

DIVINE WORSHIP

The prelude is a sacred curtain dropped between the world and the sanctuary. During this time, be prayerful and reverent in preparation for the worship of our holy God in His sanctuary. (Please silence all phones and electronic devices.)

THE PRELUDE (Handbell Ensemble) *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

THE STRIKING OF THE HOUR

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

THE FIRST LESSON John 1:1-5, 14

The great mystery of the incarnation.

THE FIRST CAROL (Unison) *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*
Trinity Hymnal, 218 vs. 1, 2, 3, 5

THE SECOND LESSON Isaiah 7:14; 9:2, 6-7; Micah 5:2-5

Old Testament prophecies of Christ's birth and kingdom

THE SECOND CAROL (Unison) *O Little Town of Bethlehem*
Trinity Hymnal, 201

THE THIRD LESSON Luke 1:26-38

The Angel Gabriel greets the Virgin Mary

THE THIRD CAROL (Unison) *What Child Is This?*
Trinity Hymnal, 213

THE FOURTH LESSON Luke 2:1-16

The birth of Jesus.

THE FOURTH CAROL *Away in a Manger*
Trinity Hymnal, 204

THE PRAYER Ruling Elder

THE CHORAL CAROL *In the Bleak Midwinter*

THE HOMILY Dr. John Clayton

THE FIFTH CAROL AND LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES
Angels We Have Heard on High
Trinity Hymnal, 214

THE CANDLELIGHT CAROL *Silent Night! Holy Night!*
Trinity Hymnal, 210 vs. 1-3

THE PASTORAL BLESSING (Minister) Based on Isaiah 60:1

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Therefore, go out into the world with great joy, and the grace of Bethlehem's matchless Child, the love of the Father who never fails, and the fellowship of the Spirit who never wearies, will be with you this holy night and evermore.

Congregation: Thanks be to God! Amen.

THE POSTLUDE *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Covenant Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith

Welcome & Announcements

Welcome to Covenant Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith! We are thankful that you have joined us for this special evening of worship. Due to the dimmed lighting and reverence of the service, please silence and refrain from using all electronic devices.

Seating: Please be courteous by moving toward the front of the sanctuary providing room in the back for those arriving late.

Restrooms: Restrooms are available at the East-end on the sanctuary level or downstairs at the East-end of the hallway. Please use the restrooms downstairs during the service.

We celebrate Advent: Today is Christmas Eve and the conclusion of Advent. Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and ends on Christmas Eve. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his first advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his second advent. Join us in celebrating this double focus on the already but not yet, as we affirm that Christ has come and that He will come again in power and glory.

The Advent Wreath: In the celebration of Advent and the coming of Christmas, we light the candles of the Advent wreath. The circle of greenery reminds us that God is eternal, the Alpha and Omega without beginning or end, and also of the hope we have in God, of newness, renewal and eternal life. The candles symbolize the light of God entering the world through the birth of Jesus. The light from the candles reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into the darkness of our lives, and it also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect the light of God's love and grace to others.

A separate Christian theme is attached to each candle:

Hope (purple in color) – “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Romans 15:13).

Love (purple in color) – “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Joy (pink in color) – “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4).

Peace (purple in color) – “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

Christ (white in color) – “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29b).

Individual Candles: You should have received an individual candle when entering the sanctuary. We will light these candles as a congregation prior to our closing carol.

Christmas Eve Offering: If you would like to give a gift for the continued gospel-centered ministry of Covenant, you may place your gift in the benevolence box at the back of the sanctuary after the service.

As we celebrate tonight the incarnation of the Son of God, we invite you to return and worship with us every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. where we rejoice in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ministry Staff

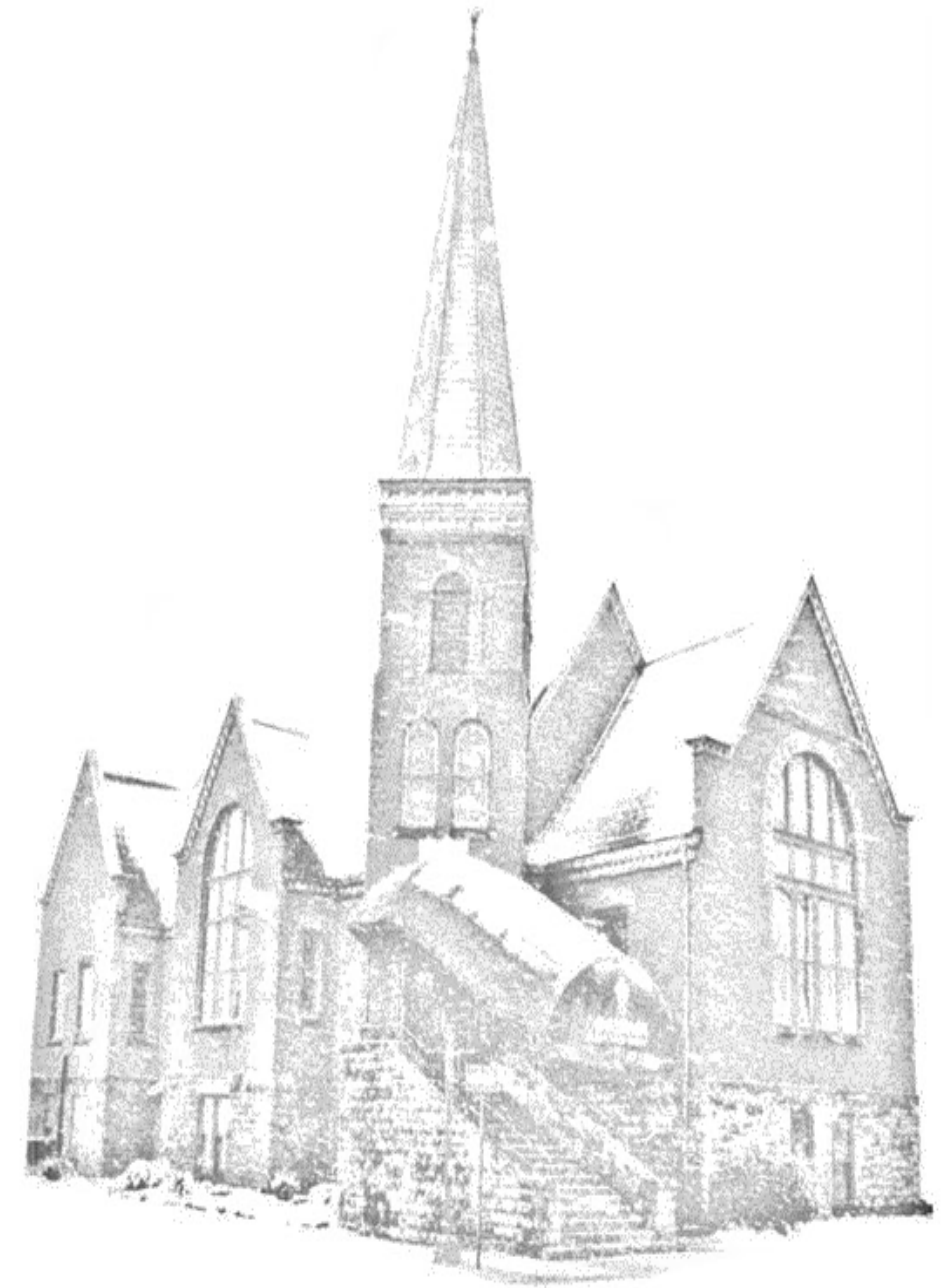
Dr. John Clayton, Senior Minister – jjclayton@cpfcs.org
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Covenant Presbyterian Church

Fort Smith, Arkansas



Christmas Eve, December 24, 2021

5:30 P.M.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

120 North 9th Street, 72901