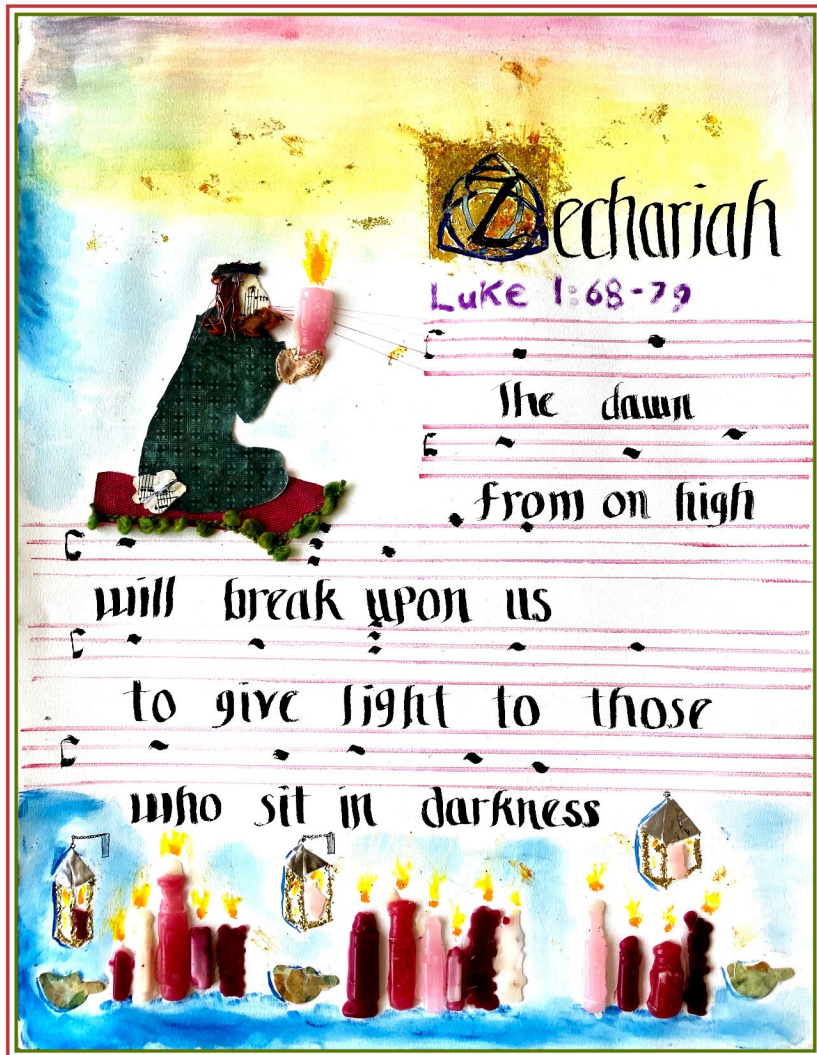


the Third Sunday of
Advent

- ⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of
Israel,
for he has looked favorably on
his people and redeemed
them.
⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty
savior for us
in the house of his servant
David.”

Luke 1:68–69



Abington Presbyterian Church

December 15, 2024
10:00 a.m. Celebration Worship

Centering Prayer

O Root of Life,
implant your seed within us,
and in your advent,
draw us all to you,
our hope reborn
in dying and in rising.
For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.
Amen.

The people gather in response to God's call to worship our Creator with thanksgiving and praise.

Hearing Assistance Devices are available in the Narthex (at the back of the Sanctuary). Please see an Usher for Assistance.

Children's Worship Bags are available at each entrance to the Sanctuary.

The whole congregation joins together in speaking (or singing) the text in **bold** print. At the asterisk (*) please stand in body or rise in spirit.

During Advent (the four Sundays leading to Christmas) the church prepares to welcome the Light of the World. We mark this season of waiting by lighting candles on the Advent Wreath.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Third Sunday of Advent

GATHERING

PRELUDE *Savior of the Nations, Come* J. S. Bach

WELCOME AND LIVING OUR FAITH

INTROIT *A Waiting Carol* Helen Kemp
The Cherub Choir: Ruth Sall, director

He's coming! He's coming! Oh, tell us, who is coming?
Lord Jesus is coming to light our lives again!

Each candle is saying, "Get ready for his birthday."
Prepare us to greet him with love and joy, we pray.

Oh, come, see the candles, they sparkle with light.
They help us to wait for the Day of Delight!
Come, lift up your voices, prepare for the Boy.
The birth of the Christ child will fill us with joy!

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE Allie and Maddie McMahon

And Zechariah lifted his voice to sing:
*Because of God's deep compassion,
the dawn from heaven will break upon us!*

Bless the Lord, the God of our ancestors!

*The rising sun will give light to those sitting in darkness,
and guide our feet into the way of peace.*

Bless the Lord, the God who redeems us!

The Spirit coaxes a song from our hearts.
With Zechariah, we lift our voices in praise.

For God has raised up a mighty Savior!

With the hope of Zechariah, we light the third candle
as we wait and watch for the dawn from on high.

**The light grows, our song swells.
Christ is drawing near!**

*HYMN NO. 106 *Prepare the Way, O Zion* BEREDEN VAG FOR HERRAN

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy One,
Christ is coming; your kingdom is drawing near.
We cannot remain unchanged.
As we prepare the way for the Prince of Peace,
help us abandon wayward wanderings
and return to faithful paths.
We have neglected to plead the case of the poor,
and ignored the needs of the afflicted.
We have denied our part in systems that oppress,
and turned a blind eye toward injustice.**

**Renew our minds and transform our hearts,
that our lives might bear the fruit of compassion and care.
Baptize us with your Spirit,
and claim us again for your holy work,
until you come in glory.**

*SILENT PRAYER

*ASSURANCE OF GOD’S FORGIVENESS

*RESPONSE NO. 82 (v. 1) *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* HYFRYDOL

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

WORD

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Ruth Sall

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Val Pendley

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:5, 8-20

New Testament, p. 56

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The congregation is invited to share signs of Christ’s peace, such as a handshake, with one another.

Following the Children’s Message, children (through Grade 5) may follow their teachers to Sunday School or remain in worship.

Where the word is read and proclaimed, we believe Jesus Christ the living Word is present by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the proclamation of the word through the reading and interpretation of Scripture is central to our worship.

We respond to the proclamation of the Word by confessing the faith of the Church. Today we are using a portion of *A Brief Statement of Faith*, which was prepared after the two largest Presbyterian denominations in the United States reunited in 1983 to form the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This statement “celebrates our rediscovery that for all our undoubted diversity, we are bound together by a common faith and a common task” (*The Book of Confessions*).

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:57-80

New Testament, p. 57

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

The Rev. Sudie Niesen Thompson

*HYMN NO. 109

Blest Be the God of Israel

MERLE'S TUNE

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

From A Brief Statement of Faith

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully 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 calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,

Jesus was crucified,

suffering the depths of human pain

and giving his life for the sins of the world.

God raised this Jesus from the dead,

vindicating his sinless life,

breaking the power of sin and evil,

delivering us from death to life eternal.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Tia McCoun

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 AND SENDING

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Prepare the Way of the Lord* William Rowan
Chancel Choir: John Sall, director

Prepare, prepare the way of the Lord!
Prepare the way! Make straight his path.

Every valley shall be exalted,
 every hill made low;
and the crooked shall be made straight,
 and the rough places plain.
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
 and humankind shall see it together.

*DOXOLOGY HYMN NO. 93 (v. 1) *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* TRURO

**Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates;
behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near;
the Savior of the world is here.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN NO. 79 *Light Dawns on a Weary World* TEMPLE OF PEACE

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* R. Powell

Your presence and participation in worship is an expression of self-offering. If you have not already done so, please sign the red Friendship Pad, located at the end of the pew closest to the center aisle, then pass it along the row.

We are grateful for gifts of time, talent and treasure. If you prefer to give a financial gift online, you may use the QR code below.



Permissions & Copyrights

Today's Centering Prayer is verse 3 of *For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits (Glory to God, 89)*.

Music of this service is reprinted and streamed online with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-729335. All rights reserved. A Parish Magnificat Copyright @ 1990 Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. All rights reserved.

Hard copies of Pastor Sudie's sermons for the First and Second Sundays of Advent, along with the Artist's Notes that accompany "Elizabeth" and "Mary," are available in the wooden racks located at each entrance to the Sanctuary.

Our community of faith strives to live by the words of the Apostle Paul: *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep* (Romans 12:15). As you pray throughout the week, we invite you to lift up the names of those who have requested prayer. Our church family would also like to rejoice with you if you are celebrating the arrival of a child, grandchild or great-grandchild; marking an important milestone; or have another joy to share.

To add a name to the Prayer List or share a joy, please call the church office or email Susan Schied: slschied@apcusa.org.

WORSHIP NOTES

Sing the Story: Advent & Christmas 2024

December 1 (8:00 & 10:00)	The Song of Elizabeth (Luke 1:42b-45)
December 8 (8:00 & 10:00)	The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)
December 15 (8:00 & 10:00)	The Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)
December 22 (10:00 only)	The Songs of the Faithful
Christmas Eve (7:30 Service)	The Song of the Angels (Luke 2:14)
December 29 (10:00 only)	The Song of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32)

Artist's Note: "Zechariah" by Alice Price

Zechariah waited in silence until the birth of John, and then broke out in the longest song yet, closing his canticle with the image of light from above that similarly breaks out of the heavens. The staffs of the music come directly from his mouth as he lifts his face in song, and both his face and his feet are made of fabric with music notes. The hanging depicts a humble, pious, older man, with streaks of silver in his hair beneath his yarmulke, kneeling barefoot, on a prayer mat cut from remnants of Elizabeth's dress. Zechariah sings about heavenly light, which—in the hanging—is the gold that erupts beyond the margins of the decorated initial Z, like meteor showers. That heavenly gold light is augmented by purple, white, and pink candles that illuminate the darkness, but also by lanterns and oil lamps, anticipating Jesus's reminder to keep our lamps trimmed and burning. Zechariah holds a large pink candle, the candle of joy, which we use in our Advent celebrations, but might also reference his own joy at the birth of his child, despite he and his wife being of advanced age. Again, thanks to all the people who helped in the installation, photographing, and concept of this illustration.

Today we welcome substitute organist, Thomas Faracco, to the organ bench. We are grateful for his leadership.

PRAYER LIST

Suzy Paravla (daughter of Susan Davis), Will Pompilli (son of Teresa Pompilli), Wayne Gibbons, Jr., Judy Meissner, John and Phyllis Frazier, Robin Cupo, Laura Lafferty, Emil Kupper, Sally Hardy, Ted Hyczko, Valerie Steigerwalt (niece of Marlyn Whyte), John Connelly (friend of Joanne and Jeff Bates), Mary Ann Wherry, Victor V. Johnson, Jr, Richard Decembrino family, Olive Biggs, Stephen Krewson, Carmina Gagliardi (friend of Joanne and Jeff Bates), David Cardwell (brother of Bob Cardwell), Barbara Burke (friend of Jeff Bates), Donald Wolf, Linda Doyle, Amy Gould, Marlyn Whyte, Sharon Robson (friend of Kimberly Browna), Ernie Arnold, Carol Boles (mother of Christine Sacco), Marilyn Ming (sister of Carolyn Ming), Eugenia Velazquez (Iris Long's mother), The Weir Family, Amanda Hebert (friend of Amanda Pompilli), Katie Link (APNS parent), Holland Lutzow (APNS student), Clinton Mench (APNS parent), Tracy & her son Gabriel Edwards (family members of Craig & Carole Jean Nicholson), Karen Jones, John Caldwell, Jackie Thurlow, Fred Cipriano (father of Fred Cipriano), Marian Poole.

TODAY AT ABINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- 8:00 a.m.** **Simple Gifts Worship Service** in the Sanctuary
- 8:45 a.m.** **Education Opportunities for Adults**
• **Adult Bible Study** in the Parlor
- 9:50 a.m.** **Nursery Care** for infants and toddlers in Rooms 110 & 112
Preschool Sunday School in Room 221
- 10:00 a.m.** **Celebration Worship Service** in the Sanctuary
- Following Children’s Message (approx. 10:20 a.m.):**
• **Sunday School for Kindergarten—5th** in the Youth Lounge
- 4:30 p.m.** **Christmas by Candlelight** in the Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m.** **Christmas by Candlelight** in the Sanctuary

CHRISTMAS AT ABINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Songs of the Faithful | December 22 at 10:00 a.m.

Throughout Advent we have listened to our forebears in the faith “sing the story” of the Messiah’s birth through the Canticles of Luke’s Gospel. On the Fourth Sunday, we will take our turn singing the story with a service that weaves readings of Scripture with Advent hymns and Christmas carols. Join us at 10:00 a.m. (one service only) to lift the Songs of the Faithful as we await the birth of Christ.

Christmas Eve Family Service | December 24 at 5:00 p.m.

A beloved tradition at Abington Presbyterian Church, this family-friendly service is led by our children’s choirs, youth participants, and children from our congregation. This year the service includes the children’s musical *Calling All Angels*, which depicts the story of God’s angel, Gabriel, whom God sends to announce the Savior has been born. A church family will portray the Holy Family and all will be invited to light up the sanctuary with beautiful LED candles while singing “Silent Night.” Created with children in mind, this service runs under an hour and includes a bulletin with coloring pages. Childcare is available for babies and toddlers in the nursery.

Christmas Eve Traditional Service | December 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Our traditional Candlelight Service includes many familiar Christmas carols and anthems led by our Christmas Choir and organ. Lighting of the Christ Candle and reading and preaching on the Christmas Gospel are joined by Holy Communion and the spreading of the light during “Silent Night” with all in attendance holding candles and singing together. The service is a little over an hour. Childcare is available for babies and toddlers in the nursery.

Stay connected with our community of faith!

You Tube:
[@AbingtonPresbyterianChurch4784](#)

Facebook:
[@Abington Presbyterian Church-APC \(Public Group\)](#)
[@Abington Presbyterian Church Youth Fellowship \(Private Group\)](#)

To read about all the exciting things happening at Abington Presbyterian Church, please pick up a copy of “Abington Presbyterian Life” from an Usher or subscribe to our weekly e-newsletter. To be added to the distribution list for the E-Blast, please call the church office or email Susan Schied: slschied@apcusa.org.

ABINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

PASTORAL STAFF

The Rev. Sudie E. Niesen Thompson, M.Div., Th.M.
Chaplain Tia McCoun, M.Div.

Pastor/Head of Staff
Congregational Care Associate

MUSIC STAFF

John Sall, M.M.
Ruth Sall, B.M.
Shirley Keiter, M.A.R.

Director of Music Ministries
Children & Youth Choir Director
Interim Organist, Interim Director of Handbells

EDUCATION STAFF

Ruth Sall, B.M.
Justin Feil
The Rev. Ashley Rossi, M.Div.

Director of Christian Education
Youth Fellowship Coordinator
Youth Fellowship Coordinator

SUPPORT STAFF

Fred Cipriano
Susan Schied
Jackie Thurlow

Facilities Manager
Secretary
Bookkeeper



Abington Presbyterian Church | Founded 1714

1082 Old York Road, Abington, PA, 19001
215.887.4530 • apcusa.org

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.