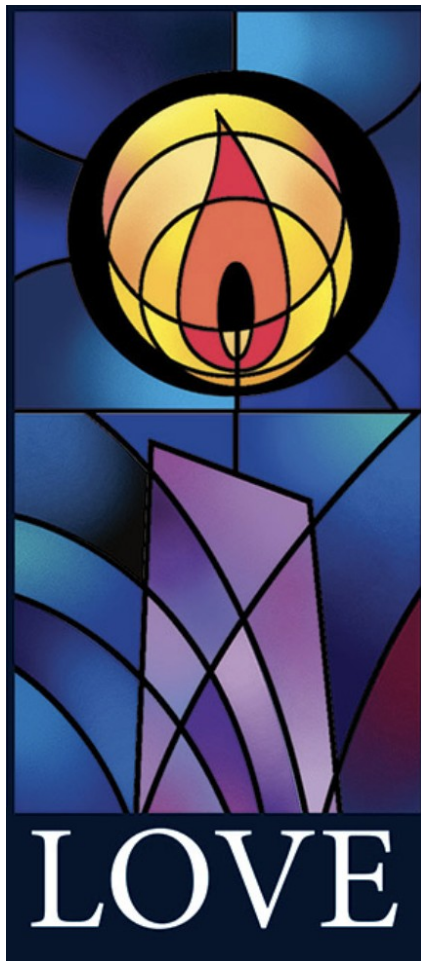


December 24, 2023

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

10:30 a.m.



First Presbyterian Church

609 South East Second Street

Evansville, Indiana 47713

(812)423-6297

www.firstpresevansville.com

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

We are grateful for your presence and invite you to participate in the worship, service, and program life of First Pres!

Please visit the church website: www.fpcevv.com to stay up-to-date on our ministry and service opportunities.

Please visit our [Facebook](#) page - First Presbyterian Church - Evansville, Indiana. We hope you'll "like" us!

Please note that this service is being livestreamed on our Website and Facebook page, and the recording will be posted to our [YouTube](#) channel.

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

**You may rise in Body or Spirit.*

THE PRELUDE

"Lo, How A Rose e'er Blooming"

arr. Ann Cameron Pearce

THE INTROIT

"Gaudete!"

from *Piae Cantiones*; arr. Robert Nicholls

Gaudete! Christus est natus ex Maria Virgine: Gaudete!

Rejoice! Christ is born of the Virgin Mary: Rejoice!

*At this time of holy grace, for which we were yearning,
in devotion let us sing, hymns of joy returning.*

God is made a man today; nature lies in wonder.

Christ the King renews the world that was put asunder.

*Fastened was Ezekiel's gate, yet he entered through it;
so the light the world has found, bringing mercy to it.*

Therefore let us all rejoice, singing to acclaim Him,

here we greet and bless the Lord, and our King we name Him.

- Anonymous 15thC; tr. Carol AP Lagemann

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One My soul magnifies the Lord.

All My spirit rejoices in God my savior.

One For the Mighty One has done great things,

All and holy is God's name.

***THE OPENING HYMN . . . no. 105**

Besançon; French folk melody

"People, Look East"

Eleanor Farjeon

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.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, in course the flower my flourish.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen.

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.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.

© David Higham Assoc. Ltd.

***THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE**

***THE CALL TO CONFESSION**

***THE PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (*in unison*)

Faithful God, we know that you are always there to guide us, yet we often make plans without listening to you and discover that our human agendas can drown out our ability to hear your will for us. We repent of these faults and turn to you in love. Forgive our offenses and pardon our sins, that our lives may magnify your holy name forever. Amen.

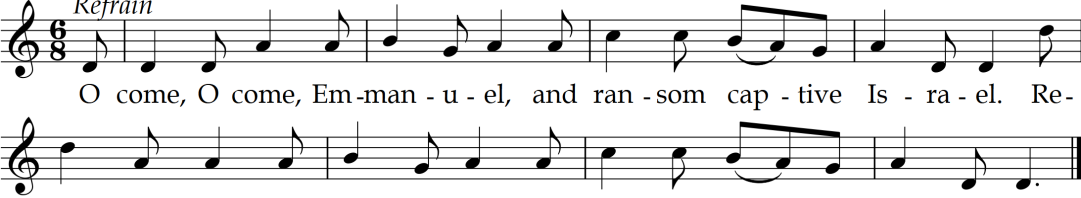
***THE SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

***THE DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

***THE CHORAL RESPONSE**
"An Advent Processional"

Donald Pearson

Refrain



O come, O come, Em-man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el. Re-
joice! Re - joice Em - man - u - el, shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

*Thy cradle here shall glitter bright and darkness breathe a newer light.
Where endless faith shall shine serene, and twilight never interoeene.
All laud, eternal Son, to thee whose advent sets thy people free,
whom with the Father we adore, and Holy Spirit for evermore.*

Refrain

Refrain - St. Ambrose
©1992 Aureole Editions

THE WORDS OF WELCOME

The Greetings Among the People of God
The Announcements

WE HEAR THE WORD OF LIFE

THE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

THE PSALM

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

- One Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.
- All For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever;
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.**
- One "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:
- All 'I will establish your line for ever,
and preserve your throne for all generations.'"**
- One You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:
"I have set the crown upon a warrior
and have exalted one chosen out of the people.
- All I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.**
- One My hand will hold him fast and my arm will make him strong.
- All No enemy shall deceive him, nor any wicked one bring him down.**
- One I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.
- All My faithfulness and love shall be with him,
and he shall be victorious through my name.**

One I shall make his dominion extend from the Great Sea to the River.
All He will say to me, 'You are my Father,
my God, and the rock of my salvation.'"

THE ANTHEM

"African Noel"

arr. André J. Thomas

Sing Noel, sing we all Noel!

O Come, ye people, gather here to hear the news of good cheer.

The King of kings, the Lamb of God is born today in Bethlehem.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

One The Gospel of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

THE CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Following the Children's Moment, those in PreK through 5th grades may go to Sunday School.

Parents may pick up their children after worship from Room 107 in the education wing.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:46b-55

And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name.

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful
to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

One The Gospel of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

Anna von Winckler

"In Weakness and Humility, God Reigns"

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

A TIME OF INTENTIONAL SILENCE

*THE HYMN . . . no. 144

*Cranham; Gustav Holst
Christina Rossetti*

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

**In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.**

**Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.**

**Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.**

**What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.**

***THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (*in unison*)

We are an Advent people, a people of hope.

For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait. We wait for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God's promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed.

Even so, we are not a naïve people. We know that the world in which we live will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow. We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist. We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives. But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end.

The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is, and ever will be. And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love, and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever. Amen.

THE MORNING OFFERING

The Invitation to the Offering

The Offertory

We receive the Christmas Joy Offering today.

You may give online at firstpresevansville.com/giving or by sending a check to the church.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

arr. Ricky Lombardo

*The Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings . . . no. 606

Old Hundredth

"Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow"

Thomas Ken

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

*The Prayer of Dedication

THE PRAYERS

The Sharing of Joys and Concerns

The Prayers of the People

The Silent Prayers

The Lord's Prayer (*in unison*)

**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.

WE DISPERSE TO SERVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR

*THE CLOSING HYMN. . . no. 97

Aberstwyth; Joseph Parry
John Bowring

“Watchman, Tell Us of the Night”

Watchman, tell us of the night, what its signs of promise are.
Traveler, what a wondrous sight: see that glory-beaming star.
Watchman, does its beauteous ray news of joy or hope foretell?
Traveler, yes; it brings the day, promised day of Israel.

Watchman, tell us of the night; higher yet that star ascends.
Traveler, blessedness and light, peace and truth its course portends.
Watchman, will its beams alone gild the spot that gave them birth?
Traveler, ages are its own; see, it bursts o’er all the earth.

Watchman, tell us of the night, for the morning seems to dawn.
Traveler, shadows take their flight; doubt and terror are withdrawn.
Watchman, you may go your way; hasten to your quiet home.
Traveler, we rejoice today, for Emmanuel has come!

*THE SENDING AND BENEDICTION

THE BENEDICTION RESPONSE

“Gloria Patri” from *Beatus Vir*

Claudio Monteverdi

*Gloria Patri, et Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto,
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

Glory to the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

- *Psalm 112*

THE POSTLUDE

“God’s Son is Coming” (BWV 600)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Leading worship this morning:

Pastor Anna von Winckler
Liturgist Sarah Cross
The Advent Candle Steve Gibson and Steve Wylie
Director of Music Robert Nicholls
The Choir of First Presbyterian Church
The Flute Choir of First Presbyterian Church, Dick Bernhardt, director

Some materials in this service bulletin are reprinted with permission under OneLicense.net #A-702939; others are under CCLI Licenses #1419649 and #20550012. All rights reserved.

About Today's Choral Music

Gaudete!

In 1582, in Greifswald, northern Germany, the *Piae cantiones* were published. The songbook documented a rich singing tradition at the cathedral of Turku, across the Baltic Sea in southern Finland. Many of the songs were centuries old. The *Piae cantiones* contains many well-loved songs and carols, including *In dulci jubilo* and *Resonet in laudibus*, and the tune of *Good King Wenceslas*. *Gaudete! Gaudete! Christus est natus* is typical of the collection with active rhythms, contrasting chant-like sections, and simple harmonies. We add drums and percussion as it seems likely they would have been used in the late sixteenth century.

African Noel

André J. Thomas (b. 1952) is a Black American composer, conductor, and author who is a Visiting Professor of Conducting and Conductor of Camerata at Yale. For many years he was Professor of Music at Florida State University. *African Noel* was written for Anton Armstrong and the St. Olaf Choir in 1994 and features direct, simple harmonies, drums and bright rhythms, and lots of dynamic contrasts to create an ecstatic outpouring of joy.

Gloria Patri from *Beatus Vir*

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) is a pivotal composer in the development of Western music, bridging the styles and aesthetics of the Renaissance and the early Baroque, and was the writer of the first Opera, *L'Orfeo*, in 1607. In 1612 he was appointed maestro di cappella at the basilica of St. Mark in Venice. *Beatus Vir* is a setting of the whole of Psalm 112, dating from around 1630, and is organized on a fairly broad scale. Monteverdi developed the 'stile concertato' where small groups are contrasted with larger groups, in this case the full chorus. The *Gloria* (sung in Latin) makes a vibrant, if unusual, Benediction Response and is crowned by one of the most glorious settings of the word "Amen".

Happening at First Presbyterian Church

We will join in worship again today at **5:00 p.m. with a service of carols, candlelight, and communion.** The doors will open at 4:30 p.m., and childcare will be available during the service. Join your First Pres family as we celebrate the birth of the Savior.

Next Sunday, we will join in **one worship service** for the last day of the calendar year. Invite your friends and family to join you for church on **Sunday, December 31 at 10:30 a.m.** as we usher the old year out and the new year in.

During this **Christmas Week**, the church **office will be closed.** [Email](#) and phone messages will be monitored, so please **don't hesitate to be in touch** if you have a question or need to come to the building. Regular office hours (Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) will resume on Tuesday, January 2.

The **Bible Bunch** Sunday school class is taking a few days off for the holiday season! The group **will not meet** today, returning to its regular schedule at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, January 7.

Are you looking for ways to **make a difference in our community**? Be sure to check out the **news** from the Mission Committee and the Justice and Peace Committee **in this week's [Connect](#).** If you're not receiving the weekly e-newsletter, make a note on your yellow worship form or contact the church office and we'll add you to the delivery list!

Weekly Calendar

Elder of the Week: Gary Morris

Sunday, December 24 *Christmas Eve*

- 7:30 a.m. Band Rehearsal
- 8:30 a.m. Wide Awake Worship
- 9:30 a.m. Advent Study
Choir Rehearsal
- 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Worship
Children's Sunday School
- 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time
- 3:00 p.m. Music Rehearsals
- 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 31 *Christmas Eve*

- 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Worship
- 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Time

Monday, December 25 - Monday, January 1
Church Office Closed

