

# *The First Sunday of Advent*

December 3, 2023 at 10:30 AM

*We welcome you to worship today. It is a privilege to have you as our guest.*

*As you join us today, begin to worship quietly with personal prayer.*

*Please turn off your cell phone and turn your hearts and minds toward God.*

## **We prepare for worship**

*Take a moment and meditate on this as you prepare for worship...*

*He who runs with a clear aim, looks straightforward to the goal, makes it his sole aim, casts away every encumbrance (Heb. 12:1,2), is indifferent what the bystanders say, and sometimes even a fall only serves to rouse him the more.*  
Jamieson, Fausset, Brown

Prelude

Consolation

Felix Mendelssohn

Dr. Kenneth Dean, Jr.; Director of Music Ministries

*Please quietly prepare your hearts for worship during the Prelude.*

Aisquith Life and Opportunities

## **We praise our great God**

Call to Worship

Psalms 144:9-11

<sup>9</sup> I will sing a new song to you, O God;  
upon a ten-stringed harp I will play to you,  
<sup>10</sup> who gives victory to kings,  
who rescues David his servant from the cruel sword.  
<sup>11</sup> Rescue me and deliver me  
from the hand of foreigners,  
whose mouths speak lies  
and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

Invocation

Hymn No. 194

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Veni Emmanuel

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

***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.***

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height,  
In ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell thy people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

O come, thou Day-spring from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high and close the path to misery.

### We embrace Christ's Word

Confession of our Need (Responsive)

Philippians 3:12-15

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect,  
**but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.**  
<sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own.  
**But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,**  
<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.  
<sup>15</sup> **Let those of us who are mature think this way,**  
and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.

Individual Confession of Need

Confession of Christ

Hebrews 12:1-2

<sup>1</sup> **Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Confession of Faith

Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 154

What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation?  
**The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.**

Hymn No. 230

*Thou Who Wast Rich beyond All Splendor*

French Carol

Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor, all for love's sake becamest poor;  
Thrones for a manger didst surrender, sapphire paved courts for stable floor.  
Thou who was rich beyond all splendor, all for love's sake becamest poor.

Thou who art God beyond all praising, all for love's sake becamest man;  
Stooping so low, but sinners raising, heav'nward by thine eternal plan.  
Thou who art God beyond all praising, all for love's sake becamest man;

Thou who art love beyond all telling, Savior and King, we worship thee.  
Emmanuel, within us dwelling, make us what thou wouldst have us be.  
Thou who art love beyond all telling, Savior and King, we worship thee.

### We acknowledge God's blessings

**We respond in gratitude for God's blessing**

The Giving of God's Tithes and Our Offerings

Offertory

*All Creation Sings*

J.S. Bach  
The Aisquith Choir

Sun, moon, earth and stars break forth in exultation! All creation sings the glorious resurrection! Christ is risen! Death is vanquished! Heav'n and earth repeat the glad refrain. Mountains, hills and dales ring out with acclamation! Oceans, lakes and vales all join the glad ovation. Christ is risen! Death is vanquished! All creation sings for joy: Alleluia! Sinners to redeem and save. O what glory far exceeding all that eye had yet perceived. Holiest hearts for ages pleading, never had such joy conceived.

*The Doxology (Hymnal, pg. 731) and Prayer of Dedication*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heav'nly host:  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**We are nourished by God in Word and Sacrament**

Scripture Reading

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Pew Bible pg. 957

<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup> So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Sermon

"Run to Win!"

Pastor Ceselsky

*Sermon Outline can be found on the back page of the bulletin.*

Celebration of The Lord's Supper

**We respond to God's grace**

Hymn

*O Church Arise*

Getty

O church, arise and put your armor on;  
Hear the call of Christ our captain;  
For now the weak can say that they are strong  
In the strength that God has given.  
With shield of faith and belt of truth  
We'll stand against the devil's lies;  
An army bold whose battle cry is "Love!"  
Reaching out to those in darkness.

Our call to war, to love the captive soul,  
But to rage against the captor;  
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole  
We will fight with faith and valor.  
When faced with trials on ev'ry side,  
We know the outcome is secure,  
And Christ will have the prize for which He died—  
An inheritance of nations.

Come, see the cross where love and mercy meet,  
As the Son of God is stricken;  
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet,  
For the Conqueror has risen!  
And as the stone is rolled away,  
And Christ emerges from the grave,  
This vict'ry march continues till the day  
Ev'ry eye and heart shall see Him.

So Spirit, come, put strength in ev'ry stride,  
Give grace for ev'ry hurdle,  
That we may run with faith to win the prize  
Of a servant good and faithful.  
As saints of old still line the way,  
Retelling triumphs of His grace,  
We hear their calls and hunger for the day  
When, with Christ, we stand in glory.

Benediction and Three-Fold Amen (**Hymnal, pg. 740**)

Danish

Postlude

*Thine Be The Glory*

(Maccabeus) - G F Handel

*Please be seated and quietly reflect upon the Lord's grace during the Postlude.*

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### **Announcements**

**Tomorrow (December 4<sup>th</sup>) is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the PCA!** We give thanks for God's blessing of our denomination and pray that he will use us as a light to the world as we seek to faithfully serve the Lord.

**This Year's Christmas Offering** will again go to the Ministerial Relief Fund of the PCA. This fund is used to help retired pastors and widows of pastors who struggle with economic hardship. Please give generously as you are able. You can use your "Christmas Offering" envelope or use one of the pink envelopes in the pew racks (please label them for the Christmas Offering).

**Poinsettias for Christmas** may be ordered again this year. The sign-up book is in the narthex and the cost is \$10 again this year. The deadline to sign up for the flowers is **TODAY!**

**Christmas Cards** may be placed in the box in the narthex. Please put the cards only in the box. And then look each week for your cards, which will be sorted alphabetically, on the back table. (Please do not include cards for folks who do not regularly attend worship at Aisquith.)

**We will be doing a video conference** with John & Gwen Cicone on Sunday, December 17 at 9:00 AM in room 11 – please plan to join us.

**Winter Weather Plans.** As we enter now into Winter, here's how we will inform you of any changes to our Lord's Day schedule (or Bible Studies) if there is inclement weather. A statement will be posted on the front page of our website, we will send out a blast email (you can sign up for our emails on the front page of the website), and we will send out a text alert (if you want to sign up for text alerts please let Pastor Ceselsky know). This will all be done prior to 8 AM.

### **Prayer Requests**

1. Please continue to be in prayer for Sylvia Barfield as she recovers from surgery to deal with the cancer on her lung.
2. Please continue in prayer for Anna Graham as she deals with sever back pain and tries to work with various doctors to deal with the issue.
3. Please be in prayer for Aisquith members, family members and friends of the Aisquith Community who are currently struggling with various illnesses and other physical and emotional issues.

### **Weekly Calendar**

TODAY:	9:00 AM	Sunday School for all ages Adults – Room 11 Young children – Room 17
	10:30 AM	Worship Service with The Lord's Supper (Nursery available in Room 25)
Monday	6:15 PM	Handbell Choir Practice – Room 28
Wednesday	10:30 AM	Women's Bible Study – Room 15
	7:00 PM	Men's Bible Study – Room 15
		<b>For the Bible Study Review the questions and notes on pgs. 63-68</b>
Saturday	10:00 AM	Choir Practice – Room 27
NEXT Sunday	9:00 AM	Sunday School for all ages Adults – Room 11 Young children – Room 17
	10:30 AM	Lord's Day Worship Service (Second Sunday of Advent)

### **Coming Soon**

Sunday, December 17 – 9:00 AM – video conference with John & Gwen Cicone  
Sunday, December 24 – 7 PM – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

### **Church Officers**

**Ruling Elders:** Jeff Soule & Mark Werner (Clerk)

**Deacons:** Andrew Bell (on sabbatical), Gus DeFord, Ken Schumann (President), and Rick Willis

**Deaconesses:** Christine Clark, Debbie DeFord, Fran Oswinkle, & Jeanne Williams (Moderator)

**Sermon Notes**

Date: December 3, 2023

Text: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Sermon Title: "Run to Win!"

Delivered By: Pastor John Ceselsky

Proposition: The Christian must run to win the race.

Main Point 1: Winning requires discipline.

Point 1: Training. (v. 25)

Point 2: Behavior. (v. 27a)

Main Point 2: Winning requires focus. (v. 26)

Point 1: The finish line.

Point 2: Hitting the target.

Main Point 3: Winning requires perseverance. (v. 27b)

Point 1: God causes all true Christians to persevere.

Point 2: Only those who persevere are truly Christians.