

The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
December 7, 2025
Second Sunday of Advent
Celebration of the Lord's Supper



Gathering As a People of God

Preparation: "...peace is not the outcome of one person's power or one group's control. Peace is the ongoing labor of all God's people. And the first step in that labor is the reorientation of our minds and the refining of our purposes. We are reminded, once again, of Martin Luther King Jr.'s words: "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." – Rev. Dr. Jeehei Park,
Illustrated Ministry Commentary

Invitation to Our Shared Ministry

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Prelude

Fanfare on *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

Charles Callahan

Choral Introit

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 7)
PCO Chancel Choir
Shelby Laird, director

*** Call to Worship**

Laurie Harkema, Liturgist

One: We gather together in this place:

All: prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,

One: we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

All: we who dare to dream God's dream.

One: We watch with Malachi and John.

All: God's peace will soon appear.

One: The hills and valleys will meet,

All: and all things will be at rest.

One: We long for a world restored, renewed.

All: The fire of God's justice burns in our hearts.

One: Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.

All: We have come to wonder and praise

*** Hymn #96**

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry, vs. 1-4
[Winchester New]

Advent Candle Lighting

Eunice Creswell & Kathy Richardson

Opening Prayer

God of promises, your vision for peace stretches our imaginations, pushing us beyond platitudes

and stirring up the fire of justice in our hearts. Show us our place and our purpose in leveling mountains and raising valleys, in straightening roads and clearing pathways. We pray as people of anticipation, who long for peace with anxious energy as we await the arrival of Christ among us. Amen.

One: The birth of Jesus has been told and retold a thousand times and in a thousand ways.

All: Its impact cannot be contained in any one perspective. But who is telling the story changes how we hear it, how we imagine it, how we experience it.

One: Close your eyes for a moment. What we often see this side of history ...

... Jesus, like Malachi, John, and other prophets before him, calls us in the loudest of cries to peace.

All: We light the candle of peace because peace requires us to pay attention to the needs of those around us. (*The candle of Peace is lit.*)

Advent Response

We Are a People of Peace

Barbara Hamm

[Table of Grace]

The response will be played through once, the congregation will join in the second time.

We are a people of peace;

we are a people of peace.

Lighting a candle, we work for the dawn;

we are a people of peace.

Prayer of Confession

Laurie Harkema, Liturgist

One: Hearing John's exhortation to repent, let us invite into our hearts the refining fire of God's Spirit, trusting that God will hear us, forgive us, and refine us.

All: God of peace, we confess the ways that we maintain "peacefulness" at the expense of seeking justice for our neighbors and our world. We turn our eyes away from human suffering to maintain false contentment in our own hearts. We settle for compromises that harm the vulnerable, rather than risk discomfort or loss. We ask to be soothed rather than stirred up. Make us a holy and risk-taking people. Forgive and inspire us. Shape us as bold witnesses to your coming reign. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Promise of the Gospel and Passing of the Peace

Laurie Harkema, Liturgist

One: Hear this good news: God pours out mercy, rushing over you like a river. You are forgiven and forever claimed as beloved of God, through the saving love of Jesus Christ.

All: We give thanks to God for everything: forgiveness, hope, new life. Amen.

One: Where two or three of us are gathered, the Spirit is among us, inspiring our imagination and creating peace in our midst. Greet your fellow travelers now with the peace of Christ, and let these small doses of repair and reconciliation ripple out into a world in need of transformation. May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you. Please greet your fellow worshippers in ways you feel comfortable.

*** Act of Praise #583**

Glory to God

[Gloria, Gloria]

The response will be played through once, the congregation will join in the second time.

Glory to God, glory to God,

glory in the highest!

Glory to God, glory to God,

alleluia, alleluia!

The Word

Prayer of Illumination

Laurie Harkema, Liturgist

God of whispers and shouts, you proclaim the good news of peace from all corners of creation. As we turn to our scriptures, may the words inspire us to dream of a world where peace thrives among us. Amen.

Children's Sermon & Time of Wonder

Pastor Lisa Schrott

First Scripture Reading

Malachi 3:1–6a

Laurie Harkema, Liturgist

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Special Music

The Promised Coming

Sandra Eithun

PCO Handbell Choir

Irene Shutt, Director

Second Scripture Reading

Matthew 3:1-12

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Prophetic Peace

Pastor Lisa Schrott

*** Affirmation of Peace**

Pastor Lisa Schrott

One: Let us affirm God's gift of courageous and prophetic peace.

All: We believe in a courageous and prophetic peace—a peace founded through sacrificial love. We commit to justice as peace, and embrace repentance and humility as foundational steps.

One: We believe there is always more to learn and understand—that a posture of curiosity and grace leads us to the heart of God and one another.

All: We believe in pursuing shalom, a whole-bodied peace, for all God's creation; seeking peace in families; peace in neighborhoods; peace between nations; peace for creation; and peace in the quiet depth of our own souls.

One: We believe in praying for peace.

All: We believe in speaking peace over those torn apart by painful divides in streets and conversations; peace for those holding deep grief; peace for those buried under heartache, chaos, and unanswered questions.

One: We trust this peace is not just a dream, but a promise.

All: With Jesus as the Giver of Peace, we claim anew the deep peace within us, committing to channel it through love and power in all that we say and do.

Special Music

Deep Peace
PCO Chancel Choir
Shelby Laird, Director

Greg Knauf

Responding to the Word

Minute for Mission

Christmas Joy Offering

Kent Workman

Offering

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Invitation

Offertory

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
[Picardy]
Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organist

David N. Johnson

***Doxology #606**

***Prayer of Dedication**

Holy Communion

Pastor Lisa Schrott

Invitation

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your fears, your hopes, your dreams.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to our generous, imaginative God.

All: We joyfully give our thanks and praise.

The Lord's Prayer

in unison

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.

Breaking of the Bread

Communion of the People

Communion will be served by intinction. Please take a piece of bread and dip into the cup of juice and partake as you return to your seat. The bread is gluten, soy, nut and dairy free so all may partake together.

Communion Prayer

Sent Out As a People of God

* Hymn #378

We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom, vs. 1-4

[Merle's Tune]

* Charge and Benediction

Go forth from this place, allowing God to forge you into instruments of peace for the hard work of peacemaking in our families, church, community, and world. Making peace requires us to enter into spaces of conflict. So may God harden our resolve, not our hearts; strengthen our will, not our arms; sharpen our minds, not our words. May we listen to the cries of others like John in the wilderness, guarding our hearts from being defensive or indifferent. And may we be moved to peace not for the sake of avoiding an argument, but for the sake of the gospel.

Postlude

People, Look East!

Kristina Langlois

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, organ

During the Postlude we invite you to help us decorate the Chrismon tree.

Chrismons will be available on carts at the front of the sanctuary.

* Please rise in body or spirit

Ushers: Jane Paterson, Jill Tribell, Jack Harkema, Keith Camann

This Morning's Fellowship Team: Thank you to Dorinda VanKempen and Barbara Dorr for supplying our snacks, Edward Ennen for taking care of the coffee and to Wayne Scott for washing dishes.

Our Advent Worship Liturgy *The Will to Dream* is from Illustrated Ministry, 2025.

<https://store.illustratedministry.com/collections/the-will-to-dream>

Education Hour:

Elementary Education in Room 116

Middle School Education with Kathi Cook in Room 107

Intergenerational Bible Study (High School and Adults): Colaborate New Testament Series with Roy Meland in the Board Room

Adult Ed. Isaiah in Advent. We will discuss the context for the use of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah's words in the season of Advent. Facilitated by Pastor Lisa in Room 108.

Next Week: December 14, 2025 Third Sunday in Advent;

Scripture: Luke 1:39–55 & Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

Elementary Education in Room 116

Youth Instrumental Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel

Intergenerational Bible Study (High School and Adults): Colaborate New Testament Series with Roy Meland in the Board Room

Adult Ed. *Isaiah in Advent.* We will discuss the context for the use of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah's words in the season of Advent. Facilitated by Pastor Lisa in Fellowship Hall

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The Presbyterian Church of Okemos
2258 Bennett Road, Okemos, Michigan 48864
(517) 349-9536

Website: <https://okemospres.org>

Email: office@okemospres.org

<https://www.instagram.com/okemospres/>

<https://facebook.com/OkemosPresbyterian>

Rev. Dr. Lisa Schrott (she/her), Pastor/Head of Staff

Dr. Marlene Brewbaker, Organist

Shelby Laird, Chancel Choir Director

Irene Shutt, Handbell Choir Director

Edward Ennen, Sexton

Anna Thiel, Office Manager

Jacob Meland, Media Specialist