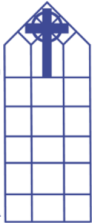


FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
COVINGTON, GA



FROM  
GENERATION  
TO GENERATION...  
*God meets us in our fear*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
DECEMBER 4, 2022



# Gathering As God's Beloved People

**Gathering Music** *Trio in Canon on "Wayfaring Stranger"* Traditional American Tune  
*Nocturne on "Under His Wings"* HINGHAM  
*Minuet on "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"* MARTYN

**Prelude** *I've Got Peace Like a River* Mark Hayes

## Chiming of the Hour

## Welcome and Announcements

**Lighting of the Advent Candles** Lonnie Lamb, Beth Lamb, and Jean Carol Mundy

Today we light the candle of peace, because we so desperately need God's peace in the midst of all we fear.

Hymn 85 *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* TIF IN VELDELE  
*First time - Soloist; Second time - Soloist and Congregation*

***Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.***

***He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.***

**May this light be a reminder that Christ is coming. God was with generations before, God is with us today, and God will be with us tomorrow. Even now, God is on the way. Amen.**

✦ **Hymn of Praise 87** *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* GENEVAN 42

## ✦ Call to Confession

## ✦ Community Confession

**Patient God,  
you know just how often  
we make decisions from a place of fear rather than love.  
You know just how often  
we allow fear to take the place of logic,**

fanning unhealthy fires in our lives.  
You know just how often  
we tuck your words, "Do not be afraid"  
on dusty shelves and in the back of closets,  
stubbornly holding onto our own point of view.  
Forgive us for giving fear the microphone.  
Silence the voices of scarcity, shame, and rejection,  
which spark and feed so much of our fear,  
to recenter us in love.  
With hope we pray, amen.

✠ **Hymn of Hope 82**

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

HYFRYDOL

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release 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.*

✠ **Assurance of God's Love and Forgiveness**

Church, we are forgiven!  
We are free to try again.

✠ **Passing of the Peace**



**Proclaiming the Word**

**Wondering with God's Children**

Mary Lindsey Whisnant

**Anthem**

*The Angel Gabriel*

Text by Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould

Basque Carol

Arranged by John Raymond Howell

**Prayer for God's Wisdom and Understanding**

**Old Testament Reading**

Isaiah 11:1-10

NRSV pew page 640

**Gospel Reading**

Luke 1:26-38

NRSV pew page 56

**Message**

*God Meets Us in Our Fear*

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



## Responding to the Word

✦ **Hymn of Response 98**    *To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary*    ANNUNCIATION

### ✦ **Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe in a God who knows our fears.**

**We believe in a God who says, "Be not afraid."**

**We believe in a God who kicks off her shoes  
and wades into the muck of our lives with us.**

**We believe in a God who stitches herself to our heels,  
and invites us to dance.**

**We believe in a God who hemmed stars into the night sky  
so that we can find our way home,  
and who sends us friends with open doors,  
so we can find our way to love.**

**We believe in a God who finds us in our fear  
and does not leave us alone.**

**Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

**Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into  
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the  
power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

### **Offering Our Gifts**

## Offertory

*Long Ago, Prophets Knew*  
Perri Walden and Adriane Ivey

Words by Fred Pratt Green  
PERSONENT HODIE  
*Piae Cantiones, 1582*  
Arranged by Lloyd Larson

## ✠ Response 88

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

VENI EMANUEL

***O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

## Prayer of Gratitude

*All are invited to join in our community Prayer of Gratitude by lifting up a one-word prayer of thanksgiving.*



## Being the Church in the World

## ✠ Sending Hymn 123

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

CAROL CMD

## ✠ Charge and Benediction

May you go knowing that from generation to generation, we have been claimed and loved. From generation to generation, we are not alone. The God of yesterday and the God of tomorrow knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth, saying, "Go be the person you are called to be, love wildly, do justice, and come back soon." May it be so. Amen.

## Postlude

*To God We Render Thanks and Praise*

J. S. Bach



## Worship Notes

Musical offerings are an act of worship. If you wish to express thanks to God at the conclusion of a musical offering, feel free to offer a hearty "Amen," a Biblical way of saying "so be it!" and affirming spiritual gifts. Music printed in our bulletin and streamed online is covered by One License #A-728738 authorizing their use.

Liturgy adapted from words of worship by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | "Mary's Golden Annunciation" by Carmelle Beaugelin | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

## **Contact Cards**

There are Contact Cards in each pew. Visitors are invited to sign in and place a Contact Card in the offering plate. If you are a visitor or interested in church membership, signing in gives us a way to connect. Members may also choose to fill out a contact card if their contact information has changed.

## **Children in Worship**

Nursery care is available for children newborn through first grade. Our nursery is located on the lower level. Children are invited to wiggle and giggle in the pews during worship! Included in worship is a time of "Wondering with God's Children" where children are invited to come forward for a message. Afterward, they are invited to remain in worship or go downstairs with the nursery workers for the remainder of the service. Worship Bags are available for children on the rack outside the Sanctuary in the Narthex.

## **Serving Today**

**Tech Team** | Dan Walden, Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley  
**Usher Chair** | Louly Hay Kapp    **Acolyte** | Kately Lane



## **Worship Music Notes**

### **Comfort, Comfort Now My People**

Johannes Olearus was an influential church leader, well connected in the noble courts of Germany. He compiled and wrote for the major hymnal used in Germany in his time. He also wrote devotional books and a commentary on the Bible. In many ways he was similar to the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah seems to have been associated with Judah's royal court in some way. He also wrote both poetry and prose, both words of devotion and theology. And Isaiah's world, like that of Olearius, was shattered by war.

From our perspective, we see that Isaiah's words shoot past Babylon to John the Baptist, announcing the arrival of Jesus the Messiah. It is a word of hope and comfort that again rang out in 17th century Germany and still rings out today. People in darkness can see the light as they focus their faith on Jesus Christ.

### **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**

Edmund Hamilton Sears is the author of two Christmas carols that are mirror images of each other, written 15 years apart. Sears was born in Sandisfield, Massachusetts, in 1819, and attended Union College in Schenectady, then Harvard Divinity School. He was ordained in the Unitarian ministry and chose to devote himself to small towns in Massachusetts, where he had

time to study, think, and write.

At 24, he wrote "Calm on the Listening Ear," a Christmas carol based on the song of the angels in Luke 2. It proved very similar to the more-famous carol he would later write. Having the same meter and theme, and it can be sung to the same tune:

*Calm on the listening ear of night, come heaven's melodious strains,  
Where wild Judea stretches far, her silver-mantled plains.  
Celestial choirs, from courts above, shed sacred glories there,  
And angels, with their sparkling lyres, make music on the air.*

Fifteen years later, he wrote its more famous twin. "It Came upon the Midnight Clear" is an unusual carol in that there is no mention of Christ, of the newborn Babe, or of the Savior's mission. Sears, after all, was Unitarian. The author's only focus is the angelic request for peace on earth.

Notice again the date of the hymn (1849). It was written as the clouds of civil strife were darkening the United States, setting the stage for the War Between the States. We can grasp the concern that drove Edmund to write this hymn by reading a stanza now usually omitted from most hymnals:

*Yet with the woes of sin and strife, the world hath suffered long;  
Beneath the angel-strain have rolled two thousand years of wrong;  
And man, at war with man, hurts not the love song which they bring;  
O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing!*



## Worship Art Notes

Today's worship guide cover is a canvas collage with acrylic and gilding by Carmelle Beaugelin titled *Mary's Golden Annunciation*. The following is an excerpt of the artist's statement.

"*Mary's Golden Annunciation* depicts not only a remarkable encounter, but also the moment that divinity in human form was conceived. It is my speculation that the divinity of God entered Mary's body no sooner than Mary's "yes" went out from her mouth. In a time when women had few options other than marriage, Mary's consent to a potentially unwed motherhood is a brave act of subversive agency. In Mary's "yes," uttered in her Magnificat, we see the transformation of a young teenage girl from fearful to determined, from simply accepting to deciding, from passivity to agency, from betrothed to surrogate mother of God—an honor rarer than gold. Perhaps the most remarkable annunciation in this passage is not the messenger's revelation to Mary, but Mary's "yes" to the call."



# Sermon Notes

Our stories of the past shape who we are today. The Christmas story is a story passed down from generation to generation. A story of God with us, Emmanuel. A story of a baby born in a time of conflict bringing hope and light. A story that speaks to us anew each Advent season and calls us forth to be changed for the better. Thanks be to God for the stories passed down to us that we too are invited to pass on to generations to come.



1169 Clark Street SW, Covington, GA 30014 | [fpccov.org](http://fpccov.org) | 770.786.7321

## Mission Statement

Covington First Presbyterian Church is a Christian community existing to glorify God by welcoming all of God's children. We celebrate through serving, teaching, praying, eating, crying, singing, and dancing with the Holy Spirit. As works in progress, we seek to respond to God's presence in our church, lives, and community.

## Want to Get Involved?

Reach out to become a more involved member of the church! We always have something happening that we would love for you to be a part of. You could be an integrated member of our church by volunteering with witness team, becoming an usher, joining a book club, singing in the choir or many other activities. Reach out to the office and we'll point you in the right direction!  
Email: [catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org) or call: 770-786-7321

## Deacons

Day Kennon (2022)  
Eleanor Scarborough (2023)  
Darcel Tabb (2024)  
Alice Walker (2022)

## Session

Class of 2022	
John McCarthy	<i>Clerk of Session</i>
Aubrey Evans	<i>Christian Education</i>
Stephanie Scarborough	<i>Worship</i>
Trista Hooten Wilson	<i>Welcome</i>
Class of 2023	
Stan Hall	<i>Facilities</i>
Louly Hay Kapp	<i>Marketing</i>
Ed Perkerson	<i>Strategic Planning</i>
Bob Tabb	<i>Finance</i>
Class of 2024	
Billy Fortson	<i>Personnel</i>
Pat Harper	<i>Worship</i>
Curtis Watson	<i>Witness</i>

## First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	<i>Senior Pastor</i>	<i>Nursery Staff</i>
Erin Morgan	<i>Associate Pastor</i>	Danielle Schubert
Alicia Taylor	<i>Dir. of Music &amp; Worship Arts</i>	Beverley Beasley
Alice Walker	<i>CAGO, AAGO Organist/ Ambassador Choir</i>	Samantha Boozer
Catherine Laseter	<i>Dir. of Communications &amp; Operations</i>	Laina Lalane
Peni Kehoe	<i>Finance Administrator</i>	Kennedy Lynn
		Amanda Sotolongo
		Kyla White



# SOUL FEAST



## December 7th Christmas Party

Fellowship Hall | 5:30pm | Adults: \$5 Children \$3  
Feed your body and soul with FPC  
RSVP by Monday, December 5th  
to [catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org) or 770-786-7321

**Jay Lanners is fixing smoked pulled pork  
and we invite you to bring a side dish or dessert.  
Sign up to bring your favorite with Erin!**

Following our Soul Feast Christmas Party, come hear a word about how we can help our neighbors living in homelessness! Jennifer Phillips from **Willing Helpers Clinic** will be speaking in the **Adult Sunday School Room at 6:15pm on December 7th.**

Join Neeley Rentz Lane for

### Advent Poetry & Prayer

Mondays in Advent on Zoom at 8:00AM

#### All of the Angel Trees have been claimed!

Remember that the gifts must be returned to the narthex no later than **Tuesday, December 13th** It is very important that the tags be returned attached to the gifts so it can reach its Angel!

### Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 14th at 5:00pm  
Meet at the FPC to carol in  
The Cottage Links at Corrydale



**Presbyterian Women Circles meet this week on Tuesday the 6th to discuss Lesson 5: Sabbath and Servitude**

The December **Martha Circle** meeting has been moved to **Day Kennon's house**. It will still be at 10:30am.

Elizabeth Ann Circle will meet as planned in the Fellowship Hall and on Zoom at 10:00am.

**December 8th from 7:00pm-8:30pm**

**in the Fellowship Hall**

Ask Jeff MacKenzie for details. Questions about plant problems, seedlings, compost issues, and all things botanical are welcome!



#### Sunday, December 4 Second Sunday of Advent

11:00am Worship

#### Monday, December 5

RSVP deadline for Soul Feast

8:00am Advent Poetry and Prayer

5:30pm Belief and Beer Christmas Party

#### Tuesday, December 6

Poinsettia Deadline

10:00am Elizabeth Ann Circle

10:00am Cricket Frog Trail Clean-up

10:30am Martha Circle

12:00pm Lectio Divina

2:00pm Staff Christmas Party

#### Wednesday, December 7

4:30pm Joyful Noise

5:00pm Hallelujah Kids

5:30pm Soul Feast Christmas Party

6:00pm Carillon Handbell Choir

6:00pm Presentation from Willing Helpers Clinic

7:00pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, December 8

RSVP Deadline for Youth Lunch

#### Saturday, December 10

10:00am Lessons & Carols rehearsal

#### Sunday, December 11

#### Third Sunday of Advent

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship - Lessons & Carols

12:00pm Youth Lunch and Caroling

## In Our Thoughts and Prayers

### Illness

- ✦ Dan Walden - knee surgery recovery
- ✦ Richard, friend of Miriam and Jack Wheeler - chemo and radiation
- ✦ Sandy Morehouse - recovering from pulmonary embolism
- ✦ Joe Burns, brother of Cathy Dobbs
- ✦ Stephanie Fortson - broken hip
- ✦ Patrick Carmichael
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining - vision loss
- ✦ Beverly Beasley, friend of Jean Elder - caring for husband who has leukemia
- ✦ Larry Cox, brother-in-law of Randy Layton - cancer
- ✦ Bob Darby, friend of Jeff MacKenzie - leg amputated, kidney problems

- ✦ Bruce Hamilton, brother-in-law of Theodosia Wade - cancer
- ✦ Lonnie Lamb - chemotherapy
- ✦ Gary Lott, brother of Tricia Hinton - recovering at home following two brain surgeries
- ✦ Linea Lott, niece of Tricia Hinton - leukemia treatment
- ✦ Karen Lein Kaasa, sister-in-law of Julie MacKenzie - home health care
- ✦ Tony Taylor, brother of Alicia Taylor - gradually gaining strength with physical therapy
- ✦ Blair Weaver - health issues
- ✦ Joyce Williams, sister of Danny Vining - Alzheimer's

### Military Service

- ✦ Billy Scarborough - Marines
- ✦ Koen Ardis - Navy

### Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Penny Blakeney - Oaks Assisted Living
- ✦ Julia Brubaker - Benton House
- ✦ Jean Elder - Florida with her daughter
- ✦ Dot Fincher - Merryvale
- ✦ Travis Moss - Westbury, Conyers
- ✦ Louise White - Merryvale

### Prayer Requests

All prayer requests should be sent to:  
[catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org)  
 Requests may be removed after three weeks if not updated.

*We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our Pastors and members of our Church Family for your deep love expressed in so many ways during the past weeks. Thank you and may God bless you well.*

— Patrick and Janet Carmichael



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18  
DURING 11:00AM WORSHIP**

*See Erin for more details and to sign up  
 Christmas Pageant Practices:  
 Dec. 11 at 9:45 am | Dec. 14 at 4:00pm*

**Join us in the Sanctuary on  
 Sunday, December 11, at 11:00 AM**

# A Festival of Lessons and Carols

*by Hal J. Jopson*

Carol selections this year include:

*O Come,  
 All Ye Faithful*

*Comfort, Comfort,  
 O My People*

*Lo, How a Rose  
 E'er Blooming*

*Good Christian  
 Friends, Rejoice*

*Angels We Have  
 Heard On High*

*Joy to the World!*

## Youth Lunch and Caroling

Dec. 11 after Lessons and Carols for 5th grade and up  
 Lunch at Your Pie | \$5 per person  
 RSVP to Erin by Dec. 8th

**After eating pizza, we will bring some youthful joy to our home-bound friends with some Christmas Carols!**

You are invited to **"Text to Give"** your offering. Text FPCCOV followed by your donation amount to: 73256  
 Or point your camera at the QR code and follow the link to give online.



### Longest Night

Wednesday, December 21st  
5:30PM

### Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24th  
6:00PM