



# Memorial Presbyterian Church

## SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025

### WHEN WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF HOPE, GOD IS AT WORK

#### GOD IN THE KITCHEN

I called home my first semester of college. I told my mom I was fine,  
but I was homesick. She must have heard the truth in my voice.  
The ache ate at me. It was a long, slow song, a million tiny ants  
slurping the juice from a peach. I was tender and bruised,  
in the doldrums of it all. But she could hear all of that. So three states away,  
she preheated the oven. Three states away,  
she tossed blueberries in a thin layer of flour. Three states away,  
she dusted a layer of streusel over the soft peaks  
of a dozen warm muffins. And three days later,  
I unboxed a package from home—  
a dozen blueberry muffins, a love letter with my name on it,  
a reminder that I was not alone.  
If you're running out of hope, count to three.  
God is in the kitchen. She's just waiting for yeast to rise.

Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed  
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PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter

Arr. by A. Perkins

## BRINGING THE LIGHT

### ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Family of faith, God is at work!

**God is healing and creating,**  
redeeming and dreaming,  
**calling and sending,**  
listening and loving.

**Yes, indeed, God is at work!**

So may we worship our God who never gives up.

**May we worship our God who holds onto hope.**

**Amen.**

#### \*SONG OF PRAISE

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Hymnal, No. 88

#### \*CONFESSION AND PARDON

**On-the-move God,**  
**we have every reason to hold onto hope.**  
**We have every reason to believe that spring will come,**  
**that flowers will bloom, that the sun will rise.**  
**And yet, too often hope slips through our fingers.**  
**With anxious hearts we cry out to you,**  
**"Will change ever come? Will things ever get better?**  
**Will I ever make a difference?"**  
**Soothe our wandering hearts and show us the places where the sun is**  
**shining.**  
**Show us the places where you are on the move.**  
**With open hearts we pray,**  
**amen.**  
*(Time for silent reflection)*

Family of faith,  
in our honesty,  
**we are heard.**

In our worries,  
**we are held.**

In our failings,  
**we are forgiven.**

In our fear,  
**we are not alone.**

Friends, this is the good news of the gospel!  
**When we're running out of hope, God is still at work.**

Thanks be to God!  
**Amen.**

#### \*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    Larry Upton

SCRIPTURE READING    Page No. 586  
Isaiah 43:19-21  
The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM    Candles of Advent    Don Besig

SCRIPTURE READING    Page No. 792  
Matthew 11:1-11  
The Word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE    When we're running out of hope, God is at work    Tracy L. Evans

\*SONG OF FAITH    Looking Out a Prison Window    Bulletin p. 11

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We have seen the valley.  
We have seen a sky without stars.  
We have seen the longest night,  
and still we believe.  
We believe in a with-us God.  
We believe in the hope of tomorrow.  
We believe that good news is louder than fear.  
We believe this good news is for all people.  
So even when our knees shake,  
even when our voice trembles,  
even when fear is all around us,  
we will hold onto that good news.  
We will reach for each other.  
We will look for God in our midst.  
We will sing songs of joy.  
We will proclaim:  
Unto us, love is born.  
We have seen the longest night,  
and we have seen unimaginable love.  
So still, we believe.  
Amen.**

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE OFFERING

\*DOXOLOGY      Creator of the Stars of Night (verse 2)      Hymnal, No. 84

When this old world drew on toward night,  
you came: but not in splendor bright,  
not as a monarch, but the child of Mary,  
blameless mother mild.

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

LORD'S PRAYER      Hymnal, p. 35

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

### **FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD**

\*SENDING SONG      Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning      Hymnal, No. 350

\*BLESSING AND CHARGE

\*POSTLUDE      Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus      Arr. by M. Hayes

\*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. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

**Lectionary Readings** for December 14: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11.

**The Food & Shelter items of the month for November are canned goods and non-perishable items.** Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.

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# Looking Out a Prison Window

IRBY 8.7.8.7.7.7

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Music by Henry John Gauntlett, 1849



Look - ing out a pri - son win - dow, who can  
All the things that keep us cap - tive shrink our  
To our sib - lings still im - pris - oned be - hind  
We are called to li - ber - a - tion, to be



see the flow - ers bloom? Hope dis - solves like dreams at  
op - ti - mis - tic faith We must prac - tice hope on  
bars of steel or fear Bring the mes - sage from our  
freed and to set free Break - ing chains of world - ly



day - break leav - ing us an emp - ty room Still be - yond what  
pur - pose e - ven when our spi - rits break 'Til at last our  
Sav - ior: hope is real and dawn - ing near Tell the gos - pel  
pow - ers who would claim our li - ber - ty Bo - dy, spi - rit,

10



we can see God is al - ways plant - ing seeds  
free - dom comes And we fin - ally see the sun  
all a - round New life springs up from the ground  
mind and heart Li - ber - ate each cap - tive part