



Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

Sunday, December 14, 2025

3rd Sunday of Advent

Gathering

Welcome and Ministry Announcements

Dr. Yvan Kelly

***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

***Opening Hymn**

Glory to God Hymnal #121 v. 1, 3, & 4

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

***Call to Worship** (based on Isaiah 35)

Worship Leader

Leader: What if joy were to break out unrestrained in our world? What would we notice?

People: The wilderness and dry land would be glad; the desert would rejoice and blossom.

Leader: The blind would see, and the lame would walk. Lepers would be cleansed, and the deaf would hear.

People: The dead would rise, and the poor would receive good news.

Leader: May joy break out in our worship today as we anticipate the One who comes into our world!

All: Come, thou long-expected Jesus!

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

“Joy”

The Barnes Family

Reader: We watch and wait for Christ’s coming! We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

We light this candle in hope. *[Light the first candle.]*

We light this candle for peace. *[Light the second candle.]*

We light this candle in joy! *[Light the third (pink) candle.]*

To those who live in a dark time, to those who suffer from others’ oppression, to those whose sin prevents them from their best God-promised selves, the Lord speaks the joy of good news.

A reading from Zephaniah 3:14-20:

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

Let us pray:

People: Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord is my strength and my might; With joy we will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say in that day: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice! Sing praises to the Lord. Amen.

A Time for Children

Dr. Yvan Kelly

(Children will go to Sunday School)

Gathering Prayer

Cedrick Grant

Call to Confession

Dr. Yvan Kelly

Prayer of Confession

Dr. Yvan Kelly

People: Holy and wonderful God, we confess that we have closed our eyes to what you are doing. We prefer to concentrate on our problems and bad news. When we do, we miss all the healing and helping you accomplish in the world. We pass up opportunities to participate in your Good News. We rob ourselves of much joy. Forgive us and give us eyes to see, ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to treasure your mission in the world. Fill us with joy at the coming of Jesus.

Leader: Please continue in silent confession....Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Dr. Yvan Kelly

Leader: The angel told Joseph, "You are to name the baby Jesus,

People: for he will save his people from their sins."

Leader: Believe the good news of the Gospel.

All: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Amen.

Word

Old Testament Lesson

Psalm 146:5-10

Cedrick Grant

Happy are those whose help
is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in
the Lord their God,
who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice
for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The Lord sets the prisoners free;
the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

The Lord lifts up those
who are bowed down;
the Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked
he brings to ruin.
The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the Lord!

Reader: The word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Lesson

Matthew 11:2-11

Dr. Yvan Kelly

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Reader: The word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God.

Message

“When the Faithful Start to Wonder”

Dr. Yvan Kelly

***Middle Hymn**

“Rise Up (Lazarus)”

***Affirmation of Faith**

Apostles' Creed

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.**

Prayers and Offering

Prayers of the People/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.

Giving Thanks to God with Our Gifts and Offerings

Offertory Song

***Doxology**

***Prayer of Dedication**

People: We thank you, God, for all the ways you work and heal and bless and free us. Accept these gifts given in great gratitude and in anticipation of Christ's return. Multiply them for your glory and for the good of all people. Amen.

Sending

***Closing Hymn**

Glory to God Hymnal #147 v. 1, 2, & 4

“The First Nowell”

Charge and Blessing

Dr. Yvan Kelly

Announcements

Congregational Meeting December 14 - The congregational meeting is today after worship. The purpose is to elect new Session members and present next year's budget.

Christmas Joy Offering December 21 - The Christmas Joy offering assists current and retired church workers and their families in need, and it develops future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools, equipping communities of color. To donate to this offering, use the Christmas Joy offering envelope in the friendship pads or use the Special Offering block in the online giving portal.

Christmas Cantata December 21 - Join us for our Christmas Cantata next Sunday, December 21, at 10:00 a.m. The choir will perform music from "CHRISTMAS ... The Story of His Love."

Presbyterian Women's Christmas Party December 21 - On Sunday, December 21, at 11:30 a.m., the women will meet at the home of Lisa Christian, 3486 Worthington Oaks Drive, Orange Park, FL 32065. Please bring a gift valued at \$20.00 for the White Elephant Gift Exchange. There is a sign-up sheet on a clipboard in the Narthex.

If you joined in the Secret Sister Fun, bring your Secret Sister her Christmas gift. We will then have our Secret Sister reveal. We will also have a Secret Sister sign-up sheet for 2026!

Men's Holiday Gathering December 21 - Attention all Kirkwood Men from Shawn Brecht: I lost track of my planning schedule. How would you like to go to lunch as a Men's Holiday Gathering on December 21, while the ladies meet elsewhere and leave us to fend for lunch on our own? Contact Shawn at 904.718.3128 to confirm you'd like to eat. I was thinking of going to Gators so we don't miss any game-day activities at the same time, and we all can enjoy each other's fellowship.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service December 24 - Please join us for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24.

Holiday Office Hours - The church office will be closed on Wednesday and Thursday, December 24 and 25, and Thursday, January 1.

Financial Giving - You may place your offering in the offering plate, drop off a check at the office, put it in the mail, or use our online giving portal that can be accessed [here](#) or by scanning the QR code to the right.



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