



¹⁰ 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 sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Isaiah 35:10

Abington Presbyterian Church

December 11, 2022
10:00 a.m. Celebration Worship
the Third Sunday of Advent



FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION...

We can choose a better way

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Third Sunday of Advent December 11, 2022

GATHERING

The people gather wherever they may in response to God's call, offering praise in words of scripture, prayer, and song. The people acknowledge their sinfulness and receive the good news of God's forgiveness.

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP *A time for quiet preparation before worship*

O God, when our world crashes in on us in ways that make us feel alone and uncertain, come to us that we may discern right from wrong and have the strength to choose what is good and true. Equip us as we worship to make choices and follow where you would lead us. Amen.

PRELUDE Comfort, Comfort Now My People *Kile Smith*

LIFE AND WORK OF THE CHURCH

INTROIT Light One Candle for Waiting Michael Bedford
The Cherub Choir readies our hearts to light the Advent candles.

Light one candle for waiting, light one candle for waiting,
Light one candle for waiting as we look for the coming of Jesus.

Light two candles for watching, light two candles for watching,
Light two candles for watching as we look for the coming of Jesus.

Light three candles, light three candles,
Light three candles for hoping as we look for the coming of Jesus.

Light four candles for welcome, light four candles for welcome,
Light four candles for welcoming the Christ Child,
The Christ Child, the Christ Child, born for all.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

It is often hard for us to interpret the events that impact our lives.
There are surprises along the way that can leave us confused.
It is often hard for us to know that God is with us in our journeys.
We gather seeking new insights that might lead to faithful obedience.
O come, O come, Emmanuel,
that we may know the fulfillment and direction you intend for us.

* LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES

*PRAYER

With joy, O God, we look for your light, confident of its provision.
With joy, we seek good news coming from your engagement with humanity.
With joy, we celebrate that as you draw close to us,
we can grow closer to you and to one another. Amen.

* HYMN 88

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

VENI EMMANUEL

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of mercy,
so often each day we have the opportunity to be gracious,
to assume the best in others,
to give the benefit of the doubt.
So often each day we could choose the better way,
but frequently we don't.
Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel of our lives.
Comparison and critique lead the charge.
Forgive us for all the ways we fall short of your good intent for our lives.
Give us the courage to love even bigger than before,
and the wisdom to choose a better way.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way,
God continues to be a God of second chances, new life, and love!
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

* HYMN 110, v 1

Love Has Come

BRING A TORCH

Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

* THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Greet one another with the sign of peace.

The Peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

WORD

God's Word is read and its message is proclaimed in scripture, music and interpretation.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

* HYMN

A Better Way

GOD REST YOU MERRY 8.6.8.6.8.6 with refrain

Text: Anna Strickland (2022)

Music: Traditional English carol (18th cent.)

When Jo - seph learned of Ma - ry's state, he pon - dered her dis - grace.
 He planned to leave her qui - et - ly and not cre - ate a scene.
 Said Ga - briel, "Jo - seph, do not fear to make Ma - ry your wife;
 Like Jo - seph woke from sleep to find his path - way had been changed,

He cal - cu - lat - ed all the shame the scan - dal would cre - ate.
 But Ma - ry still would grow with child; what then would her fate be?
 She bears in - side her womb the hope of ev - er - last - ing life.
 Still, here to - day, God calls us all to choose the bet - ter way.

But, not con - tent to see her stoned, he of - fered her some grace.
 When Jo - seph went to sleep that night, an an - gel in - ter - vened.
 The son that she will bear to you is Je - sus the Mes - siah."
 Be - yond our wild - est dreams is still a call - ing that re - mains:

Oh there is a bet - ter way, God's bet - ter

way Oh we can choose the bet - ter way

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SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

We Can Choose a Better Way

The Rev. Kirby Lawrence Hill

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Based on a resource by Sanctified Art

We believe in a God who offers second chances
 and does not hold grudges.

We believe in a God who opens the door to new life
 and leaves the porch light on for us when we get lost.

We believe in a God who believes in us—
believes that we can make a difference,
that we can choose grace over comparison,
love over hate,
peace over war.
So, we strive to live our lives in love,
to be the people God calls us to be.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE 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.

THANKSGIVING & SENDING

*After the proclamation of God's Word, we respond with gratitude prepared to go
into the world where we are called to live according to God's will.*

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

(You can leave your offering in the plates at the exits or use the QR code to go to APC's giving page or you
can mail your gifts to the church office.)

OFFERTORY

Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion

Kenneth Kosche

Chancel Choir offers a setting of scripture from Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 118:26a.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout, daughter of Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation.

*DOXOLOGY HYMN 143, v4

Angels, From the Realms of Glory

REGENT SQUARE

4 All creation, join in praising
God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king!

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

* HYMN 109

Blest Be the God of Israel

FOREST GREEN

1 Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free;
who visits and redeems us, who grants us liberty.
The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill that promise and bring the people peace.

2 God from the house of David a child of grace has given;
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

3 On those who sit in darkness the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

* BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Improvisation on God Rest You Merry

Eric Meyers

Worship Leaders:

Preacher: The Rev. Kirby Lawrence Hill

Liturgist: Anne-Marie Constable

Children's Message: Ruth Sall

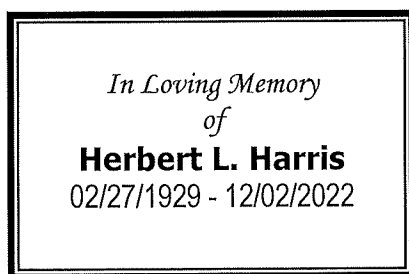
Cherub Choir: Ruth Sall, director

Chancel Choir: John Sall, director

Candle Lighters: David & Sandy Bishop

Organ: Erik Meyer

Congratulations to Grace and Sam Loveland in the birth of their son, Liam Douglas Loveland, on November 28. Proud grandparents are Ralph and Tink McDevitt.



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Bulletin Cover Art artist statement

Wilderness Blossom

by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Isaiah 35:1-10 | Digital painting

Hope is difficult to come by these days; the wilderness seems to expand toward the horizon with no end in sight. "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing" (Is. 35: 1-2). How does one cling to the nonexistent, vibrant purple petals of a crocus flower as they crouch in a barren, dusty wasteland? How does one reach for the cool relief of clear springs in a parched haunt of jackals?

Have you ever looked through a kaleidoscope? A kaleidoscope doesn't expose your eye to anything that isn't there. It takes what is in view, and with light and mirrors, creates a new, dynamic, luminous image. The overlapping, novel perspectives, light, and movement transform mundane and even unappealing subjects into vibrantly dancing masterpieces. Now, how does this relate to this text? I think it's possible that when we face difficult seasons that seem unending, if we immerse ourselves in the light of the voices of prophets, move to a new vantage point, and try new perspectives, we just might be able to see the wilderness bloom.

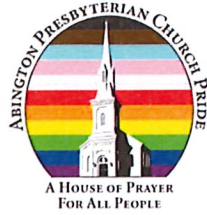
In this image I chose a few of the many vivid visuals from the text and created a kaleidoscope of sorts. Starting in the center, crocuses bloom, weak hands are strengthened, eyes are opened, bodies leap with joy, burning sand becomes a pool, swamps are formed, and the light of gladness radiates from the entire composition.

We need prophecies like this. Please don't get me wrong; there are certainly seasons of disappointment, devastation, and grief in this life, but we need not make our homes there. We could choose to shy away from such optimism during particularly difficult times while getting endlessly lost and settled into apathy and despair. Or, we could choose a better way, and hold fast to the stories of the joy that is to come.

—Lauren Wright Pittman

In need of special prayers this week: Doris Boerner, Ira Greenbaum (nephew of Marlyn Whyte), Helen Porter (mother of Joe Porter), Suzy Paravla (daughter of Susan Davis), Linda Maisenhelder, Christine Kim (wife of Stephen Kim), Will Pompilli (son of Teresa Pompilli), Wayne Gibbons, Jr., Susan Arnhold (friend of Joanne and Jeff Bates), Judy Meissner, Susan Johnson, John and Phyllis Frazier, Robin Cupo, Laura Lafferty, Emil Kupper, Erma Yerkes, Joseph May, Victor Johnson III (Pete Johnson's nephew), Laurie Betts, Sally Hardy, Katie Link, Kevin Alexander (Betsy Alexander's son), Jennifer Edward (friend of Nick Cupo), Karen Dirks, Marilyn DeBacco (mother of Barb Foy), Ted Hyczko, Peter Mason (John Waters' nephew), Shawn London (William Coles' daughter), Rusty Thurlow (Jackie Thurlow's husband), Bill Kostik (Shelia Jackson's brother), Ian Beck, Gordy Hawkinson (Nick Cupo's Uncle).

For Pastoral Care: To notify the church of an illness, hospitalization, death, or to request prayer, contact a minister or call your Deacon or the Church Office at (215) 887-4530.



Abington Presbyterian Church celebrates God's infinite love and believes all people are equal in the eyes of God. We welcome all to worship and serve with us. We seek to work together to oppose intolerance, racism, and injustice that threaten the unity of humankind.

ABINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Founded 1714

1082 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001

Phone: (215) 887-4530 Fax: (215) 887-5988 E-mail: klhill@apcusa.org

Web Site: www.apcusa.org

The Reverend Dr. Kirby Lawrence Hill, *Head of Staff*

Ruth Ideen-Sall, B.M., *Interim Director of Christian Education*

John Sall, M.M., *Director of Music Ministries*

Eric Meyer, *Organist*

The Rev. Ashley Rossi & Justin Feil, *Youth Fellowship Coordinators*

ABINGTON PRESBYTERIAN LIFE

December 11, 2022

10:00 AM				
AGE/GRADE	ROOM	TEACHER	TOPIC	Pick Up
Birth— 2 year olds	110-112	Childcare	Childcare	110-112
Preschool	221	Amanda & Joe Pompilli	Advent	221
K—2nd Grades	Malachi Jones Room (70)	Mariam Freeman	Cooking	Parish Hall
3rd—5th Grades	Malachi Jones Room (70)	Mariam Freeman	Cooking	Parish Hall

Children ages 30 months through 5th grade attend Sunday School during the 10am service. Preschool classes start at 10am and are listed in the grid. Kindergarten through 5th graders start the worship service with their families and proceed to their classrooms after the Children's Moment. All children are welcome to attend Sunday School. If you are a visitor today, please feel free to accompany your child to his or her classroom.

Christian Education Offerings

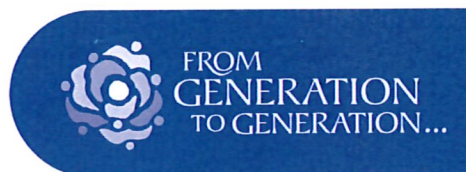
8:45am

- Middle School Sunday School at 8:45am in the Parish Hall basement. All 6th - 8th graders are welcome to join us.
- Confirmation class led by Bill Stock and Karen Hoyle.
- Senior High Dialogue at 8:45am in the Parish Hall basement. All 10th-12th graders are welcome to join us.
- Adult Education at 8:45am in the Parlor. (see blurb below for more information)



Advent Adult Education Opportunity

Join us at 8:45am in the Parlor to learn from our Advent theme, *From Generation to Generation*. Ruth Sall will lead us in a Bible Study and Visio Divina inspired by the Advent readings and artwork created by A Sanctified Art. Using visual art, poetry, and devotional texts, we will meditate on the scriptures that lead us through Advent. From Generation to Generation was produced by a talented collective of pastors, artists, and pastors who are artists, all of whom are women.



Congregational Meeting TODAY—In light of Kirby's pending retirement, the Session has called a congregational meeting in order to receive the Nominating Committee's slate of nominees to serve on a Designated Pastor search committee. They will be nominating Zene Colt, John Dean, Farah Khan Gill, Darcey Linton, Ralph McDevitt, Alice Price, Kathy Waite

Please plan to attend after worship today.

December's Coffee Fellowship moved to December 18th

This Sunday's schedule is full! Come to the after-service congregational meeting and truly enjoy the Christmas by Candlelight experience.

Let's gather next week in the Parish Hall after the 10:00a.m. Worship Service to relax with friends. See you there!



Nursery Care— is offered for children birth through toddler in the nursery and the toddler rooms (110 and 112)

All nursery volunteers will be vaccinated and wearing masks.
Our limit per room is 4 children.

CHRISTMAS DONATIONS 2022

We are so very blessed at APC to enjoy beautiful and inspiring music in a lovely and worshipful sanctuary. At our most holy times of year we are even more fortunate to be able to witness even more of those gifts in a sanctuary that has been lovingly decorated. Thanks to those who have given their time, talents and treasure we are able to make this happen each year.

This Christmas, consider making a gift to enrich the season and enhance our music with added musicians as well as beautifying the sanctuary with flowers and special decorations in memory/honor of a loved one. We ask that you mark your check as “*Christmas Gift*” and include this form with your donation.

Yes, I/We would like to remember/honor a loved one with a gift:

Your Name:

Your Name (s) as printed in the Bulletin:

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

Enclosed please find \$ () Check () Cash

APC envelope # (if available)

Please make checks payable to Abington Presbyterian Church.

Please Get Your 2023 Pledge Turned In

Thanks to all who have turned in pledge cards or have pledged online to let the Session know what resources it can expect as it moves toward adopting a 2023 budget. If you have not turned in a pledge card, it is not too late! You will find them in the pew racks and you can drop them in the offering plate at the exit.

Or you can go online to <https://apcusa.org/give/pledge/> in order to securely register your planned giving for the coming year. Thanks so much!



Dec. 17 - All youth 6th-12th grade are welcome to join us for caroling at Rydal Park followed by our gift exchange at church. Please bring a wrapped gift that is less than \$10 if you are able.

TAKE A NAME TAG!

**PLEASE
TAKE ONE**

It is a tradition at APC each Christmas Season to send Christmas cards to members who are ill, home-bound, have moved away or to someone who has lost a loved one. You will find name tags with addresses on the small Christmas tree located outside the church office. Sending a Christmas card will let each person know we are thinking of them during the Christmas Season. Take two, three or more if you can.

Thank you, Committee for Older Adult Ministry



Christmas Eve Services

5:00pm Family Friendly Service

7:30pm Traditional Service

Childcare offered at both services

Christmas Day Service

10:00am only with Communion

No Childcare available

New Year's Day Service

10:00am only with Communion

No Childcare available



The ornaments on the Christmas Trees were made by members of the congregation at the Advent Fair. They include Advent-colored ribbon where people wrote something they are afraid to say 'yes' to, a worry, a prayer concern, or a hope that they hold in their heart.

The craft came from our Advent Resources created by A Sanctified Art- *From Generation to Generation*: "What God asks of Mary is not easy, so Gabriel's greeting of "Be not afraid!" is easier said than done. Thankfully, God meets us in our fear, exactly where we are. Even when the fear remains, God holds it for us, so we are not alone. These ornaments, decorated in gold to symbolize the divine, will hold some of our fears."



The APC Pandemic team has these updated safety protocols to match community conditions:

Masks are now optional in church facilities (including during singing).

You are encouraged to maintain some social distancing in where you choose to sit.

There is a full-time mask section on the lectern-side rear portion of the sanctuary (section where the video equipment is) for whoever wants to use it. This section is still using the color-coded guidance for social distancing.

Thanks to all for your cooperation. We show our love for God and neighbor by being sensitive to the needs of others.

The Pandemic Work Team consists of the following people:

Medical Professionals: Frank Sandstrom, MD; Michelle Feil, MSN, RN

Church Council Representatives: Suzin Weber, Carolyn Koch, Don Brooks

Church Facility Expertise: John Miller

From the Staff: John Sall, Ruth Sall, Barb Foy, Rev. Kirby Lawrence Hill

This QR Code takes you to the donation
page on our APC website



SCAN ME



Mission Council Offers Christmas Giving Opportunities



Purchasing alternative gifts for family and friends are tangible ways that we can share our faith by supporting people at home and around the world who are in need of hope and relief from the traumas of poverty and upheaval. A small gift has a big impact and adds joy to families celebrating Christmas. Below are giving opportunities that will directly impact the children and families who receive your gift.

Gift Cards for Gemma Services (formally the Village)

Gemma Services changes lives by transforming hope into action for children, youth and families facing emotional and behavioral challenges often caused by loss or serious traumas such as abuse, neglect and addiction. Your donation of gift cards or monetary support will help children and families experience joy and hope during the Christmas season.

____ **Gift Card Total** (Gift Cards in the amount of \$25: Target, Walmart, Amazon, 5-Below.) Complete this form and return with your gift card to the church office. If you rather, make a \$25 donation (check made payable to Abington Presbyterian Church) and we'll purchase a card for you.

Presbyterian Giving Catalogue

Gifts purchased from the Presbyterian Giving Catalogue are tangible ways that you can provide help and relief to people, families and communities around the world.

____ **Fishing Net, \$15.** Small-scale fishermen rely on their catch for income and food. When damaged, nets are too expensive to replace, some use mosquito nets which can introduce insecticides into waterways. Help protect livelihoods and the environment with a gift of a fishing net.

____ **Family of Chickens, \$25.** Eggs for food, feathers for pillows and fertilizer for crops. By giving a family of chickens, you can help improve the food security and livelihoods of farmers and families around the world.

____ **Kitchen Kit, \$25.** Food requires preparation and families who have lost everything in a disaster often lack the basic tools needed to cook a meal. A kitchen kit contains cooking pots, utensils, bowls, cups and spoons.

____ **Sewing Machine, \$50.** New sewing equipment can launch a business that mends, alters and sells clothing and linens. Your gift can help provide a stable source of income for a family in a developing part of the world.

____ **Water Filter, \$50.** In places like Flint, Michigan, Puerto Rico and other communities, residents must cope with contaminated local water systems. Your gift of a water filter provides a family with safe water for drinking, bathing and cooking and keeps empty water bottles out of local landfills.

____ **Teacher Training, \$85.** Your gift can increase access to education for girls around the world by expanding teacher training. Through an innovative learning program that doesn't require any technology – not even electricity – more teachers can be effectively trained to serve in remote communities where girls may otherwise have little opportunity for schooling.

____ **Women's Empowerment Project, \$100.** Where women receive education and economic opportunity, communities thrive. By helping to provide agricultural and vocational training, literacy education and access to loans and credit services for women, you are helping them in their efforts to care for their families and reduce hunger and poverty in their communities.

Alternative Gift donations should be made by December 18, 2022.

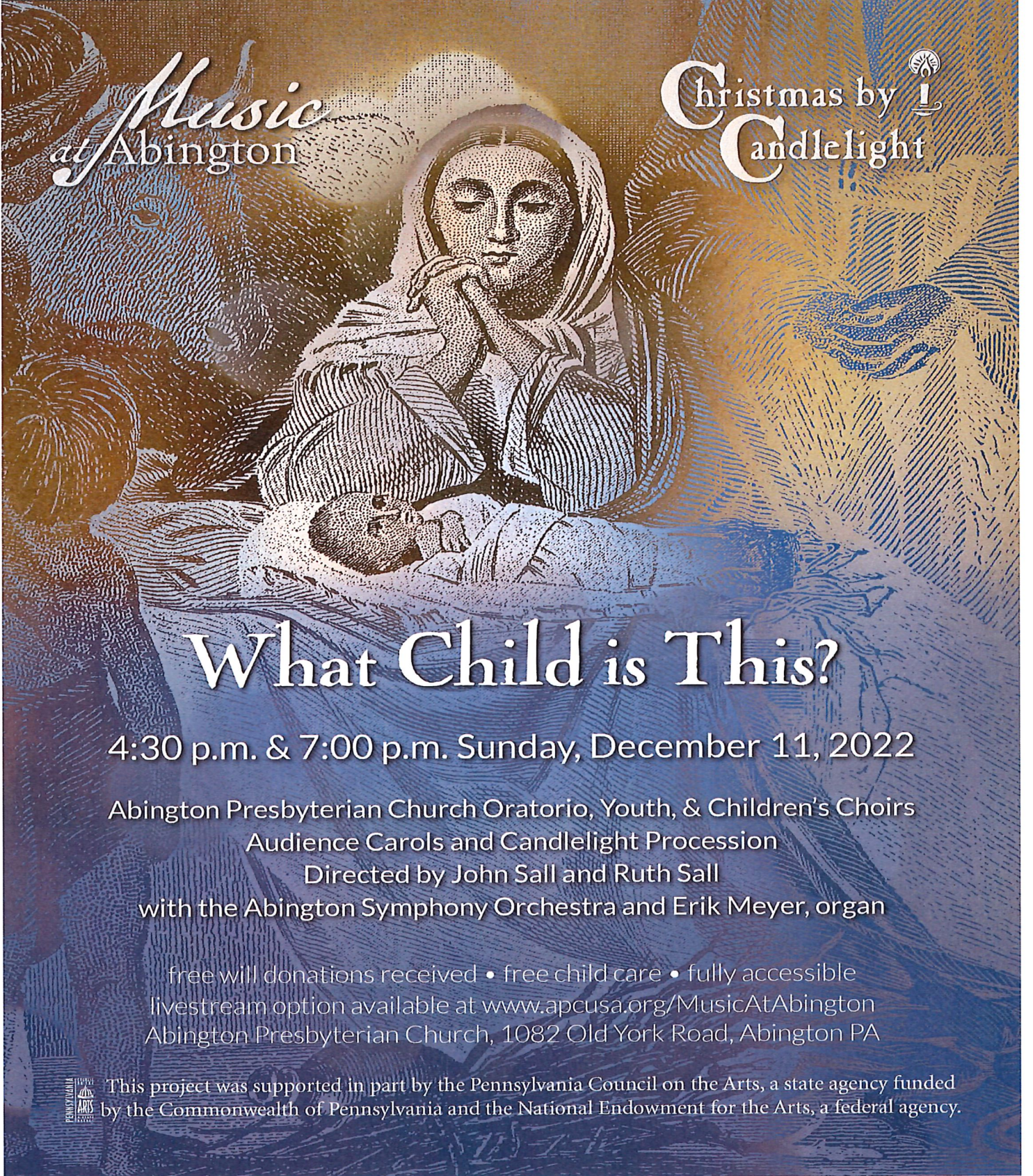
Please fill out this form with your Gift Card and/or Check for gifts from the Presbyterian Gift Catalogue and mail to the church. *Please make checks payable to Abington Presbyterian Church and add your member number.* We will mail you a card(s) with the project(s) you purchased for your honoree.




NAME _____ Total \$ _____ Member # _____

Your address: _____

COME TOGETHER TO CREATE CHANGE. Small Gifts. Big Impact.
Abington Presbyterian Church: 1082 Old York Road, Abington, PA 19001
Questions: Please contact Georgene Pilling at gapilling25@gmail.com.

A detailed illustration of a Nativity scene. Mary is seated in the center, holding the infant Jesus. Joseph is on the left, and a donkey and ox are visible in the background. The scene is lit with warm, golden light.

Music
at Abington

Christmas by 
Candlelight

What Child is This?

4:30 p.m. & 7:00 p.m. Sunday, December 11, 2022

Abington Presbyterian Church Oratorio, Youth, & Children's Choirs

Audience Carols and Candlelight Procession

Directed by John Sall and Ruth Sall

with the Abington Symphony Orchestra and Erik Meyer, organ

free will donations received • free child care • fully accessible
livestream option available at www.apcusa.org/MusicAtAbington
Abington Presbyterian Church, 1082 Old York Road, Abington PA



This project was supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.