



FOR THE BEGINNING

— HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK —

New Castle Presbyterian Church Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024

10:30 a.m.

GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

Prelude

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

arr. Stan Pethel

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

Advent Canon

by Michael Sharp

Sunday School Children and Choir

Minerva Lermond and Ellie Gerhart - Handbells

Bethany Faiz - Piano

Call to Worship

The Dobson/Teller Family

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.

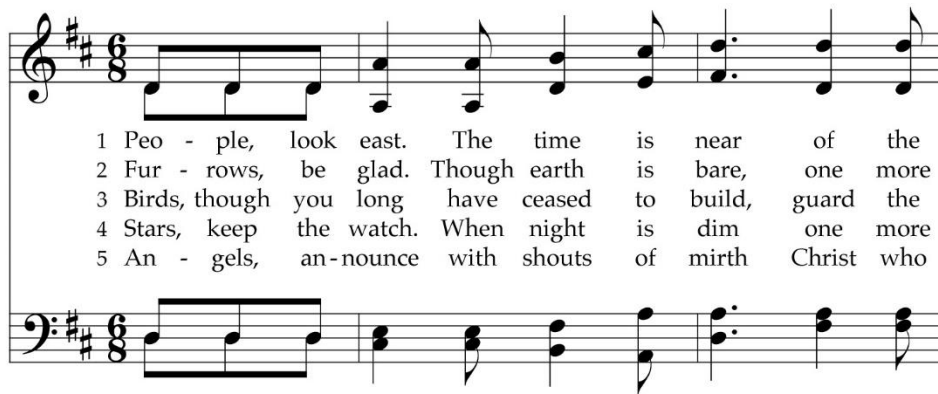
Let us begin with tenderness and wear our hearts on our sleeve. Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us begin with love. Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love. **May these lights warm our hearts to love as God loves us.**

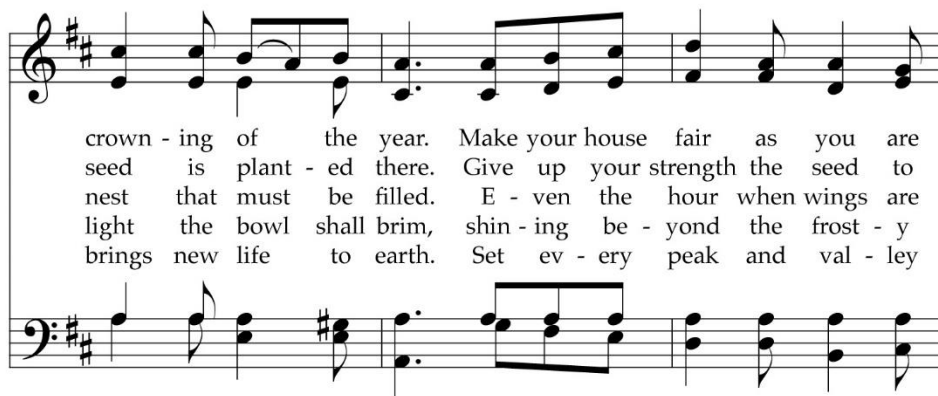
May God's light of love help us to begin again. **Amen.**

*Hymn #105

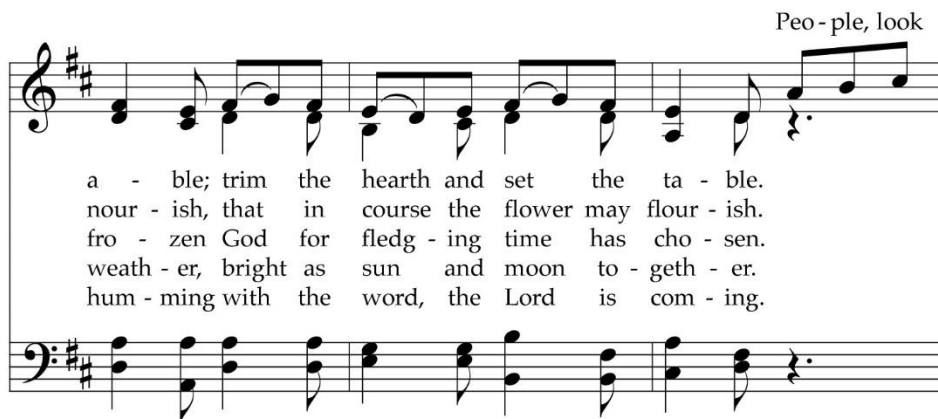
People, Look East



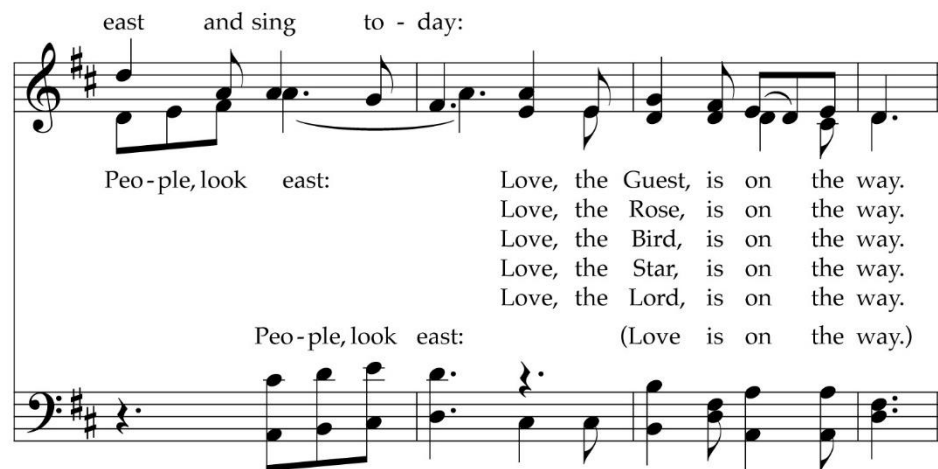
1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more
5 An - gels, an-nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who



crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley



Peo - ple, look
a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.



east and sing to - day:
Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
Love, the Rose, is on the way.
Love, the Bird, is on the way.
Love, the Star, is on the way.
Love, the Lord, is on the way.
Peo - ple, look east: (Love is on the way.)

This text was written to provide a new Advent text for an existing carol tune, here named for the city in eastern France where it originated. The author has imaginatively expressed the cosmic implications of Christ's coming by addressing each stanza to a part of creation.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of our salvation, you paint pictures of what could be, but we declare these visions impossible. You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb, but we spout skepticism and uncertainty. You proclaim a more just day, but we scoff, unable to fathom that horizon. Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is. Open our hearts to see the world as you see it. Open our hearts to risk hope and to dream dreams. Lord, we believe. Help our unbelief... *(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

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming arr. by Michael Larkin
Bethany Faiz – Piano

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung. Of Jesse's lineage coming, as seers of old hath sung. It came a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter, when halfspent was the night. Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind. With Mary we behold it, the Virgin Mother kind. To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior, when halfspent was the night. When halfspent was the night.

Scripture Conversation with Children

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, we've heard the stories of Advent before. We've rearranged the nativity scenes and read the children's books. We've seen the movies and sung the songs. But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again. Reset our expectations, open our minds, and tell us anew of the coming of Christ. We are listening. Amen.

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 1:18-25

Page: NT 1

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus. *This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.*

Scripture Lesson

Luke 1:46-55

Page: NT 57

⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; ⁵⁰ indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." *This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.*

GIVE THANKS TO GOD***Hymn #140****Once in Royal David's City,**

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 -

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

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

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.

Like "All Things Bright and Beautiful" (see no. 20), this popular Christmas hymn was written by an Irish poet to illustrate for children the various articles of the Apostles' Creed. It is not known which of several English villages the composer had in mind when naming this tune.

Offerings of Tithes and Gifts

Offertory

Creator of the Stars of Night
with Of the Father's Love Begotten
Bethany Faiz - Piano

arr. Michael Larkin

***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? Mary shows us how to sing of your love. With-us God, help us to trust in your promise of grace and live as your children. Bless our offerings that your love 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 #110


Love Has Come

Capo 3: (D) (Bm7) (Em7) (A)
F Dm7 Gm7 C




1 Love has come: a light in the dark - ness!
2 Love is born! Come, share in the won - der.
3 Love has come and nev - er will leave us!

(D) (Bm7) (Em) (A7) (D)
F Dm7 Gm C7 F




Love shines forth in the Beth - le - hem skies. See, all
Love is God now a - sleep in the hay. See the
Love is life ev - er - last - ing and free. Love is

(A) (D) (Bm) (D) (A) (G) (D)
C F Dm F C B^b F




heav - en has come to pro - claim it; hear how their song of
glow in the eyes of his moth - er; what is the name her
Je - sus with - in and a - mong us. Love is the peace our

(Em7) (F#7) (G) (A) (Bm) (A7)
Gm7 A7 B^b C Dm C7



joy a - ris - es: Love! Love! Born un - to you, a
heart is say - ing? Love! Love! Love is the name she
hearts are seek - ing. Love! Love! Love is the gift of

(D) (A) (G) (A) (D) (A) (A7) (Dsus) (D)
F C B^b C F C C7 F^{sus} F



Sav - ior! Love! Love! Glo - ry to God on high.
whis - pers. Love! Love! Je - sus, Em - man - u - el.
Christ - mas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

Here is a chance to sing a familiar French carol tune with new words, the most important clearly being "Love." The senses "seen and heard" (as in Acts 4:20 and elsewhere) organize the first two stanzas, while the third holds the summary statement: "Love is the gift of Christmas."

***Charge and Benediction**

Benediction

Steeple Bell

Postlude

The King Shall Come

arr. Lloyd Larson

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: Amy Selheimer

Counters: Connie Reese/Peter McCurdy

Ushers: Lindy & Sandy Ballance

Coffee Hour: Trustees

Nursery & Sunday School: Mallory Mackie/ Molly Shaw

Today we remember in the Special Gifts Memorial Case:

Russell H. Rausch
1910-1966

Theresa G. Witt
1902-1993



SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER ON A SUNDAY MORNING

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

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

CHRISTMAS CAROLING – DECEMBER 22

Join us tonight 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!

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES – 5pm & 7:30pm

Join us for our Christmas Eve services this Tuesday evening.

Our 5pm Family Service will have lots of singing and interactive exploration of the Christmas story that is meaningful for all ages.

Our 7:30pm traditional service will include the choir and a Christmas sermon.

CODE PURPLE

First & Central Presbyterian welcomes Wilmington's unhoused neighbors into their social hall every Saturday during the winter. 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.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS – THANK YOU!

A BIG thank you to everyone who cooked, baked, volunteered, sang, rang, and attended Spirit of Christmas on December 14! NCPC raised over \$2,500 in support of Friendship House. Every year, Friendship House cares for 14,000 Delawareans, providing supportive long-term housing, short-term shelter, clothing, empowerment, and so much more. In the Spirit of Christmas, thank you for generously supporting our neighbors in need! Learn more about the work of Friendship House at friendshiphousede.org

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.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Mark your calendars for these happenings in January:

We'll celebrate Epiphany Sunday with star words on January 5. Our middle and high school youth group will gather for a musical celebration from 12-2 on January 12. Our All-Ages Sunday school will collaborate with Congregational Life for a card-writing project on January 19. May God bless you and keep you in the new year!

This Week's Schedule

SUNDAY	12/22		4th Sunday of Advent
		10:30am	In-Person & Live Stream Worship
		11:30am	Coffee Hour
		6:00pm	Caroling in Old New Castle
		7:00pm	Refreshments in Fellowship Hall
Monday	12/23		Meals on Wheels
Tuesday	12/24		CHRISTMAS EVE
			Office Closed
			Meals on Wheels
		5:00pm	Family Service
		7:30pm	Traditional Service
Wednesday	12/25		CHRISTMAS DAY
			Office Closed
Thursday	12/26		Office Closed
			Meals on Wheels
Friday	12/27		Meals on Wheels
Saturday	12/28	8:00am	Tai Chi
SUNDAY	12/29	10:30am	In-Person & Live Stream Worship

*Kris will be on vacation Thursday, 12/26 but checking phones.
Pastor Miriam will be out of the office December 25 – January 1.
If you require emergency pastoral assistance,
please contact the church office or Deacon Janet Spring.*

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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)

