

WORDS

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



Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

2nd Sunday in Advent

December 8, 2024

WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING

When Will You Be Back?

Yesterday I visited an old man in the hospital.
I was not the only one. We talked on the elevator ride down—
Has he gained any weight? Will he stay in that room?
Does he like the food? Has he called?
All the man wanted to know was, *When will you be back?*
We ask that question in a thousand different ways
every single day,

our hearts leaning over themselves,
bending to get closer to love.
We say, *Text me when you're home.*
Call me when you're free.
One more kiss!
I love you all the time.
When will you be back?
What we really mean is—
I can't go through life alone.
Please don't let me go through life alone.

Poem by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

PRELUDE

Wachet auf

Jacobus Kloppers

BRINGING THE LIGHT

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Vince Leseney

In a world that is lonely,
we will save a seat for you.
In a world that is anxious,
we will light candles against the gloom.
In a world that is weary,
we will sing songs of joy and truth.
I am not alone.
We are not alone.
For here in this place, God is weaving us together.
Light the candles! Sing with joy!
We are a three-cord strand, not easily broken.

*ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*SONG OF PRAISE

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

Hymnal, No. 82

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

I have tried to make my own way.
I have tried to lace my own shoes, to build my own house, to kindle my own faith.
I have said a thousand times, "turn back," as if I am fine on my own.
But the days are long and I am forgetful.
I need your help. Can you remind me?

We will remind you of this everlasting truth:
You are not alone.
Where you go, God goes.
You are held in grace.
Trust in this good news.

Thanks be to God! I remember. I believe.

Now we need your help.
We, too, have tried to make our own way.
We have tried to lace our own shoes, to build our own houses, to kindle our own faiths.
We have said a thousand times, "turn back," as if we are fine on our own.
But the days are long and we are forgetful.
We need your help. Can you remind us?

I will remind you of this everlasting truth:
You are not alone.
Where you go, God goes.
You are held in grace.
Trust in this good news.

Thanks be to God! We remember. We believe.

Alleluia! Amen.

(Time of silent reflection)

***THE PEACE**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

***SONG OF RESPONSE** Angels We Have Heard on High (Refrain) Hymnal, No. 113
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING Julie Forthman

SCRIPTURE READING
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Page No. 538
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM In the Bleak Midwinter

SCRIPTURE READING
Ruth 1 Page No. 210
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE We Can't Go Alone Tracy L. Evans

SONG OF FAITH Prepare the Way O Zion Hymnal No. 106

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

We believe in a with-us God:
a God who walks with us in the valley,
dances with us on the mountaintop,
sings with us through the night
and rejoices in the morning.

We believe that this with-us God
wired us for relationship,
saying to creation on the very first week,
"Humans should not be alone."

Therefore, in an effort to be who God called us to be,

**we strive to live like the Trinity—
connected, united, and centered.
We believe in the power of community.
We commit to learning each other's names.
We choose to journey with each other,
like Ruth with Naomi.
And we remember that no one can go through life alone.
Thanks be to God, for lighting our way.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, p. 35

*Please pray the Lord's Prayer
in the language and wording most familiar to you.*

THE OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Creator of the Stars of Night, (verse 4)
To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be,
From age to age eternally. Amen.

Hymnal, No. 84

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG

To Be Known

Bulletin p. 7

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

Fantasy on Veni, Emmanuel

Robert Powell

*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. You may also indicate interest in membership by checking the appropriate column in the ritual of friendship booklet. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for December 15: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18.

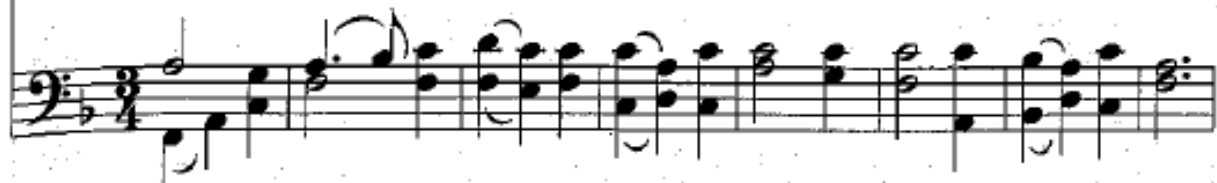
The Food & Shelter items of the month for December are canned soup and . **Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.**

Hearing-assistance devices and **large print hymnals** are available from the head usher.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus 82



1 Come, thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is-rael's strength and con-so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



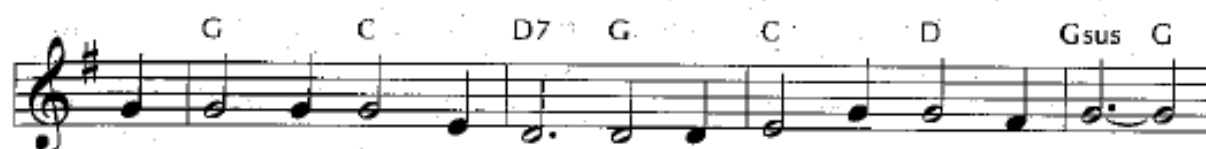
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf-fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.



Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



- 1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,

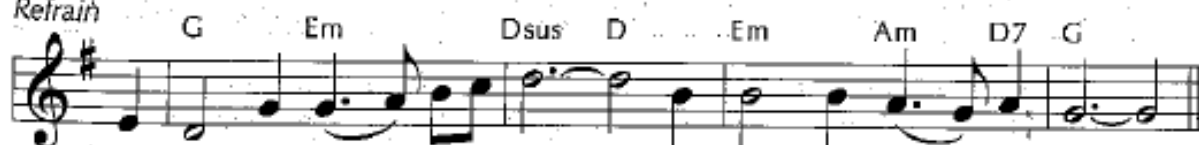


Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.

Refrain



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

To Be Known

WALTHAM 8.8.8.8

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Music by John Baptiste Calkin, 1872



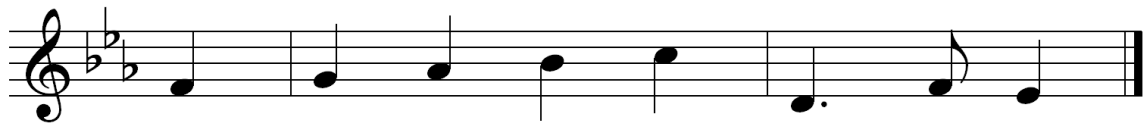
Re - call the truth that we once knew:
For in the gar - den God de - clared
In ev - ery age hu - man - i - ty
Both you and I are in - ter - twined



We were not made for sol - i - tude
That our brief lives on earth be shared
Re - lied on mu - tu - al - i - ty
The warp and weft of hu - man - kind



We need com - mun - i - ties of faith
With part - ners, friends, and fam - i - ly
Our God - breathed spi - rits weren't de - signed
So please don't try to go a - lone



Where we can feel God's warm em - brace
Who hold us in our joy and grief
To be di - vid - ed and con - fined
Your hu - man heart needs to be known