

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE *Celtic Sunrise* J. Mulder

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The fourth Advent candle is lit while the first, second, and third verses of hymn 85 are sung by 3 soloists. The congregation joins in the singing of verse four.

Soloist: Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.

Soloist: Light two candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,
gently lead them homeward.

Soloist: Light three candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway
for the king of glory.

**All: Light four candles to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He is coming, tell the glad tidings.
Let your lights be shining.**

Leader and people then share in the following spoken call and response:

Leader: Therefore God will give you a sign.

**People: Look, the young woman is with child and shall
bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.**

HYMN 105 "People, Look East"

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Silent Prayers

Assurance of Pardon

SHARING CHRIST'S PEACE

Hymn 92 "While We Are Waiting, Come"

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON Micah 5:2-5a, p. 756-757 (OT)

ANTHEM *Breath of Heaven* Amy Grant
Bonnie Runkle, Soloist

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:39-45, p. 831 (NT)

SERMON "Near to Our Joy"
Fourth in the Series: Drawing Near

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from *A Brief Statement of Faith* (11.2)

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel. Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

GIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Invitation to Offering

Offertory *Homecoming* H. Hardy

Doxology Hymn 82

Prayer of Dedication

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 107 "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Carol of the Bells* Traditional

END OF WORSHIP ... BEGINNING OF SERVICE



We light two candles in worship. The white candle reminds us of the presence of Christ's spirit in worship. The smaller candle is in a candle holder made by a member of our partner church, Iglesia El Divino Salvador in Guatemala, and it reminds us of our covenant with them.

Today's liturgist: Tom Fife

Today's greeters: Bunk and Nancy Spann

Today's ushers: Herschel and Linda Lewis

Special Offering: Christmas Joy

Today we will be receiving our denomination's Christmas Joy Offering. This offering supports pastors and retired pastors in need and racial-ethnic education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. (Please see the enclosed envelope.) Please make checks out to New Hope Presbyterian Church with Christmas Joy in the memo line. Thank you.

Christmas Eve Services

This year we are having two Christmas Eve services at 5 PM and 7 PM! We want to be able to accommodate our larger attendance numbers on Christmas Eve while also maintaining our socially-distanced seating in the sanctuary. Please register for either the 5 PM or the 7 PM service by contacting Erin May at (828) 274-0191 or by email at officenewhope@gmail.com. Thank you.

December Tornado Relief

As night fell on December 10, a horrific line of powerful tornadoes ripped across several states, ending the lives of more than 100 people and wreaking devastation across many communities by the time morning had broken. We are called to be the hands and feet of Christ as we reach out to shelter, feed, care for, and help rebuild the lives of those who have lost loved ones, homes, work, and a sense of safety. Two important ways we can help are to give and to pray. Visit pda.pcusa.org to make a donation to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's December Tornado response.

Bold font indicates congregational participation.

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

Playground Removed

You may have noticed that the playground equipment has been removed due to termite infestation. It will be replaced after the first of the year with steel supports and equipment that will not rust. The Will Lewis Memorial fund will pay for the replacement cost.

Alternative Christmas Giving

In lieu of giving a traditional gift, make a charitable donation in honor of a loved one. In return for your donation (minimum \$10), you will receive a card to give to your loved one describing where your donation in their honor is going. Look for the Alternative Giving table in the Narthex on Sunday mornings during Advent! Unable to come to church? Send your donation to New Hope and indicate in the memo line which fund you wish to support (or, if you would like to support both funds, indicate the amount you wish to donate for each fund). We will mail or deliver your card(s) to you.

This year, you are invited to make a donation to one or both of two funds: (1) *educational scholarships for Guatemalan children and youth* in our sister church, and (2) *resettlement support for Afghan refugees* in Asheville through Catholic Charities.

Equal Exchange Products

Buying fair trade products through the Presbyterian Coffee Project ensures that more of the money you spend on coffee (or tea) reaches the hardworking farmers who actually grow it. Visit the table in the Narthex. We are offering coffee, tea, and chocolate bars at a special reduced price through Advent.

Worship bulletin announcements for Sunday, December 26 are due to Administrator, Erin May, by noon on Wednesday, December 22.

New Hope COVID Policy

Mask Up! Whether you are vaccinated or not vaccinated you need to wear a mask while inside the church.

New Air Purifier in the Sanctuary

In order to increase our safety in the sanctuary, we have purchased a new air purifier, a Medify MA-112, which has a medical-grade HEPA filter and ionizer. It is able to filter particles as small as 0.1 microns (the coronavirus is slightly larger at 0.125 microns). It also provides about two complete air exchanges per worship service.

Please sanitize your hands upon entry. Hand sanitizer is available at all entry points and in various other locations around the building. Remember to keep your hands washed as needed.

Please stay away from church IF you are sick, have COVID symptoms, have been exposed to someone with COVID.

Please do not move any of the chairs in the sanctuary. Our new seating layout took a lot of exact measuring and effort to set up, so we would appreciate it if you would refrain from moving seats.

Please observe a “touchless” Passing of the Peace of Christ. While individuals may use their own discretion about accepting hugs and handshakes outside of the sanctuary, during the passing of the peace we will refrain from touching so that those who aren’t comfortable with that yet aren’t put on the spot. (And, when you’re outside the sanctuary, please ask before you hug someone to make sure they’re comfortable.)

Please do not let the Narthex get crowded. We will not be serving coffee or food after worship for now. As you leave the sanctuary, please make a conscious effort to help the Narthex not get too crowded by spreading into outdoor spaces to socialize if a lot of people are present.

Communion: Communion servers are vaccinated and will wear masks and sanitize hands. Juice will be served in individual glass cups, and pieces of bread will be served with tongs. Please follow the ushers’ directions in coming forward and return to your seats with your elements in hand. Please wait until the pastor indicates that it is time to partake, and we will all partake together.

Please know that the Session may change this policy, either by loosening or tightening these restrictions, as circumstances change.

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.

3070 Sweeten Creek Road, Asheville, NC 28803 | (828) 274-0191
Kim Wells, Pastor | Erin May, Church Administrator
Rob Blackwell, Director of Music Ministry/Pianist
Ken Meeks, Parish Associate | www.newhopepcusaasheville.org

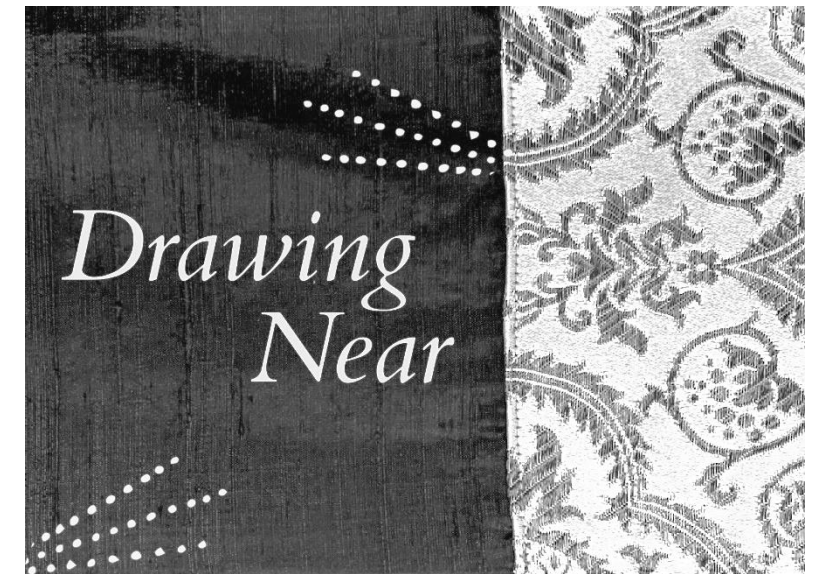
New Hope Presbyterian Church

“Including, Renewing, Serving”

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 19, 2021
11 o’clock



“Near to Our Joy”



“For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting,
the child in my womb leaped for joy.”
(Luke 1:44)