



LAUREL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

Welcomes You to Worship!

Advent 3

December 11, 2022 10:00 AM

Where Love is Known

PRELUDE

Don Moro

RINGING OF THE HOUR

Janice Berger

WELCOME BELOVED ONES

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

GATHERING AROUND LOVE

MUSICAL CALL TO WORSHIP

Don Moro

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

The Candle of Love

“Uncorked” Small Group

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Pete MacRae

Leader: Live love.

People: Prepare for this birth.

Leader: Be love.

People: Open your hearts.

Leader: Hold love.

People: The Messiah is coming!

*HYMN

Prepare the Way, O Zion

No. 106

RECEIVING LOVE

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, beyond all time, meet us in this space of Advent waiting. We are restless and weary, and our patience is frayed. Give us the heart of Mary, so that when you do come to us, we humbly ask, “How can this be?” Give us the endurance to prepare our own stables for your coming with expectation and anticipation. Come overshadow us now, quicken our hearts, and enliven us to love as we have never dared to love before. Heal our doubts, strengthen our resolve, and help us to prepare to blossom as your people of hope, peace, and love as we continue onward with the Holy Family to Bethlehem.

For we pray this in the name of that One to come, who is and was and always will be, our Christ. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION . . . Amen

FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Leader: Hear the good news: We are all Bethlehem Bound and because we are, we can always take our kneeling places, and claim the love that claims us at the stable. Friends, Believe this Good News!

People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

*OUR RESPONSE

Gloria Patri

Hymn No. 581

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

PROCLAIMING LOVE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 35: 1-10 (NRSVue)

ANTHEM

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

Laurel Choir

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11: 2-14 (The Message)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Are you the One?"

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

RESPONDING IN LOVE

*HYMN

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

No. 99

*PROFESSION OF FAITH

A Brief Statement of Faith 10.2

Pete MacRae

We trust in Jesus Christ, full human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calls us all to repent and believe the gospel.

*OUR RESPONSE *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* Hymn No. 606

PRESENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS Duane Berger, Stated Clerk

NEW MEMBERS PROFESSION OF FAITH

BLESSING AND WELCOME

PLEDGE DEDICATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS Ann Whitby and Pete MacRae

Ann: Everything our eye can see comes from God.

All: Every single thing we count as ours, comes from God.

Pete: Our lives, our works, our meaning, our resources, our passions.

All: All from God.

Ann: The gifts of God for the people of God!

All: Our hearts are full ...

Pete: Since you gave everything we have ...

All: It is with joy, not regret, that we return these gifts to you, our Giver.

Ann: May these gifts bless your work through the work of Laurel Love. May they swell the universe with your tenderness for all people.

All: We thank you, Beloved One, for this opportunity to return our love to you – and to make your Love known.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

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.

BEARING LOVE INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing (vs 1,4,5)* No. 610

*CHARGE AND BLESSING The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

*POSTLUDE Don Moro

*RECESSION AND GREETING The Rev. Ann D. Cherry

***Please feel free to stand and move during our worship service.**

Lay Readers: Thank you to Pete MacRae for serving as our liturgist today, and to Ann Whitby and Duane Berger for serving in our worship today as well.

Don Moro, Guest Organist: Don has been a substitute organist in the Richmond area for over 14 years. He studied at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, where he received organ lessons from Dr. David Craighead. He lives in North Chesterfield with his wife, Deborah, and three sons.

Sanctuary Flowers: The flowers are given this day by Judy and Jim Smith to the glory of God.

Advent Wreath Lighters: Thank you to our “Uncorked” small group for serving as our Advent wreath lighters today, and to Carol Cummins for coordinating this group of voices and lighters. This year we have asked our small groups of the church to serve as our Advent Wreath Lighters.

Passing of the Peace: You are invited to stand and greet each other in the name of our Beloved One to show forth your Laurel Love :)

Friendship Pads: Old and new friends, please take a moment to fill out our Friendship Pads and provide us with a (cell) phone or email contact. The red pads can be found at the end of the pews.

New Member Love: It is a joy this Advent season to receive new members into our midst. Today we welcome, by Letter of Transfer from Lakeside Presbyterian, Carl Cummins, Linda and Woody Patterson, Beverly and Bill Shepherd and, and by Re-Affirmation of Faith, Susan Dameron. If God has is nudging you to join with us, please let our pastor know.

Choral Leadership: Gratitude to Howard Lawrence for directing our wonderful choir this day.

Teams to Meet Today: Our teams will meet right after worship today. Please consider adding your voice to the mix.

Pledge Dedication Today: We are dedicating our gifts to the glory of God this morning. Extra pledge cards are available near where we pick up bulletins. This year we are making a big ask – that you consider adding 9% to your pledge amount over last year’s gift in order to continue our ministry funding at the same level. We know that inflation has impacted all of us, so pray about how you might rethink your home budget so that we can continue to invest in God’s vision for us at Laurel. For additional information, please touch base with Tod Balsbaugh, our Stewardship Lead, and Ann Whitby.

Advent Devotional Small Groups:

This Tuesday Night at 7:30 pm: We will gather by Zoom. A link will be sent out to all on our email “listserv” to participate. You can use the same link for each meeting.

This Wednesday at 1 pm: We will offer an in-person group meeting in the Parlor. This is the Beloved group.

Lessons and Carols Next Week: We have a wonderful service on tap for next week when we celebrate Advent 4 by singing our favorite carols that you all identified for us. Thank you to Glenda Miller for organizing the carols and to Howard Lawrence for organizing and directing our choral ministry.

Vote for Laurel's Tag Line: Take a moment to register your vision for Laurel summarized in our new tag line. In the Narthex you will see a ballot box and the 4 possibilities on a poster board. Here are your options:

Enter to Worship, Leave to Serve
Come as a Guest, Leave as a Friend
Homecoming for Your Heart
Let the "Laurel Love" Light Shine on You

Coal Pit Love Due Wrapped Today: We are excited to be sponsoring **ALL** 14 children at Coal Pit this year for our Christmas mission. Thank you to all who have bought Christmas gifts. We know they will be so excited to receive them. Today is the last day we are accepting gifts. Members of the Member Care and Missions Team will be taking the gifts to Coal Pit this week for distribution to the children.

Beholding with Spirit Meets Wednesday: There will be an informational meeting on this emerging ministry this Wednesday, December 14, at 3:00 pm in the Parlor. We are looking for "Beholders" – those interested in learning how to actively "see and behold" Christ in the other. The goal is to equip "beholders" with "seeing" and "listening" skills in order to walk alongside others in our church. We are trying to move from a pastor centered church to the Body of Christ – where we can care for one another in the name of the Church.

JOY Offering this Advent: Every year during the Advent season, from November 27th through December 18th, we come together to support the Christmas Joy special offering. Laurel Presbyterian Church continues to make and keep our vital promises for this mission. Please help us to support God's perfect gift to us, Jesus Christ.

Last Call to Order your Poinsettias: **Today is the deadline to reserve your poinsettias.** They are \$11.50 each. Just use the form in the bulletin for your dedication and drop this along with your check earmarked, "Christmas Flowers" in the small white church in the narthex. See Duane or Janice Berger for more information.

Christmas Family Dinner Love: Our Virginia Randolph Christmas family is a grandmother raising her 2 teenage grandsons who is struggling to make ends meet. We are receiving food donations, financial gifts, and gift cards for this family. You can make checks payable to the church and earmark "Christmas Family" in the memo line. Food items needed include white potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, canned vegetables, cranberry sauce, boxed food items, and rice. Next Sunday, December 18th, is the last day to donate. We will be delivering the meal/gifts on December 20th. Items can be placed in the box in the Narthex marked VA Randolph family. If you have any questions, please contact Margaret Fitch at (804) 755-7201 or Brenda MacRae at (804) 314-6671.

Christmas Eve Service: Our Christmas Eve service will be celebrated **at high noon** on Saturday, December 24th.

No Service on Christmas Day: We will gather again to worship on New Year's Day.

New's Year Day Service: We will kick off the new year on Sunday, January 1st , with **a noon** service.

Our Advent Home Practice: We are including daily meditations with each week's emailed bulletin for your practice at home. Try to slow down and take time each day to wait with God to prepare for the birth of this One to come. Light a candle as you pray. Make the space for God to be born again in you.

Weekly Tithes and Our Offerings: We have placed a small church house on the table in the back of our outdoor worship and invite you to leave your gifts to support God's work as you depart. You can also mail in your pledges and weekly offerings using our post office address: P.O. Box 1280, Glen Allen, VA 23060-1280

Online Giving is Active: Online giving allows a donor to make contributions using a credit or debit card through a safe portal. You can use the QR code (quick response) by opening your camera app on your phone and scanning it. The QR code is found in the pews and on the back of this bulletin, and it will link you to the secure donation site. You may also choose the new "Online Giving" tab at LaurelPres.com and follow the link there, or the instructions for downloading the giving app.

The Lamb Basket: The Circle has asked that we think outside of the pantry box and bring in canned or boxed items that we find on sale to refill our Lamb basket. The donation box is located in the Narthex.

A COVID PSA: The COVID Task Force would like us to remember that if we do test positive, to let the people around us know, specifically the people we had contact with at church and sat around at worship.

Interested in Joining Laurel?: . If you are interested in joining this sweet church, please contact Rev. Ann Cherry at (804) 508-3850.

Director of Music Search Team: The Session has appointed Glenda Miller, chair, and Gladys Bowles, Vickie Chaplin, and Denis Ramdas to serve as our Director of Music search committee. The job description is posted. We will keep you updated as information is available. Please keep the Search Team in your prayers.

Kettle o'Fish Counseling: Each of us is created by God with purpose and infused with meaning no matter our season of life. If you are interested in exploring yours, please reach out to Chris Rhoden at (804) 220-1582. "Be known. Be loved."

We want you to be comfortable: You are invited to stand, stretch, and move during our worship service or even to remain seated as the spirit moves you.

Bulletin Announcements Best Guide: Please use this as your church event planner for our life together. Sometimes the schedule needs to shift from what is posted in our newsletter.

December Shepherd of the Month: Our December Shepherd of the Month is Kathy Boyce. You can reach Kathy at 804-755-4260. Our shepherds provide member care and TLC.

Call to Prayer: Let us be in prayer for all those impacted by the recent college campus violence, for the Walmart and nightclub tragedies, for those suffering in the Ukraine/Russia war or from any violence, those who are fighting addiction, battling cancer, healing from COVID, carrying heavy burdens, grieving, or suffering. We pray also for our Director of Music Search, for our stewardship campaign, for Laurel to embody the bold vision God has set for us, for all of us to claim our gratitude in God, and for all of us who are struggling to claim the love that claims us as beloved ones, and to live it out in this world.

Laurel Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry, Minister
Chris Rhoden, Kettle o'Fish Counselor-in-Residence
Duane Berger, Clerk, Elder, WE
Michael Henderson, Documentarian, WE
Linda Coulson, Elder, MCM Team
Diane Jackson, Elder, MCM Team
Brenda MacRae, Elder, MCM Team

Rob McBane, Treasurer
Peter MacRae, Bookkeeper
Tod Balsbaugh, Elder, SP Team
Gladys Bowles, Elder, SP Team
Denis Ramdas, Elder, SP Team
Stephen Scarce, Elder, SP Team

You can contact Rev. Ann Cherry at (804) 508-3850 or at laurelpres.cherry@gmail.com

You can reach Chris Rhoden at (804) 220-1582 or at chris@kettleofish.com

You can reach Gingerbread Cottage Preschool at (804) 755-1667 or gingerbreadcottagepreschool@gmail.com

Where Love Is Known

P.O. Box 1280, Glen Allen, VA 23060-1280

9675 Staples Mill Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060

laurelpres.com



Our QR Code for online donations

Use your camera app to open this link to donate

Matthew 11:2-14, *The Message*

²⁻³ John, meanwhile, had been locked up in prison. When he got wind of what Jesus was doing, he sent his own disciples to ask, “Are you the One we’ve been expecting, or are we still waiting?”

⁴⁻⁶ Jesus told them, “Go back and tell John what’s going on:

The blind see,
The lame walk,
Lepers are cleansed,
The deaf hear,
The dead are raised,
The wretched of the earth learn that God is on their side.

“Is this what you were expecting? Then count yourselves most blessed!”

⁷⁻¹⁰ When John’s disciples left to report, Jesus started talking to the crowd about John. “What did you expect when you went out to see him in the wild? A weekend camper? Hardly. What then? A sheik in silk pajamas? Not in the wilderness, not by a long shot. What then? A prophet? That’s right, a prophet! Probably the best prophet you’ll ever hear. He is the prophet that Malachi announced when he wrote, ‘I’m sending my prophet ahead of you, to make the road smooth for you.’

¹¹⁻¹⁴ “Let me tell you what’s going on here: No one in history surpasses John the Baptizer; but in the kingdom he prepared you for, the lowliest person is ahead of him. For a long time now people have tried to force themselves into God’s kingdom. But if you read the books of the Prophets and God’s Law closely, you will see them culminate in John, teaming up with him in preparing the way for the Messiah of the kingdom. Looked at in this way, John is the ‘Elijah’ you’ve all been expecting to arrive and introduce the Messiah.