

Second Sunday of Christmas
January 4, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



Christmas Nativity Oil Painting by Cynthia Christine



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

"La Nativite du Seigneur"
(The Birth of the Savior) (1935)
Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)

Call to Worship

Now the salvation
and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ have come.

**For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and his name shall be called,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.**

About the Program

First Movement “La Vierge et l'enfant” (The Virgin and Child)

“Conceived of a Virgin, unto us a child is born, for unto us a Son is given, rejoice greatly, o daughter of Zion, behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is just and lowly.” (Books of the prophets Isaiah & Zacharias)

A three-sectioned movement, the first and third parts depict a dimly lit manger scene on a misty night; mystery enshrouds the atmosphere. The middle portion is joyous, a repeating flourish in the top voice based on the Gregorian chant, "Puer Natus est" (Unto Us a Child Is Born). In the closing measures of the piece, a shooting star darts across the sky and peace reigns.

Reflection

Second Movement

“Les Bergers”

(The Shepherds)

“Having seen the child lying in a manger, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God.” (St. John the evangelist)

The Shepherds can be heard crunching deliberately through the snow; they then call to each other using their musical instruments, announcing what they have seen. Second section: a four-verse carol played antiphonally on two different instruments; a quiet joy pervades the music.

Call to Confession

Third Movement

“Desseins Eternels”

(Eternal Purposes)

“God, in His love, has predestined us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, to the praise of the glory of His grace.” (Epistle of St. Paul to The Ephesians)

A deeply reflective movement that takes one beyond earthly realms to contemplate the infinite and the inexplicable.

Now is the time for a silent, personal **prayer of confession** as the music guides our hearts to seek God and all God’s goodness.

Assurance of Pardon & Reflection

Fourth Movement

“Le Verbe”

(The Word)

“The Lord hath said unto me: Thou are my Son, in His bosom, before the dawn existed, He begat me. I am the image of the goodness of God, I am the Word of life, that which was from the beginning.” (Psalms 2 and 109; Epistle of St. John)

Sequential bursts of light interspersed with a commanding, descending bass theme, representing the delivery of the Word from heaven to earth. Then, a lengthy meditative section ruminates on the received message... timelessness ensues amid the constantly shifting tectonic plates of the music.

During this time, the **offering** will be taken as the music compels us to gratitude.

Fifth Movement

“Les enfants de Dieu”

(The Children of God)

“But as many received Him, the Word to them gave He power to become the sons of God. And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying ‘Abba’, ‘Father’.” (St. John the evangelist: Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians)

The excitement and joy of being infused with the spirit of God are depicted in an ever-building, rhythmic, and thematic crescendo, culminating in the cry "Abba", "Father". This section is followed by a period of reflection and calm.

Reflection

Sixth Movement

“Les Anges”

(The Angels)

“And there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, glorifying and praising God, saying ‘glory to God in the highest’.” (St. Luke the evangelist)

The flight and aerobatics of angels are created with the music's melodic and rhythmic patterns: here, one experiences Messiaen at his most vivid and pictorial... pirouettes, nosedives, gliding, vast squadrons filling the sky flapping their wings ecstatically.

***Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe that God has come to us as a little child,
making our weakness his strength,
securing our salvation by becoming one of us,
blessing us with a steadfast Savior,
filling our hearts with joy to be shared with one another.**

**We believe that God has birthed righteousness and justice into the world,
giving us a law that will be written upon our hearts,
making the cause of the oppressed the highest priority,
declaring an everlasting reign of peace,
defeating the power of pain and suffering.**

**We believe that God calls us to participate in this reality of love,
inviting us to proclaim Christ's resurrection at the Table,
transforming us as disciples to go out into the world,
sending us forth to announce his kingdom of peace and comfort,
challenging us to see everyone as nothing less than beloved children.**

This we believe. This we preach. This we seek to embody in word and deed.

Seventh Movement “Jesus accepte le souffrance” (Jesus Accepts Suffering)
“Wherefore, when he cometh unto the world, He saith unto His Father: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me, lo, I come!” (Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews)

In a sobering moment, at the very heart of the Christmas story, we are reminded that Christ was predestined to give His life for us... the nailing to the cross, suffering, and eventual release and ascent into heaven are powerfully illustrated.

Eighth Movement “Les Mages” (The Wisemen)
“The Wisemen departed and the star went before them.” (St. Matthew the evangelist)

One can easily visualize the caravan of Wisemen and their entourage trudging purposefully toward the star, lanterns swinging in a misty night, their eventual weariness, and the great length of their historic journey.

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.

Ninth Movement “Dieu Parmi Nous” (God Among Us)
“The words of the communicant, the Virgin, and of the whole church: He who created me has rested in my tent, the Word was made flesh and has dwelt in me. My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” (Ecclesiastes; St. John & St. Luke the evangelists)

The summation of the nine pieces, a vast Toccata; themes, especially from the fourth and sixth movements, are woven into a tapestry of urgent and rhythmic patterns, expressing now unbridled joy, building to a cataclysmic and deeply satisfying final page, resolving and closing this epic story.

***Benediction**

About the Composer

Olivier Messiaen was born in 1908 in Avignon, France. The influence of art and music was present from his earliest years, his Father was a musician and his Mother, a poet. Messiaen's talent was such that he earned a place at the famous Paris Conservatory at the age of 11 studying piano, organ, composition and improvisation. He studied with legendary names in the field such as Maurice Emmanuel and Paul Dukas for composition and Marcel Dupre for organ.

Messiaen was a devout Catholic and the connection with the church and his own faith plays an enormous role in his life and music. In 1931, he was appointed "Organiste Titulaire" at the church of "La Trinite" in Paris, a position he would hold for 61 years. Almost all of Messiaen's compositions in all genres are inspired by scripture. For him, any act of musical creativity was an act of faith, to quote the composer himself "...the subject theological? The best, for it encompasses all subjects and the wealth of technical means allows the heart to expand freely". Regarding Messiaen's compositional style: he was discontented with traditional harmony and instead devised new scales and harmonies of his own invention, which give his music a distinctive and mystical hue. He was also influenced by his fellow Frenchmen, composers Debussy and Ravel, Gregorian chant (which he would have played daily in church), the music of the Far East such as Indian ragas and Indian rhythmic patterns and vocal melissmas, the Gamelan orchestras of Bali, birdsongs (which he notated in the forests and quoted directly in his music) as well as Norwegian and Russian folksongs in his early years.

He is one of the most original voices in the history of classical music...the best way to listen to his music is to use the imagination. Just as you watch a movie and are further drawn in and moved by the music that accompanies each scene, so Messiaen does this with the back drop of scripture. The PowerPoint presentation accompanying today's performance adds yet a further dimension, that of art work... this multi-sensory experience is one that Messiaen would have approved of, as in his improvisations he would always have visions of the scripture he was inspired by.

Assisting with Worship this Morning

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

Director of Music Ministries: Colin Andrews

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Betsy Perry-Patton, Carol Rhudy

Ushers of the Month: Anne Barnett, Dave Beer, Jack Patton, Dan Serban

Live Stream Operator: Dick Florea

Sound Board Operator: August Burger

Slide Show Operator: Bill Patterson

Prayer List

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| • Kathy Miller | • Cormac Wallace |
| • Kelly Leach | • Donna Jesse and Family |

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.

Help Shape the Future of Our Church!

The Officer Nominating Committee is now receiving nominations for elders and deacons. Who do you know who would be a faithful, compassionate leader in our church? Your voice matters—your nominations make a real difference! This is *your* church, and God is still calling leaders from among us. Deadline: January 15.

Nominations may be emailed to Ina Carlson at iscarlson1@gmail.com or Carol Rhudy at cmrhudy@gmail.com, or drop them off. Printed forms will be available in the Narthex and in the church office. Completed forms may be returned in the box located in the church office.

NEWS AND EVENTS

First Pres Art Gallery

Creative Resistance opens January 16 in the gallery, featuring work by Rachel Ivy Clarke, Tamara Harper, Erin Bauchan-Caprara, Emily Herbster, Elysha Ozanian, and Amber Elliot.

Showing: January 16-March 9, 2026

Reception: January 16, 5:30-7:00 pm, January 18, 12:15-1:00 pm

Craftivism, the intersection of craft and activism, brings a slower, more reflective approach to protest. It seeks to show that while bold action and loud voices have their place, change can also come through quiet, intentional acts. The exhibit will feature art done in traditional craft forms. Please join us!

First Pres Theater

What the Constitution Means to Me opens January 30 in the Theater! Playwright Heidi Schreck's boundary-breaking play breathes new life into the U.S. Constitution, weaving humor, heart, and personal history into a powerful theatrical experience. As a teenager, Schreck paid her college tuition by competing in Constitutional debate competitions across the country. In this Tony-nominated and Pulitzer Prize finalist, she resurrects her fifteen-year-old self to explore how the Constitution has shaped four generations of women in her family.

By blending storytelling, wit, and political insight, *What the Constitution Means to Me* examines the document's lasting impact on individual lives and on contemporary America. Hilarious, hopeful, and achingly human, the play invites audiences to reflect on the Constitution's relevance today and imagine how it might shape the next generation.

Tickets are on sale now by calling ArtsTix at 260-422-4226, or purchase online by scanning the QR code! See you at the theater!



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 — Resumes 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 — Fridays, 10am

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.

11:00 am

English Worship.—Sanctuary & Livestream.

Korean Language Worship Service.—Chapel & Livestream.

12:00 pm

Fellowship Time.—McKay Hall.

This Week

Mon Jan 5

1:30 pm

Body, Brain, and Belief (3B).—McKay Hall.

3:00 pm

Faith, Fibers, and Fellowship.—Room 302.

Wed Jan 7

1:30 pm

Body, Brain, and Belief (3B).—McKay Hall.

Fri Jan 9

1:00 pm

Women's Bible Study.—Zoom.

Coming Soon

Mon Jan 12

5:30 pm

North and South Dinner Groups.—Offsite.

Sun Jan 18

12:15 pm

Creative Resistance Congregational Opening.—Gallery after worship.

Fri Jan 30

8:00 pm

What the Constitution Means to Me Opening Night.—Theater.