
Welcome, we're glad you're here!

We welcome you to join us on a transformative journey.

Seeking God, we strive to know God and love God.

Serving others, we follow our Servant Savior to help bring fullness of life to others.

Sharing Christ's love with all we proclaim the unconditional love of Christ filled with joy and hope.

If you are a Miami student, we invite you to make this your church home away from home during your time at Miami.

Liturgist: Debbie Davidson

(Image on cover: For Advent, we will be featuring the photography from our mission journeys to Russia and Colombia. Today's image from the 2017 journey to Colombia is inspired by this Sunday's Advent image of Love.)

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

**Please rise in body or in spirit*

CHIMES

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

"Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabelle"
traditional Provencal, arr. Greg Danner
Oxford Brass Ensemble

CHORAL INTROIT

"While We Are Waiting, Come"
Claire Cloninger and Don Cason

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We look for an extraordinary sign of hope for our world but God's sign is most ordinary of all:

All: **A young woman is with child.**

We look to power for strength in our world but God points to the most vulnerable:

She gives birth.

We look far and wide for a key to God's mystery, but the Lord points us home:

She calls this child Emmanuel: God-with-us!

Let us rejoice, and worship the Lord our God in our ordinary, vulnerable, resilient lives:

God-IS-with-us!

*HYMN – "Angels We Have Heard on High" #113

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

In these last days before Christmas, the busyness and the anxieties of this holiday season may overwhelm us, and keep us from feeling the wonder of these days.

Let us take a moment to re-order our lives in this reality: In Jesus Christ, the Love of God is breaking into our world.

(A moment of silence)

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel!

You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth: Stir up your might, and come to save us!

**Restore us, O God;
let your face shine,
and change our lives with
your salvation and justice. Amen.**

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

In Christ,

**the light of God's love shines in our hearts,
and we are forgiven and given strength to forgive.**

**Let us give thanks that in Jesus, Emmanuel,
God is truly with us.**

Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.

*SHARING THE PEACE

A TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES & LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Alleluia the Christ child comes,

And we await his birth.

Let us throw off our distractions,

And allow the chaos to settle.

Let us watch for the signs,

And listen to the messengers.

Let us stand on tiptoe,

And shout aloud and sing.

Let us light this fourth candle of Advent, a candle of Love, for

Something new is emerging,

We commit ourselves to love as God loves us, for

Something new is being birthed.

(The candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love are lit. As we sing "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" #85, the congregation is invited to engage the Scottish liturgical practice of 'Cloth for the Cradle.' In this practice, all who are able are invited to take the strips of cloth you were given as you entered. With a prayer, place your strip in the manger and together we will weave a blanket for Emmanuel. In doing so, we create room to welcome the Christ Child into our hearts.

Light one candle to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish the darkness.

He shall bring salvation to Israel, God fulfills the promise.

Light two candles to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish the darkness.

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

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

*Lift your heads and lift high the gateway
for the King of glory.*

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

He is coming; tell the glad tidings.

Let your lights be shining.

Children in Preschool through Grade 8 are dismissed to class following the children's message.)

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Speak to us, Lord.

**Speak to us in the waiting, the watching,
the hoping, the longing,**

the sorrow, the sighing, and the rejoicing.

**Speak to us by your Word in these Advent days,
and walk with us until the day of your coming.**

Amen.

SCRIPTURE

A reading from Luke 1:39-55

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON – "The Songs of Advent:
Emmanuel Can and Will"

Pastor Lawrence

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

*HYMN – "My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout" #100

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER (sins...sin)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

"O Magnum Mysterium"
Tomas Luis de Victoria, arr. Max Stannard
Oxford Brass Ensemble

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN – "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" #136

*BLESSING

Let us go forth with eyes to see and ears to hear and voices to proclaim:

In the ordinary and the vulnerable: **God-with-us!**

In the challenge of the unexpected: **God-with-us!**

In salvation and justice: **God-with-us!**

In the work of peace: **God-with-us!**

Thanks be to God! Amen!

***CHORAL RESPONSE**

"Prepare"
Joseph M. Martin

***POSTLUDE**

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"
traditional English, arr. Bernard Walker
Oxford Brass Band

Oxford Brass Ensemble

First Trumpet: Gregg Wentzell Second Trumpet: Dylan Gardner
French Horn: Lori Dickerson Trombone: Kalinde Webb
Tuba: Bill Fisher

Large-print bulletins and hearing assistance units are available from the ushers. **Please sign the friendship pads found at the end of the pew and pass them to our neighbors.**

Greeters: Leanne and Eric Staley

Advent Wreath Candle Lighters:

Mike, Lindsay and Anthony Sunderhaus

Mission Partners Prayer List:

Presbytery of the Miami Valley: Huntsville Presbyterian

Sister Churches: The First Church of Zlatoust, Russia
and The Seventh Church of Barranquilla, Colombia

Congregational Concerns: Betty Barnhart, John Curry, Tracy DeGood, Bob Douglass, Nancy Gates, Genee Hesse, Breanna Kinneman, Ruth Miller, Jan Reinhart, Becky Rudolph, Sarah Soika, Joan Teckman, Dave Wilson, Stacey Winn, John and Jean Woodruff

Email prayer request to Janet Holmes, holmest2@frontier.com, call Pat Roberts, 513-255-0549 or email the church office, office@oxfordpresbychurch.org.

Fellowship hour following worship hosted by Debbie Davidson and Stephanie Hartman on behalf of the Deacons.

Join your church family for these worship opportunities during this sacred season:

**Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
December 24 – 7:00 p.m.**

**First Sunday of Christmas
December 30 – 10:00 a.m.**

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**Oxford Presbyterian Church
for a full ministry calendar, please visit:
<https://oxfordpresbychurch.org/calendar/>**

**Lawrence H. Bartel, Pastor
Marcel van Bulck, Associate Pastor**

MINISTRY NEWS

Today's the perfect day to give a special gift to support the ministry of Oxford Presbyterian Church this Christmas Season. Please feel free to use the pew envelopes for cash or checks. Also give via text or online <https://onrealm.org/oxfordpresbychurch/Give>



Text giving is so quick!

- (1) Text opc1825 and (your designated amount) to 73256. For example, text "opc1825 25" to 73256 for an offering of \$25.
- (2) Click the link you receive in your text message response.
- (3) Follow the prompts to give.

Text giving even saves your payment information, so you can quickly give again.

Church Services at The Knolls: December church services on DVD will be shown at 10:00 a.m. **Thursday, December 27 (Christmas falls on the 4th Tuesday)**. Please call Becky Quay at 523-5747 if you need a ride.

Backpack Food Program: Many children who receive free and reduced-price school meals are left without the nutrition they need on the weekends and holiday breaks. The Backpack Program, a partnership between St. Mary's and the Shared Harvest Food Bank, aims to reduce this nutrition gap by discreetly supplying 175 students from Kramer, Bogan and Marshall schools with a bag of food each Friday throughout the school year.

The cost to sponsor one student for a year is \$50, though any amount is welcome. Checks can be made to Oxford Presbyterian Church with "Backpack Food" in the memo line.

This is a Mission and Outreach Committee collaboration with St. Mary's as we address local food insecurity. Any questions, please contact St. Mary's at 523-2153.



Spirit of Scotland 2020: The Spirit of Scotland, an eight-day guided tour exploring our sacred heritage, led by Pastor Lawrence in coordination with Rev. James Wallace (Church of Scotland). Ecumenical and

welcoming, interested friends and neighboring congregations are invited to join us in May 2020 for this exciting spiritual journey.

A brochure and complete itinerary will be available in January.

Tour Information Meetings: Sunday, January 13, at 11:30 a.m., and Thursday, January 24, at 6:30 PM, in The Seminary.

Inquiries can be addressed to the following:
Rev. Lawrence Bartel, pastorlawrence@oxfordpresbychurch.org, (315) 369-5225; Ellen Buerk, ebuerk@hotmail.com, or Will Hazleton, hazletwa@miamioh.edu, (513) 461-1812

Fourth Sunday of Advent



Sunday, December 23, 2018



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U.S.A.

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Find us on