



Central Park United Methodist Church

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 7, 2025

10:30 am Sunday Service

*Everyone is invited to pray at the altar before
the service.*

Rev. Raquel Alston, Pastor

Ms. Gail Shepherd, Guest Minister of Music

Reader: Mr. Ken Thurlow

Videographer: Ms. Betty Murphy

*We are a Christ-centered community
of faith and love, reaching out to all.*

*The flowers at the altar today are given by Steve & Anne
Hunt, in celebration of Peter Hunt's birthday.*

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP (Call and Response)

Based on Isaiah 2:2-5, Matthew 24:42-44

CALL TO WORSHIP (Call and Response) *Based on Isaiah 40:1-5, Mark 1:1-8*

ONE: Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God!

MANY: **Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term!**

ONE: A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD!"

MANY: **Make straight in the desert a highway for our God!**

ONE: Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain made low!

MANY: **Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed!**

ALL: Let us worship the God who comes to comfort and transform His people!

DECLARATION & PRAISE

Songs of Comfort and Transformation;

Based on Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

"Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation!"

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING HYMN

Hymnal #209

"Blessed Be the God of Israel"

WELCOME ONE ANOTHER

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL: PEACE (Lector)

Jim Grande & Family

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." — Isaiah 40:3

Preparing the Highway

The voice of comfort echoes from Isaiah's ancient prophecy into John's desert message: "Prepare the way of the LORD!" When a king got ready to visit a city, the people would fix the roads. They would fill in the valleys and level the mountains. They removed anything that would block his path. God calls us to do the same work in our hearts. We need to level mountains of pride. Fill in valleys of despair. Straighten out crooked paths of compromise that block His peace. This is not about being perfect. It's about removing the barriers that keep us from receiving the Prince of Peace. John's baptism creates a cleared highway where Christ's peace can travel into our hearts. And then through us into a broken world. As we light the second candle of Advent, we embrace peace. Not just the absence of conflict, but the wholeness that comes when God's presence flows freely through surrendered lives.

Prince of Peace, clear away all that blocks Your presence in our lives. Make our hearts highways of holiness where Your peace reigns forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

Reader: *This is the Word of the Lord.*

People: *Thanks be to God.*

NEW TESTAMENT READING: (Please stand if you are able)

Mark 1:1-8

Reader: *This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

People: *Thanks be to God.*

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Jim Grande

This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng. Water, God's Word, bread and cup, prayer, and song: This is where children belong.

THE PROCLAIMED WORD

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

Sermon: Clear the Path Today
The Rev. Raquel Alston

INVITATION TO RECEIVE CHRIST

COMMUNION HYMN "I Come With Joy"

Hymnal #617

THANKSGIVING AND HOLY COMMUNION

A Service Of Word And Table II Hymnal #12-15

THE LORD'S PRAYER / OMBI LA BWANA YESU (*Swahili*)

English

Swahili + Pronunciation

Our Father, who
art in heaven

Baba yetu uliye mbinguni (BAH-bah YEH-too
oo-LEE-yeh mm-bee-NGOO-nee)

Hallowed be thy
name.

Jina lako litukuzwe. (JEE-nah LAH-koh lee-
too-KOOZ-weh)

Thy kingdom
come.

Ufalme wako uje. (oo-FAHL-meh WAH-koh
OO-jeh)

Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in
heaven.

Mapenzi yako yatimizwe, duniani kama
mbinguni. (mah-PEN-zee YAH-koh yah-tee-
MEEZ-weh, doo-nee-AH-nee KAH-mah mm-
bee-NGOO-nee)

Give us this day
our daily bread.

Utupe leo mkate wetu wa kila siku. (oo-TOO-
peh LEH-oh mm-KAH-teh WEH-too wah
KEE-lah SEE-koo)

English	Swahili + Pronunciation
And forgive us our trespasses,	Na utusamehe makosa yetu. (nah oo-too-sah-MEH-heh mah-KOH-sah YEH-too)
As we forgive those who trespass against us.	Kama nasi tunavyowasamehe wakoaji wetu. (KAH-mah NAH-see too-nah-vee-yoh-wah-sah-MEH-heh wah-koh-SAH-jee WEH-too)
And lead us not into temptation,	Wala usitutie katika majaribu. (WAH-lah oo-see-too-TEE-eh kah-TEE-kah mah-jah-REE-boo)
But deliver us from evil.	Lakini utuokoe na yule mwovu. (lah-KEE-nee oo-too-oh-KOH-eh nah YOO-leh mm-WOH-voo)
Amen.	Amina. (ah-MEE-nah)

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

DOXOLOGY “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”
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.

CHURCH LIFE & MINISTRY

SENDING HYMN Hymnal #220
“Angels from the Realms of Glory”

BENEDICTION
Go forth as road-makers for the Lord, creating pathways of peace wherever you walk. Let your lives be highways of holiness where others encounter God's transforming presence. May the peace of Christ rule in your hearts and flow through you to heal our broken world. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, go and prepare the way. Amen.

POSTLUDE

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