

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated for the reading of Scripture.

**Psalter Reading:** Psalm 79..... Martha Ruggiero

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

Note: The Congregation may please be seated.

**Sermon:** “Glory: Absence and Return” ..... Rev. Giffone

**Sermon Text:** Luke 1:5–25, 57–80

## The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Remembrance · Communion · Hope

**Invitation to the Lord’s Table**..... Rev. Giffone

**Offering:** *Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming* .....arr. Dillon

Lo, how a rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,  
Of Jesse’s lineage coming, as men of old have sung.  
It came a flow’ret bright, amid the cold of winter,  
When half-spent was the night.

Note: If able, the Congregation should please stand for the Offertory Hymn.

**\*Offertory Hymn:** *Doxology*..... OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Note: The Congregation should please remain standing, if able to do so.

**\*Offertory Prayer**..... Rev. Giffone

Note: The Congregation may please be seated.

Note: We welcome the families with children sitting in the rear of the sanctuary to come forward and find seating in the front of the church, so that the children may observe the Celebration of Holy Communion.

**Communion Opening Prayer**

**and Words of Institution** ..... Rev. Giffone

**Distribution of the Bread:** *The body of Christ, broken for you.*

As you pass the bread, please say to the next person:  
“The body of Christ, broken for you.”

Upon receipt of the bread, please hold it until all have been served, so that we can partake of the bread together, as a sign of our oneness in Christ and membership in His corporate body—the Christian Church.

**Distribution of the Cup:** *The blood of Christ, shed for you.*

As you pass the cup, please say to the next person:  
“The blood of Christ, shed for you.”

Upon receipt of the cup, please hold it until all have been served, so that we can partake of the cup together, as a sign of our oneness in Christ and membership in His corporate body—the Christian Church.

Please use the baskets we have provided in alternate rows for disposal of the used communion cups

**Prayer following Communion** ..... Rev. Giffone

Note: If able, the Congregation should please stand for the Hymn.

**\*Hymn No. 198:** *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*.... TRURO

Note: If able, the Congregation should please remain standing following the Hymn

**\*Benediction** ..... Rev. Giffone

Note: At the conclusion of the Benediction, the Congregation is dismissed.

**Postlude:** *Joy to the World/Glory to God* .....Handel/Hobson

\* Congregation should please stand, if you are able to do so.



**Pastor:** ..... Rev. Benjamin D. Giffone, PhD

**Minister of Music and Worship:** ..... Thomas Brooks

**Accompanist:** ..... Shirley Wilson

To contact the church, please send an email to the following address:

[info@rpcerie.org](mailto:info@rpcerie.org)

To contact Pastor Benj, please send him an email at: [pastor@rpcerie.org](mailto:pastor@rpcerie.org)

Or, please call or text him at: 724-221-2595

# REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church



<https://www.rpcerie.org>

## Sunday Morning Worship Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2024

*Worship Theme: “The birth of John the Baptist was a sign that YHWH’s glory would soon return to His people. Upon His return, He would confront human rebellion and shame. In the person of Jesus Christ, He has shown himself faithful to His promise to make them glorious once again.”*

We welcome children of all ages in our Worship Service. At the Information Center in the rear of the Sanctuary, we offer children a “Book Bucket” with books and activities for their use. Parents, please do not be concerned if your young child cries. We believe that the cries of young children signal that the church is alive, well, and destined to continue for generations to come.

**Welcome, Announcements, and**

**Introduction to Worship** ..... Thomas Brooks

**Prelude:** *Of the Father’s Love Begotten* .....arr. Rodriguez

O that birth forever blessed, when the Virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race;  
And the Babe, the world’s Redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,  
Evermore and evermore!

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated.

**Call to Worship:** (*responsively*) ..... Thomas Brooks

Liturgist: Let us sing to the Lord a new song.

**Congregation: Let us abandon our darkness and embrace the light. Let us worship the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated.

**Hymn No. 194:** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel..... VENI EMMANUEL*  
(Verses 1 and 2 only)

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated.

**Lighting of the**

**Advent Wreath Candle** ..... Joshua and Amy Stearns

Lighting the Advent wreath originated in Germany, based on a Roman custom of the ceremonial entrance of a ruler to a province or city as his "advent" (from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "arrival"). One candle is lit the first Sunday of Advent, two are lit the second Sunday, etc. Each of the candles has special significance. The final candle, the Christ candle, is lit on Christmas Eve.

Liturgist: Today we will light the First, Second, and Third Candles of the Advent Wreath. The First Blue Candle is the Candle of Hope. The Second Blue Candle is the Candle of Peace. This Third Sunday of Advent is known as Gaudate Sunday, and deals with rejoicing in the Lord. Therefore, we light the Rose Candle, which is the Candle of Joy.

Liturgist: In Philippians 4:4-6, the Apostle Paul tells us: *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your forbearance be known to all, for the Lord is near at hand; have no anxiety about anything, but in all things, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God.”*

Liturgist: Theologian Henri Nouwen has described the difference between joy and happiness. While happiness is dependent on external conditions, joy is “the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing—sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death—can take that love away.” Thus, joy can be present even in the midst of sadness.

Liturgist: In Isaiah 12:2-3 we read these words:

**Congregation:** *“Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord God is my*

*strength and my might; He has become my salvation. With joy I will draw water from the wells of salvation.”*

Note: The Congregation should please stand for the Hymn, if able to do so.

**\*Hymn No. 194:** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel .. VENI EMMANUEL*  
(Verses 3, 4, 5 only)

Note: The Congregation may please be seated and remain seated for the reading of the Scripture.

**Old Testament Readings:**

Ezekiel 43:1–5; Malachi 3:1–4 .....Samuel Ruggiero

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

Note: We will have A Moment for Children *only* if two or more children are present in the Worship Service.

**A Moment for Children** .....Shirley Wilson

Note: The Congregation should please remain seated for the following Hymn.

**Hymn of Reflection:** *O Lord, How Shall I Meet You? .. GERMAN*

O Lord, how shall I meet You, how welcome You aright?  
Your people long to greet You, my hope, my heart’s delight!  
O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,  
To do in spirit lowly all that may please You best.

Love caused Your incarnation, love brought You down to me;  
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.  
O love beyond all telling, that led You to embrace  
In love all loves excelling our lost and fallen race.

**Prayers of Confession**..... Thomas Brooks

We will begin by praying a unison prayer of corporate confession.  
Then, we will join in silently, confessing our personal sins.

**We need You to speak to us, O God, because we have, each in our own way, forgotten Your law, and forgotten Your love for us. We are in need of Your deliverance from our sins because we have, too often, given ourselves to powers and practices that**

**would destroy us. We are lost and in need of rescue. Come, Lord Jesus, forgive us and restore us, guide us and deliver us, teach us and renew us. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Note: The Congregation should please silently confess their sins.

**Assurance of Pardon** (*responsively*) ..... Thomas Brooks

Liturgist: Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of the light.

**Congregation: If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin.**

—Ephesians 5:8; 1 John 1:7

**Thanks be to God!**

Note: The Congregation should please stand for the Hymn, if able to do so.

**\*Response Hymn:** *Emmanuel*..... McGee

Emmanuel, Emmanuel  
His name is called Emmanuel  
God with us, revealed in us  
His name is called Emmanuel

Emmanuel, Emmanuel  
His name is called Emmanuel  
God with us, revealed in us  
His name is called Emmanuel

Note: If able, the Congregation should please remain standing following the Hymn

**\*Passing of the Peace** ..... Thomas Brooks

Note: The Congregation will please turn to each other and speak these words of greeting: *“May the peace of Christ be with you.”*  
And the answer of response: *“And, also with you.”*

Note: The Congregation may please be seated.

**Pastoral Prayer, Prayers of the People, and The Lord’s Prayer** (*debts/debtors*)..... Rev. Giffone

## After the Worship Service

We invite you to join us for a time of fellowship with coffee and cookies after the Worship Service in the rear of the sanctuary.

If you have any special needs in your life and you wish to have a time of personal prayer, please speak to Pastor Benj or to one of our Ruling Elders— Robert LeSuer, James Stahl, or Amy Stearns—and he or she will arrange for someone to meet with you today and pray with you.

## Monthly Prayer Focus for December

The season of Advent can often be a time of faith renewal. As we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, we can also prepare for a renewal of Christ in our hearts. During the month of **December, 2024**, please pray for the spirit of renewal to take hold in our hearts.

- Please pray that Christ will come afresh into each of our hearts, not just for the holiday season, but with a life changing renewal of thought, word, and deed.
- Please pray that as our family and friends gather, each of us will have an opportunity to tell someone about God's purpose in sending Jesus into the world, or to remind someone who has fallen away from the faith that Jesus came into the world for them.
- Please pray that there will be "Peace on earth and good will to all men." It is a huge concept, but please pray that each of us will have the courage to do our part in bringing about a spirit of peace. Maybe we will have an opportunity to exhibit God's love in a situation that could end up very differently without our example and witness to that Love.

## Daily "God Hunt" Sightings

It is our sincere hope that you are still going on a daily "God Hunt." Every day please look for one or more of the following:

- Any obvious answer to prayer, or...
- Any special evidence of God's care, or...
- Any help to do God's work in the world, or...
- Any unusual linkage or timing.

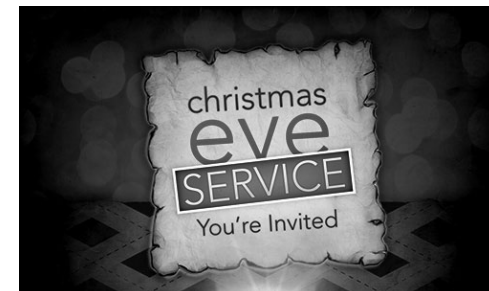
## Advent Daily Devotional

The Session of Redeemer Presbyterian Church (EPC) cordially invites you to join with us in experiencing a unique devotional walk through the Season of Advent, provided by the Coalition for Christian Outreach.

The Advent season is more than a countdown to Christmas. It is the Church's time in-between. During Advent, we remember the Word became flesh and laid in a manger, and we long for Jesus' return to reclaim God's beloved creation. We are grateful for the opportunity to travel this in-between time together. We invite you to join us!

Please sign up for this free Season of Advent Devotional by pointing your web browser to the following link:

<https://mailchi.mp/ccojubilee.org/advent2024>



## Christmas Eve Service

We invite you to join with your fellow members and friends of Redeemer Presbyterian Church at 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve— Tuesday, December 24th. We will have a very special Christmas Eve Service of "Lessons and Carols" filled with music and readings that honor the birth of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Please mark your calendar today and plan to attend this family celebration.

Meeting at: Weis Library United Methodist Church  
6020 Heidler Road  
Fairview, PA 16415