



THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

DECEMBER 17, 2023

MORNING WORSHIP

THE SILENT MEDITATION UPON ENTERING THE SANCTUARY

What a wonder it is that two natures infinitely distant should be more intimately united than anything in the world, and yet without any confusion! That the same person should have both a glory and a grief; an infinite joy in the Deity, and an inexpressible sorrow in the humanity; that a God upon a throne should be an infant in a cradle; the thundering Creator be a weeping babe and a suffering man. These are such expressions of mighty power, as well as condescending love, that they astonish men upon earth and angels in Heaven.

STEPHEN CHARNOCK, PURITAN DIVINE (1628-1680)



APPROACHING GOD'S THRONE

The Christian Greeting and Call to Preparation

Rev. Bill Clark, *Interim Minister*

The Prelude

What Child Is This?

arr. Kim Robertson

Vonda Darr, *harp*

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed the heir of all things, through Whom also He created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Hebrews 1:1-4

† Indicates the congregation standing

• Indicates seating for those detained

The Chiming of the Hour

† The Ascription of Praise

REGENT SQUARE

**All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son;
Evermore your voices raising to th’eternal Three in One:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn King!**

† The Call to Worship – Mark 1:2-3

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.’”

•† The Hymn No. 87

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

DIX

† The Apostles’ Creed – inside cover of *The Hymnal*

† The Prayer of Invocation

† The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father Which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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, for ever. Amen.**

•† The Doxology – No. 650 in *The Hymnal*

OLD HUNDREDTH

SEEKING GOD'S FACE

The Call to Confession – Romans 5:8, Hebrews 4:16

But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Corporate Prayer of Confession – Based upon Psalm 51:1-3, 9, 12

**Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your steadfast love;
according to Your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions.
Wash us thoroughly from our iniquity, and cleanse us from our sin!
For we know our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us.
Hide Your face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities.
Restore to us the joy of Your salvation, and uphold us with a willing spirit. Amen.**

The Silent Confession of Sins

The Assurance of God's Pardon – Ezekiel 36:25-27

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

The Pastoral Prayer

• † The Hymn No. 129

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

PSALM 42

The Offering

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

2 Corinthians 9:7

HEARING GOD'S VOICE

The Anthem

A Child Is Born in Bethlehem

Phillip Stopford

A Child is born in Bethlehem, Alleluia!
And joy is in Jerusalem, Alleluia!
Rejoice, rejoice, sing high, sing low, Alleluia!
Benedicamus Domino [*Let us bless the Lord*], Alleluia!
To Thee, O Lord, be glory paid, Alleluia!
Thou Son of Mary, mother maid, Alleluia!
To Holy Trinity give praise, Alleluia!
With Deo gracias [*thanks be to God*] always, Alleluia!

The Prayer for Illumination

Rev. Dr. Jonathan Gibson

† The Reading of God's Word – Matthew 1:1-25

pew Bible page 1025

*If you are visiting today and do not own a personal copy of the Scriptures,
please take one from the table in the narthex as our gift.*

All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field.

**The grass withers and the flowers fade,
but the Word of our God shall stand forever. Amen.**

The Personal Meditation and Preparation of the Heart

*Children age four through kindergarten may leave to attend Children's Church.
They may be picked up in Room E-100 after the service.*

The Sermon

A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

Rev. Gibson

The Closing Prayer

FOLLOWING GOD'S SPIRIT

† The Hymn No. 127

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

† The Benediction of God's Grace

† The Threefold Amen – No. 657 in *The Hymnal*

The Postlude

Partita on IN DULCI JUBILO

James Vivian

*I will make a covenant of peace with them.
It shall be an everlasting covenant with them.
And I will set them in their land and multiply them,
and will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.
My dwelling place shall be with them,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be My people.
Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel,
when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”
Ezekiel 37:26-28*



THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ The Shepherds' Candle, the third candle, is lighted to remind us that the birth of the Messiah was announced to humble shepherds, and that we straying sheep must go to Him, believe in Him and tell others the Good News of salvation.

Sanctuary

SERMON SERIES

Today, we welcome Rev. Dr. Jonathan (Jonny) Gibson to the Trinity pulpit. Dr. Gibson is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He holds a PhD in Hebrew Studies, from Girton College, Cambridge University. He is an ordained teaching elder in the International Presbyterian Church, UK, and previously served as associate minister at Cambridge Presbyterian Church in England. He was Lecturer in Biblical Theology in the Christian Heritage Apprenticeship Program in Cambridge from 2013–2015.



Dr. Gibson is a contributor to and co-editor (with David Gibson) of *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*. He is also the author of historical and biblical articles in *Themelios*, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, and *Tyndale Bulletin*, as well as “Obadiah” in the *NIV Proclamation Bible*. He is the author of *Be Thou My Vision: A Liturgy for Daily Worship*; *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel: A Liturgy for Daily Worship from Advent to Epiphany* — the devotional Trinity Presbyterian Church is using to prepare our hearts during the 2023 Christmas season; and *O Sacred Head Now Wounded: A Liturgy for Daily Worship from Pascha to Pentacost* which will be available in early January 2024. He also authored several children’s books, including *The Moon Is Always Round*, *The Acrostic of God*, and *The Acrostic of Jesus*.

To all who are spiritually weary and seek rest;
to all who mourn and long for comfort;
to all who struggle and desire victory;
to all who sin and need a Savior;
to all who are strangers and want fellowship;
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness;
and to all who will come,
this church opens wide her doors and offers welcome
in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.



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