



**Centenary United Methodist Church
2300 W. Friendly Ave., Greensboro, NC 27403**

December 5, 2021 11:00am

Second Sunday of Advent

Reverend Kelley Groce

Anita Trumpler-Rich, Music Director

Welcome friends, family, and visitors. May your hearts be touched by the Holy Spirit as we join in worship with devotion, songs, and prayer.

Our Mission: To experience God's life-changing love and take God's love into the world.

Our Vision: To be a church where everyone is involved in ministry.

†Please stand as you are able.

** Please silence all cell phones during the service. Thank you.

Thank you for continuing to wear a mask to protect the most vulnerable in our midst, especially those not yet able to be vaccinated.

Gathering Music *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light...Thomerson* **Choir**

Announcements for Missions and Ministry

Choral Call to Worship *Star-Child...Murray/Young* **Choir**

Call to Worship:

One: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel!

All: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

One: For God is with us, smiling upon us with love.

All: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

One: For Christ has saved us from our enemies, our sins, and our fears.

All: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

One: For God's Spirit shines upon us, giving light for our darkness.

All: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel!

One: Let us worship God together.

Hymn: *Angels from the Realms of Glory* **UMH #245, v. 1,2&4**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath-The Candle of Peace **Caryn Hull & Dona Pickett**

Anthem *Love Has Come...Ken Bible* **Choir**

Sermon: The One Who Comes Before **Rev. Kelley Groce**

Hymn: *The First Noel* **UMH #245, v. 1&2**

INVITATION TO THE TABLE:

The prophets foretold it: the desert burst into bloom.

Angelic messengers delivered news:

a priest lost his speech; a young woman found her voice.

In this season of Advent, the scriptures revive old stories
and bring new understandings.

In the face of critics and skeptics,
our faith cries out, resilient,
like a baby from a manger bed.

From that Bethlehem beginning,
Jesus, baptized in the Jordan, spent his life serving others
that all might know the compassionate attention of a loving God.
Today, Jesus serves us yet again,
as we gather at this Table he prepares for us.

Prayer of Confession

We come before you, Mighty God, asking forgiveness and cleansing for our lives that are rough and unfinished. Cleanse us, purify us, give us your gentle love, your pure peace, and your shining hope. Let the offering of our lives be beautiful and unhindered. Let our hearts be steadfast and sure as we face the future, knowing that the future is yours and held in your kind and loving hands. Amen.

Words of Assurance

The Psalmist proclaims: "Blessed be the God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us."

"Your sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more."

"Your sins are forgiven. Go and sin no more."

Let us Worship with our Tithes and our Offering

Offertory

In Remembrance...Courtney/Red

Choir

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of our salvation,
we do not deserve your love and yet you lavish it upon us.
Not being content to be apart from us,
you came to us in human form,
donning flesh and becoming one of us.
You are not a God that is removed from our reality
but is intimately present in our lives and our struggles.
We lift up to you our thanks for your presence among us.
We give thanks for your son, Jesus Christ,
the very incarnation of your being on this earth.

With all of creation, with all peoples in every time and place
we join the everlasting chorus:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

We remember how you called your servant Mary to bear your son,
how you called your servant Joseph to accompany her,
how you called the wise men to search and the shepherds to ponder,
how you called John to proclaim and Jesus to be baptized,
how you called Peter and the disciples to follow and serve.

With them, we gather on the night on which Jesus was betrayed,
when, after having dinner with his friends, he took the bread,
blessed it and broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying,
take, eat, do this in remembrance of me.

Likewise, he took the cup and, pouring it, said,
this is cup of the salvation, shed in my blood, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.

For as long as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the resurrection of our living savior until he comes again.

As we wait, during this blessed rest known as the season of Advent,
we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen;
Christ will come again.**

We give thanks for your gifts of grace,
and ask that your Holy Spirit would come to bless this sacrament,
that we might preside with you and you in us.
Hear us as we pray the prayer you taught us to pray, saying:
**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.**

Please give the following credit: "Written by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing - www.stephenmfearing.com"

Breaking the Bread

Giving The Bread and Cup

Prayer following Communion:

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery, you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn

Angels We Have Heard on High

UMH #238, v. 1,3&4

Blessing and Benediction

Postlude

The First Noel...Arr. Coates



As you engage your 'Prayer Life' this week, please remember these prayer concerns: If you have a prayer concern or praise, please contact the church office at 336-299-9643, or call Kelley at the parsonage 336-285-5081. Let us know if the concern may be shared with the congregation.

Jane Norman, fell and broke her left hip in 3 places , she is at Cone hospital. **Scott Stanley**. **Keith Eller** at Adams Farm Rehab. **Steve Martin (friend of Betty Durham)** Stroke and is home now. **Marie Evans (friend of Betty Durham)** Back surgery. **Kay Scott**, health challenges and treatment. **Susan Carrick**. **Easton Garner (Robin Garner, and Shari and Dean Saunder's grandson)** in elementary school has experienced some neurological issues and will have an MRI November 12 as well as a referral to cardiologist. Please keep him and the family in your prayers. **Anne Murr**, prayers for her treatments. **Margaret Miller** health issues. **Louise Woods**, Carolina Pines is now allowing visitors, Louise is in room 225 and would love to have visits. **Lori Johnson**. **Sheridian Wacker**, health issues **Trudy Sillmon**. **David Blackman**. **Don & Clara Ellis**. **Aly Saunders**. **Judy Milligan**. **Abbie Samuel**.

Let us join in prayer for the family of **Ed Allred**, Diaconal Minister and former Congregational Care Director at Mount Pleasant UMC in Greensboro. Ed died in his sleep yesterday, November 17, at his home. A Memorial Service will be held early next year. Please pray for the family.

Sympathy to the Family of Bob Harris who died.



December Birthday-Dona Pickett (1), Nina Stowe (5), Charles Gordon (6), Grant Sillmon (7), Betty Durham, Carol Burklin, Al Eaton (10), David Sillmon (12), Scott Stanley (13), Bobby Burklin (15), Haley Saunders (17), Clara Ellis, Mark Schlueter (18), Nancy Carrick (19), Harrison Stout (22), Trudy Sillmon (24), Mary Jo Baugh (30), Travis John (31)

Announcements

- **Notice of Charge Conference:** This Sunday, December 5th at 12:00pm in the Sanctuary, immediately following there will be a brief Ad Council meeting.
- **Purpose of Charge Conference / Background Information:** The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) filed for bankruptcy after numerous suits were filed for sexual abuse. As part of the bankruptcy process, United Methodist local churches across the country had the opportunity to file a proof of claim. Filing a proof of claim indicated, among other things, that the local church had a right to be indemnified/protected by BSA as well as BSA insurance policy coverage for any claim filed against the local church by a scout survivor. Our congregation, as a church that either currently or in the past has chartered a Boy Scouts troop, filed a proof of claim and now has the opportunity to vote on the bankruptcy plan. The Charge Conference will be solely for the purpose of receiving and acting on the recommendation of United Methodist lawyers in conjunction with annual conference leadership and the Council of Bishops as to whether or not to approve the Boy Scouts of America plan of reorganization so that our church can execute and submit our proof of claim ballot to the bankruptcy court by the deadline of Noon on December 14th.
- **Soul to Soul** will meet Saturday, December 11th at 10:00 am to put blessing bags together until we can gather for the Community Breakfast again.
- **Communion and Devotion**-Rev. Kelley will be at Friends Homes Guilford on Wednesday afternoon December 15th at 4:00pm for Communion and Devotion.
- **Community Concert**- "Our Community Concert series will make a festive appearance this winter, with a program of Christmas music for piano to be presented by Anita Trumpler-Rich and James Esterline on Sunday, December 19th at 2:00 pm. All are welcome to attend." After the performance a love offering will be collected as you leave. James Esterline
- **Advent/Christmas Decorations**- A big Thank you to Debra Schlueter, Betty Durham, Linda, Harold and Bo Billings, and Teresa John for decorating the Sanctuary for the Advent/Christmas Season. It will enhance our recordings as well as allow us to have a sense of the normal Christmas in church feel. Much gratitude for these men and women gifting their time and talents. It is much appreciated.



The Chrismon Tree

Advent is here and with it the appearance of many symbols of this season that concern the future of the Risen One, who will judge wickedness and prevail over every evil. Advent is the celebration of the promise that Christ will bring an end to all that is contrary to the ways of God. Advent Sunday is the beginning of the liturgical year.

The idea of Chrismon making for a Chrismon Tree is relatively new, but Chrismons as such date back to the earliest Christians in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The term *Chrismon* is a compound of Christ and monogram. Symbols of their faith were used by early believers in days when it was dangerous to be a Christian. Followers of Jesus resorted to secret signs to keep from exposing themselves unnecessarily to the foes of Christianity. At such times Christians would have to worship in secret and visiting Christians would find their way to the worship center in the large underground passageways by simply looking at the fish symbol on the wall pointing in the direction in which they were to go. So...a Chrismon is just that...a "Monogram of Christ." They also sketched or carved these designs on jewelry, utensils, over doors, and in the catacombs and buildings.

The Chrismon Tree originated at the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, VA, in 1957 by Mrs. Frances Kipps Spencer and from that beginning, the idea has spread to thousands of churches of all denominations all around the world. In the spring of 1957, Mrs. Spencer offered to decorate a tree for her church for the Christmas season. She wanted to create something more suitable for church than the traditional tree of colored lights and ornaments but did not know exactly what that would be. After many months and many discarded ideas, the answer came!

Christmas is the birthday of the Christ child, so by using these early symbols of our faith to decorate the tree, we would bring out distinctly the real reason we celebrate this day of the year. Now she was ready to go to work!

The evergreen tree suggests eternity and the eternal life that Jesus Christ brings. Tree decorations are made in white, gold, and crystal or combinations of these. WHITE is the liturgical color for Christmas and refers to our Lord's purity and perfection. GOLD refers to His Majesty and Glory. CRYSTAL refers to the Holy Spirit. The tiny clear lights on the tree are symbolic of "Christ, the Light of the World." The Chrismon Tree should be a separate tree, and the Chrismons should not be mixed with other ornaments. Mrs. Spencer's desire was that they must not be bought or sold but may be given away as an act of love and caring.

Chrismons proclaim the Name, the Life and Saving Acts of Jesus the Christ. To be called a Chrismon, the symbol must refer to Christ and His Kingdom. Some Chrismons are simple copies of symbols of Christianity from its earliest days; others are of God's never-changing world; and some are combinations of several elements, old and new. You will find many crosses, crowns, stars, fish, butterflies, doves, angels, bells, nativities, triangles (the Trinity), circles, and hearts.

Some more complicated ones are the Gifts of the Magi, Resurrection Morn, the Door, the Holy Bible, the fish net, the Lenten symbol, the Ten Commandments tablet, the chalices, and Jonah and the list goes on.

There are many more Chrismons to make, and more will be designed – that is the one thing realized every year. Our trees will never be finished. There is always something new to say about God, always a new and better way to say it. Our one wish in presenting this Chrismon Tree in this space is to continually remind us of God's greatest gift to all of us...His Son Jesus Christ.

Take some time to get up close to the tree and experience the message the symbols are telling.
Please do not touch or handle