

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025
11:00am — Sanctuary



“Love” mixed media artwork by Laura Bowman



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WEST WAYNE STREET

*Those who are able, please stand

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

Eternal Purposes

Olivier Messiaen

Chiming of the Hour

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Advent Candles

Into the world's tiresome, weary, and impatient ways, God will give us a sign.

A miracle is about to break forth,

a sign as deep as the grave and as high as heaven.

A young woman will give birth to a son and name him Immanuel, God with us.

He will learn to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves,

reject evil and choose good.

Today we light the candle of love, for God's love is soon to be born.

In love, we wait for God-With-Us.

***Hymn No. 113**

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

***Call to Confession**

A sign is given: a young woman will bear a son and call him Immanuel, God with us. Yet we confess that we often resist the love God longs to give. Trusting in God's compassion, let us confess our sin.

***Prayer of Confession**

God of steadfast love, we confess that we grow weary of waiting. We chase after lesser signs, and we trust our own strength more than your saving grace. We resist your call to reject evil and choose good, and we hesitate to love as freely as you love us. Forgive us, O God. Let your love be born anew in us, that we may bear Christ's light into a world in need. Amen.

***Declaration of Forgiveness**

Hear the promise: God is with us—Immanuel has come. Love has drawn near, offering mercy and renewal. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

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. 137

He Came Down

HE CAME DOWN

He came down that we may have hope; he came down that we may
 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may
 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may
 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may

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have hope; he came down that we may have hope; hal-le - lu-jah for-ev-er - more.
 have peace; he came down that we may have peace; hal-le - lu-jah for-ev-er - more.
 have joy; he came down that we may have joy; hal-le - lu-jah for-ev-er - more.
 have love; he came down that we may have love; hal-le - lu-jah for-ev-er - more.

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 7:10-16

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem

Sleepers, Wake!

Wachet Auf/Bach

Gospel Reading

This is the Word of the Lord.

Matthew 1:18-25

Thanks be to God!

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

***Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe that God has come to us;
that God brought us into being,
that this God gave us breath and purpose,
that we have been blessed to be a blessing to others,
that we have fallen short of this commandment
but that God has nevertheless loved us despite our brokenness.**

**We believe that God is coming to us;
that God is not happy to leave us alone,
that this God will come to us as a particular human being,
that God will be made known to us in flesh and bone like ours,
that Mary will soon give birth and Joseph will soon clap his hands in joy,
that Jesus Christ will be born and our salvation made complete.**

**We believe that God will come to us;
that God will have the final word and that Word will be good,
that this God will give us the presence of the Spirit to continue our work,
that we are called to be disciples to all the corners of the earth,
that the day is coming when tears and pain will be no more,
and all will gather at the Table to sing an endless and perfect “Alleluia!”**

***Hymn No. 128**

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

W ZLOBIE LEZY

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.

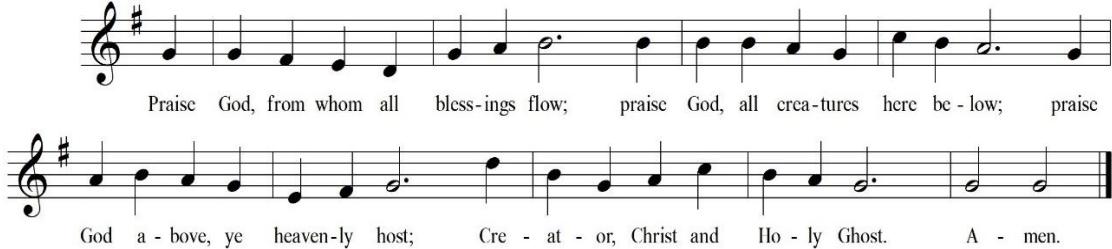
Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Poco Allegretto

Cèsar Franck

*Responsive Hymn No. 606 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow



Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below; praise God above, ye heavenly host; Cre - at - or, Christ and Ho - ly Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

Faithful God of unfolding plans, when our certainty falters and our expectations collapse, you are still at work, inviting us into grace that redefines and redeems. Like Joseph, we bring our gifts and lay down our plans, trusting that your Spirit can shape our offering into something greater than we imagined. Let these gifts and our lives be signs of obedience, humility, and hope. We pray in the name of the one who is Immanuel—God with us. Amen.

SENDING

*Hymn No. 147

The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL

*Benediction

*Postlude

Prelude in G major BWV 550

Johann Sebastian Bach

Assisting with Worship this Morning

Pastors: Rev. Dr. Annie Epling (she/her), Rev. Carrie Winebrenner (she/her)

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Tony Borton, Carolyn Krebs, Carol Rhudy, Sherrie Steiner

Ushers of the Month: Anne Barnett, Dave Beer, Eric Evans, Carol Offerle, Jack Patton, Steve Weissner, Beth White

Director of Music Ministries: Colin Andrews

Assistant Organist: Irene Ator

Chancel Choir: Richard Baughman, Edith Coplin, Quinton Davis, Susan Dorion, Andrew Graham, Liz Graham, DuWayne Hintz, Joan Kern, Jane McGeehan, Scott McMeen, Alli McQueen, Kemel Mitchell, Kip Ormerod, Ellis Pedersen, Carol Rhudy, Marj Sapp, Sandy Shearer, Jill Therrien, Mary Winters

Live Stream Operator: Dick Florea

Sound Board Operator: Jeff Slater

Prayer List

- Kathy Miller
- Kelly Leach
- Donna Jesse
- Mary Winters
- Jim & Sondra Mergenthal
- Cormac Wallace
- Richard Baughman
- Virginia Kreamer-Lutz

If you are in need of prayer or an encouraging word, let us know.

Care & Support

FPC is a **Stephen Ministries** congregation and has a dedicated group of Stephen Ministers. Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. The Stephen Ministry is completely confidential, and open to all FPC members. For more information, please contact Carolyn Krebs at 956-844-3890 or Marcie Weissner at 260-312-5733.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Fair Trade Chocolate Sale

The Green Team will be offering delicious Fair-Trade chocolate bars for \$5 each at the Green Team Cart after worship today and next Sunday, cash or check only. Why Fair Trade? Because it ensures farmers receive fair wages and supports sustainable growing and harvesting practices.

This season, consider giving the sweet gift of Fair-Trade chocolate! All proceeds help us purchase food for local food banks!

Annual Sweatpants Drive

At the beginning of each semester, the Schools Team asks the administrators of the two schools we support, South Wayne and Washington Elementary, what needs they have for the upcoming months. Both of the schools have asked for sweatpants (bottoms only) to have on hand. We ask your help in providing this for our schools. They need children's sweatpants sizes XS through XL. Preferably neutral colors such as blue, red, navy, black and gray. We will have a bin in the Narthex beginning in December where you can place your purchases. We thank you in advance for helping us support our schools.

Worship on December 28th

Join us on December 28 at 11:00 a.m. in McKay Hall for a special, informal worship service as we reflect on the year past and look forward to the year ahead.

This service centers on the theme of the New Year, with meaningful rituals and reflections to mark the passage of time. We'll worship and eat together around tables, sharing stories, prayer, and conversation. Please bring a favorite Christmas dish—or any dish—to share.

Come say goodbye to 2025 in a thoughtful, meaningful way and step into 2026 with intention, community, and hope.

Faith, Fibers, and Fellowship Holiday Break

FFF will hold its last meeting of 2025 on Monday, December 22. The group will not meet on December 29 and will resume on January 5, 2026.

Men's Bible Study

The men's group held its last meeting of 2025 on Friday, December 19. The class resumes on February 6, 2026. Please contact Rev. An at ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org with any questions.

Special Worship Service January 4

FPC's Director of Music Ministries, Colin Andrews, will be playing Messiaen's Christmas cycle "La Nativité du Seigneur" ("The Birth of the Savior") during the worship service on Sunday, January 4, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. This is a multi-media event which includes a presentation of artwork and Scripture to add a further dimension to this magnificent work. It sounds spectacular on our wonderful Aeolian-Skinner organ and will be a beautiful way to celebrate Epiphany!

End of the Year Giving/2026 Envelopes

As we approach the end of the year, please note that all donations to First Presbyterian Church need to be postmarked by December 31 to be included in your 2025 giving statements. Online donations can be made by scanning the QR code. If you have any questions about end of year giving, please contact Bill Hickle at bhickle@firstpresfortwayne.org or 260-426-7421 x102.



The 2026 Giving Envelopes are now available in the small dining room. There are no assigned numbers, so take any box. Make sure to put your name on your envelope if using cash.

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

The offering will be taken until January 4. Special envelopes will be available in the pews, or you may give online by scanning the QR code.



GETTING CONNECTED

MEMBERSHIP

Whether you live in the Fort Wayne area or worship with us online, we welcome you to join our family of faith. Through Coffee with the Pastors, you'll learn more about First Presbyterian Church, its history, and its current ministry in a relaxed atmosphere. Whether you're sure membership is right for you, or you're just beginning to wonder if this might be your spiritual home, we'd love to have you join us for coffee. Keep an eye out for our next date of Coffee with the Pastors.

NURSERY

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, ages 6 months through five years, is always invited. Our nursery meets in the first-floor day school wing, so please ask an usher or the front office volunteer for assistance and a key fob.

ADULT EDUCATION

Wired Word — Sunday Mornings, 10am

Join us each week as we delve into a topic inspired by recent news and explore how the Bible speaks to the events shaping our world today. Each Sunday brings a fresh topic, making this group perfect for those with busy schedules who may not be able to attend every week. Topics are emailed each Friday, so please let Luci Gilpin at lucifoltz@gmail.com know if you'd like to receive that email. All are welcome — come as you are and join the conversation.

Women's Bible Study — On Holiday Break until January 9

This group is now led by Rev. Susan Keirn Kester and meets on Zoom. For more information, email Susan at keirnsusan@aol.com.

Table Talk for Women — Wednesdays, 10am

This group reads a book at their own pace and is led by members of the group on Zoom. ZOOM Meeting ID: 870 6712 2177. ZOOM Passcode: 260 426 7421. For more information, please contact Marj Sapp at 260-413-2639 or Marcie Weissner at 260-312-5733.

Men's Bible Study — On Winter Break until February 6

This group is led by Rev. Youngsoo An and meets on Teams. For more information, email Rev. An at ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

North and South Dinner Groups — 2nd Monday of the month, 5:30pm

Join a Dinner Group! Every 2nd Monday of the month at the same time, 5:30 PM. South Dinner Group meets at Hall's Coventry, no RSVP needed! North Dinner Group meets at Don Hall's Factory. Please RSVP to Marj Sapp at 260-413-2639 or by email at marj.sapp@gmail.com.

Faith, Fiber, and Fellowship — Mondays, 3pm

This group meets weekly at 3pm on Mondays in Room 302 on the 3rd floor. Bring your latest fiber project for a time of fellowship and crafting.

Body, Brain, and Belief (3B) — Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30PM in McKay Hall

Maintaining balance is essential as we age. A decline in stability increases the risk of falls, impacting independence and quality of life. Good balance helps prevent falls, supports daily activities, and reduces the risk of serious injuries.

Join us for 3B, a lifetime fitness class designed to improve balance, flexibility, and strength using chairs and other provided equipment. These free classes are open to all adults aged 50 and older and are filled with fun, fellowship, and fitness. Our holistic approach combines proven physical therapy exercises, healthy brain activities, and opportunities for spiritual, emotional, and social growth. Classes meet twice a week in McKay Hall. We'd love to have you join us!

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Sunday School for Children and Youth

Both Sunday School Age groups attend worship through the “Time with Children” and then head to class as a group. Neither class meets on Communion Sundays so that we may celebrate as a whole church.

Youth Group

All 6th-12th graders are encouraged to join this amazing group of young people! Keep an eye on the Family Ministry bulletin board (by the elevator) for schedules and plans.

MISSIONS

Through our **Missions Ministry**, many of our members and friends are engaged in volunteering and advocacy. Our programs include collecting, making, and serving meals for shelters, schools, food banks, and more. We also maintain mission partnerships with many local, national, and international partners.

The **Schools Team** wishes to remind everyone that a designated bin is available in the Small Dining Room to deposit gently-used clothing for the Fort Wayne Community Schools Clothing Bank. Through school referrals, the Clothing Bank has provided clothing for thousands of students and families in need. All types of gently-used clothing in all sizes are needed. (Socks and underwear must be new.) If you're paring down your wardrobe, please remember to bring in a bag of wearable items for the FWCS Clothing Bank bin. Thank you!

Our **Green Team** is active throughout the year. In the winter, you can find them distributing the “Bag of Bags,” which are reusable grocery bags. In the spring, they have a booth at Eco Fest, sponsor a recycling drive at Hands ON Fort Wayne, and host our biennial Pet Blessing with a collection of items for local animal shelters. Throughout the year, they sell Fair Trade chocolate with proceeds supporting our food bank ministry.

FINE ARTS MINISTRY

The **Fine Arts Ministry** consists of the Art Gallery, Music Series, and the Theater. Throughout the year, the three art forms together present exhibits, concerts, and shows which seek to enhance our faith through visual art, music, and drama, all while highlighting themes and challenges within our world. The mission of the Fine Arts Ministry is to *Enrich Our Faith Through the Arts*. This important ministry seeks to create artistic beauty and to help us grow in our faith with God, right along with the mission of the church. A full listing of these events can be found at <https://firstpresfortwayne.org/arts/>.

The Chancel Choir sings for all English Worship Services and they welcome anyone who enjoys singing God's praises. Chancel Choir rehearsal is on Thursdays 7pm-8:30pm, and Sundays at 10am. The Handbell Choir practices Thursdays 5:30pm-6:30pm and rings occasionally in Worship.

CALENDAR

Today

- 10:00 am** **Wired Word.**—2nd Floor Parlor.
Choir Rehearsal.—Music Room.
- 11:00 am** **English Worship.**—Sanctuary & Livestream.
Korean Language Worship Service.—Chapel & Livestream.
- 12:00 pm** **Fellowship Time.**—McKay Hall.

This Week

Mon Dec 22

- 1:30 pm** **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B).**—McKay Hall.
3:00 pm **Faith, Fibers, and Fellowship.**—Room 302.

Wed Dec 24

- 5:00 pm** **Christmas Eve Service.**—Sanctuary.

Coming Soon

Sun Dec 28

- 11:00 am** **English Worship**—McKay Hall.

Sun Jan 4

- 11:00 am** **“La Nativité du Seigneur”**—Sanctuary.

Please note:

FPC Campus will be closed Christmas Day through New Years Day,
with the exceptions of Sunday, Dec 28th worship services
and the KLM New Years Eve service.