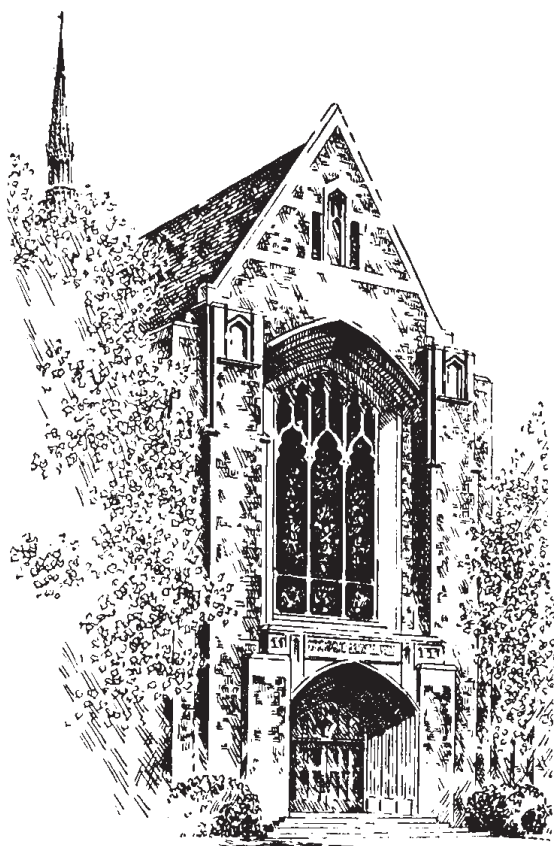


Independent Presbyterian Church

Birmingham, Alabama



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2020

eleven o'clock

Service for the Lord's Day

The Gathering for Worship

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Make me, O God, as one of Thy servants, that I may sing. Clothe me in the livery of joy. Give me the garment of praise. May I stoop to serve that I may rise to shout aloud. May I do Thy will and rejoice in Thy grace. *from Beginning the Day by Dr. Henry Edmonds*

PRELUDE - Chorale Prelude on "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen"
Johannes Brahms

The service of worship begins with the music of the organ. Through its power and brilliance may you feel the majesty and glory of God; in its quietness, His peace.

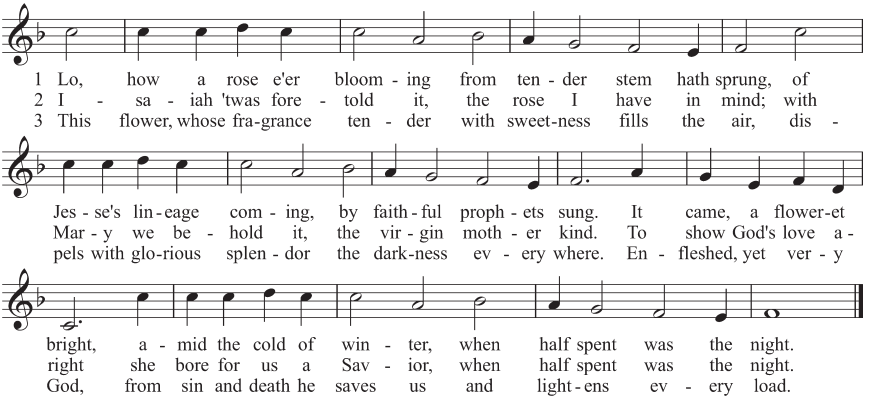
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Dr. Goyer

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATHFairry Sutherland,
Frank Sutherland, and Family

INTROIT - "Savior of the Nations, Come"
NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word! To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally.

*HYMN 129 - "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"ES IST EIN' ROS'



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath sprung, of
2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in mind; with
3 This flower, whose fra-grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the air, dis -

Jes - se's lin-eage com - ing, by faith - ful proph - ets sung. It came, a flower-et
Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a -
pels with glo-rious splen - dor the dark-ness ev - ery where. En - fleshed, yet ver - y

bright, a - mid the cold of win - ter, when half spent was the night.
right she bore for us a Sav - ior, when half spent was the night.
God, from sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - ery load.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION.....Rev. Clayton

Unison: God of grace, your eternal Word took flesh among us through your truth in Jesus Christ. Prepare our hearts for your Word to take flesh in us as we confess our sins. Forgive us for hearing lies as truth and truth as lies. Forgive us for only listening to the voices that justify our beliefs and not to Your voice that calls for love and justice. Forgive us for the way we try to hide our sins with the darkness of deceit. Then, having forgiven, open our hearts to a new way of hearing and open our ears to hear and recognize the Truth. Then, upon hearing, open our mouths to speak only words that echo your Word. In the name of Your Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, our truth and our redeemer. Amen.

A period of silence for personal confession.

KYRIE ELEISON

Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

Minister: Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:
People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

* GLORIA PATRI (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, p. 581)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM Dr. Wilkins

ANTHEM - "The Glory of the Father" Egil Hovland
The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. We beheld the glory of the
Father, full of grace and truth. The Word was with God. In Him was life; and
the life was the light of men. He came to his own, and his own received him not.
Adapted from John I

The Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

MORNING LESSON - John 1:1-5, 14
Minister: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON - AS GOOD AS HIS WORD? Dr. Goyer

The Response to the Word

* APOSTLES' CREED Rev. Clayton
I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the
Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day
he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven; and sitteth on
the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come
to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy
catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the
resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Please continue to remember to support the church. Even during this time when in-person attendance is limited, we do have basic necessary bills to cover. Offerings may be submitted online by clicking here, by mail, or through the ShelbyNEXT app. As always, thank you for your gifts.

- * The Offertory Statement
- * The Doxology (*The Presbyterian Hymnal*, p. 606).....
OLD HUNDREDTH
- * The Prayer of Dedication
- The Offertory Anthem – "Comfort Ye" from *Messiah*
George Frideric Handel

Nick Mathes, *Tenor*

Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her Iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for Our God.


Isaiah 40:1-3

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER.....Dr. Wilkins


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, for ever. Amen.

The Sending


* HYMN 132 - "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" IN DULCI JUBILO



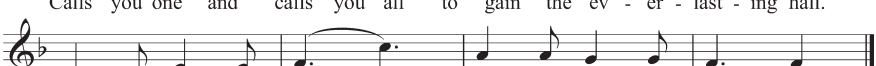
1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice_____ with heart and soul and voice;_____
2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice_____ with heart and soul and voice;_____
3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice_____ with heart and soul and voice;_____



give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!



ox and ass be - fore him bow, and he is in the man - ger now.
He has o - pened heav - en's door, and we are blest for - ev - er - more.
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day!_____
Christ was born for this!_____
Christ was born to save!_____

Christ is born to - day!_____
Christ was born for this!_____
Christ was born to save!_____

* CHARGE

* BENEDICTION

* POSTLUDE - "In Dulci Jubilo"Johann Michael Bach

**Congregation standing*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL OF TODAY'S ONLINE VISITORS!

We would love to welcome you to our family of faith at IPC. Please provide contact information to Cindy Shaw at 933-3696 or cshaw@ipc-usa.org.

THE FLOWERS in the chancel today are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Carleton Benners Parnell. THE FLOWERS on the War Memorial are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Stanley T. Moodie, Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army Air Corps WWII; father of Pat Garlikow.

CELEBRATE ADVENT AT HOME this year. In a time when our holiday traditions look a bit different, our at-home Advent activities are designed to keep stress low and encourage family connection in a meaningful way. Join fellow IPC members preparing for Christmas with the resources available at ipc-usa.org > advent.

IPC MEMBER AND STORYTELLER DOLORES HYDOCK performs her story of O. May Jones, the woman who served as superintendent, manager, and "Camp Mother" at the Children's Fresh Air Farm from 1928 to 1945. Watch to learn about Ms. Jones' experiences at the Farm and hear an astonishing event that happened to her one long-ago Christmas. The story starts streaming today on IPC's Facebook page and YouTube channel; search for @IPCBirmingham.

LONGEST NIGHT VIRTUAL SERVICE: There is an Advent tradition of inviting people to come together around winter solstice for the Longest Night when there are more hours of darkness than of light. At 5 pm tonight, join us for our Longest Night Gathering where we will come together virtually for prayers and laments, to mourn the losses and griefs of the year, and to let the tears flow for the hurting places in our own lives as well as for our country and our world. Known also as "Blue Christmas," our Longest Night Gathering will be broadcast on Facebook and YouTube (search for @IPCBirmingham). You can also find the link at ipc-usa.org/connect.

GIVING TREE: Today is the last day for our annual alternative Christmas gift opportunity. In the COVID-19 pandemic reality, IPC Social Services has given unprecedented food and financial assistance to our neighbors who are struggling with food, shelter, utilities, transportation, and medical needs. All Giving Tree gifts this year will go to IPC Social Services to support this ministry. To give, visit us online at ipc-usa.org/connect or mail your check to the church (memo: "Giving Tree") On the form, you can indicate how many cards you would like, and we will leave your cards in the designated pick-up bin outside the Parlor door in the cloister. Thank you for your generosity this Advent season.

CHILDREN'S NATIVITY SERVICE: A virtual worship experience will be offered in lieu of our traditional noon Nativity Service. Through this at-home family service, we invite you to join us wherever you are for the lighting of the Advent Wreath, Susan Clayton's reading of "T'was the Night Before Jesus," and music and prayers from the children of IPC. The link to this service will be available to all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS *(continued)*

AN UPDATE ON CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES: In order to respect the overburdened health care system as well as the health of our congregation, clergy, choir, families and community, the Re-opening Task Force, backed up by the Worship committee, have collectively decided that we will not be able open IPC's Sanctuary for Christmas worship this year. We invite you to join us for our virtual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols (details below).

PICK UP A CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE on Christmas Eve morning. Staff will be at the church 10 am – noon on Christmas Eve to wish you a Merry Christmas and bring candles to your car—along with treats, a printed prayer, and coloring sheets for children. Pick-up is on Highland Ave. All staff will be masked, and you won't need to leave your car.

SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS & CAROLS: Honor the birth of the Christ-child with our Service of Nine Lessons & Carols. IPC's clergy and choir will safely lead us in the traditional Christmas Eve service with candle lighting and carols, scripture readings, music, and prayers in celebration of the season. Although in-person participation is not advisable this year, the service will be available to all on Facebook and YouTube at 4 pm on Christmas Eve.

HOLIDAY HOUSE TICKETS are still available. Celebrate the season with us by virtually touring four beautifully decorated homes for Christmas. All proceeds will benefit ministries supporting Birmingham women and children. Purchase a ticket today at ipcholidayhouse.com, and a link to a private tour will be immediately emailed to you. Enjoy now through December 31.

BAPTISM TODAY

JAMES WALTER LESTER, born October 22, 2019, son of Sara Anne Lester and James C. Lester; brother of Jackson Wilkins Lester; grandson of Catherine Mason and Jay Wilkins, Jeanne Jackson and Mark Lester.

Participants in Today's Services

Dr. W. Stephen Goyer, Pastor
The Rev. Susan A. Clayton, Associate Pastor of Adult & Comm. Ministries
The Rev. Dr. Jay Wilkins, Interim Associate Pastor, Pastoral Care
Dr. Jeff R. McLelland, Director of Music and Fine Arts
Members of the Independent Presbyterian Church Choir

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www.ipc-usa.org