
Welcome, we're glad you joined us!

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.

Liturgist: **Scott Shriver**

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE "Comfort, Comfort, Now My People"
setting, Egil Hovland

CALL to WORSHIP

One: I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my child,

All: Suddenly, joy was overflowing.

I knew love, but when you held my hand,
Suddenly, love was overflowing.

I knew God, but when you showed me grace,
when you forgave me,
when you loved me,
when you raised me,
Suddenly, God was overflowing.

So, let us worship Holy God together
As a reminder that God is here and we are never alone.
This is community.
This is the body of Christ.
Welcome home.

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

Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain:
Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song.
refrain

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
refrain

PRAYER of CONFESSION

God of Good News,
You say to us, "You are highly favored,"
but we struggle to see how that could be.
You say to us, "Do not be afraid,"
but we are so often afraid.

You say to us, "Even the impossible is possible,
just look at Elizabeth!"

But hope slips through our hands like water.

The impossible still feels impossible.

So today we pray:

Teach us to sing like Mary.

Teach us to laugh like Elizabeth.

Teach us to trust like the angels.

Forgive us when we can only do one at a time,
or none at all.

With hope we pray, Amen.

ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

May God forgive you.

May God's guiding hand surround you.

May you know comfort. May you know peace.

Friends, believe the Good News of the Gospel:

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen.

A TIME with YOUNG DISCIPLES

& LIGHTING the ADVENT CANDLE

I dream of music that makes my heart swell.

I dream of trees that take my breath away.

I dream of sunrises that wrap me in light.
I dream of family dinners that feel like home.

I dream of church services that give me hope.
I dream of love as the default.

So today, as we draw near to Christmas day,
we light the candle of love.

May this light burn bright as a reminder
that God is here and God is love.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

UNISON PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

Holy God,

Before you could speak, you were speaking—

Leaping in wombs, kicking, stretching,
jumping for joy.

You have always found a way

to show up in our midst,

Particularly on our fearful or lonely days.

So today, as we open our Bibles,

fluttering through these beloved pages,

We ask that you would move again.

Stir in us. Speak to us.

Fill us with the Holy Spirit.

And if we are not able to hear your Word clearly,
then give us Elizabeths

who will point out your presence in delight and joy.

Before you could speak, you were speaking,

so here and now, Creator God, we are listening.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE

A reading from Luke 1:26-38

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Dreaming for Days of Miracle and Wonder"

Pastor Lawrence

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

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

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous
things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on the servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.

Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.

AFFIRMATION of FAITH

We believe that this world is harder than it has to be.
When the world falls apart around us,
we believe in listening for the angels that say,
"Do not be afraid,"
And in seeking out the Elizabeths in our lives—
those who laugh with joy at our arrival
and throw open the doors to their homes.
We believe that healthy relationships
can offer healing,
through the laughter of cousins,
the joy shared between siblings,
and the home found in partnership.

Therefore, we believe in church families,
in chosen families,
and in the love that extends beyond family.
We believe in friendships,
in neighbors,
and in leaning on each other
when the going gets tough.

We believe in the Triune God—
Lover, Beloved, and Love itself—
Inherently relational, always connected,
and never alone.

We believe that that same belovedness exists for us.
We believe that we are loved and claimed,
never alone.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and LORD'S PRAYER (sins...sin)

MUSIC for OUR OFFERING

Sonatine (*Cantabile*)
Georg Philipp Telemann
Doug Hamilton, violinist

Click here <https://onrealm.org/oxfordpresbychurch/-/give/now>
to give online

DOXOLOGY – "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" #607

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

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.

refrain

Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Refrain

BLESSING

Let us go forth with eyes to see and
ears to hear and voices to proclaim: **Immanuel!**
In the ordinary: **God-with-us!**
In the challenge of the unexpected: **God-with-us!**
In the love giving work of salvation and justice:
God-with-us!
Thanks be to God! Amen!

POSTLUDE

Sonatine (*Vivace*)
Georg Philipp Telemann

(Liturgy adapted from prayers by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC
| sanctifiedart.org.)

Congregational Concerns: Betty Barnhart, Jim Baer, Rodger
Cromer, John Curry, Bob Douglass, Nancy Gates, Genee Hesse,
Ruth Miller, Dick and Marian Nelson, Jan Reinhart, Becky Rudolph,
Sarah Soika, John & Jean Woodruff.

Email request to Judy Fisher, fisherrh@miamioh.edu, or
contact the church office.

MINISTRY NEWS

Special Music Fund and Poinsettia Fundraiser
Click [HERE](#) for Dedications

Service of Comfort and Hope

The Service of Comfort and Hope will be livestreamed from the
Seminary Church on today - December 20 at 4:00 p.m. Join us
online for a time of spacious rest, comfort, and healing through
this gracious time of music, scripture and prayer.

Youth Group Discussion on the Meaning of Advent

Youth Group will be meeting via Zoom this Sunday night from
6:30-8:00 p.m. We will be discussing the meaning of Advent and
spiritual practices during this season.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

Join us for a joyous and meaningful Christmas Eve Candlelight
Service of Lessons and Carols from the Memorial Church
Sanctuary at 7 p.m. – ONLY on the livestream.

Peace Light of Bethlehem

Memorial Church Courtyard –
Thursday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m.

Families and individuals are – to join us at 4 p.m. on Christmas
Eve in the courtyard to receive the Peace Light of Bethlehem. We
will follow health precautions such as wearing masks and
maintaining a safe distance.

After a brief time of sharing in prayer, you will be invited to take
the light of Bethlehem home as you prepare to join us for the
livestream of the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the
evening. Candles and candle holders will even be provided for
you.

This is a great time to pick up your own Candlelight Kit
for worship at 7:00 p.m.
Contact our church office to request your Candlelight Kit
of candles and paper discs.

Oxford Presbyterian Church
for a full ministry calendar, please visit:
<https://oxfordpresbychurch.org/calendar/>
Lawrence Bartel, Pastor – Marc van Bulck, Associate Pastor
Kent Peterson, Music Director – Lynn Jacobs, Organist

The Fourth Sunday in Advent



Sunday, December 20, 2020



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oxfordpresbychurch.org

Find us on