

# POLLOCKSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



**Sunday, December 17, 2023**

**Leader in Worship: Lyle Swanger**

**Music Accompanist: Jennifer Miller**

311 Main Street / P O Box 205 / Pollocksville, NC 28573

[www.PollocksvillePresbyterian.org](http://www.PollocksvillePresbyterian.org)

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# Pollocksville Presbyterian Church

3rd Sunday of Advent

Order of Worship

11:00 a.m.

December 17, 2023

Prelude

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. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, and remembering the promises of God with prayer.*

*Lighting of the Advent Candle (see insert) ~ Joy ~ ~ Lyle & Amber Swanger*

Response (*remain seated*) "He Came Down" *See Hymn Insert*

Call to Worship (*Responsive*)

*Leader:* With joy this day we anticipate the one who is coming, the arrival of the Messiah.

*People:* **The one we call the Word! The one we call the Light.**

*Leader:* Like John the Baptist, we are not the light. In our worship, we testify to the light.

*People:* **Our testimony is prayer and praise, song and scripture.**

*Leader:* Our testimony is preaching and teaching, learning, and serving.

*People:* **May our testimony be a sweet sound in your ear, O God.**

Prayer of Invocation

*~ Liturgist*

\*The Peace of Christ

*Leader:* ... May the peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you all.

*People:* **And also with you.**

\*Opening

"In the Bleak Midwinter"  
*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

# 36

## Call to Confession

~ Lyle Swanger

Although God is the source of our joy, our sin often hinders our joy and the joy of others. Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

## Unison Prayer of Confession

**Mighty and powerful God, your word says, "Rejoice always." But we would rather sulk about the things that don't go right. Your word says, "Pray without ceasing." But we go for days without even thinking about You. Your word says, "Give thanks in all circumstances." But our thankfulness is fleeting because we think we deserve blessings. Your word says, "Hold fast to what is good," while we hold fast to sinful ways of thinking and acting.**

## *Silence is Kept*

## Assurance of God's Pardon

~ Lyle Swanger

The prophets of old have declared, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God. For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robes of righteousness. Friends, believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

## Anthem

"We Wait for Thee" by Victor Johnson

~ Choir

## Prayer for Illumination

~ Lyle Swanger

## Scripture

Matthew 24:3-8 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>7</sup> Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these are the beginning of birth pains."

Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28 (NIV)

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

<sup>19</sup> This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

<sup>23</sup> He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. <sup>24</sup> Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup> the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup> This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

*Leader:* This is the Word of the Lord.

*People:* **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

*"The Moral Miracle"*

~ Lyle Swanger

\*Hymn of Response

*"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*

#376

*The Presbyterian Hymnal*

Joys, Concerns and Prayers

Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

Brothers and sisters, as we joyfully await the glorious coming of the Christ, let us pray for the needs of the church, our community, and the world.

God of joy and exultation, you strengthen what is weak; you enrich the poor and give hope to those who live in fear. Look upon our needs this day. Make us grateful for the good news of salvation and keep us faithful in your service until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives forever, who first taught us to pray, saying, *(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.**

\*The Apostles' Creed

Fellow Christians, what do we believe?

**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.**

\*Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.**

Offering of our Tithes and Gifts

Offertory

\*Doxology

**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.**

\*Prayer of Dedication

~ Lyle Swanger

\*Closing Hymn

“Stand By Me”

See Back Cover

\*Charge and Benediction

\*Postlude

\*Please rise in body or spirit / **Bold:** Congregation Speaks



*The poinsettias in the sanctuary today and throughout the Advent Season are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Penny Bender by her Family.*

*Welcome!*

**Welcome to everyone who is worshiping with us today.**

~ **Next Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** ~

**Pastor Ken Yearick will be back in the pulpit at PPC**

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Ushers & Greeters



**December: Ron Pound**

**January: Rebecca Diane McCaffity**

**Thank you to all the volunteers who fill in as needed!**

**You are appreciated!!!**

*A new year is here and ushers are needed for 2024.*

*If you would be willing to serve as an usher, please contact John Bender at 252-675-8431 or email: [jmbender1991@gmail.com](mailto:jmbender1991@gmail.com).*



## **Prayer List Additions as of 12/10/2023**

Keep Warren and Frances Waters in your prayers (Joe Bell); Friend Becky Hines is in hospital with pneumonia and needs our prayers (Mary Ann LeRay); Eye surgery December 14 for Bobby (Carol Mattocks); Eye surgery December 13 for Jay (Jay Bender); Gayle Bender fell & broke 3 ribs (Pastor Ken Yearick)

*Prayers for Our Nation; Our Military; Our Church; PPC Childcare*

Our complete prayer list is available in the PollyPress. *These names will remain on this list for 3 weeks.*



**\$110 has been received to date for The Annual Christmas Joy Offering.**

It is not too late if you wish to contribute. Just mark on your check or pew envelope **Joy Offering** and drop in offering plate or give to Ron Pound.

God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering addresses the support needed by some of our leaders, including supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.



**For Congregational Use: Lectionary Readings:**

*Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 and Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28*

**Daily Readings for December 17 – 23 use the following web link:**

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/devotions/month-month-lectionary-reading-list/>



**" LESSONS AND CAROLS "**

**Pollocksville Presbyterian Church Choir  
Sunday Evening, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm  
in the Pollocksville Presbyterian Church Sanctuary**



**PPC Communion & Candle Light Service  
Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm ~ Christmas Eve Service**





## Reminders & Announcements

**Sunday Mornings: 11:00 am – Worship in the Church Sanctuary & Streaming Live on Facebook & on PPC Website**

**Sundays at 9:45 am            Adult Sunday School – *Remember your Bibles!***

**Children’s Sunday School at 11 am**

**Wednesdays                    6 pm Choir Practice**

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>        6 pm “Lessons & Carols” at PPC**

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>        Morning Worship Service - Building Fund Sunday**

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>        6:30 pm Christmas Eve Service at PPC**

**– Communion & Candlelight Service**

**Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> – Church Office Closed - HOLIDAY**

**Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup> Through January 1<sup>st</sup>**

**– Childcare Closed – Reopen Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>            Church Office Closed - HOLIDAY**

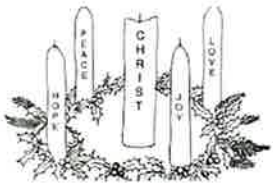
**Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>            Ordination & Installation of 2026 Elders**

**5 pm Session Meeting**

**Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>        Church Office & Childcare Closed – MLK HOLIDAY**



**Pastor Ken Yearick will be available on Tuesday’s from 10 am to 2 pm by appointment.**



*“Advent season is an invitation to set your mind off of the stresses of the year. We can take our focus off of the crazy hustle that can be associated with the Christmas season that often threatens to produce more hassle than delight. Advent is a chance to focus our thoughts on the gift God has given us in his son Jesus.”* *From [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com)*

# Stand by Me

Charles Albert Tindley, 1905

♩ = 105

1. When the storms of life are rag - ing, Stand by  
 2. In the midst of trib - u - la - tion, Stand by  
 3. In the midst of faults and fail - ures, Stand by  
 4. In the midst of per - se - cu - tion, Stand by  
 5. When I'm grow - ing old and fee - ble, Stand by

me (stand by me); When the storms of life are rag - ing, Stand by  
 me (stand by me); In the midst of trib - u - la - tion, Stand by  
 me (stand by me); In the midst of faults and fail - ures, Stand by  
 me (stand by me); In the midst of per - se - cu - tion, Stand by  
 me (stand by me); When I'm grow - ing old and fee - ble, Stand by

me (stand by me); When the world is toss - ing me Like a  
 me (stand by me); When the hosts of hell as - sail, And my  
 me (stand by me); When I do the best I can, And my  
 me (stand by me); When my foes in battle a - rray Un - der -  
 me (stand by me); When my life becomes a bur - den, And I'm

ship up - on the sea Thou who rul - est wind and wa - ter, Stand by me (stand by me).  
 strength be - gins to fail, Thou who nev - er lost a bat - tle, Stand by me (stand by me).  
 friends mis-un - der-stand, Thou who know-est all a - bout me, Stand by me (stand by me).  
 - take to stop my way, Thou who sav - èd Paul and Si - las, Stand by me (stand by me).  
 near - ing chill-y Jordan, O Thou "Li - ly of the Vall-ey," Stand by me (stand by me).



## LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH – 2023

### WEEK THREE: JOY

*(Reader 1):* In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; and set lights in the sky – sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors chartered their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them.

*(Reader2):* This morning we light three candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to nestle among the greens.

*(Reader 1):* Last week, we lit the Candle of Hope. *(Light last week's purple candle)* and the Candle of Peace. *(Light last week's second purple candle)* This morning we light a pink candle – the Candle of Joy – also called the Shepherd Candle. *(Light a pink candle)*

*(Reader 2):* We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of joy. Even when despair is all around us and apathy seems the order of the day, we set our face steadily towards the light.

*(Reader 1):* Rejoice!! Hear the Lord speak the joy of good news in these selected verses from Isaiah 35:

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; ...They shall see the glory of the Lord. Say to those with a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.' ...Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer; and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.... And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorry and sighing shall flee away.*

*(Reader 2):* Let us pray:

Oh Lord, our redeemer, you lead us from languishing in sorrow's shadows into laughter's joy over your abundant restoration. As we search for signs of joy this week, help us to BECOME the signs of joy that others are seeking. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven's joy. AMEN

*(Reader 1):* Let us sing verses 1, 2, and 3 of "He Came Down" on the insert.

## He Came Down

137

He came down that we may have hope; he

came down that we may have hope; he came down that we may

have hope; hal-le-lu-jah for-ev-er-more.

*Leader:* Why did he come?

*Additional stanzas:*

... that we may have peace  
 ... that we may have joy  
 ... that we may have love

Because this traditional Cameroon piece begins with the refrain, it does not initially reveal that it is cast as a call-and-response song. Assigning the answers to the congregation rather than to the leader is a notable affirmation of the corporate wisdom of God's people.