



WORDS
FOR THE BEGINNING
— WE CAN'T GO ALONE —

New Castle Presbyterian Church
Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024

10:30 a.m.

GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

Prelude

Lift Up Your Heads

arr. Franklin Ritter

Bethany Faiz - Piano

Welcome & Words about The Life and Work of the Church
Greeting of Peace

As Jesus greeted his disciples, so let us greet one another:

The peace of Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

Steeple Bell

Choral Introit

Light A Candle For Peace

Ruth Elaine Schram

Sarah McCann – Soloist Carolyn Hendrix – Cello Bethany Faiz - Piano

Call to Worship

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Let us begin with the good news!

Let us begin by trusting that we are loved by a gracious God.

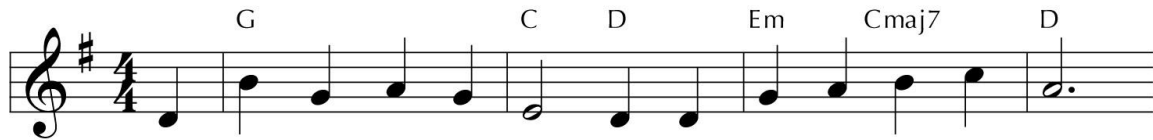
Let us begin together. Let us begin arm in arm, holding each other up instead of tearing each other down. Let us begin with peace.

Yes, let us begin with peace. Today we light the candles of hope and peace. **May these lights mark a new beginning. May peace flow like a river. May peace begin with me.**

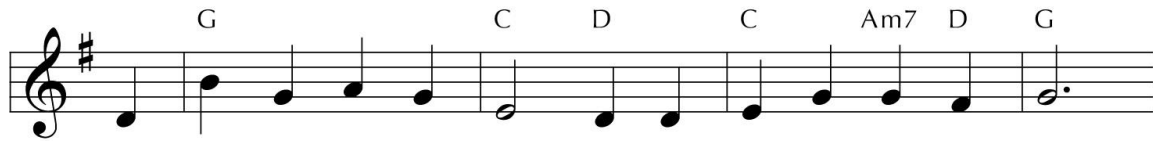
Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side. May God's peace flow forth from here! **Amen.**

*Hymn #109

Blest Be the God of Israel



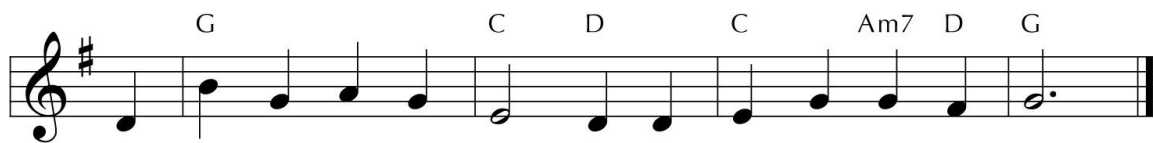
1 Blest be the God of Is - rael, who comes to set us free;
2 God from the house of Da - vid a child of grace has given;
3 On those who sit in dark - ness the sun be - gins to rise,



who vis - its and re - deems us, who grants us lib - er - ty.
a Sav - ior comes a - mong us to raise us up to heaven.
the dawn - ing of for - give - ness up - on the sin - ner's eyes.



The proph - ets spoke of mer - cy, of free - dom and re - lease;
Be - fore him goes the her - ald, fore - run - ner in the way,
God guides the feet of pil - grims a - long the paths of peace.



God shall ful - fill that prom - ise and bring the peo - ple peace.
the proph - et of sal - va - tion, the har - bin - ger of day.
O bless our God and Sav - ior with songs that nev - er cease!

This 20th-century British paraphrase of the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79) broadens the implications of what John the Baptist's father says in order to affirm that God's work is ongoing. The tune is named for the composer's oldest sister, who was his first piano teacher.

TEXT: Michael Perry, 1973, alt.
MUSIC: Hal H. Hopson, 1983
Text © 1973 The Jubilate Group (admin. Hope Publishing Company)
Music © 1983 Hope Publishing Company

MERLE'S TUNE
7.6.7.6.D

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of grace and glory, we have tried to make our own way. We have tried to lace our own shoes, build our own houses, kindle our own faiths. We have said a thousand times, “turn back,” as if we are fine on our own. But the nights are long, and we are forgetful. We need your help. Can you remind us?

Remind us of your everlasting truth. We are not alone; you are with us. You hold us in grace, even when we forget. Lord, we believe. Help our unbelief. In Christ’s name, we pray... *(Time for silent prayer.)*

Assurance of Pardon

Let us proclaim the Good News together:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God.

*Response #582

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.**

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen. (sing 3x)

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

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PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

Anthem

Advent Canon

Michael Sharp

Choir and Sunday School Children

Carolyn Hendrix – Cello Bethany Faiz - Piano

Come, O come, Anointed Savior, come and set the captives free. From the chains of sin release us, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, O come Divine Redeemer, come and heal our broken hearts. Change our grieving to rejoicing; hope and joy Your love imparts.

To all people, poor and needy, weak and weary on their own. Jesus brings the gift eternal; life is found in Him alone.

Come, Immortal King of glory, joyous songs to you we raise. King of kings who reigns forever, worthy of our endless praise.

Welcome of Fooks Family and Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism

Presentation and Affirmations by the Parents

Congregational Vow

Do we, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Micah by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging him to know and follow Christ and to be his faithful disciple? **We do.**

***Affirmation of Faith – Apostles’ Creed**

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer

Act of Baptism

Hymn #486

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words of Welcome

Micah, with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you into Christ’s church! May you always know that you are held in God’s hands and in the hearts of your church family. Amen.

Scripture Conversation with Children

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, the words of this world whip around us like a mighty wind. We are caught up in news reports, in text messages, in emails and notifications. We are drowning in updates and overwhelmed by the constant hum of it all. But on this morning, we remember, you too are speaking. Still the voices around us and calm our minds. Center our hearts so that we can hear your words above the wind. Speak to us, as only you can. Amen.

Scripture Lesson**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12****Page: OT 616**

⁹Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰For if they fall, one will lift up the other, but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. ¹¹Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹²And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Scripture Lesson**Luke 1:39-45****Page: NT 57**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Sermon

*Words for the Beginning: We Can't Go Alone***GIVE THANKS TO GOD**

Offerings of Tithes and Gifts

Offertory In the Bleak Midwinter by Gustav Holst

Carolyn Hendrix – Cello, Bethany Faiz - Piano arr. Marty Parks

Response #607*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;****Praise Christ, all people here below;****Praise Holy Spirit evermore.****Praise triune God, whom we adore. Amen.*****Prayer of Dedication**

O God, in a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start? Your promises help us to trust that we are a three-cord strand, not easily broken! Christ's light of peace can shine brightly through our lives. Bless our offerings that your peace would offer new beginnings to all who need it. Amen.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

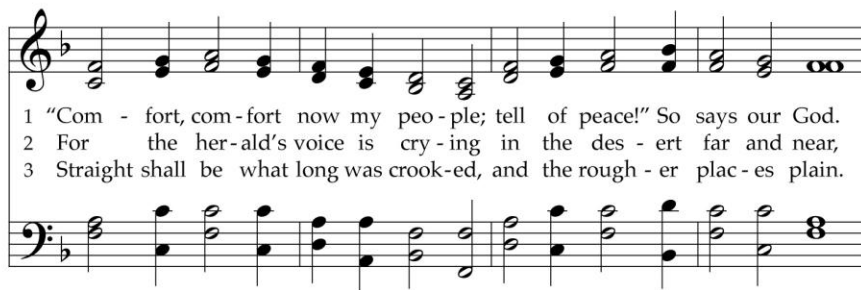
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

**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.**

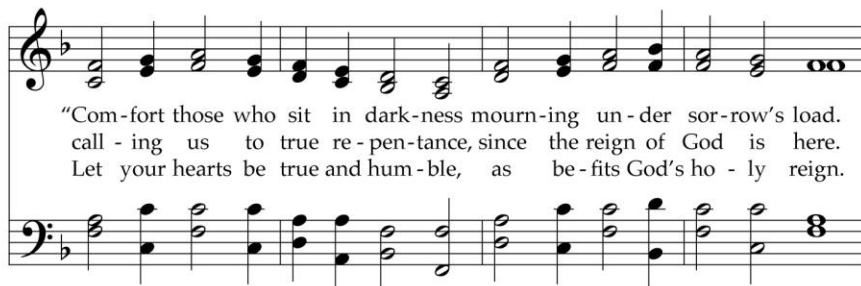
GO IN GOD'S NAME

*Hymn #87

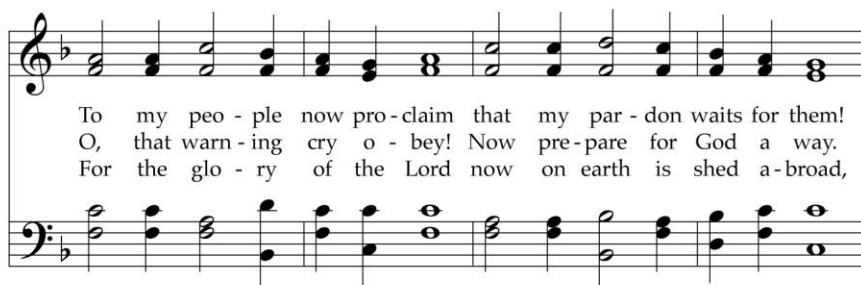
Comfort, Comfort Now My People



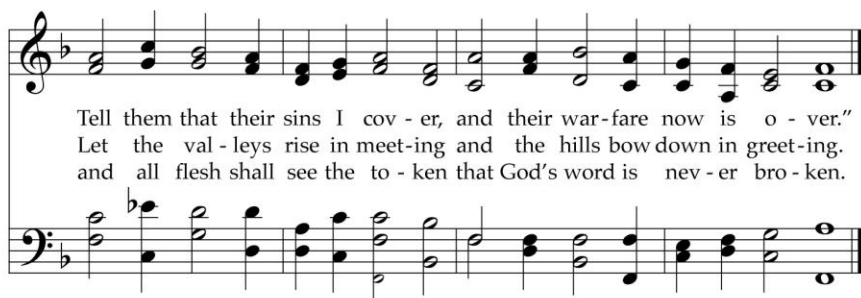
1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



"Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To my peo - ple now pro - claim that my par - don waits for them!
O, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver."
Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1-5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

***Charge and Benediction**

Choral Benediction

Steeple Bell

Special Congregational Meeting

Postlude The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came arr. Larry Shackley
Bethany Faiz - Piano

Please remain seated through the Postlude. As you exit, you may recycle your bulletin in the basket at the door. Join us after worship for Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall

Thank you for serving today:

Worship Leader: Scott Selheimer *Counters:* Sarah McCann/Gary Graham
Ushers: Lindy & Sandy Ballance *Coffee Hour:* Session
Nursery: Jane Fouracre/Lynn Smith *Sunday School:* Mallory Mackie/Kim Beebe

Today we remember in the Special Gifts Memorial Case:

Esther Maria Gilpin
1897-1966

Jack Graybeal
1929-1993



SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS – SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14

The CE Building will be open from 11:30-3 with soups and breads for sale, as well as free refreshments and three free concerts in the Meeting House. All NCPC proceeds go to support [Friendship House](#)! We need volunteers to serve as Meeting House ushers, folks to bake bread/ fix soups/ bake cookies, as well as folks to sell the yummy goodies and restock the refreshments table. All sign-up forms, with more information, are posted in the Fellowship Hall. Any questions, contact Amy Selheimer and Phee Price.

SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER ON A SUNDAY MORNING

We are in need of ushers and worship leaders in December & January.

Please sign up today: <https://www.newcastlepreschurh.org/on-line-signups>

ALL AGES SUNDAY SCHOOL – NEXT SUNDAY

Our All-Ages Sunday School on December 15 will explore the quilt imagery of our Words for the Beginning series! Click this link <https://tinyurl.com/4r7p8e93> to access our photo-a-day challenge!

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP

We'll gather on December 15 from 11:30 to 2 for a New Castle-themed escape room. We will be walking outside, so be sure to dress for the weather. At our midway point, we'll take a lunch break. Contact Pastor Miriam to RSVP.

NCPC MEN'S GROUP

Men's Group will gather for food and fellowship on Monday, December 16 at 7 p.m. at Iron Hill in Wilmington. Please RSVP to Steven Foltz. All ages are invited to attend.

SPECIAL SERVICES IN DECEMBER

Join us for our **Longest Night Service at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18**. For all who struggle in this season of merry carols, this candlelight service is a quieter time to gather in the promise and comfort of Emmanuel: God with us. Our **Christmas Eve services** will be a Family Service at 5 p.m. and a Traditional Service at 7:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING – DECEMBER 22

Join us on Sunday, Dec. 22 at 6 p.m. for caroling around Old New Castle; we'll begin to walk from the CE Building. We'll provide sheet music, but please bring a flashlight. Christmas lights and festive attire is encouraged! We'll end at the CE Building for refreshments around 7:00pm. You are welcome to come even if you don't go caroling!

CODE PURPLE

First & Central Presbyterian welcomes Wilmington's unhoused neighbors into their social hall every Saturday during the winter months. From 6 to 10 to a.m., guests receive a warm welcome, light breakfast, and hospital services, including WiFi, charging stations, and shower services. NCPC's Mission and Outreach committee invites you to sign up at <https://shorturl.at/X6Vyd> or contact Amy Selheimer.

BAYLOR PAPERBACK BOOK COLLECTION

We remember all who are incarcerated and separated from their families through the holidays. Through Sunday, December 22nd, Mission & Outreach will collect new or gently used softback books for the library at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution. Let us share some joy through the written word!

GUATEMALAN ADVENT PROJECT

It's time again to help with the Guatemalan Advent Project. This year you can buy chickens for women in Guatemala. These chickens are given to women to raise for their families as a source of nourishment. There will be information at Coffee Hour for the next few weeks on how you can give. This is a great gift for that friend or family member who is hard to buy for. Questions? See Scott or Amy Selheimer.

CHRISTMAS EVE POINSETTIAS

For our Christmas Eve service, the Meeting House will be decorated with poinsettias. Donate a poinsettia for \$15 in memory or in honor of a loved one by returning the order form (located in entrance to Meeting House and CE bldg.) to the Church Office by **Monday, Dec. 16**.



This Week's Schedule

SUNDAY	12/08		2nd Sunday of Advent
		10:30am	In-Person & Live Stream Worship & Baptism
		11:30am	Congregational Meeting
		11:45am	Coffee Hour
Tuesday	12/10	7:00pm	Christian Education Meeting
Wednesday	12/11	3:00pm	Bible Study
		7:30pm	Choir
Thursday	12/12	4-9pm	Private Party
		7:00pm	Celebration Ringers
Friday	12/13		Decorating for Spirit of Christmas
Saturday	12/14	8:00am	Tai Chi
		11:30am	Spirit of Christmas
SUNDAY	12/15		3rd Sunday of Advent
		10:30am	In-Person & Live Stream Worship
		11:30am	All-Ages Sunday School/ Youth Group
		6:00pm	Open Mic Night

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New Castle Presbyterian Church

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Mallory Mackie, Sunday School Coord.

Eileen Larkin, Dir. of Music

Dan Knox, Treasurer

Minerva Lermond, Dir. of Handbells

Lyn Briggs, Recording Secretary

Bethany Faiz, Accompanist

SESSION

2025	2026	2027
Melissa Boris	Cynthia Beam	Julie Barry
Jennifer Dunham	Peter McCurdy	Sarah McCann
Connie Reese	OPEN	Amy Selheimer
Clerk of Session: Scott Selheimer		

Session meets the 1st Tuesday of the month

DEACONS

2025	2026	2027
Toni Marley	Lindy Ballance	Julia Spock
Janet Spring	Liz Toto	Beverly Stoudt

Deacons meet the 2nd Sunday of the month

TRUSTEES

2025	2026	2027
Marshall Freund	Mary Fontinha	Gary Graham
Mike Smith	Gail Seitz	Kelly McCurdy

Trustees meet the 3rd Monday every other month (Sept/Nov/Jan/Mar/May)

