



November 30, 2025

First Sunday of Advent

In the time of Herod, we long for God to break in

PRELUDE (A Time for Quiet Meditation)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Myra Schubert

WORDS OF WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Hope

Ashley Lockemer

One: In a world full of fear, where do we find hope?

All: We feel hopeful when we gather together. We see hope when we look to the next generation. We know hope, deep inside, when we dream of a better world.

One: Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us. Today, we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

Light the first candle



All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

CONGREGATION SINGS

*We're Not Alone
(refrain)*

Adeste Fideles

When fear grows deep inside us, remember what unites us. No, nothing can divide us; we're not alone.

Text by Anna Strickland / ©Anna Strickland, 2025 / Reprinted with permission

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: On Sundays and weekdays, on good days and bad days, early in the morning and very late at night, here in this room and out in the world,

All: God, we long for you to break in.

One: Meet us in this space.

All: Surprise us with your presence.

One: Fill this room with your good news.

All: As – with hope – we worship, we sing, we pray.

***GATHERING SONG #82**

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
(verse 1)*

Hyfrydol

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

*Please stand as you are able.

(verse 2)

Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king, born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring. By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

CALL TO CONFESSION

One: Longing to feel closer to God, we pour out the truth of our lives in this prayer of confession. We do not hide anything from our Creator. Join me as we invite God to draw closer, to break in here:

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Ever-present God, we long to feel you close. We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world. But, if we are honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst. Forgive our distractedness and rushing around. Forgive our wandering hearts and center us in this space. Remind us that even in a fearful world, even on the longest of nights, you are always there.

(Time of Silence)

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Family of faith, even when we doubt God's presence, even when we fail to notice God's imprint on the world, God is always near us. Hear and believe this good news of the Advent season: we are seen, we are forgiven, we are not alone.

All: Thanks be to God. Amen.

***SONG OF RESPONSE #92**

While We Are Waiting, Come
(verse 1)

Waiting (Cason)

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

Text by Claire Cloninger / ©1986 Word Music, LLC / CCL #11043756

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

One: In Christ we discover a peace that surpasses all human understanding. Let us share that same peace with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And, also, with you.

UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Ever-present God, in the time of Moses you spoke through water in the desert and manna from heaven. In the time of the judges you spoke through poets and prophets. In the time of Herod, you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles. So, today, in our time, we ask that you would speak again. Break through the wandering thoughts of our weary minds and speak to us once more through your Word as it is read and proclaimed. With hope we pray. Amen.

*Please stand as you are able.

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Lamentations 3:55-57

⁵⁵ I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit; ⁵⁶ you heard my plea, 'Do not close your ear to my cry for help, but give me relief!' ⁵⁷ You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!'

CHORAL ANTHEM

Advent Echo Carol

Beall

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:5-13

⁵ In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸ Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰ Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹ Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.'

THE MESSAGE

"We Long for God to Break In"

Rev. Dr. John Wahl

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

In the Time of Herod

By Sara Speed Are

I didn't live during Herod's time—that brutal, murderous king, God save his soul.
But even hundreds of years later, I know the prayers of his people.
I know the prayers of the mothers and the children under his rule.
I know the prayers of the young men under his angry arm.
I know their prayers, because anyone who has ever lived in this soft world for
more than two days.
knows how to pray for a miracle.
We rub our hands together.
We fold weary shoulders in,
a cage of bone to protect our bleeding hearts.
We sing, we shall overcome and bind my wandering heart to thee.
We walk across bridges and in front of powerful buildings.
We cover our cars in stickers that scream, we will not give up!
We allow a hungry cry to slip from our lips,
giving our lament a life of its own (with room to dance!).
And when all of that is said and done, we whisper to our creator,
God, break through the yelling and the fear. Break through the violence and
the oppression.
Get past the Herods of this world, and come be here.
Like every bleeding heart before, we pray for a miracle.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

CALL TO OFFERING

We take this time to reflect and recognize all contributions of time, talent, and treasure. A basket is available for making monetary donations.

OFFERTORY *Jesus, Thy Church with Longing Eyes*
Johann Sebastian Bach

***DOXOLOGY #314**

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

(verse 1)

Christ, Be Our Light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you. Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see. Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Text by Bernadette Farrell / ©1993 Bernadette Farrell / Reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-722956

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

***SENDING SONG** *In the Time of Herod* Cranham
(verse 1)

In the time of Herod, fear had taken hold. Hope was buried deep and hidden, rare as gold. Ordinary people dared not speak aloud. Dreams of the Messiah breaking through the clouds.

(verse 2)

Thick as fog the fear grew, slowly creeping in. Day by day the people bent and drew within. With the clouds so heavy, who could see the stars? Hopelessness had trapped them, strong as prison bars.

(verse 3)

Piercing through the stratus comes the angels' song. "Do not fear!" rings hollow when we've feared so long. Still in the recesses of our weary souls. Something is awakened – could it be our hope?

(verse 4)

In the time of Herod, fear has taken hold. Still we share a longing for a glimpse of hope. Ordinary people shout the truth we trust: God will stop at nothing to be here with us.

Text by Anna Strickland / ©Anna Strickland, 2025 / Reprinted with permission

***CHORAL BENEDICTION** *Celtic Advent Carol* *Angerman & Barrett*

*FINAL BLESSING

POSTLUDE *The Bright Resounding Trumpet* *Franklin Ritter*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CFPCC Food Bank Needs

Please consider donating the following items to help stock the shelves at Chagrin Falls Park Community Center:



Canned sweet potatoes, canned turkey gravy, Stove Top stuffing mix, cooking oil, mayo, butter, celery, white potatoes, onions, eggs, cranberry sauce, sweet relish, a turkey, green beans, corn, corned bread mix, broth, cream mushroom, elbow macaroni, pie (no pumpkin please*), anything seasonal (no pumpkin please*), or anything you would like to donate.

CFPCC is receiving donations at your car. Someone will come out and retrieve donations. You can, also, leave them in the blue donation bin in the Narthex.

*The CFPCC community does not use pumpkin as part of their autumn / holiday meals.

Annual Christmas Angel Tree Project



Each Christmas season Valley has an Angel Tree project. This year, we will be supporting Geauga County Family Services. We are collecting gift cards this year. The suggested cards are Amazon, Giant Eagle, Walmart, Aldi. There will be a box in the Narthex for the gift cards.

Please return the gift cards by Sunday, December 7. Thank you so much for your support. In Christ, The Mission Commission

\$5 for Feet, Fingers, and Fares for North Church



In this season of giving, we can give the gift of warmth to our neighbors at North Church in Cleveland. Your contributions will provide hats, gloves, socks, and fares for those in need.

Envelopes will be available in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall beginning Sunday, November 23

through Sunday, December 14. Thank you for generously supporting this mission. In Christ, your Mission Commission



Here We Come A Caroling!!!!



The Valley Church Choir and the Musicians from the Bainbridge Community Church would like to invite any Valley Church members who are interested to go CAROLING with us immediately after the service on December 7th. There will be a light lunch at the UCC Church, and then we will be going to two Nursing Homes (TBA) in the area. If you are interested, please contact Nancy Sullivan for more information.

Alternative Gift Giving

THE ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS
THAT KEEP ON GIVING



If you are considering giving alternative gifts, there are some brochures on the Mission bulletin board in the hallway.

Heifer, Habitat for Humanity, and Presbyterian Gift Catalogs are there for you to look at. You can copy down their website or phone number, if you are interested. Mission Commission

Knitting For Others



The group will not be meeting in December.

Festival Choir – The Christmas Gift

Valley's Festival Choir would like to invite you to join us this year for our Christmas Program



“THE CHRISTMAS GIFT”

to be presented during the church service on

December 14th.

Christmas Dinner with the Man in the Red Suit

Sunday, December 14, after the 10:30 a.m. worship service

Look for a sign-up link in the December newsletter.



Bring a wrapped package for your child or anyone (around \$15.00).

Santa's bag will be in the library for you to slip it in!

2025 Year-long Bible Study

Every Day for Everyone

365 Devotions from Genesis to Revelation

This collection of reflections encompasses the entirety of the Bible - taking you on a journey from the beginnings of creation and humanity's journey with God in Genesis through the history of Israel to the life of Jesus and the birth of the church in the New Testament.

Each daily devotion includes:

- Scripture reference (usually not more than one chapter);
- A one-page, thoughtful commentary on that day's passage;
- A prayer echoing the Scripture and reflection from that day.

Join Pastor John on a 2025 journey through the Bible; group times for discussion will be planned throughout the year. Books are available through the church office for \$17.

Every Day for Everyone – Daily Bible Study discussion

Those participating in the Every Day for Everyone Daily Bible Study (and anyone else interested) are invited to gather for questions and discussion.

Group Discussion Time

Sunday, December 7

5:00 p.m. in the Church Library

North Church Partnership

One of Valley's most enduring and impactful ministry partnerships is with North Presbyterian Church in the St. Clair neighborhood of Cleveland. This spring, Rev. Charlie Hurst retired, and North Church welcomed its new pastor, Rev. Katherine Chilcote.

North Church is a predominantly homeless and housing insecure population. Four Sundays each year, Valley prepares and serves a meal at North; Sunday volunteers depart from Valley at 10 a.m. (taking prepared food with them) to attend the 11 a.m. worship service at North, and help serve the lunch to participants following. Three-to-five people are requested for each Sunday.

Upcoming Date

Sunday, December 21

(cooking on Friday, December 19, at 9:30 a.m.)

Donations – Credit Card or Zelle

Credit card donations are available on-line at the Valley Presbyterian website below:

<http://valleypresbychurch.org>

Look for "Give Now" button. Can only be used for donations.

Can not pay for holiday flowers, VBS, books, etc. at this link.

Use the following QR Code to donate via **Zelle**:



Check with your financial institution to see if they offer *Zelle*. Zelle can be used for both donations and to pay for holiday flowers, VBS, books, etc.

VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.valleypresbychurch.org

VPC Guest Wifi Password: VPC12345

17560 Chillicothe Road
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023
Phone: (440) 543-1071
Email: valleypc@netlink.net

Rev. Dr. John Wahl, Pastor
Cell Phone: (216) 287-2405
Email: revjohnwahl@netlink.net

Heart of Valley Preschool
Heidi Cregar, Director
Phone: (440) 708-2572
Email: hovcp@netlink.net

Director of Music: Nancy Sullivan
Liturgist: Henry Cregar

Organist: John Kautzman
Greeter: Glenna Pool