

Sunday, 7 December 2025 – Second Sunday of Advent

The season of Advent also marks the beginning of a new liturgical year in the church calendar. Our liturgical calendar is organized into three yearly cycles, labelled A, B, and C. Today is the beginning of year A. <https://pcusa.org/theology-and-worship/advent>

Advent means *coming* or *arrival*. During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ's coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ's return.

Prelude/Postlude

Bruce Neswick's *Partita on Winchester New* is based on the hymn tune of the same name. The partita was composed in 2000 for the 90th anniversary of the District of Columbia Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

The tune WINCHESTER NEW is named for the city of Winchester, England. It is the home to Winchester Cathedral, built between 1079 and 1532. This tune is found twice in our *Glory to God* hymnal at #42 and 96. We are singing #96, *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*, as our second communion hymn this morning. The text was originally written in Latin in the 18th century and translated into English in the 17th century.

The tune is named WINCHESTER NEW to distinguish it from the tune WINCHESTER OLD, found in *Glory to God* at #25, 117, and 329.

Offertory Anthem

Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1949) was born in Erie, PA and was a well-known singer. At the National Conservatory in New York City, he studied with, and probably taught spirituals to, Antonin Dvorák. Burleigh was one of the most prolific arrangers of spirituals in the first half of the 20th century. *My Lord, What a Morning* looks ahead to the "end times"—not with apprehension, but with a sense of longing for an end to worldly suffering.

Communion Responses

The acclamation *Holy, Holy, Holy*, traditionally known as the *Sanctus*, represents one of the oldest layers in the liturgy for the Lord's Supper, because it is rooted in a text from pre-Christian Scripture. It is drawn from Isaiah 6:3, the song of the seraphim in the prophet Isaiah's vision of the throne of God surrounded by six-winged, ministering angels. This passage is echoed in Revelation 4:8.

The tune Land of Rest is an American folk melody first appeared in *The Christian's Harp*, published in Pittsburgh in 1836. It was harmonized by Annabel Morris Buchanan (1888-1983) in *Folk Hymns of America*, published in New York in 1938.