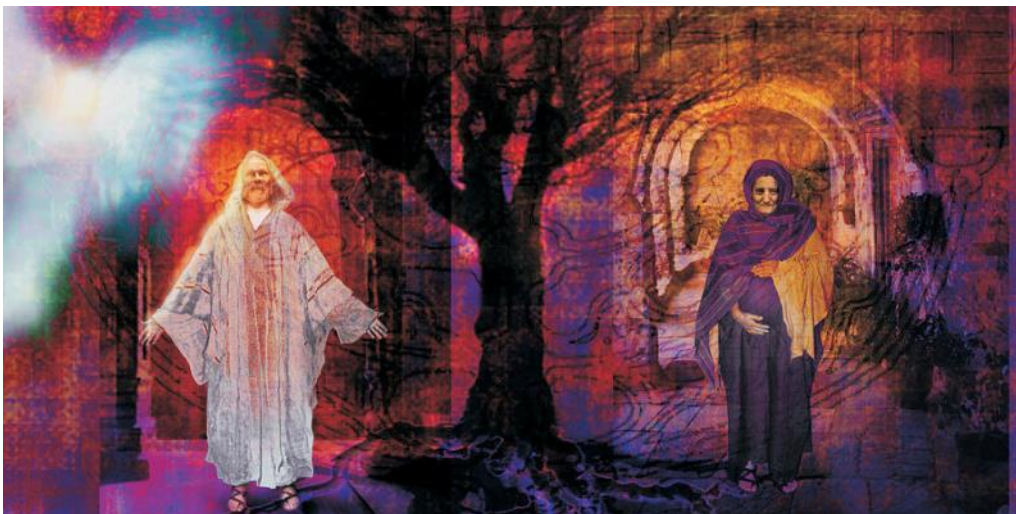


December 17, 2023
Third Sunday of Advent
11:00am



Zechariah and Elizabeth, digital artwork by Merrill Miller



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church!

Thank you for joining us today! We're grateful for your presence and invite you to take part in our worship, mission, and programs. Please join us after worship for coffee, cookies, and punch in our fellowship hall, called McKay Hall. Just follow the crowd, and you cannot miss it! Then, we hope you return next Sunday. Livestreaming is available to watch via the website or YouTube, but we know this is no substitute for the community built through in-person connections. We're glad you're here!

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**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

Gathering

Prelude O Little Town of Bethlehem
Berceuse sur un Noël Alsacien, Op.93, No. 4

Robert A. Hobby
Alexandre Guilmant

Call to Worship

Our God can part the sea.

**God can bring water from a rock,
and provide bread in the desert.**

Our God can walk on water.

**He can heal the sick,
and turn water into wine.**

Our God sets the stars in the sky.

**God hears our voice when we cry,
and is closer than our own breath.**

There is nothing our God cannot do.

Let us stand in awe. Let us worship God with wonder.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Susan and Randy Bolinger

***Hymn No. 132** Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

***Call to Confession**

If you spend any time with a child, you will quickly notice that children see the world differently. For a child, a ladybug is a miracle. A pine tree is a wonder. Curiosity is a love language, and water is not only for survival, but for joy. As adults, we forget this language of awe and wonder, and when we do, we distance ourselves from God. In confession, we have the opportunity to close that distance. So let us return to God with hearts wide open. Let us return to God in prayer. Join me in the prayer of confession:

***Prayer of Confession**

**Holy God, somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe.
We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts.
We praise those who have answers,
and assume that wonder is an answerless game.
Forgive us for closing that door to you.
Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children.
Teach us the ways of awe and wonder,
so that like Zechariah,
when we find ourselves speechless,
our first words will be words of praise.
With hearts open wide, we pray, amen.**

***Words of Forgiveness**

Family of faith, just as we marvel at mountains and newborns, at sunrises and sunsets, God marvels at us. There is nothing you could do or leave undone that could prevent God from loving you. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:
**We are forgiven.
We are loved.
We belong to God. Amen.**

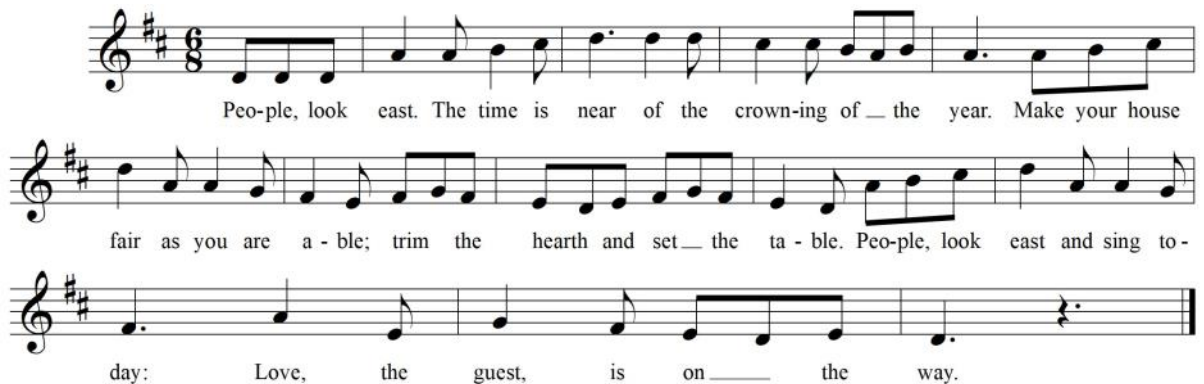
***Sharing the Peace of Christ**

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

As you are comfortable, we invite you to take a moment to share the Peace of Christ with those around you with a smile, wave, or other signs of connection.

***Responsive Hymn No. 105** People, Look East

BESANÇON



Hearing the Word

Time with Children

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem Still, Still, Still

Austrian Carol/Norman Luboff

Chancel Choir

Still, still, still one can hear the falling snow. For all is hushed, the world is sleeping, holy star, its vigil keeping. Still, still, still. One can hear the falling snow. Sleep, sleep, sleep, 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth. The night is peaceful all around you, close your eyes, let sleep surround you. Sleep, sleep, sleep 'tis the eve of our Saviour's birth. Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come. While guardian angels without number watch you as you sweetly slumber. Dream, dream, dream of the joyous day to come.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:57-80

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“Zechariah’s Song”

Rev. Dr. Anne Bain Epling

***Affirmation of Faith**

We believe in a God who knows our names,
**who counts the hairs on our heads,
and carries the dreams in our hearts.**

We believe that God's fingerprints are all over creation,
and that God is forever speaking to us in a million different ways.

We believe that awe and wonder,
goosebumps and laughter,

telling stories and paying attention,

are all ways that we can say thank you

to our creating, sustaining, and loving God.

**Therefore we commit ourselves to moving through this world
with eyes wide open,**

with porous hearts,

and grateful spirits.

We commit ourselves to living lives of awe, wonder, and gratitude,

trusting that these things will forever draw us deeper into God's loving arms.

We believe.

We stand in awe.

Thanks be to God!

Responding to the Word

***Hymn No. 123** It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

CAROL

Announcements and Minute for Mission

Prayers of the People and 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.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Of the Father's Love Begotten 13th Century Plainsong/Paul Wohlgemuth
Chancel Choir

Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore! O that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bare the Savior of our race; and the Babe, the world's Redeemer, first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore! O ye heights of heaven adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King! Let no tongue on earth be silent, every voice in concert sing, evermore and evermore!

***Responsive Hymn No. 102** Praise We Sing to Christ the Lord



***Prayer of Dedication**

God of love, thank you for the ways you break into our weary world with a joy that reaches far beyond anything the world can offer. We ask your blessing upon these gifts that they may help us to share your love with the world. Bless each of us, that we may be vessels of your joy-filled light in our weary world. Amen.

Sending

***Hymn No. 147** The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL

Stanzas 1-3 Only

***Benediction**

***Postlude** Chorale Prelude on *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Robert A. Hobby

Assisting with Worship this Morning

Pastors: Rev. Dr. Anne Epling, Rev. Carrie Winebrenner

Advent Candle Lighters: Susan and Randy Bolinger

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Carolyn Krebs and Carole Slater

Ushers: Dan Serban, Jack Patton, David Beer, Anne Barnett

Director of Music Ministries & Organist: Brent Neuenschwander

Assistant Organist: Kathryn Miller

Assisting Conductor: Liz Graham

Chancel Choir

Live Stream Operator: Dick Florea

Sound Board Operator: Marj Sapp

MINISTRIES FOR OUR YOUNGER DISCIPLES

SUNDAY SCHOOL TODAY! K-5TH GRADE RIGHT AFTER THE TIME WITH CHILDREN

Join us for Sunday School with Miss Rachel and Friends! We'll all start in worship together, and then head to our SS room as a group. We hope you'll join us for a lesson, craft, and, of course...Bible Bucks! YAY! Grown-ups, please pick your children up after worship.

NURSERY AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN 6MO - 5 YEARS

Jesus loves the little children, and we do, too! But should you decide that today would be a good time to explore the nursery, your child is always invited to drop in. Ask an usher for assistance.

BUSY BAGS FOR CURIOUS MINDS

Worship isn't always easy for little hands and minds to focus, so you are invited to "check out" a fidget toy-filled Busy Bag or a book from our Littles' Library! Please return after church, so it's there next week!

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST PRES THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 17, 2023

- 9:30am HeBrews, YL
- 10:00am Children's Choir Rehearsal, SS2
- 10:00am The Wired Word, PR
- 10:00am Chancel Choir Rehearsal, SB
- 10:30am Childcare, NR
- 11:00am English Worship Service, SC
- 11:00am Korean Worship Service, CH
- 11:15am Sunday School, 208
- 12:15pm Hospitality Time, MH
- 12:15pm KLM Fellowship, FH
- 12:30pm Green Team Meeting, SR
- 3:00pm Open House at the Eplings, OS

Monday, December 18, 2023

- 1:30pm 3B Exercise Class, MH
- 3:00pm Faith, Fibers, and Fellowship, 302

Tuesday, December 19, 2023

- 10:00am Staff Meeting, SR
- 11:00am Counter Team, FO

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

- 10:00am Table Talk, ZM
- 1:30pm 3B Exercise Class, MH

Thursday, December 21, 2023

- 6:30pm Choir Social Time, PR
- 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal, MR

Friday, December 22, 2023

- 9:30am Day School Music Class, MR
- 1:00pm Women's Bible Study, ZM
- 5:00pm Christmas Crafts & Carols, MH

Saturday, December 23, 2023

Campus closed all day

Sunday, December 24, 2023—Christmas

- 10:00am Children's Choir Rehearsal, SS2
- 10:00am Chancel Choir Rehearsal, SB
- 10:30am Childcare, NR
- 11:00am Christmas Pageant/Worship, SC
- 11:00am Korean Worship Service, CH
- 12:15pm Santa - Hospitality Time, MH
- 12:15pm KLM Fellowship, FH
- 4:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal, SB
- 5:00pm Orchestra Prelude, SC
- 5:30pm Christmas Eve Worship, SC

Campus Room Abbreviations

CH	Chapel	MF	McKay Foyer	SB	Sanctuary Balcony
CL	Chapel Lounge	MH	McKay Hall	SC	Sanctuary
CN	Chapel Narthex	MR	Music Room	SDR	Small Dining Room
CY	Courtyard	NP	North Parking Lot	SR	Session Room
FH	Fellowship Hall	NX	Narthex	SS2	Sunday School 2
FO	Front Office	NR	Nursery	TH	Theater
GL	Gallery	OS	Offsite	YL	Youth Lounge
KT	Main Kitchen	PR	Parlor	ZM	Zoom