

December 17, 2023
Third Sunday in Advent

Welcome to NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Leading people to become
faithful followers of Jesus Christ
together in God's world

*Bear fruits worthy of repentance.
Do not begin to say to yourselves,
"We have Abraham as our ancestor";
for I tell you, God is able from these
stones to raise up children to Abraham.
Luke 3:8*



Senior Pastor
Associate Pastors

Parish Associates

Music

Ministry Directors

Dr. Ray Hylton, Sr.
Dr. Quinn Fox
Rev. Lisa Larsen
Dr. Nancy Fox
Dr. Kerry Stoltzfus
Dr. Michael Denham (Director)
Todd Fickley (Organist)
Joanna Zorack-Greene
(Contemporary Music Leader)
Jonathan Edwards (Serve)
Kristin Franke (Youth & Families)
Jill Meek (Children)
Leslie Saum (Connections)

EVENTS AT NATIONAL

For more information about all our events, please visit the [Events page](#) on our website at nationalpres.org. Questions? Email us at Today:

Mission Gifts for Christmas

Today, December 17

Stone Fellowship Hall

Shop online December 1-31

Mission Gifts for Christmas enables you to give meaningful gifts instead of giving another “thing,” by supporting God’s work locally and internationally. Choose your gifts in person today, December 17. Or you can choose gifts online and sign up to serve at nationalpres.org/mission-gifts.

College Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 20

All NPC college-aged students are invited to reconnect with other NPC youth for a Christmas party on Wednesday, December 20 at 6:30 pm. Bring a white elephant gift and wear a festive sweater. Contact Kristin Franke at kfranke@nationalpres.org for location details and to RSVP!

Club 45 (4th & 5th graders)

Today, December 17 at 5:00 pm

Calling all 4th & 5th graders! Come grow in faith and friendship through fun and games and exploring God’s word.

For more information contact

jmeek@nationalpres.org.

DECEMBER 24: CHRISTMAS EVE

All services will be offered both in-person and online on our [Watch page](#). Childcare for ages up to 4 years will be provided for the 10:00 am, 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm services.

10:00 am: Morning Service*

Worship with a special and spectacular musical celebration including Daniel Pinkham’s brilliant *Christmas Cantata* for choir, brass, and organ!

5:00 pm: Family Nativity Service*

Our children, youth and adults will bring the nativity story to life with song and scripture. This is a family-friendly service that your kids will love!

8:00 & 10:00 pm

Traditional Candlelight Services

The message, prayers and beautiful music of these traditional Christmas Eve services will inspire you and fill you with hope.

* A complimentary photographer will be in Stone Fellowship Hall to capture your holiday memories in front of our beautiful Christmas backdrop and decor before and after these services!

8:45 AM WORSHIP

Sanctuary and Online

WE ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE

GATHERING

Improvisations

Joanna Zorack-Greene, piano

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Lisa Larsen

▲ OPENING SONG

O come, O come, Emmanuel

Traditional

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight. **Chorus**

O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace. **Chorus (2x)**

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Evan Williams

Emma Shaw

Bryan Alphin

CONFESSION OF SIN *in unison*

Rev. Larsen

Lord God, eternal and almighty Father,

We acknowledge and confess before your holy majesty

that we are sinners who make no end of breaking your commandments.

We lament that we have disobeyed and dishonored you,

and in true repentance ask you to forgive and help us by your grace.

Most gracious and merciful God,

in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior,

bestow on us your mercy.

Daily increase in us the filling of your Holy Spirit,

that from our inner hearts we may become truly repentant,

and that your same Spirit may increase in us

fruits worthy of your righteousness and holiness,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

from John Calvin

SILENT CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Believe the good news of the Gospel.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

▲ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

In dulci jubilo

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart, and soul, and voice:

Now we need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls us one and calls us all to gain the everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

We believe in one God, whose almighty word brought forth the universe,
who speaks to us by his Spirit through what he has created
and through what has been written for us in Holy Scripture.

We believe that at the right moment in time,

God's Word became flesh in the life of Jesus of Nazareth,

who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.

We believe that this good news of great joy which heralded Jesus' birth
also points us to the cross on which Jesus died, and to his empty tomb.

There the angel's message "He is risen!"

heralded the glorious good news of Christ's resurrection.

We believe that this same Jesus is alive to meet us every day,
and to offer us new and abundant life.

We rejoice in the knowledge that he will one day return to rule in righteousness,
to renew the earth, and to claim us as God's own.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:7-18

Joy Eckert

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor;' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' ¹¹In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' ¹²Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' ¹³He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

A TIME FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

Kyle Putnam

Associate for Youth Ministry

*Children ages 5 to 5th grade will then be dismissed for Children's Chapel.
Parents may take children age 4 and under to the nursery.*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE AND CALL

Children return to join their parents in the sanctuary.

CALL FOR OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

Dr. Quinn Fox

Please bring forward your gift during the offering song.

- ▲ OFFERING SONG God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen *Traditional*
 God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay.
 Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day.
 To save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy!
O tidings of comfort and joy! Glory to the Light of the world!
 From God our heavenly Father a blessed angel came.
 And unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same.
 How that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name. **Chorus**
 Now to the Lord sing praises all you within this place
 and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace
 this holy tide of Christmas all others doth replace. **Chorus**
 Comfort and joy! (3x)

- ▲ ADVENT DOXOLOGY *Regent Square*
 All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
 Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
 One in might and one in glory while unending ages run.

- PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER Dr. Fox
 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.

- ▲ CLOSING SONG Light of the Stable Steve and Elizabeth Rhymer
 Hail, hail to the newborn King, let our voices sing him our praises.
 Hail, hail to the guiding Light that brought us tonight to our Savior.
Halle--, hallelujah (4x)
 Come now, let it shine so bright to the knowing Light of the stable.
 Kneel close to the Child so dear; cast aside your fear and be thankful. **Chorus**
 Hail, hail to the newborn King, let our voices sing him our praises.
 Hail, hail to the guiding Light that brought us tonight to our Savior. **Chorus**

- ▲ BENEDICTION AND PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST Dr. Hylton

- ▲ SENDING NPC Band

11:00 AM WORSHIP

Sanctuary and Online

WE ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE Prelude on "Veni Emmanuel" Herbert Buffington
John Varcoe and Todd Fickley, organ

CHIMES

CALL TO WORSHIP Rev. Lisa Larsen

▲ HYMN 8 Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates *Truro*

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE Dzili and Nadia Chanthunya
with Ethan, Phoebe, and Owen

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *Truro*
Come now, O Savior, enter in! Let thy new life and way begin!
Thy Holy Spirit lead us on, until the glorious crown be won.

CONFESSION OF SIN *in unison*
Lord God, eternal and almighty Father,
We acknowledge and confess before your holy majesty
that we are sinners who make no end of breaking your commandments.
We lament that we have disobeyed and dishonored you,
and in true repentance ask you to forgive and help us by your grace.
Most gracious and merciful God,
in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior,
bestow on us your mercy.
Daily increase in us the filling of your Holy Spirit,
that from our inner hearts we may become truly repentant,
and that your same Spirit may increase in us
fruits worthy of your righteousness and holiness,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. from John Calvin

SILENT CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Believe the good news of the Gospel.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

▲ CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE *In dulci jubilo*

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart, and soul, and voice:
Now we need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls us one and calls us all to gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

▲ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH An Advent Affirmation Rev. Larsen

We believe in one God, whose almighty word brought forth the universe,
who speaks to us by his Spirit through what he has created
and through what has been written for us in Holy Scripture.

We believe that at the right moment in time,
God's Word became flesh in the life of Jesus of Nazareth,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.

We believe that this good news of great joy which heralded Jesus' birth also points us to the cross on which Jesus died, and to his empty tomb.

There the angel's message "He is risen!"

heralded the glorious good news of Christ's resurrection.

We believe that this same Jesus is alive to meet us every day, and to offer us new and abundant life.

We rejoice in the knowledge that he will one day return to rule in righteousness, to renew the earth, and to claim us as God's own.

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Larsen

SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:7-18

Jennifer Schottke

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor:' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.'

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' ¹¹In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' ¹²Even tax-collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' ¹³He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.' ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.'

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

A TIME FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

Kyle Putnam

Associate for Youth Ministry

Children ages 5 to 5th grade will then be dismissed for Children's Chapel.

Parents may take children age 4 and under to the nursery.

SERMON

*Prepare Him Room
Signs of Repentance*

Dr. Ray Hylton, Sr.

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE AND CALL

Children return to join their parents in the sanctuary.

CHORAL RESPONSE

A la venue de Noël

Our hearts are manifest to thee; thou knowest our infirmity.
We in repentance seek thy face; grant, O Lord, thy pard'ning grace.

CALL FOR OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

Dr. Quinn Fox

OFFERTORY

But Who May Abide

G. F. Handel

But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth?
For he is like a refiner's fire.

Messiah

Paul Grosvenor, baritone and Ethan Zorack-Greene, bass-baritone
with Heather Green, violin

▲ ADVENT DOXOLOGY

Regent Square

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
One in might and one in glory while unending ages run.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Dr. Fox

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.

▲ HYMN 409

Wild and Lone the Prophet's Voice

Aberystwyth

▲ BENEDICTION

Dr. Hylton

▲ CHORAL AMEN

G. F. Handel

▲ PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Dr. Fox

▲ POSTLUDE

Toccata on Veni Emmanuel

Adolphus Hailstock
Todd Fickley, organ

▲ Congregation standing, as able

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Our worship services are in the Sanctuary and online on our [Watch](#) webpage.

- **8:45 am:** Contemporary Worship
- **9:55 am:** Sunday School for all ages
- **11:00 am:** Traditional Worship

Adult Classes

For complete class descriptions, the Zoom link for the *Romans* class, and the upcoming January term please visit our Adult Classes webpage. The last Sunday for all classes is today December 17, term resumes on January 7.

- ***Walking with God in Mission for Our Changing World:*** Room #209
- ***The Story Behind "The Story:" God's Plan of Redemption Through History:*** Garden Room A
- ***The Gospel of Luke:*** Garden Room C
- ***Romans:*** Chapel and online
- ***Parent Gathering:*** Jones Hall in the Education Building

Childcare

The Nursery rooms are available 8:30 am-noon for infants to walkers, up to age 4.

Youth Sunday School

Visit our [Youth webpage](#) for information about Sunday School and other youth events. Youth grades 6-12, please come to the Multipurpose Building for Sunday School. We'll meet there briefly then split to smaller groups by age.

Children's Sunday School

Visit our [Children's webpage](#) to read about our Children's Ministry.

- Children ages 2-3 years have Sunday School in the Toddler Room in the main church building.
- Children age 4 through 5th grade meet for Sunday School in the Education Building (National Presbyterian School).

NOTES

[illegible]

MORE EVENTS AT NATIONAL

New Year's Eve Worship

Sunday, December 31, 10:00 am

We will have a single worship service at 10:00 am on New Year's Eve. Childcare will be provided for ages up to 4 years. Our regular 8:45 and 11:00 am worship schedule and Sunday School for all ages will resume on January 7, 2024.

Bible Reading Guides for 2024

Go deeper into God's word with our convenient Bible reading guides. You can pick up a printed version in our Welcome Center or download your copy from our Resources page. There are full-Bible and New Testament only versions to choose from.

Men's Breakfast

Saturday, January 6, 8:00 am

All men are invited to join us in-person on the first Saturday of every month for our men's breakfast. Our speaker will be Dr. Ted George, presenting *Embracing the New Year*. Please email

grow@nationalpres.org for more information or to RSVP.

Pathway of Christian Discipleship Class

Saturdays, January 21 & 28, online

Becoming a church member here at National can be a meaningful step forward in your spiritual journey. To inquire about membership or just learn more about Christian faith, please attend the online Pathway of Christian Discipleship classes on January 21 & 28. Please see the [Events webpage](#) for more information or contact Kemet Rakiatu to register by January 10th at krakiatu@nationalpres.org or 202.537.7578.

Week at a Glance

For information about all of these events, please see the [Events webpage](#) on our website.

Today, December 17

3rd Sunday of Advent

- Mission Gifts for Christmas
- 8:45 am: Contemporary Worship
- 9:55 am: Sunday School for all ages
- 11:00 am: Traditional Worship
- 12:15 pm: Moldova prayer meeting in Room #109
- 5:00 pm: Club 45
- 6:30 pm: Youth group

Wednesday, December 20

- 6:30 pm: College Christmas Party

Sunday, December 24

4th Sunday of Advent

Christmas Eve

- 10:00 am: Traditional Worship
- 5:00 pm: Family Nativity Service
- 8:00 & 10:00 pm: Candlelight Service

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day

- Office is closed

Sunday, December 31

New Year's Eve

- 10:00 am: Traditional Worship

Monday, January 1

New Year's Day

- Office is closed



**Called
to Care**

Stephen Ministry

Our Stephen Ministers provide one-to-one care for those experiencing challenges. Your identity and conversations are held in confidence.

careoffice@nationalpres.org / 202.537.7540

*Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed;
defend the orphan; plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:17*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas Helpers at NPC!

You can help make our church most welcoming for our multitude of guests this holiday season! Contact Leslie Saum at lsaum@nationalpres.org to sign up and join the fabulous Welcome Team to help greet, usher or hand out Christmas Ornaments on these dates:

- Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24, choice of 4 services

National Presbyterian School Christmas Celebration

Last Friday, NPS celebrated its annual Christmas Service in the beautiful NPC Sanctuary. Thank you to the many NPC friends who help NPS hold this wonderful service that includes beautiful choral performances, Scripture readings, and the Kindergarten nativity. For more information about NPS, visit www.nps-dc.org or contact Director of Enrollment & Marketing Robin Baker at rbaker@nps-dc.org (202) 537-7569.

Fund for Charitable Giving

Grow your generosity. Save on your 2023 taxes. Establish a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) with the NPC Fund for Charitable Giving. Don't know what a DAF is? It's a special charitable giving account, professionally managed and invested to multiply the impact of your family's generosity. Learn more about setting up a DAF before year-end by contacting Jonathan Dickey or Rick Hawthorne on 301-452-8269 or at npcfund@nationalpres.org.

NPC Small Groups welcome newcomers!

Looking for a place to grow spiritually in community? NPC has regular online small groups and in-person Bible studies on weekdays, evenings and Saturdays. If you are interested, please visit our [Small Groups webpage](#) to get connected.

JOIN OUR NPC TEAM!

NPC Communications Director Needed

The National Presbyterian Church is searching for a Communications Director to provide internal and external messaging about the life and ministry of NPC using a variety of communication tools including bulletins, website, mailings, email blasts, publications, signage, exhibits, podcasts, and social media. Reporting to the Senior Pastor, the Communications Director will develop and implement an overall communications strategy aligned with the Church's mission and vision. The successful candidate will be creative, analytical, well versed in social media and today's communication tools, and have excellent attention to detail and strong writing and graphic design skills. The Communications Director must be able to manage multiple tasks simultaneously, effectively manage deadlines, collaborate with pastors, staff, and congregants and work independently. The position is based at the National Presbyterian Church campus located in upper Northwest Washington, DC. The position is full-time and includes comprehensive benefits. Qualified applicants should send a resume to npcfacdirsearch@gmail.com.

Summer Interns at NPC

Applications are now open for Children's and Youth Interns for Summer 2024. Spend your summer supporting our younger congregants in encountering Jesus' love for them at VBS, camps, and weekly programs. Application deadline is January 15, 2024. For more details, visit our [Jobs webpage](#).

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE!

New to National? Welcome!

Welcome and thank you for being here today! Please stop by the Welcome Center just outside the sanctuary. We would love to meet you, and we have a gift for you! Here are some other easy ways to connect with us:

- Sign the guestbook in the pews or online on our [Watch webpage](#).
- Sign up for our e-newsletter on our website or info@nationalpres.org.

Children and Youth E-newsletters

If you have little ones or youth in your household and would like to receive our updates, please:

- Visit our [Children's webpage](#) for kids up to 5th grade.
- Visit our [Youth webpage](#) for kids in middle and high school.

Prayers

We pray:
that we reflect the joy of Christ.

We pray for:
John Wagner as he works through
Young Life to spread the Gospel
to teens in New York
and in cities across the globe.

How may we pray for you?
Please submit prayer requests
to the Care Office,
careoffice@nationalpres.org
202.537.7540.

Community Health Note

Masks are optional at our services, with the exception of the balcony and the lectern-side transept (at the front on your right), where masks are required. Our ushers are happy to guide you to your preferred seating area.

Your Giving Makes a Difference!

Thank you!

Giving Report

As of December 10, 2023

	Faith Giving
Annual Budget	\$ 3,075,000
Received YTD	\$ 2,637,000
Remaining Needed	\$ 438,000

Would you like to make a gift?

- Mail or place it in the offering plate
- Go to nationalpres.org/giving
- Text "NPC" to 833.414.9444
- Donate stock
- Disburse your Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA
- Scan the QR code below:



Monthly financial reports are available in the Narthex.

For help or questions about giving, please contact our Finance Office at 202.537.7495 or email our Director of Finance and Administration, Leah Skrine at lskrine@nationalpres.org.

Today's Flowers

To the glory of God, whom he served,
and in honor of his December 23 birthday,
the flowers in the Sanctuary
are given by the family of
Dr. Edward L. R. Elson (1906-1993),
Senior Pastor of NPC for 28 years and
Chaplain of the Senate for 12 years.



4101 NEBRASKA AVE. NW
WASHINGTON DC 20016
202.537.0800
WWW.NATIONALPRES.ORG



[/NATIONALPRES](https://www.facebook.com/NATIONALPRES)
[@NATIONALPRES](https://www.instagram.com/NATIONALPRES)