

LET
HEAVEN AND NATURE
SING

Sunday | December 16, 2018
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

"In Advent spirituality we are also called on to meditate on the birthing of Christ in our hearts. In this matter we are dealing with the conversion of life, the movement away from the old life lived under the power of evil to the new life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. True conversion is a turning from one way of life to another. Christ calls us to be converted to him, to make him the pattern of our lives, to make our living and dying a living and dying in him."

Robert Webber

Third CHURCH

*Called together for the renewal
of all things through Jesus Christ.*

Welcome!

¡Bienvenido!

欢迎!

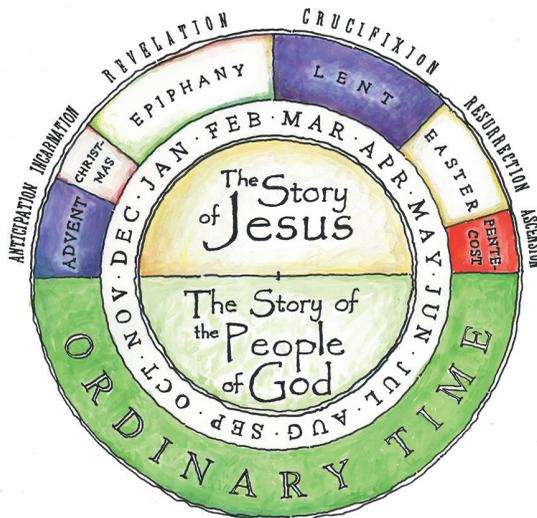
مرحباً

Добро пожаловать!

We're glad you've chosen to worship at Third!
We look forward to meeting and getting to know you.

Sanctuary Decorations

Since the days of the early church, followers of Jesus have been invited to “tell time differently” with a calendar shaped by the story of God’s works of salvation and renewal. At Third Church we draw on that tradition not only by marking the seasons of the Christian year through the readings and music in our Sunday services, but also by using colors and textures to enrich our physical space and experience of worship.



The liturgical year starts with the season of Advent, when we begin a four-week vigil waiting for the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, into our hurting world. The purple banners, Advent wreath and window candles, and twig and evergreen decorations now adorning our Sanctuary reflect this season of longing for new life, and help us prepare to celebrate Christmas all the more. The gold and white “chrismon” tree at the front of the Sanctuary features decorations made by earlier generations of Third members which represent the many names and symbols for Jesus used by the Church through the centuries. As we progress through this month-long season, we’ll light a new candle on the Advent wreath each week and add new greenery and other markers of God’s in-breaking love. On Christmas Eve we’ll replace the purple with banners and decorations in white and gold that will carry us into the New Year and to Epiphany.

Adorning the Sanctuary is the work of a multi-generational team of people from 16 to 65, and if you’re interested in being part of that effort, or would just like more information, please contact Holly Smith at hhovelsonsmith@gmail.com.

GATHERING

God gathers us all and calls us by his grace.

Prelude

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”
(Paul Manz)

Jeff Hummel

Welcome and Announcements

Preparation for Worship

From Psalm 62:5

Leader: For you, O Lord, our souls in stillness wait;

People: Truly our hope is in you.

Singing together: “Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”

Silent Preparation for Worship

Let’s quiet our hearts in silent preparation for worship.

† Call to Worship

Isaiah 60:1–3

Leader: Arise, shine; for your light has come,

People: And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

Leader: For the darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;

**People: But the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.**

**Everyone: Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.**

Prayer of Adoration

† Songs of Praise

“Come Light Our Hearts”
“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

(Words on page 5)
#821 in the Hymnal

† *The cross indicates standing, as you are able.*

COME LIGHT OUR HEARTS



For you, O Lord, our souls in still - ness wait,



for you, O Lord, our souls in still - ness wait.



Tru - ly our hope is in you, tru - ly our hope is in you.



O Lord of life, our on - ly hope, your ra - diance
O Joy a - bove all oth - er loves, in you we



shines on all who look to you in the
find more than e - nough. We come as we



dark; Em - man - u - el, come, come light our hearts.
are; O heal and re - store, come light our hearts.

CONFESSING

God invites us to be honest with him about ourselves.

Song of Confession and Assurance

"Psalm 32 (Blessed Are You)"

Antiphon

Bless-ed___ are you___ whose trans-gres-sion is___ for-giv-
- en, whom the Lord has now made clean.___ Bless-ed___ are you
___ in whom the Lord counts no___ sin,___ where there
is no de - ceit.___ Bless-ed are you.---

CONFESSING

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away
Through my groaning all day long.
Day and night your hand was heavy upon me,
But you forgave all my wrongs.

Antiphon

I confessed my transgressions to you, Lord,
And you forgave the guilt of my sin.
You are a hiding place for me,
Surrounded by shouts of deliverance.

Antiphon

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,
But steadfast love surrounds those who trust him.
Be glad in the Lord; rejoice, O righteous,
And shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Antiphon

† **Greeting of Peace**

As a new spiritual family reconciled to one another through Christ, offer to one another a sign of peace: a handshake, a hug, or even just a smile. You could say something simple like "Peace be with you," or just simply, "Peace."

THANKSGIVING

Our Offerings

Pray for Paul and Julie Ford as they seek to develop indigenous leaders through education, partnerships and mentoring first generation Christian leaders in central Asia, northwest Uganda, and Eastern Europe.

Mission Partner Interview: Paul and Julie Ford

Offertory

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”
(Brooks; arr. Pottle)

Choir / Team

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven!
No ear may hear his coming but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell!
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord, our Lord Emmanuel.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Doxology

Please stand as we sing to the Lord.

† **Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him,
all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

PROCLAIMING

God speaks to us through his word.

Scripture Reading

Micah 5:1–5a

- 1 Marshal your troops now, city of troops,
for a siege is laid against us.
They will strike Israel's ruler
on the cheek with a rod.
- 2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."
- 3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.
- 4 He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.
- 5 And he will be our peace.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

RESPONDING

We respond to God's word.

† **Song of Response** "O Little Town of Bethlehem" #88 in the Hymnal

† **Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

Now gathering our prayers into one, let us boldly pray as our Savior has taught us:

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 for ever. Amen.

Prayer Needs

For Health

Elva White, Milton Jones, Stephen McCray, Zach James, Strick Smith, Nancy Bonsack, Betty Cox, Dru Fitch, Brad Bishop, Julie Walden, Charles Ellison, Lou Hanscom

For comfort for those who have lost loved ones

Frannie Nance (grandfather, 11/16), Patty Ramsey (husband, Jerry, 10/25), Valerie Holland (brother, 10/8), Patrice Foster (mother, 10/4), Frank Flanary and Andrea Woie (mother, grandmother, 10/2), Stepha Phillips (mother, 9/22), Merle James (mother, 9/16)

For Metro Richmond

We pray for the families of metropolitan Richmond: for the care and protection of infants, children, and youth; and for the intimate knowledge that each one is a beloved child of God.

SENDING

God sends us into the world as his witnesses.

† **Song of Commission** “Soon and Very Soon” #482 in the Hymnal

† **Commission and Benediction** Colossians 3:15–17

Leader: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
 since as members of one body
 you were called to peace, and be thankful.

People: **Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly
 as you teach and admonish one another
 with all wisdom through psalms, hymns,
 and songs from the Spirit, singing to God
 with gratitude in your hearts.**

Everyone: **Whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
 do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus,
 giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Singing together: “Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”

† **Postlude** “Toccatina on ‘God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen’” Jeff Hummel
 (11:15 service only) (Douglas Wagner)

SERVICE NOTES

Today’s flowers are given to the glory of God and in honor of the marriage of Lauren Tapscott and Joshua Cogdell, who were married in the Sanctuary yesterday, December 15, 2018.

REFLECTING

Advent Week 3: O Little Town of Bethlehem

This week we will be meditating on the one who is our Peace (Micah 5:5), what his reign of peace will be like, and how we can more fully experience it now as we wait for it to come in its fullness.

- MondayMicah 4:1–8
- TuesdayIsaiah 11:1–10
- WednesdayZephaniah 3:8–17
- ThursdayHosea 14:1–9
- FridayColossians 3:1–17
- Saturday2 Peter 1:1–8

READ

- Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart to God’s Word.
- Read the passage for the day slowly once or twice, even out loud!
- Take a few minutes to try to understand the main themes of the passage. Pay special attention to the original context of the scripture.
- Ask: What does this passage tell you about God, humanity, or the world?

REFLECT

- Focus on one theme, verse, or phrase that stood out to you during your reading.
- Meditate on one or more of the following questions: *Why is God showing me these particular things today? Does my life demonstrate that I am remembering and acting based upon this truth? What do I need to do or become in light of this?*
- You might consider journaling on your reflections.

RESPOND

- Talk to God in response to what you heard from him. Praise him, confess to him, ask him for what you need based on your reflections.
- Consider one thing you will do today in response to what you learned.
- Pause periodically for a few moments throughout the day to reflect on what you heard from God.

Christmas Eve Services at Third – Monday, December 24

Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to celebrate Christmas Eve at one of our five services: 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall (shorter service, suitable for our littlest ones), and 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, and 10:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary (where all ages are also welcome!). Childcare available for 3 years old and younger during the 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. services.

Important Sunday Morning Schedule Changes – Sunday, December 30

On Sunday, December 30, we will have only two services at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary, with time for fellowship in between. Sunday school classes will not meet, but childcare will be available for kindergarten and younger in both services.

Student Ministry Lock-In – December 21-22

It's time for the annual Student Ministry Lock-In! Join us for games, food, an inflatable obstacle course and fun from 8:00 p.m. Friday night till 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning. Great opportunity to invite friends! Sign up (\$20): thirdrva.org/events.

Today! Connect with our Mission Partners: Paul and Julie Ford

Paul and Julie Ford will be interviewed during all three worship services this morning and will talk about their work supporting ministry couples in Uganda, Kazakhstan, and the Ukraine. Meet the Fords in between services!

Newcomers Class – Begins Sunday, January 13

Our Newcomers Class is an opportunity for you to go deep into Third's vision for worship, discipleship, community, and outreach. At the end of the class, you can choose to become a covenant partner of the church. Class meets Sunday morning (January 13) then again the next weekend (Friday evening, January 18 and Saturday afternoon, January 19).

Guided Tour of the Bible – Kicks off again January 10 with the Poets!

This 5-week study digs into one section of the Bible, looking at a different book each week. We read on our own in between classes, then come together to explore things we want to know more about, and learn from each other. Ed Satterfield leads our time. Our next study begins Thursday night, January 10, and will focus on the Poets (Job through Proverbs). More info and to sign up: thirdrva.org/events.

SUNDAY ADULT DISCIPLESHIP CLASSES

During December, most of our adult Sunday school classes are taking a break. However, here are some opportunities you can drop into this week during the 10:00 a.m. hour.

Good News Class (Room 101)

This class is focusing on Advent based on Scripture and Advent-inspired music—including some of the O Antiphons of Advent—from the Renaissance (Michael Praetorius, William Byrd) through the Baroque (J.S. Bach) and Romantic periods (Felix Mendelssohn) and all the way to the 20th century (Herbert Howells).

Common Rule: Advent Edition – Community Conversations (Room 215)

For folks who are committing to the daily and seasonal Advent habits (based on the Common Rule, commonrule.org/advent-edition), we'll be gathering this week to connect, process what we're experiencing in our homes and workplaces, share insights, and ask questions.

Advent Resources for the Third Family

We are encouraging every person and family at Third to engage with this season of anticipation and waiting. Here are a few resources we wanted to share with you:

Common Rule: Advent Edition This guide contains daily and seasonal habits that you can practice during the Advent season. Visit thecommonrule.org/advent-edition to download the guide.

Behold! An Advent Devotional From Frontier Fellowship Our mission partner Frontier Fellowship has released a daily Advent devotional with entries by their staff and ministry friends, including Richard Haney, Donald Marsden, and LJ Jaworski. Guides are available around the church to pick up, and can be accessed digitally at frontierfellowship.org/blog.

If you have any questions about our Sunday school classes, contact Derek Mondeau: derekm@thirdrva.org.

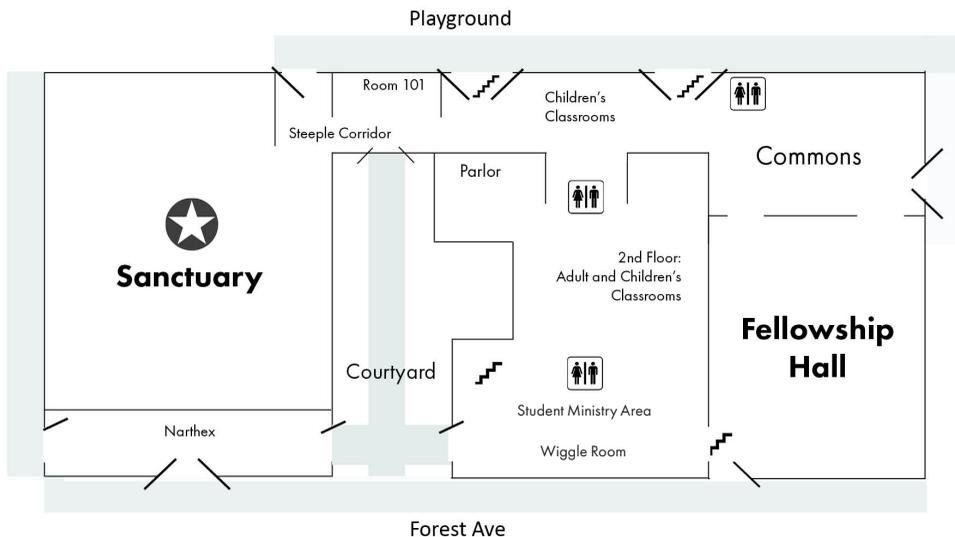
FAMILY & STUDENT MINISTRY

During 8:45 and 11:15 a.m. services: Childcare is available for all children aged Kindergarten and younger. First grade and above attend worship with their parents.

Infants, toddlers, 2 year olds	First Floor
Young 3s–Kindergarten	Second Floor

During the 10:00 service: Children are welcome to attend worship with their parents or Sunday school:

Infants, toddlers, 2 year olds	First Floor
Young 3s–4th Grade	Second Floor
5th–6th Grade (Club56)	Basement
Middle and High School	Student Ministry Area (First Floor)



Student Ministry: Sunday Night Gatherings – 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Students in 7th–12th grade are welcome to join us on Sunday evenings in the Fellowship Hall. Contact Rick (rickh@thirdrva.org) or Andrea (andreaw@thirdrva.org) with questions.

THIS WEEK AT THIRD

Sunday, December 16

8:45, 10:00, 11:15 a.m. Worship services – Sanctuary

10:00 a.m. Welcome Coffee – Parlor

11:15 a.m. Children's Choir rehearsal – Choir Room

1:00 p.m. Luncheon with mission partners Paul and Julie Ford – Room 101

Tuesday, December 18

9:00 a.m. Kingdom Knitters – Parlor

Wednesday, December 19

6:30 p.m. Freedom Road – Conference Room, 500 Forest Ave.

6:45 p.m. Club 56 Christmas Party – Basement

Thursday, December 20

7:00 p.m. Worship Team rehearsal – Sanctuary

7:00 p.m. Choir practice – Choir Room

Friday, December 21

8:30 a.m. Europe Prayer and Care – Carolyn Oakley's home (804-937-6564)

8:00 p.m. High School Lock-In – Fellowship Hall

2018 BUDGET UPDATE

2018 Total Annual Budget
\$3,876,808

November YTD Giving Budget
\$3,071,597

November YTD Giving Actual
\$2,923,137

(difference: \$148,460)



As we begin to close out 2018 and prepare our budget for 2019, we want to share with our church family how the Lord is providing for our finances this year. We are grateful for his provision thus far, and look to him in the weeks to come.

Year-to-date giving through November was \$2,923,137, which is \$148,460 or 4.83% short of budgeted expectations. It is worth noting that our annual giving budget remains heavily dependent on December giving as, historically, close to 20% of our annual giving occurs during this month. We faithfully rest in God's grace and provision, and pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to stir our hearts with overflowing and joyful generosity to meet the commitments to which God has called us.

We give praise for God's faithfulness and generosity and invite you to pray that our financial gifts will empower Third's ministry and mission at Forest Avenue, in Richmond and around the world. Your gifts have Kingdom impact.

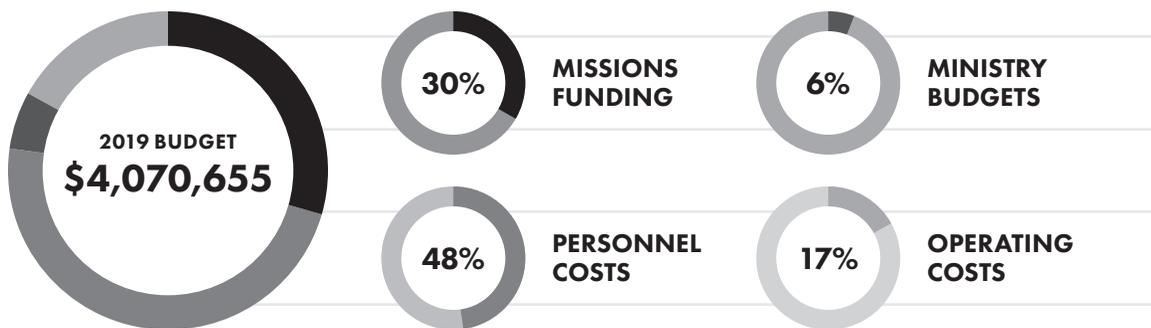
2018 STEWARDSHIP SEASON: A GENEROUS PORTION

On November 4, we came together as a church to offer our pledged financial commitments to the Lord for the upcoming year. In this act, we entrust this church to him, and ask him to use our gifts for his great purposes. If you would still like to make a commitment, you can use the cards found in the church (can be dropped in the offering plate), or visit: thirdrva.org/give.

We believe that through the local church, the gospel is proclaimed, community is formed, individuals grow and the kingdom is embodied and sent out into the world.

To that end, every year we look at what it will cost us in the coming year to live as the particular local church God has called us to be. The staff, alongside the Budget and Stewardship Committee, carefully projected our budget for 2019, and we as a church body make pledges to help ensure our financial commitments.

For 2019, we project our total budget will be **\$4,070,655**, a 5% increase from 2018.



Budget Highlights:

- For the first time, we're including our full mortgage payment for our office building, and also including increases for additional principal payments and replacement costs for aging HVAC systems.
- We aim to commit more resources to maintenance and debt reduction now, so that our future facility improvements will be less encumbered by debt, freeing us up to invest in good, new work.

WELCOME TO THIRD

We're so glad you're here. We'd love to get to know you and for you to learn more about our community. To get started, you can visit our **website** (thirdrva.org) and sign up for our **ministry emails** (thirdrva.org/signup). You can also pick up a copy of **Third Press**, our monthly newsletter, from around the church.

SUNDAY MORNINGS AT THIRD

If you ever need help on a Sunday morning, look for individuals wearing yellow name badges. They can help answer questions, find seats, and guide you around our building. A **Wiggle Room** is available if you need to leave the service with your little one. You'll be able to watch the service via streaming. The room is across the courtyard, through the doors and to the right.

WELCOME COFFEE

If you're new to Third, join us for our Welcome Coffee! This monthly gathering is a great opportunity to meet a few people and learn about Third's vision, what we believe, and how you can get involved. **Join us today at 10:00 a.m. in the Parlor.**

JOIN A PARISH GROUP COMMUNITY

We desire everyone at Third to be known, cared for, and encouraged as a disciple of Christ, and we do this through our Parish Groups. Whether you are new or not, you are invited to a Parish Group in your area this week. No qualifications, no homework, just come. We have a place set for you.

Parish Groups meet regularly to grow in our relationship with God, build authentic community, love our actual neighbors and bless our city. Learn more and find a group meeting near you at thirdrva.org/parish-life.



500 Forest Ave Richmond, VA 23229 | thirdrva.org | [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Instagram](#) @thirdrva | 804-282-4645

Third Church is a member of the ECO denomination, a Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians