

December 22, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Intergenerational Walk-Up Christmas Pageant
11:00am — Sanctuary



“Bethlehem” Alina Kurbiel, 2014

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

Chorale Prelude on *What Is This Lovely Fragrance*

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Paul Manz

Robert A. Hobby

Handbell Acclamation

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Today we light the candle of Preparation, inspired by John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus. John called people to turn their hearts to God, to make ready for the arrival of the Messiah. As John prepared the way, may we also prepare our hearts, creating space for God's love and justice to grow.

As we light this candle, we prepare ourselves for Christ's coming. May we be ready to receive him and to share his light with the world.

"Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Mark 1:3)

God of love, help us to prepare our hearts for Christ's coming. Make us ready to receive him, and to share his love and justice with all we meet. Amen.

***Hymn No. 113** Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

***Call to Confession**

*Prayer of Confession

God of love, we confess that we do not always prepare ourselves to receive you. We become distracted, focused on our own desires, and often ignore the call to make room for you in our lives. Like those who heard John the Baptist, we may hesitate to repent and turn our hearts fully toward you. Forgive us when we fail to prepare ourselves and to share your love with others. Create in us clean hearts, ready to welcome the light of Christ into the world. Amen.

*Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends, hear the good news: God's mercy is abundant, and God's love prepares the way for us. In Christ, we are forgiven, renewed, and called to walk in the light with courage and hope. **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 (Jesus, the Light of the World)

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'. It is written in G major (one flat) and 3/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. 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.' The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a triplet of eighth notes in the second staff.

HEARING THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Walk in the Light: The Christmas Story

The Entire Congregation

Instead of a traditional Scripture reading and sermon this morning, we present an intergenerational, interactive Christmas pageant. We are all members of this Christmas cast! Some of our actors were handed their roles this morning, with no rehearsal other than having heard this miraculous story before.

We pray that this story, told in a new, exciting way, will allow your inner child to hear the Good News with fresh ears. Gloria in Excelsis Deo !

During the retelling of the story, the entire congregation is the heavenly host of angels sent to bring the good news. When we hear the narrator say, " At once, the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises!" please respond:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights; Peace to all!

Hark the Herald Angels Sing, choir will sing verse 1, all sing verse 3

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!

Hail the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by,

born that we no more may die,

born to raise us from the earth,

born to give us second birth.

Hark! the herald angels sing,

"Glory to the newborn King!"

We Three Kings, verses 1 and 5

We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

Glorious now behold him arise;
King and God and sacrifice:
Alleluia, Alleluia,
sounds through the earth and skies.

O star of wonder, star of light,
star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding,
guide us to thy perfect light.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*Hymn No. 136 Go, Tell it on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

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 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

Gustav Holst

*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 preparation, just as John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, we offer these gifts to prepare the way for your light to shine in the world. Bless what we give and prepare our hearts to serve others with love and generosity. May our lives, like John's, proclaim the coming of your kingdom as we walk in your light. Amen.

SENDING

***Hymn No. 110** Love Has Come

BRING A TORCH

***Benediction**

***Postlude** Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Robert A. Hobby

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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

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Assisting with Worship this Morning

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

Narrator: William Shassere

Cast List: The Priesthood of All Believers

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

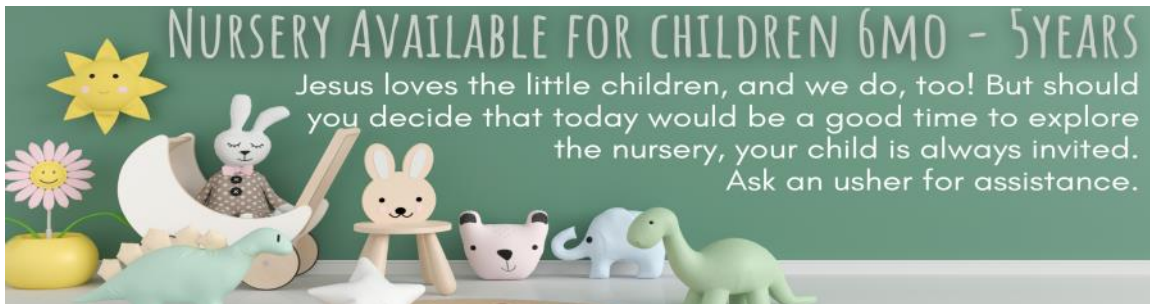
Ushers: Anne Barnett, David Beer, Jack Patton, Dan Serban

Director of Music Ministries & Organist: Brent Neuenschwander

Assistant Organist: Kathryn Miller

Chancel Choir

Children's Choir



This Week at First Pres!

CHRISTMAS EVE AT FIRST PRES DECEMBER 24TH

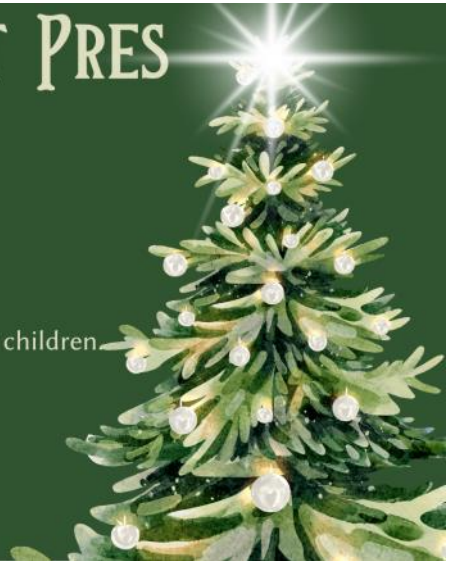
5PM PRELUDE WITH ORCHESTRA

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.



Christmas Eve: Join us as we celebrate Christmas 2024! We would love to see you at one of our Christmas Eve services! Come enjoy the full majesty of Lessons and Carols beginning at 5:00 pm with special music orchestra featuring musicians from the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, plus organ, a brass quintet, and choir. The service begins at 5:30pm. Our traditional candle lighting during the singing of Silent Night will conclude the service. You're also welcome to join us at 10:00 pm for a shorter Lessons and Carols service, featuring organ and soloist. May you experience the hope, peace, love, and joy that is yours this Advent and Christmas season! Please note: Nursery and livestream will be offered for the 5:00 pm service only.

Church Office: Due to the holiday and staff vacation schedules, the church office will be closed December 25 thru 27th. Should needs arise, please email Bill Hickle, our church administrator, at bhickle@firstpresfortwayne.org. For pastoral care concerns, please call Rev. Ann Pitman at 260-267-1196