**Hymn Notes:**

“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”

This very old and well-known carol is not in our current *Glory to God* hymnal—that’s why we’ve printed the words. It was first published in 18th century England, probably around 1770. Even then it was introduced as “an ancient carol, sung in the streets of London.” In fact, old London had municipal watchmen who were licensed to perform certain tasks, including the singing of Christmas carols. This was one of their songs.

In *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, Ebenezer Scrooge hears this song sung joyously in the street and tells the singer he’ll hit him with a ruler unless he stops singing. Of course that was not the intended response to this carol.

Commas are very important in hymns including the opening line of this one. It is not, as so often thought, addressed to merry gentlemen but rather to those who may be anxious. Indeed, its message of God’s reassuring love is specifically directed at the shepherds who are frightened by the sudden appearance of an angel in their midst. That also explains the gender-specific language. The comma is often misplaced in the singing, if not in the printing. The meaning is “God keep you merry, gentlemen.”

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Wednesday Bible Study**, led by Cindy Huffman

A study of the Book of Matthew meets every Wednesday at 7:00pm through Zoom. The study guide being used is *The Immersion Bible Study: Matthew* by J. Ellsworth Kalas. If you’d like to join the Wednesday Bible Study or need a study book, please email Cindy Huffman at lucindy1@aol.com and she will forward you the Zoom link. All are welcome!

**Experiencing God Class**, led by Vicki Krueger

If you’d like to join the Experiencing God class virtually via Zoom at 10:30am on Sunday mornings, please contact Vicki Krueger via email at vickilee33@aol.com and she will send you the meeting details each week.

**Fresh Brewed**

Fresh Brewed will meet on the first Friday of every month at 10:30am via Zoom. The next meeting is February 5th. The book we are studying is “Deeply Rooted; Knowing Self, Growing in God” by Christopher Marcic. Please contact Louise Mylin for a Zoom code and if you have any questions (727) 787-9868

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**BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS TO...**

**Sunday, December 27:** Barbara Stone, Sally Uhler, Shanon O’Leary

**Monday, December 28:** Charlotte McQuown

**Tuesday, December 29:** Joyce Worley, Sarah Worley, Georgia Gordon

**Wednesday, December 30:** Doug Winder, Kaleb Adkisson

**Thursday, December 31:** Mark Johnston, Nancy Turner

**Friday, January 1:** Jacob Matthews

**Saturday, January 2:** Sheena Watkins, Cambia Woodford, Robert Wood

If you see someone whose birthday is listed and you haven’t seen them in church recently, give them a call!

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**Citylight Schedule 12/27 - 1/3**

- **SUNDAY 12/27**
  - 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM - LIVE STREAM CHURCH
  - 10:15 AM - SUNDAY SCHOOL VIA TEAMS
  - 8:30 PM - COLLEGE GROUP VIA ZOOM

- **TUESDAY 12/29**
  - 8:00 PM - YOUNG WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY VIA ZOOM

- **WEDNESDAY 12/30**
  - 8:00 PM - 7:00 PM - OUTDOOR CITYNIGHT

- **SUNDAY 12/3**
  - 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM - LIVE STREAM CHURCH
  - 10:15 AM - SUNDAY SCHOOL VIA TEAMS
  - 3:00 PM - NEW YEARS PARTY AT PHILLIPPE PARK

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**Follow the link to view our weekly email:**

https://mailchi.mp/7d8abcb2822a/citylightupdate-12222020

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**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

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**Friends of Northwood**

Flower orders & donation costs for flowers ordered for worship are made using the “2020-2021 Flower Reservation Chart” on the bulletin board across from the kitchen. Thank you to those providing flowers each week In Honor/In Memory of someone or an anniversary/birthday!

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**“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”**

John 3:16

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**Welcome To Northwood Presbyterian Church**

* A Stephen Ministry Church

**December 27, 2020**

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**Ministers: All Members of the Church**

E. Chris Curvin, Pastor
Paul Means, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care & Mission

Northwood Presbyterian Church
2875 State Road 580, Clearwater, FL 33761
(727) 796-8090 Fax (727) 797-8276
www.northwoodpc.org

Like us on Facebook!
facebook.comnpc.clearwater
ASSURANCE OF PARDON

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

REGENT SQUARE

Sages, leave your contemplations; brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations; you have seen his natal star:
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ the newborn king!

PRAISE SONG

“It’s Christmas”
Voices in Praise & Horns in Praise
(Recorded December 16, 2018)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER

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.

CALL TO OFFERING

QUARTET

“God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”           Molly Ijames
Heather Wood, Lindsey Peterson, Robert Wood, David Hamilton
(Recorded December 24, 2019)

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,
for Jesus Christ our Savior was born upon this day,
to save us all from Satan’s power when we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tiding of comfort and joy.
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.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tiding of comfort and joy.

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 deface.
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tiding of comfort and joy.

WE GROW IN THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:22-40 NRSV

MESSAGE

“The Staggering Declaration of Christmas”
Paul Means, Associate Pastor