

4th Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024

10:30 a.m. Worship



Purple Flowers in Snow (royalty free image)

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

--James 1:17

First Presbyterian Church

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COMMISSIONED PASTOR: DR. WENDY L. LAMB

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN W. SMITH

MINISTRY OF VISITATION: LAURIE STAFFORD

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

PASTOR EMERITUS: REV. JAMES C. HUFFSTUTLER

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being livestreamed and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available **from the ushers**.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice w/those who rejoice, weep w/those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are **welcome** in worship. Younger children may go to the Nursery at any time.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Sunday, January 5th.

Morning Worship†

Lectors: Stephanie Fletcher

Sarah Fletcher

Candle Lighter: Rowan Fletcher

REFLECTION before the SERVICE

Being ready for Christmas and the birth of Jesus is about joy but also about courage. God is with us, and God also calls us to live in Christ, here and now. God calls us to stand for goodness and kindness, to stand against “might makes right,” to choose joy, patience, faith, and self-control, to join in the struggle of the gospel to rout out evil from the world. Be brave, knowing that God has equipped you with gifts and practical tools to make a difference in the world and that Jesus comes among us to lead us in that struggle.

--Heidi Haverkamp, *Advent in Narnia*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Est ist ein' Ros' Entsprungen

Johannes Brahms

Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

INTROIT

*Carol of the Bells*¹

M. Leontovich

Hark! How the bells, sweet silver bells, All seem to say, Throw cares away.” Christmas is here bringing good cheer, To young and old, meek and the bold. Ding, dong, ding dong, that is their song, With joyful ring, all caroling. One seems to hear words of good cheer From ev’rywhere, filling the air. Oh, how they pound, raising the sound. O’er hill and dale, telling their tale. Gaily they ring, while people sing, Songs of good cheer, Christmas is here! Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas! Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas! On, on they send, on without end, Their joyful tone to ev’ry home. Ding, dong, ding, dong.

INVITATION to ADVENT

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

* **Stand if you are able**

✱ **The congregation will read.**

¹ Text: Peter J. Wilhousky. Music: Arr. Peter J. Wilhousky. ©1936 Carl Fischer, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

CHOIR 89 v. 6

For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits;

Truly my hope is in you.

Here we shall meet the Maker of the heavens,

Creator of the mountains and the seas,

Lord of the stars, and present to us now.

For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits;

Truly my hope is in you.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life."

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

(Child lights first candle.)

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;

✘ **On those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned**

(Child lights second candle.)

I will lead the blind by a road they do not know,

by the paths they have not known I will guide them.

✘ **I will turn the darkness before them into light,**

The rough places into level ground.

(Child lights third candle.)

The LORD says to his servant,

✘ **I will give you as a light to the nations,**

that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

(Child lights fourth candle.)

The LORD says,

✘ **Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,**

and your healing shall spring up quickly;

*HYMN 89² v. 1

✘ **O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory,**

your radiance shines in all who look to you;

come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow.

For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits;

truly my hope is in you.

The Christ of Peace be with you

✘ **and also with you!**

*HYMN 93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

TRURO

² Text & Music: Marty Haugen. ©1982, 2005 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

PRAYER of CONFESSION³

It is Advent. It is the season in which we prepare our hearts to welcome Christ, who is the bringer of all peace.

We confess to you the ways in which we block the peace of Christ in our lives.

✘ **God of peace, hear our prayer.**

The rushing and scurrying to get things done,

The worry about the little details,

The financial burdens we put on ourselves,

The impatience and irritability we feel and take out on one another,

✘ **we confess to you, O God of peace.**

Though we make ourselves less than peaceful at this time of the year, your peace is always there for us.

When we feel overwhelmed,

When we are filled with worry,

When we become irritable,

✘ **instill within us your peace, O God. Amen.**

(We remain seated for the kyrie, an ancient song of the church. We will sing it through in Greek first and then in English.)

KYRIE⁴

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Note: Lower voices may hum.

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

✘ **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and are being made whole. Amen.**

³ *Worship Sourcebook, 2nd ed.*

⁴ Traditional Liturgical text. Music: Dinah Reindorf, 1987. ©1987 Dinah Reindorf. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

(We stand and sing Gloria)

***GLORIA 113** ⁵

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. After Time with the Children, they may go to KidSpace in Room 11.]

ANTHEM

*Carol of the Advent*⁶

Philip R. Dietterich

People, look East. The time is near of the crowning of the year. Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth, and set the table. People, look East, and sing today: Love the guest is on the way. Furrows be glad, Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there: Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish. People, look East, and sing today. Love, the rose, is on the way. Birds, though ye long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled. Even the hour when wings are froz'n, He for fledging time has chosen. People, look East, and sing today: Love the bird is on the way. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together. People, look East, and sing today: Love, the star, is on the way. Angels, announce to man and beast Him who cometh from the East. Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming People, look East, and sing today: Love, the Lord is on the way.

A READING

BELL ANTHEM

Angel Tidings

Cynthia Dobrinski

SCRIPTURE 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11

New Testament, pg. 174

SCRIPTURE I Timothy 4:11-16

New Testament, pg. 195

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Good Gifts

Pastor Wendy Lamb

HYMN 107

Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn

REJOICE, REJOICE

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our tithes and gifts to be part of God's purposes in the world, and we invite you to take part. You may place your offering in the basket in front or give it to the usher. You may always send gifts by mail or online.)

⁵ Music: French carol; arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937 ©1996 H. W. Gray Company. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

⁶ Text Eleanor Farjeon. Music: Philip Dietterich. © 1982 Hope Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDREDTH

- ✘ Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost, Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, OUR 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.

*HYMN 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

(If you would like to join the choir to sing the Hallelujah Chorus, please make your way to the choir loft during this hymn.)

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

Hallelujah from Messiah

G. F. Handel

Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

*POSTLUDE

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Johannes Brahms

Resources for this Series:

“Advent in Narnia,” Cindy de Jong, Reformed Worship 129
Advent in Narnia: Reflections for the Season, Heidi Haverkamp
The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, C.S. Lewis

Our musicians for this morning are

Trumpet I: Jerry Green
Trumpet II: Norm Wallis
French Horn: Victor Torres
Trombone: James Bauchert
Tuba: Asher Gano

GREETERS: Doris Nord, Donna Feit

USHERS: Chris Thomas, *Lead Usher*

Jim Siegmund, Al Rueda, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord

VIDEO ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Jim Huffstutler, Ron & Ruby Kraft

Elders: Martha Pinckney, Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane

Deacons: Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda, Steve Smith

Pastor Nominating Committee:

Susan Addington, Mary Bolaños, John-Paul Fletcher

This Weeks' Celebrations

Dec 22 John Garten-Shuman

Dec 28 Lillian Franklin

Dec 23 Ray Nelligan

Today, we will receive the Christmas Joy Offering. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us, with generous support of retired church leaders, and students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color, who develop leadership skills as they pursue their education and prepare to bring their gifts in service to the world God loves so much.

Incoming, Ongoing, & Outgoing Officers (Session & Deacons). Please save **Saturday, January 11th, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.** for our annual **Officer's training retreat.** This is always a fruitful time of reflection, transition, learning, and visioning.

Annual Reports are due SOON. The end of the year is near, and that means that committee chairs, program officers, are soon to be writing their (brief!) reports on where they saw God at work in their organization in 2024. **All reports must be submitted to Amy Smith amymys952@aol.com and/or Mimi Lange pres.first@gmail.com NO LATER THAN Friday, January 17th, so they can be included in the Annual Report to the Congregation.** Presbyterian Women must include a financial report. If you have any questions or need help, contact Amy or Mimi.

Brandon Turner has been approved to renovate the planter on the north side of the Fellowship Hall, as a service project that benefits his community. He is working towards achieving his Eagle rank in Scouts
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(BSA). His plan is to remove the existing plant material, install a drip irrigation system, and plant new drought-resistant plants. Brandon is currently at the fundraising stage and is asking for your help in reaching his goal of \$1000 - \$1300. He has already arranged for much of the material to be donated or discounted, and he has already raised \$450.00 towards his goal thanks to your generosity. He hopes to start this project in late February/early March and be finished within a month, depending on the weather. If you would like to donate to this project, Brandon will be in Fellowship Hall during Coffee Hour.

Deacons' Community Outreach/Christmas Gift Cards

The Deacons have the gift cards ready for you to pick up and deliver. If you cannot pick up your gift card(s) today, please let us know so we can make other arrangements. **Thank you for helping us help our neighbors!**

Symphony Jeunesse will present Carols & Cookies – Cinnamon & Cider, a holiday concert in Fellowship Hall this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. Please join us for this concert from these talented young musicians!.

Inland Master Chorale presents *A John Rutter Christmas*, this afternoon at 4:00 p.m. at the Memorial Chapel of the University of Redlands.

We have been given a small pipe organ, built by Ron Kraft. He and Ruby have kindly donated it to our church and it will be installed in Fellowship Hall, enhancing our summer worship, and perhaps leading to some other joyful activities. The cost of installing it has been greatly discounted, but will still require about \$3,500. **If you would like to donate to this, please contact the church office.**

Leonard Scholarship Applications. Leonard Scholarship applications for fall 2025 are available in the church office and on the church website. <https://www.fpcsb.net/leonard> All applications must be in the church office no later than Feb. 28, 2025. Any questions can be emailed to Lynda Savage. Lksavage3@gmail.com

The Joy of Generosity! Thank You! As of December 20, we have received 38 pledges for a total of \$228,924. If you have not yet pledged, you can mail your pledge in, or drop it in the offering plate, or phone Laurie or Mimi at the church office, and we'll be happy to take your pledge over the phone.

News and announcements are available in your Friday *Keeping in Touch* emails. If you are not receiving these, and you would like to, contact Mimi in the church office.

The Music Box

It had always been the same. Every December, as the first frost settled over the hills and the days grew short, Emilia would light the little lantern and set it in the window of the old stone cottage. She did it without fail, as her mother and grandmother had before her.

“Why do we light it, Grandma?” she had once asked as a child.

“To guide the way,” her grandmother answered. “For those who are lost or alone, for those who are waiting, and for those who don’t yet know they’re searching.”

Emilia hadn’t understood then, but the ritual had stayed with her. Now, many years later, she kept it faithfully, even though she lived alone by the edge of the village.

The days before Christmas felt longer than the rest of the year. Winter deepened, and the world grew still, as though the land itself was holding its breath. Emilia loved this quiet time—it felt like waiting for something she couldn’t name.

Her days were filled with small tasks: dusting, mending quilts, and baking bread that warmed the cottage. In the evenings, she polished the lantern’s glass, trimmed the wick, and set it glowing at twilight. Its golden light spilled across the snow, a quiet beacon for anyone passing through the village—a promise that someone was waiting, even if they weren’t sure for whom.

It was the third week of December when Emilia saw him.

She had stepped outside to gather wood when movement at the edge of the woods caught her eye. A figure, dark against the snow, moved slowly toward the village road. It was a boy, no more than twelve, wrapped in a coat far too thin for the cold. He carried a satchel, his footsteps dragging as though he’d walked for miles.

Something in Emilia’s chest tightened. She watched him for a moment, then turned back inside. She didn’t call out—not yet.

She set to work, preparing for a guest. She ladled stew to warm on the stove, brewed tea, and added oil to the lantern to keep the flame strong.

At the window, she saw the boy draw closer, his head bowed. He slowed when he noticed the lantern's glow, hesitating, then stopped and looked up.

Their eyes met through the glass.

Emilia opened the door. "It's bitter cold tonight," she said softly. "Would you like to warm yourself by the fire?"

The boy swallowed, pale and wind-chapped, but he nodded.

Inside, he ate tentatively at first, then hungrily.

"Where are you headed?" Emilia asked gently.

"I don't know," he admitted.

"Well," she replied with a small smile, "this is somewhere, isn't it?"

The boy blinked at her, surprised, and a faint smile tugged at his mouth.

That night, as the boy slept by the fire, Emilia relit the lantern and returned it to the window. Snow fell softly outside, the flame glowing steady in the darkness, as though waiting for someone unseen who might need its light.

Emilia stood watching it for a long time. In that moment, she understood her grandmother's words. The waiting wasn't just for Christmas. It was for the lost and weary, for those wandering through the cold and dark.

And as she turned back to the quiet warmth of her home, Emilia whispered, "To guide the way."

--William Zeitler



The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames.

As a church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), our congregational life is governed by the Ruling Elders of our current Session:

Mary Bolaños, Brooke Dvorak, Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney, Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough, Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Rebecca Allen, Dan Direen, Robin Edwards, Rick Rodriguez, Katie Smith, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas, Chris Wright-Thomas, Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda

In this time of change for our congregation, a Pastor Nominating Committee has been elected by the congregation:

Susan Addington, Mary Bolaños, John-Paul Fletcher,
Brian Gano, Kendra Lamb, Jim Morris,
Shelby Obershaw, Christa Wallis, Neal Williams