

WORSHIP GUIDE

Hope Chapel Greensboro

December 14, 2025



The Third Sunday of Advent

What is Advent?

Advent is a word that means “coming” or “arrival.” It is a four-week period in which the church looks back to Jesus’ first coming as our Savior, and looks forward to his second coming as our Judge. Just as John the Baptist told the Jewish people to “prepare” for the Lord’s coming, we need to encourage each other to be ready for his coming again, when he will fulfill God’s promises and renew all things. Indeed, the kingdom of God will come “on earth as it is in heaven” – the wolf will lie down with the lamb, death will be swallowed up, the dead in Christ will rise to new life, and every tear will be wiped away. As Isaiah the prophet says, “Prepare the way for the Lord... The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together” (Isaiah ^{40,3-5}).

Since the fourth century, the Church has celebrated this season of Advent, starting on the fourth Sunday before Christmas day. The celebration of Advent helps us focus our attention on Jesus Christ’s birth and ministry as well as his promised return. Throughout the season we are constantly reminded that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

Reflection

The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord.

Henri Nouwen
Advent and Christmas Wisdom

In the silence of a midwinter dusk, there is far off in the deeps of it somewhere a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You walk up the steps to the front door. The empty windows at either side of it tell you nothing, or almost nothing. For a second you catch a whiff in the air of some fragrance that reminds you of a place you’ve never been and a time you have no words for. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment.

Frederick Buechner
Whistling In The Dark

This is the irrational season
when love blooms bright and wild.
Had Mary been filled with reason,
there’d have been no room for the child.

Madeleine L’Engle
from After Annunciation

Preparation

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 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. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Gathering Song

We sing as a way of engaging our voices, imaginations, words, and desires in the worship of God. We sing together, to God and to each other, because of our calling to be a people joined together in Christ.

Once in Royal David's City

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for His bed:
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,
And His shelter was a stable, and His cradle was a stall:
With the poor, and meek, and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love;
For that Child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above,
And He leads His children on to the place where He is gone.

Cecil Alexander (1848), Henry Gauntlett (1849)

Welcome

We're glad you are here. If you are visiting with us, please take a moment to fill out a "Connect Card", available in a seat-back near you or online using this QR code. We would love the chance to connect with you and help you know more about our community.



Advent Reading & Call to Worship

Leader: God of heaven and earth,

You sent Your angels as messengers to Your servants,
bringing news of comfort and joy,
of Your plan to heal a world gone astray...

All: ...Bringing news of Emmanuel, God-With-Us.

Leader: To Mary, you sent a message of your favor.

You chose her to carry and give birth to Jesus,
the Son of the Most High.

**All: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
From now on all generations will call me blessed." ¹**

Leader: To Joseph the angel gave assurance that Mary's son was from God,
and should be named Jesus...

All: ...Because He would save us from our sins. ²

Leader: To shepherds among their flocks,

angels brought good news of great joy that will be for all people.

All: A Savior has been born to us; He is the Messiah, the Lord. ³

Leader: To Kings from the east, a star rose signifying the birth of Jesus.

When they saw the star they were overjoyed,
and they bowed down and worshiped the Christ Child,
offering costly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**All: We worship the King of Kings and Lord of Lords,
and lay all our treasures at His feet. ⁴**

Leader: You have brought us joy through Your Son, the Messiah.

All: A Savior who is Christ the King.

PSALM 86:9-10

Leader: All the nations you have made

shall come and worship before you, O Lord;

and shall glorify your name.

All: For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

During the Third Sunday of Advent we light the "Joy" candle, remembering how Christ came into the world to bring true and lasting joy.

References: ¹ Luke 1:46-48; ² Matthew 1:21; ³ Luke 2:8-14; ⁴ Matthew 2:1-12

This advent reading was written by Fran Pratt and used with permission.

Song of Praise

From the Squalor of a Borrowed Stable *Stuart Townend (1999)*



1. From the squalor of a borrowed stable,
2. King of heaven now the friend of sinners,

by the Spi-rit and a vir-gin's faith;
hum-ble ser-vant in the Fa-ther's hands;

to the an-guish and the shame of scan-dal
Filled with pow-er and the Ho-ly Spi-rit,

came the Sav-ior of the hu-man race! But the
filled with mer-cy for the bro-ken man. Yes, He

skies were filled with the praise of heav'n, shep-herds lis-ten as the
walked my road and He felt my pain, joys and sor-rows that I

an-gels tell of the gift of God came down to man
know so well; Yet His right-eous steps give me hope a-gain-

at the dawn-ing of Im-man-u-el.
I will fol-low my Im-man-u-el!

3. Through the kisses of a friend's betrayal,
He was lifted on a cruel cross;
He was punished for a world's transgressions,
He was suffering to save the lost.
He fights for breath, He fights for me,
Loosing sinners from the claims of hell;
And with a shout our souls are free -
Death defeated by Immanuel!

4. Now He's standing in the place of honor,
Crowned with glory on the highest throne,
Interceding for His own beloved
Till His Father calls to bring them home!
Then the skies will part as the trumpet sounds
Hope of heaven or the fear of hell;
But the Bride will run to her Lover's arms,
Giving glory to Immanuel!

Confession of Sin

Why do we confess sin? Worship both draws us to God and reveals where we are distant from him. Throughout Scripture, when people see or experience God they are faced with the reality of their own brokenness and shame. Likewise, we confess our sin, as a community and individually.

Almighty God who inhabits eternity
but dwells with those who are of a humble and contrite spirit:
before You and our Lord Jesus Christ we confess our sins.
We have ignored the presence of Your Spirit.
We have failed to look for the return of our Savior and Judge.
We have been blind to Your coming
in the suffering of the hungry, the exiled,
the destitute, the sick, and the imprisoned.
In Your great goodness put away our offenses
and cleanse us from our sin, for Jesus' sake...

*** time for silent confession ***

Words of Forgiveness

Matthew 1:21

Why is it called “Words of Forgiveness?” There’s a reason we don’t call this element “The Forgiveness of Sins.” As Protestants, we truly believe that there is only one mediator between God and humankind—Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5). Therefore, no pastor or priest can offer God’s pardon...this is the work of Christ alone, given freely by and directly from Him! Therefore, we are assured that as we confess our sins and put our faith in Jesus Christ, He indeed does pardon us. Our pastors and leaders in worship merely offer this good news as it is proclaimed in Scripture (see 1 John 1:9).

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

Passing of the Peace

Why is the Greeting put after our Words of Forgiveness? The book of 2 Corinthians reminds us that part of God’s goal in reconciling Himself to us was that we might likewise be reconciled with one another. But for healing and wholeness to take place in our relationships (which is what the Greeting enacts as we acknowledge one another in the peace of our Lord), we must first know the healing of our relationship with God through Christ. God’s pardon of us sets us free to love and forgive one another without reservation or qualification!

Jesus Came the Heavens Adoring

Jesus came, the heav’ns adoring, came with peace from realms on high;
Jesus came for man’s redemption, lowly came on earth to die.

Jesus comes again in mercy, when our hearts are bowed with care;
Jesus comes again in answer to an earnest, heartfelt prayer;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Comes to save us from despair.

Jesus comes in joy and sorrow, shares alike our hopes and fears;
Jesus comes, whate’er befalls us, glads our hearts, and dries our tears;

Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing, bringing news of sins forgiven;
Jesus comes in sounds of gladness, leading souls redeemed to Heav’n;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Now the gate of death is riv’n.

Jesus comes on clouds triumphant, when the heav’ns shall pass away;
Jesus comes again in glory; let us then our homage pay,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Till the dawn of endless day.

Godfrey Thring (1864), Michael Van Patter (2012)

Giving of Tithes & Offering

What's the offering all about? The offering is a way for Christians to support the mission and ministry of the church. Christians offer a sacrificial portion of their resources—time, talents, possessions—as an act of faith and gratitude in response to God's grace. While many at Hope Chapel make their regular contributions through online giving and automated bill pay, offerings are a part of our worship service as an opportunity for the regular, proportionate and generous giving of the resources God has given us.

If you are a guest, please feel no obligation to give. Giving is for the members and regular attenders who desire to give to God and His church so that we can be a blessing to Him and our community in even greater ways.

Ways to give: You may drop a check or cash in the offering plate, give online at hopechapelgreensboro.org/give, or give through Venmo to @HopeChapel (note: contributions made through Venmo are not receipted for tax purposes).



Behold

The empty filled, the wounded healed, the broken back together.
The poor are blessed, the weary rest, we will dance forever.
The blinded see, the chained are free, the doubtful now believer.
The outcast known, the orphan home, You are my Redeemer.

*Behold, behold, behold what love can do!
Behold, behold, He's making all things new!*

The lost return, the voiceless heard, the mourner now rejoicing.
The mountains shake, the world awake, creation all composing.
The sad untrue, the earth renewed, the song has found its singer.
The darkness light, the dead alive, You are my Redeemer.

*Behold, behold, behold what love can do!
Behold, behold, He's making all things new!*

We've been struck down, we're not destroyed,
We've sown in tears, we'll reap in joy.
We've been struck down, we're not destroyed,
We've sown in tears, we'll reap in joy.
My eyes are open!

Taylor Leonhardt (2020)

Prayer of Renewal

Church, City, World. Corporate prayer is an essential part of the worship and work of God's people. We pray for specific needs— naming and sometimes lamenting the brokenness in the world— mindful to ask our powerful and merciful God for help for the Church, the city, the world, and for one another.

The leader will end each section of the prayer by saying "Lord, in Your mercy..." and the congregation responds with "...Hear our prayer."

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:39-56 (ESV)

P.803 IN CHURCH BIBLE

***What do we do during the Scripture Reading?** Because the Word of God is one of the chief means through which God has chosen to speak to us, it is a principle and direct way we "hear from God" in worship. The public reading of Scripture, then, is a sacred act that deserves our full attention and focus. Especially in our age, we must discipline ourselves to listen to readings for longer periods of time, for God's Word is food for our soul.*

³⁹ In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be[a] a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

Sermon

“The Way Up Is The Way Down”

*Erik Rome is Hope Chapel's pastor of community & mission.
For past sermons, please visit our website.*

Communion

What Is Communion? *What we do during communion isn't merely a symbolic act or a remembrance—it's more than that. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 teaches us that we are actually communing with Christ Himself as we partake of the elements. We mysteriously “participate in the body and blood” of Jesus. As we take communion, let us remember that Christ is spiritually present in a special way for us in this sacrament. Let's enjoy the feast!*

If you are not a follower of Jesus or are not prepared to share in the meal, please feel free to not participate and instead spend this time in prayer (“Prayers for Reflection” are included in this worship guide). We hope this time is helpful to you as you consider your relationship with Jesus Christ and with his people, the church. PLEASE NOTE: All bread is gluten-free.

Communion Litany

The Great Thanksgiving

Minister: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

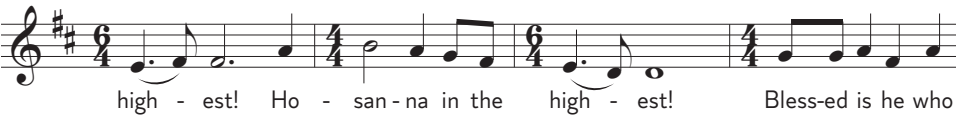
Minister: Lift up your hearts!

All: We lift them up to the Lord!

Minister: And now we give you thanks because Christ was born a child
into a line of broken and sinful people,
a royal house lying in ruins.
In righteousness He will judge the world,
as the one who gives us himself—his body and his blood—
for our righteousness and peace
and for the rebuilding of His kingdom.

**All: And so we gladly thank you,
joining our voices with Your people on earth
and all the company of heaven,
who forever sing to the glory of Your Name...**

Sanctus *Patrick Schlabs (2011)*



Prayer of Approach

Minister: We do not presume to come to this Your table,
O merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in Your abundant and great mercies.

**All: We are not worthy so much as to gather up
the crumbs under Your table;
but You are the same Lord
whose character is always to have mercy.**

Minister: Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of Your dear Son Jesus Christ,
and to drink His blood,
so that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body,
and our souls washed through His most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.

All: Amen.

Words of Institution

Minister: Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. Alleluia.

All: Alleluia!

Minister: These are the gifts of God for the people of God.
Take these in remembrance that Christ died for you,
and feed on Him in your hearts by faith,
and drink, remembering that Christ's blood
has been shed for you!

*Preparation for the Table**The Feast**Prayer after Communion*

Minister: O Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, Emmanuel,
 We thank you that in this holy meal,
 You renew your promises within us,

**All: Empower us by your Spirit to witness and to serve,
 And send us out as your disciples. Amen.**

Prayers for Reflection

Prayer for Those Searching

Lord Jesus, You claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. If what You claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open me to the reality of who You are. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following You as I consider the reasons for doing so. Give me an understanding that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life You promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through You, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank You for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that You have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive You as my Savior and my Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Those Struggling with Sin

Lord Jesus, grant that I may see in You the fulfillment of all my need, and may turn from every false satisfaction to feed on You, the true and living bread. Enable me to lay aside the sin that clings so closely, and faithfully follow You in life. Amen.

Prayer for Renewal and Commitment

Lord Jesus, You have called us to follow You in baptism, to love God and neighbor, and to a life of committed discipleship in your Church. Grant that I may take the necessary steps to be one with Your people, to pursue forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace, and to live in the fullness of Your Spirit. Amen.

Hope of the Ages

The prophets had glimpsed and the angels had watched with awe,
The unfolding plans of our faithful, redeeming God.
What they longed for we have seen;
What was promised we believe.

*Hope of the Ages, Isaiah's great light,
Abraham's offspring;
Blessing of Jacob, Judah's might;
Hope of the Ages, David's true Son;
Desire of nations, promised salvation; God with us.*

The vision once clouded has now to our hearts appeared;
Once shrouded in myst'ry, redemption has been made clear.
Our Messiah now has come,
Word made Flesh, the saving One.

All hail the One now revealed to the world,
In Bethlehem born to a young virgin girl.
Lamb without blemish yet cruelly betrayed,
Who cried, "It is finished!" and rose from the grave.
The Father's great gift and the proof of His love,
Hope of the Ages, our God here with us.

Fournier, Romanacce, Althoff (2020)

Sending Song

Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery

Come behold the wondrous mystery in the dawning of the King,
He the theme of heaven's praises, robed in frail humanity.
In our longing, in our darkness, now the light of life has come;
Look to Christ, who condescended, took on flesh to ransom us.

Come behold the wondrous mystery: He the perfect Son of Man.
In His living, in His suffering, never trace nor stain of sin.
See the true and better Adam, come to save the hell-bound man;
Christ the great and sure fulfillment of the law; in Him we stand.

Come behold the wondrous mystery: Christ the Lord upon the tree;
 In the stead of ruined sinners hangs the Lamb in victory.
 See the price of our redemption, see the Father's plan unfold
 Bringing many sons to glory; grace unmeasured, love untold.

Come behold the wondrous mystery, slain by death the God of life;
 But no grave could e'er restrain Him: Praise the Lord; He is alive!
 What a foretaste of deliverance, how unwavering our hope!
 Christ in power resurrected, as we will be when He comes!

Matt Boswell, Michael Bleecker, Matt Papa (2013)

Community Life

Blessing & Sending

Minister: Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shine upon you,
 scatter the darkness from before your path,
 and make you ready to meet Him when He comes in glory;
 and the blessing of God almighty,
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 be among you, and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Minister: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God!

Financial Update

Given Last Week:	\$58,163	Gifts can be placed in the offering
Required to date:	\$898,072	plate on Sundays or mailed to:
(Jan. 1 - Dec. 7)		Hope Chapel
Given to date:	\$945,312	908 N. Josephine Boyd St
Over/[Under]	\$47,240	Greensboro, NC 27408

Online giving is available on our website: www.hopechapelgreensboro.org/give
 We also accept donations via Venmo: @HopeChapel.

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Want to connect with others?
hopechapelgreensboro.org/community



Visiting with us?
hopechapelgreensboro.org/im-new



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