

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE *Angels We Have Heard on High* James Chadwick
Rita Hayes, Merrill Baylor and Ruth Young, Flute Trio

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SILENT MEDITATION

* LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Pastor: We live with a yearning to belong, wrestling with an inner “homelessness” no matter how settled we are.

Lighters: We light the fourth Advent candle as a sign of our longing for the coming light of Christ, in whom our hearts find their true home.

All: **You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.**

* **HYMN 105** “People, Look East”

* CONFESSION AND PARDON

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

O God, you invite us to come home to you.

Yet, we are wanderers, seeking our homeland in places that don’t require us to tell the truth about our need, but that don’t meet those needs with true sustenance.

Forgive us, O God.

By your Spirit, give us the courage to come home, so that we might know the peace and joy of your embrace.

Silent Prayers & Assurance of Pardon

* SHARING CHRIST’S PEACE

Hymn 92 “While We Are Waiting, Come”

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Bold font indicates congregational participation.

* You are invited to stand in body or in spirit.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON Hebrews 11:13-16

ANTHEM *Calypso Noel* Gordon Krunnfusz

Sing we Noel, sing we joyously Noel!

Joyously sing the news we have to tell!

Born to us in the little village of Bethlehem on this day,

Is the little Christ Child so pure and holy;

He’s sleeping there in the hay.

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON Zephaniah 3:14-20

SERMON “Longing for Home”

Last in a Series for Advent: Every Longing Heart

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

* **HYMN 102** “Savior, of the Nations, Come”

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God’s image, male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community.

But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.

Ignoring God’s commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God’s condemnation.

Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Invitation to Offering

Offertory *I Wonder As I Wander* John Jacob Niles

Today we are receiving our denomination’s Christmas Joy offering simultaneously with our regular offering.

* *Doxology* (Hymnal, back page)

CELEBRATIONS AND CONCERNS

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

GOING OUT TO SERVE

* **HYMN 314** “Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness”

* CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

* BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Hymn 314, refrain “Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness”

POSTLUDE *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* Charles Wesley

END OF WORSHIP ... BEGINNING OF SERVICE



The candles in worship: The four candles on the branch on the communion table are lit consecutively over the four Sundays of Advent. Three of the candles are purple, the liturgical color of Advent, and one is pink, representing the joy that Christ’s coming is near. The white candle (the Christ candle) reminds us of the presence of Christ’s spirit in worship (though during Advent it remains unlit, as a sign that we are waiting for the coming of Christ on Christmas). The smaller candle is in a candle holder made by a member of our partner church, Iglesia El Divino Salvador in Guatemala, reminding us of our covenant.

The Righteous Branch

The branch on the communion table represents God’s promise of a coming ruler for Israel. As the prophet Jeremiah says, “I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (Jeremiah 33:15). The lighted candles on the branch represent our longing for the coming of Christ.

Today's liturgists: Susan Maveety and Emily Neel
Today's greeters: Richard & Judy Green
Today's ushers: Bill Higgins and Glenn Limbird
Fellowship: Tom Fife's Care Group

Special Offering: Christmas Joy

Today we are receiving one of our denomination's annual special offerings: Christmas Joy. This offering supports pastors and retired pastors in need and racial ethnic education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. Please see the enclosed envelope and insert for more information about these ministries. Checks should be made out to New Hope Presbyterian Church with Christmas Joy in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity.

Out-to-Lunch Bunch

Everyone is welcome to join the Out-to-Lunch Bunch for lunch after church today! We will be going to Tupelo Honey. See Marlene Johnson for more information about today's lunch outing.

Christmas Eve Worship Service

Join us tomorrow evening, December 24, at 6:00 PM for our Christmas Eve worship service. It will be a service of lessons and carols, with the sanctuary lights dimmed toward the end of the service for the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight. Family members and friends of all ages are welcome!

Alternative Christmas Giving Is Here

Stop by the Outreach table in the Narthex to make a donation of \$10 or more to one of the organizations below and pick up a card saying that you have made a donation in honor of your friend or loved one. This year we are sponsoring (1) the Eblen Energy Project (local), which provides families with heating and cooling assistance, (2) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (national), which is the emergency and refugee program of the PC(USA), and (3) educational scholarships for the children of our sister community in Guatemala (global). We also have fair trade items for sale, such as coffee, tea, chocolate, or olive oil.

"There's No Place Like It: Meditations on the Idea of Home"

Make-up class on January 6! Due to the snow closure on December 9, we missed one of our four December classes. So, we will kick off the new year on January 6 with one more discussion about our longing for home. In our last class, we will look at how we are (or aren't) at home in our relationships. We meet in the downstairs classroom (Room 104).

January Tuesday Night Book Study

Join us at 7:00 PM on Tuesday night, January 29, for a discussion of the book *Enrique's Journey*, which tells the story of a Honduran boy's solo journey to the United States to find his mother, eleven years after she leaves her hungry family in Honduras in order to find work. The book includes photos of Enrique and his family, as well as an interview with the author, who went on Enrique's journey herself as part of her background research in preparation for writing the book. During this season when caravans of migrants are making their way north from Honduras and other Central American countries, this book is a timely read and an opportunity for deepened understanding and compassion. Some books will be available today, and the majority of books will be available on January 6 in the Narthex for \$10. We recommend getting a head start on your reading for January's discussion, since the book is about 300 pages long. We hope you can join us!

Worship bulletin announcements for Sunday, December 30 are due to Administrator, Erin May, by noon on Wednesday, December 26.

The office will be closed on Tuesday and Wednesday, December 25 and 26, in observance of Christmas.

Calendar

Sun	23	11:00 AM	Worship
		12:30 PM	Out-to-Lunch Bunch (see Marlene)
Mon	24	6:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service
Wed	26	7:00 PM	Choir Practice
Sun	30	9:30 AM	No Class (Christmas Break)
		11:00 AM	Worship
		12:30 PM	Out-to-Lunch Bunch (see Marlene)

New Hope Presbyterian Church

We are a welcoming, inclusive faith community, seeking to respond to Christ's call to love and serve, through ministries of compassion and social justice.

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 Rob Blackwell, Director of Music Ministry/Pianist
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*New Hope
 Presbyterian Church*
 "Including, Renewing, Serving"

Fourth Sunday of Advent
 December 23, 2018
 11 o'clock



"Longing for Home"
 Last in a Series for Advent:



"Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart."
 —"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"