

Pastoral Joys and Concerns of the Church

Prayer for the People and Lord's Prayer Choral Amen

**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.**

Call to Stewardship

*All undesignated cash goes to the Compassion Fund.*

Offertory

Arr. Robert Lau

"Comfort, Comfort Ye My People"

\*Congregational Response Hymn 606 *Old Hundredth*

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

\*Offertory Prayer

**Bearing and Following the Word into the World**

\*Hymn 105

*Besancon*

"People, Look East"

\*Invitation to Discipleship

\*Charge and Benediction (Responsive)

Follow the light of God's guiding star.

**Seek the child.**

Listen to the words of a heavenly host.

**Find the child.**

Offer as gifts the best that you have.

**Serve the child.**

Peace be among us.

**God be with us. Amen.**

\*Closing Choral Response

*Winchester New*

"On Jordan's Banks"

Sanctuary Choir

On Jordan's banks the Baptist's  
cry announces that the Lord is nigh;  
awake and hearken, for he brings  
glad tidings of the King of kings.

\*Peace of Christ

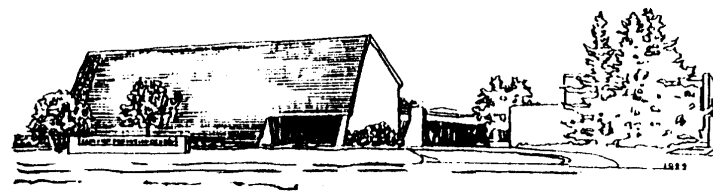
The peace of Christ be with you

**And also with you**

\*Closing Voluntary

Arr. Robert Lau

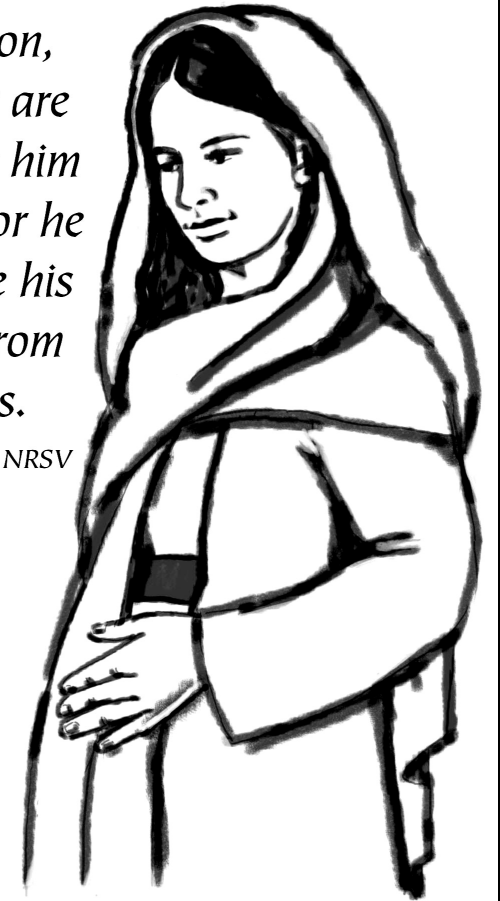
"Prelude on the Besancon Carol"



The Christmas Creed was adapted from:  
<http://www.prayer-and-prayers.info/christmas-prayers/a-christmas-creed.htm>

*She will  
bear a son,  
and you are  
to name him  
Jesus, for he  
will save his  
people from  
their sins.*

*Matthew 1:21, NRSV*



**Grace First**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*Together – Worshipping, Witnessing, Working*

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The Reverend Ashley Drake Mertz, Pastor  
The Reverend David A. Slyter, Associate Pastor  
Marialice Parish, M.M., Organist and Director of Music

## THE ORDER OF MORNING WORSHIP

December 22, 2019

10:40 A.M.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

*\*The congregation is invited to stand as music begins.  
Additional worshipers may enter as the congregation sings.*

Welcome and Announcements

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. During Advent we light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love remembering the promises of God. ***(Please sign the attendance register and pass it along, greeting those near you. Guests, please share your address and telephone number with us.)***

### Gathering Around the Word

Opening Voluntary Richard Purvis  
"Greensleeves"

Entrance of Baptismal Water and the Bible

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Dr. Mark & Sarah Eidson

Prayer of Invocation

\*Hymn 93 Truro  
"Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

**Merciful God, it is so easy to get caught up in the hype of the holiday season. We forget the true meaning of Advent.**

**We have tried to focus our attention on the little village of Bethlehem, but our eyes wander to the shop windows and bright lights. Forgive us for ignoring the true hope of this Advent Season. Help us to shed the commercial mantle of our day and to truly embrace the gift of the Christ-child.**

Silent Confession...

Assurance of Forgiveness

\*Congregational Response Hymn 95 *Prepare The Way*  
**Prepare the way of the Lord.  
Prepare the way of the Lord,  
and all the people will see  
the salvation of our God.**

### Proclaiming the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Children's Moment The Rev. Ashley Drake Mertz  
*(Children pre-k through 5<sup>th</sup> grade may now leave the Sanctuary for Children's worship. Following worship, parents should pick up their child in room 5)*

First Reading Romans 1:1-7  
Pew Bible: Page 152

The Word of God for the People of God  
**Thanks be to God.**

Music Ministry (see insert)

Second Reading Matthew 1:18-25  
Pew Bible: Page 1

The Word of God for the People of God  
**Thanks be to God.**

Sermon The Rev. David A. Slyter

## Responding to the Word

\*Hymn 83 Stuttgart  
"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

\*Affirmation of Faith (Unison) The Christmas Creed

**I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.**

**I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.**

**I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.**

**I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.**

**I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:**

**I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at persons and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.**

**I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold. I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.**