Ulrich by the Ulrich Family
 - ♥ Charles Jackson, Rhonda's father and Margaret Miraglio, Paul's mother, from the Boddy family.
- ✚ **Prayers are requested for:**
 - ♥ Michael Cranley, a friend of Staci Dennison
 - ♥ Sally Harlow, recovering from recent health issues
 - ♥ Mary Baverman (Marc's mom) who recently suffered a stroke.
 - ♥ Craig Kallendorf, Camille Rechel's brother, who is in hospice.
 - ♥ Pierce Teepen, son of Alyssa and Tyler, friends of Rhonda Boddy, recovering from brain surgery.
 - ♥ Diane Ringshauser, who is undergoing chemotherapy.
 - ♥ Rev. Larry Lalama, Jeff's cousin
 - ♥ Diana Jackson, Rhonda's sister-in-law, undergoing chemotherapy.
 - ♥ Jacqueline Holton, at Christ Hospital recovering from heart surgery.
 - ♥ Jan Rice and Kristine Von Holle, friends of Sandy Morris
 - ♥ Elizabeth Durrell recovering from a broken hip.
 - ♥ DJ Hines, Sandy Morris' brother-in-law.
 - ♥ Linda Kugele who continues to deal with breathing issues.
 - ♥ Our homebound members and friends.
 - ♥ Our Scouting units, their families and leaders.
 - ♥ Our Session, our committees, and the discernment team.
 - ♥ Our partnership with City Gosel Mission's Princesses Ballet.

Our Service of Worship, November 27, 2022 The First Sunday of Advent



Westwood First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, OH Gathering Around God's Word

Welcome and Announcements

[Please take a moment to silence all mobile devices and prepare for worship.]

Prelude: "Savior of the Nations, Come"—arr. Paul Manz

[Where indicated (*), those who are able are invited to stand.]*

Ring of the Tower Bell

Choral Introit: "A Flickering Candle"—Stephen P. Folkemer

* Call to Worship: Lighting the Advent Wreath—The Baverman/Babicke Family

The Lord be with you all.

And also with you.

This is the first Sunday of Advent, and our journey begins once more, as we read again of God's people waiting in hopeful expectation for the coming of the Messiah. Advent is the season of waiting and preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

This time of waiting is also a time for us to be working for peace among the nations, and peace with each other. It is a time for us to change our priorities as we walk in the light that God gives us.

As part of our Advent waiting we celebrate Christ's coming by making an Advent wreath and lighting its candles to remind us of the hope Christ brings to the world.

The round shape of the wreath reminds us of the unbroken love of God. The green branches speak of new life, and the candles proclaim the light that came into the world with Jesus Christ. Today we light the first candle. The flickering flame reminds us that our waiting is a time of both contemplation and action, a time of hope.

Opening Prayer

* **Hymn No. 9:** “*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*”

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here; until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one hearts and mind;
Bid envy, strife and discord cease fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!



Invitation to Confession/Prayer of Confession and Thanksgiving (*Unison*)

Holy Lord, in this time of Advent, we confess we often are distracted by the season's busyness, by the stress of commitment, and even by putting our own traditions ahead of the true meaning of Christmas. We confess we also often prefer being sentimental to being sacrificial.

Forgive us for all the times we have missed seeing you in our midst, for all the times we have doubted your presence, and for all the times we have failed to hold the holidays as holy days. Pour peace into our lives and let us be bearers of your peace to others. Remind us that this is a season of waiting and preparation for the greatest Gift of all. In the holy Name of our Savior, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

A Moment for Silent, Personal Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness (*based on 2 Peter 3:8-15 —Responsive*)

But do not ignore this one fact, beloved. With the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

May the peace of Christ be yours in these Advent days and always!

And also with you.

hope

Moment for Meditation: Swords Into Plowshares

This Sunday marked the beginning of the church year—the season of advent. We begin what's called the liturgical year by eagerly waiting and anticipating the birth of Christ, much like his mother Mary would have done as Emmanuel—God with Us—grew in her womb for nine months. We spend this season preparing for the coming of Christ, the light, into a dark world. But what this passage from Isaiah points to is that God's people, Israel, had been waiting much longer than that for their Messiah, the Prince of Peace, to come and usher in a world better than the violent and cruel one that they knew.

It's in the midst of violence and unrest that Isaiah writes these words. Just like Mary went through the pain of labor before the joy of holding her child, Isaiah tells us that we must face this world's suffering and violence for what it is, before by the grace of God, it can be transformed into something better.

Well, we might think, Jesus came and went 2,000 years ago and where is this peace Isaiah dreamed of? It seems that each Advent we wait for it anew, and maybe that's part of the problem, we're passively waiting when instead we need to be waiting in an active sense, working as co-creators with God to bring about this peace that we hope for. Beginning the season of Advent by reflecting on beating swords into plowshares should remind us that we are called to actively work for peace, to actively welcome Jesus—the Prince of Peace—into the world every single day.

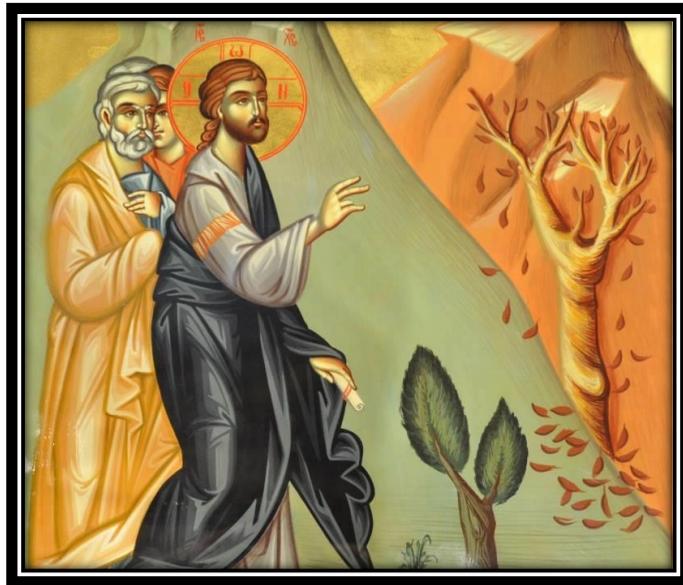
Isaiah's vision and [that of] the whole Christian story, is one of life coming from death. Tools from weapons, peace from violence, love from hate, and joy from fear. So this Advent, we can't sit passively in our churches and wait for Peace to come. We have to do the work of beating swords into plowshares, of setting our own hearts into a posture of peace, of treating others peacefully even when they approach us with violence. Rather than pointing at someone else and claiming they're the problem, we have to take responsibility for the part that we've played in perpetuating violence. We're called this advent season not to wait passively but to be *active* in making peace a reality in our world. How will you commit to actively working for peace this Advent season?

~ <https://www.connectionpointlnk.org/post/beating-swords-into-plowshares-actively-waiting-this-advent-season>





Christ Swords into Plowshares by Kelly Latimore



Jesus and the Fig Tree, Artist Unknown

* **Response: Gloria Patri** (*Unison*)

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.
World without end, amen, amen.**

Proclaiming God's Word

Prayer for Illumination

First Reading: *Isaiah 2:1-5*

The word that Isaiah, son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

²In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 24:32-44*

³²From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁶"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left.

⁴² Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Sermon: “*The Hope of Advent*”

Responding to God’s Word

Invitation to Stewardship/Offertory Prayer (*Unison*)

God of Righteousness, you have saved us from the worst the world can do and promised to redeem the whole creation when Christ comes again. In faith and hope we offer our gifts of our time, talents and treasure, our very selves, that we may be part of what you are doing in the world even now, as we watch for Christ’s coming in glory; for it is in His name we pray. Amen.

Offertory Anthem: “*Every Valley*”—John Ness Beck
Chancel Choir

Pastoral Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

[During the prayer, everyone will have an opportunity to offer a joy or concern aloud. During the pause, feel free to call out the name of someone for whom prayer is requested, or briefly, a joy or concern on your heart. The prayer concludes with 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.



Bearing God’s Word Into the World

* **Hymn No. 2:** “*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*”

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 every nation, Joy of every longing heart.

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.



Charge and Benediction

Choral Response: “*Rejoice!*”

Postlude: “*Allegro Vivace*” from *Concerto in G Major*—Vivaldi



Leading Worship This Morning

Rev. Dr. Jeff Colarossi, *Pastor*

Heather MacPhail, *Organist/Director of Music Ministries*

Jason Dennison, *Videographer/Director of Technology*

Ann Regan, *Lay Leader*

Emmanuel God with us