



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHESTNUT HILL PHILADELPHIA

At the edge of every thought, there resides the promise of both ever-deepening loss and insistently imposed newness. Mourning and wonder. There, at the edge of every eyeblink, every muscle bend, and every lip-formed moment of speech—there is a space that both carries traumatic loss and yet remains open and new. Poised here, we always wait to be dragged from despair into light.

This is a profoundly presentist vision of life, landing us hard in the here and now: to be saved is not to be taken elsewhere. It is to be awakened—to mourn and to wonder. And to stand courageously on the promise that grace is sturdy enough to hold us all—you, and me, and every broken, trauma-ridden soul that wanders through our history. To us all, love comes.

~ Serene Jones
Trauma and Grace

ORDER OF WORSHIP SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 6, 2020

10:00 a.m.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

- Leader: We light the second candle of the Advent wreath as a sign of the coming light of Christ.
- People: **God has promised that in the days to come the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid.**
- Leader: The calf and the lion and the fatling will lie down together, and a little child shall lead them.
- People: **Let us walk in the light of God.**

INVOCATION

HYMN

Comfort, Comfort You My People

PSALM 42 8.7.8.7.7.8.8

Johannes Olearius, 1671

Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863; alt.

Genevan Psalter, 1551

1. Com-fort, com - fort you my peo - ple, Tell of peace, thus says our God;
2. For the her - ald's voice is call - ing In the des - ert far and near,
3. Make you straight what long was crook-ed, Make the rough - er plac - es plain;

Com-fort those who sit in dark-ness Bowed be-neath op - pres-sion's load.
Bid - ding us to make re-pent-ance Since the king-dom now is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, As be - fits God's ho - ly reign.

Speak you to Je - ru - sa - lem Of the peace that waits for them;
O that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre-pare for God a way;
For the glo - ry of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed a - broad;

Tell them that their sins I cov - er, And their war-fare now is o - ver.
Let the val - leys rise in meet-ing And the hills bow down in greet-ing.
And all flesh shall see the to - ken That God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

WELCOME

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

Speak to us, gracious God. Speak to us in the waiting, the watching, the hoping, the longing, the sorrow, the sighing, the rejoicing. Speak to us by your word in these Advent days, and walk with us until the day of your coming. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Leader: Holy wisdom, holy Word.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALTER

Psalm 85:8-13

PLAINCHANT

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying,
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together,
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring up from the earth
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

The Lord will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness shall go before him,
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,” John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Leader: Holy wisdom, holy Word.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“The Gift of Being Prepared”

John Wilkinson

SOLO

from *Messiah*

G. F. Handel
(1685-1759)

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.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low:
the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *Our Song of Hope*
Reformed Church in America

We sing to our Lord a new song;
We sing in our world a sure Hope:
Our God loves this world,
God called it into being,
God renews it through Jesus Christ,
God governs it by the Spirit.
God is the world’s true Hope.

God's Spirit speaks in the world
 according to God's ultimate word in Christ.
 In every time and place,
 in ancient cities and distant lands,
 in technology and business,
 in art and education,
 God has not been left without a witness.
 The Word has entered where we have failed to go.

Come, Lord Jesus:
 We are open to your Spirit.
 We await your full presence.
 Our world finds rest in you alone. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

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.

HYMN

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

Charles Coffin, 1736
 Trans. John Chandler, 1837; alt. WINCHESTER NEW LM *Musikalisches Handbuch*, 1690
 Harm. William Henry Monk, 1847; alt.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are as follows:

1. On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry An -
 2. Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; Make
 3. We hail You as our Sav - ior, Lord, Our
 4. All praise to You, e - ter - nal Son, Whose

noun - ces that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and heark - en,
 straight the way for God with - in, And let us all our
 ref - uge, and our great re - ward; O let Your face up -
 ad - vent has our free - dom won, Whom with the Fa - ther

for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.
 on us shine And fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, And Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, December 20, 7:00 p.m.

Longest Night/Blue Christmas Service. Christmas isn't always "the most wonderful time of the year," and this year brings extra measures of grief and uncertainty. Join us for this LIVE service (Zoom link to come) when we will reflect and pray together in community.

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24

Outdoor Christmas Eve Service, 5:00 p.m.

Bring your masks and a chair as we gather on the front lawn in a family-friendly way to welcome the Christ-child. This socially-distanced service will feature music, readings and the Christmas story. Join us and invite a friend.

We will also offer two online Christmas Eve services (posting dates pending) that you can view in the comfort and safety of your home, and share with friends and loved ones.

>Christmas Pageant online, featuring the children of the congregation

>Traditional Lessons and Carols Service with readings and choral music

Finally, we are planning a live, online Christmas carol sing. Watch your email and website for that announcement.

WALKING IN FAITH: STEWARDSHIP 2021 THANK YOU

Thanks to the many of you who have responded already to our 2021 stewardship effort by returning a pledge card to the church. Thus far we have received 98 pledges (including 36 pledges this week) totaling \$453,298. Send your completed pledge card to the church office or send a confidential email to ecole@chestnuthillpres.org. Your timely support is appreciated.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CHURCH SCHOOL

Every Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Log onto our website at <https://www.chestnuthillpres.org/> and click on the Church School button at the top of the page.

Church School begins at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday prior to worship for children of all ages. We would love to have the adults tuning in to pay attention to what we do in church school—often a purely behind the scenes venture. The sessions continue to be available on the website.

JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

Sunday, December 6, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.: Habitat for Humanity "Rake-A-Thon"

Sunday, December 13, 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.: Las Posadas "Walk of the Holy Family"

THE CHURCH IN COMMUNITY

SECOND HOUR LIVE (ON ZOOM—link below)

December 6 at 11:00 a.m.: *What is Advent* led by John Wilkinson

Join us for a conversation about the origins of Advent and its significance to us now.

December 13 at 11:00 a.m.: The Music of Advent led by Ken Lovett
Come join us for this lively and interactive conversation. Here is the link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86312882088?pwd=ZUdESFhEdXZLWkQwU1hYNUc1bTB2UT09>

ADVENT RETREAT

Saturday, December 12, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, (via Zoom)

“The Gifts of Christmas” led by John Wilkinson

Join us for a time to step away and reflect on the meaning of the season through prose, poetry, music and art. RSVP at 215.247.8855 or ecarpenter@chestnuthillpres.org by December 10 to receive the Zoom link and retreat materials.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

Wednesday – Bible Study, 12:00 noon, Facebook Live

Friday – Morning Prayer, 7:30 a.m., Facebook Live

Visit our website www.chestnuthillpres.org and our Facebook page regularly for updates and events. Let us know if you have prayer concerns.

THE CHURCH IN SERVICE

WALK OF THE HOLY FAMILY IN THE SPIRIT OF LAS POSADAS

Saturday, December 12, 4:30 p.m.

Las Posadas is a traditional Latin American festival that commemorates the journey of Mary and Joseph as they seek shelter to welcome the birth of the baby Jesus.

PCCH will join with area churches in a Christmas event that raises critical funds for the Philadelphia Interfaith Hospitality Network (PIHN) to support homeless families in our community.

The walk commences at *Christ Ascension Lutheran Church* (8300 Germantown Avenue) and concludes at *St. Paul's Episcopal Church* (22 E. Chestnut Hill Avenue) with numerous stops along Germantown Avenue. The walk is approximately 6/10 of a mile and is suitable for all ages. Walkers will wear masks and travel in small groups to maintain social distancing. Families or clusters of friends can walk together.

The PCCH Church Life Committee will host a socially-distanced gathering in our parking lot following the event, with a fire pit to keep us warm.

Join us as a fundraiser, or simply participate by making a donation of your choice (*recommended \$5-\$10 per person, \$25 for a family*). To learn more about the event and how to take part visit <http://philashelter.org/index.php/news-and-events/walk-of-the-holy-family/>

GIFTS FOR ACHIEVABILITY

Due by Sunday, December 13

This holiday season, PCCH has committed to collecting gifts for 40 children participating in the Achievability program. **ACHIEVEability** works to permanently break the generational cycle of poverty for low income, single parent, and homeless families through higher education, affordable housing, supportive services, community and economic development, and accountability. Every year, ACHIEVEability provides holiday gifts to children in West Philadelphia that would otherwise go without—and this year will be no exception.

ACHIEVEability has made the process both safe and easy for us to give this year. Congregation members can choose to deliver gifts to PCCH or have them sent directly to ACHIEVEability. Typically the commitment is about \$50 per child. If you would like to participate, please reach out to Beth Vaccaro at bethnellvaccaro@gmail.com with the number of

children you would like to sponsor, and she will send you wish lists. All presents must either be dropped at PCCH by Sunday, December 13 or if sent directly to ACHIEVEability, arrive by that date at their location. If you are participating in the “Walk with the Holy Family,” you may drop your gifts off at the church on December 12.

THE SANDWICH BRIGADE MARCHES ON!

Our first time out, we had such an *amazing* congregational response—nearly 200 peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches and lunch bag items—to Face to Face’s request to supply its food-insecure clients, that we have signed on for several more dates. The next sandwich brigade is on **Thursday December 16**. Please drop off your individually bagged sandwiches by **5:00 P.M.** for our volunteers (thank you Martha and Jill!) to pack into lunch bags. (Pro tip: put PB on both pieces of bread, with jelly in the middle, to avoid soggy sandwiches!).

In addition, we need these shelf-stable items to complete the lunch bags: granola bars, packets of nuts, fruit cups or applesauce, and bottled water. Please drop these off at your convenience. Questions? Contact Beth Vaccaro (bethnellvaccaro@gmail.com) or Suzan Willcox (sewillcox@comcast.net).

CHRISTMAS COOKIES

If you are baking for Christmas this year and would like to share some joy, please consider sharing some of your bounty with those in need. The Social Witness Committee will deliver home-baked cookies packed (1-2 dozen) in sealed plastic containers—consider re-using the takeout containers you’ve accumulated during Covid!—to mission partners in the area. Please deliver to the church during normal office hours or call the church office to arrange pickup. Thank you!

SOULS SHOT EXHIBITION

Through January 15, 2021 in Widener Hall, free and open to the public. Visiting hours Monday—Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or by appointment. Calling the church office is recommended. COVID protocols must be followed. The Souls Shot Portrait Project pairs fine artists with families and friends of victims of gun violence. The artists create portraits using diverse approaches and emphasize the individuality and uniqueness of the victims portrayed. The exhibition is a truly moving tribute. Questions: soulshotportraitsproject@gmail.com.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

Friday, December 11 — 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

If you can volunteer to greet potential donors, take their temperature, and check them in using the Red Cross computerized system, please email Liz Podraza at lizpodraza@gmail.com. If you would like to be a blood donor, go to redcrossblood.org and search for Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill using the zip code 19118. You must have an appointment to donate; no walk-ins can be accepted, but appointments may be made the day of the drive.

THE CENTER ON THE HILL

The Center on the Hill is now CLOSED for in-person activities, and has returned to streamed ONLINE ONLY classes and events, for people to participate in or watch from home. New Online content, such as virtual tours, fitness videos, art lessons, recorded presentations and more, is posted Monday—Thursday at 12:00 noon on our programs page here: <https://www.chestnuthillpres.org/center-on-the-hill/programs/>. The links and schedule for upcoming online events can also be found there.

Upcoming events online:

REGISTRATION REQUIRED for online participation in real time. Call 215-247-4654 to register.

Recorded versions of some of these activities are posted on our Programs page in the days following the event.

DIABETES WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, December 9, 12:00 noon—1:00 p.m., FREE. Presented Live on Zoom for phone and online access.

You can live well with diabetes, pre-diabetes or gestational diabetes. Ambler Nutrition's certified diabetes educator Kirsten Puskar, CDE, will help you understand managing diabetes to stay healthy. All are welcome to take part.

COLORFUL COLLAGE ART WORKSHOP

Thursday, December 10, 1:00—3:00 p.m., \$10. Presented Online Through Zoom.

This fun class offers everyone an opportunity to create their own work of art. Using two familiar tools you have at home—glue and scissors, each participant will enjoy turning new and recycled papers and magazines into art. No prior experience with art is required.

ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP: WHY DO IT ALONE?

Thursday, December 10, 2:00—3:30 p.m. on Zoom. By Phone Call 301-715-8592 and enter meeting ID and Code when prompted: Meeting ID: 448 977 3675 Passcode: 076567. By computer visit www.zoom.us/join and join the meeting by entering the meeting ID and then password. For more information, call Jean Kirkley, 215-758-7305 or e-mail jean.kirkley@gmail.com.

Share your wisdom, experiences, challenges and joys with others as caregivers for those living with Alzheimer's and related dementias. This group is an open support group for caregivers, sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association of the Delaware Valley. The group meetings are open to new and interested members. No enrollment or long term commitment is required, just a willingness to share in a confidential and supportive environment.