

December 15, 2024
Third Sunday of Advent
11:00am — Sanctuary



“Flight Into Egypt”, Giotto, c.1304-1306, fresco, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy



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! 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!

Rev. Dr. Anne Epling (she/her), Rev. Carrie Winebrenner (she/her)

Rev. Dr. Youngsoo An (he/him), Rev. Ann Pitman (she/her)

Please silence and put away your cellphone as you enter this worship space.

**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

Sleepers Wake! A Voice Astounds Us
On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry

Philipp Nicolai/J. S. Bach
Malcolm Archer

Handbell Acclamation & Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Today we light the candle of Learning, as we consider the choices of King Herod. Faced with the news of Jesus' birth, Herod chose not to learn from this gift but to cling to his power and pride. May we have hearts that are open to the truth Christ brings, willing to learn and to change, that we may find hope in his way.

As we light this candle, we commit to learning from Christ's example. May we welcome the light of his wisdom and allow it to transform us.

"Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage." (Matthew 2:2)

God of wisdom, help us to learn from Christ's humble birth. May we have hearts that seek truth, turning away from pride and fear. Teach us to be open to your light, bringing hope to our lives and the world. Amen.

***Call to Confession**

Herod rejected the light, refusing to learn from the signs of God's coming. We confess that we too are slow to learn, clinging to power or pride instead of walking in God's truth. Let us ask God to teach us and transform our hearts.

***Prayer of Confession**

God of wisdom, we confess that we do not always have hearts open to your truth. Like Herod, we may cling to our own power, pride, or comfort, fearing the changes your presence might bring. We do not always seek to learn from Christ's example, and we resist the transformation you desire in us. Forgive us for our stubbornness and fear and open our hearts to learn your ways. Teach us to humbly walk in your light, that we may live in love and justice as followers of Jesus. Amen.

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Friends, hear the good news: Though we stumble, God is patient, teaching us again and again. In Christ, we are forgiven, and the light of God continues to lead us in the way of wisdom and love. **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

***Passing 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. 127 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'. It consists of four staves of music in a 3/4 time signature with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The lyrics are: 'We'll walk in the light, beau - ti - ful light. Come where the dew - drops of mer - cy shine — bright. O, — shine all a - round us by day and by night. Je - sus, the light of the world.'

HEARING THE WORD

Time with Children

Children and youth in kindergarten thru 9th grade are encouraged to head to Sunday School after the Time with Children

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 63: 7-9

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem The Advent Road

Douglas E. Wagner

The Advent road to Bethlehem is paved with promise and hope; still travelers walking its winding path, with fears and sadness cope. On ahead is peace for anxious hearts and refreshment for pilgrims all; for at journey's end will be found a friend in the guise of an Infant small. Rejoice, rejoice, good news we have to tell: "To you shall come, Emmanuel." As darkness fills the endless sky, and a silence covers the earth, not a sign appears, not a sound is heard of the coming Savior's birth. But the light is drawing closer in with each step along the way; and a heavenly music how begins, as the night turns into day. Rejoice, rejoice, good news we have to tell: "To you shall come, Emmanuel."

New Testament Reading

Matthew 2:13-23

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon “Walk in the Light: Learn”

Rev. Dr. Annie Bain Epling

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*Hymn No. 132 Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

Announcements

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 Lullaby

F. Melius Christiansen/G. Winston Cassler

*Responsive Hymn No. 105 People, Look East

BESANÇON



Peo-ple, look east. The time is near of the crown-ing of _ the year. Make your house
fair as you are a - ble; trim the hearth and set _ the ta - ble. Peo-ple, look east and sing to -
day: Love, the guest, is on _ the way.

***Prayer of Dedication**

God of wisdom, unlike Herod we seek to learn from your truth. As we dedicate these gifts, we ask for hearts that are open to your teaching. Use our offerings to share your light with the world, and guide us to walk humbly in your ways, growing in grace and understanding. Amen.

SENDING

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

CAROL

***Benediction**

***Postlude** Improvisation on *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

Chancel Flowers

The Chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Edward Hamman and Frances Whitebread by Judy and Tom Mettler

Assisting with Worship this Morning

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

Advent Wreath Lighters: Randy and Susan Bolinger

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Denise Davis, Steve Weissner

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

Director of Music Ministries & Organist: Brent Neuenschwander

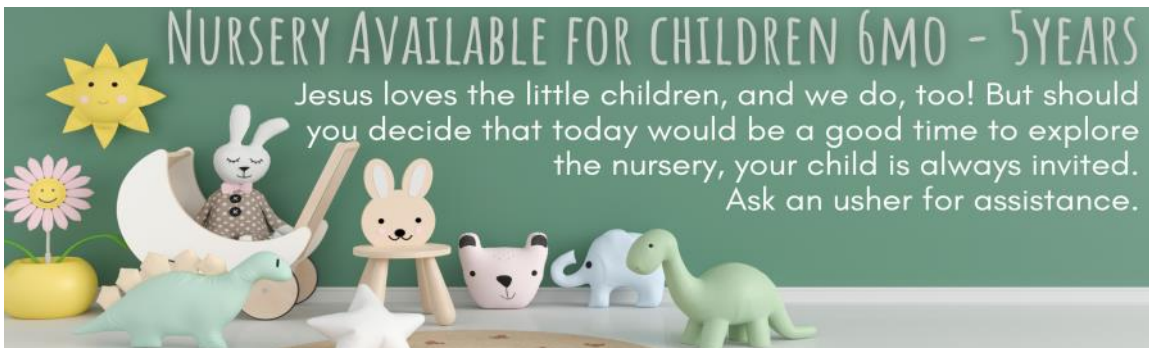
Assistant Organist: Kathryn Miller

Chancel Choir

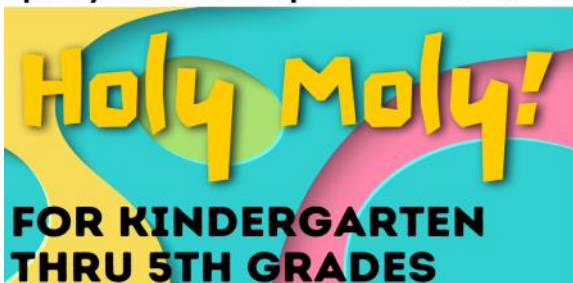
Live Stream Operator: Dick Florea

Hearing Loop: To use the “Hearing Loop” during the service, please switch your hearing aid or cochlear device to the “T,” T-Coil or telephone position.

Large Print Hymns are available from the Ushers



Sunday School for Children and Youth meets during church. We'll all start in worship together, and then head to our SS rooms as a group. Grown-ups, please pick your children up in the education wing after worship.



This Week at First Pres!

Christmas Eve Music and Decorations: We look forward to having an orchestra at the 5:30pm service on Christmas Eve and to all of the beautiful Christmas decorations. All of this is made possible through monetary gifts given in loving memory of family and friends. Memorialized names, with the names of the donors, will appear with the Christmas Eve worship bulletin. Please have your donation to the church **today**. To donate, make check payable to First Presbyterian Church, memo line: Chancel Guild – Christmas (Music or Flowers) or online at www.firstpresfortwayne.org.

Intergenerational Walk-Up Christmas Pageant: You're Invited to "Walk in the Light" as we journey through the Christmas story next Sunday during the 11 AM worship hour. This year's pageant, "*Walk in the Light*", brings the story of Christ's birth to life with joy, music, and the voices of all ages. As you arrive next Sunday, you may be handed a paper bag with a role to play in the story, and we will all participate as the heavenly host of angels. Experience the wonder of the first Christmas as we remember how ordinary people embraced God's extraordinary plan for humanity, playing lead roles in this incredible story of grace. Come and celebrate the light of Christ that continues to shine in our lives today. Bring your family and friends—there's a place for everyone in this story of love and hope.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT FIRST PRES

DECEMBER 24TH

5PM PRELUDE WITH ORCHESTRA

5:30PM LESSONS AND CAROLS

Busy Bags and LED candles will be given out to the younger children.

10PM LESSONS AND CAROLS

Both services will conclude with traditional singing of Silent Night by candlelight.

