

Worship at First Presbyterian Church

The FOURTH week of Advent (LOVE)

Sunday, December 22, 2024 at 10 am

*"This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us
and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." (1 John 4:10)*

PRELUDE

WELCOME

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HYMN #24: *AWAY IN A MANGER*

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASSING THE PEACE, PRAYERS FOR THE CONGREGATION

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

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HYMN #36: *IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER*

In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him,
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak midwinter
A stable place sufficed
The Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
 May have gathered there,
 Cherubim and seraphim
 Thronged the air;
 But His mother only,
 In her maiden bliss,
 Worshipped the beloved
 With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
 Poor as I am?
 If I were a shepherd,
 I would bring a lamb;
 If I were a wise man,
 I would do my part;
 Yet what I can I give Him:
 Give my heart.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *AND* ASSURANCE OF PARDON (unison)

Our loving, and love-giving God:

If we wonder what love looks like, we can look to you:

"This is how God showed his love among us:

He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."

As we celebrate Advent, and come to Christmas Eve,

We see your love in Jesus.

And we love the experience of your love.

But we so often fail to be loving to those around us, to love one another.

It's hard to be patient and kind.

It's easy to be jealous or boastful or proud or rude.

We want our own way.

We're easily irritated; we do keep track of being wronged.

We rejoice in the wrong things and fail to rejoice when truth wins.

We give up when loving is hard; we lose faith; we doubt.

Forgive us Lord.

Open our hearts again to your love
 that we might pour out your love to others.

Come, Lord Jesus; forgive us and restore us.

Come, Lord Jesus; guide us and deliver us.

Come, Lord Jesus; teach us and renew us.

Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

After corporate prayer we will have a few moments of silence for personal confession.

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 HYMN #37: *INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY*

Infant holy, Infant lowly,
 for His bed a cattle stall;
 Oxen lowing, little knowing
 Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
 Swift are winging, Angels singing,
 Noels ringing, Tidings bringing:
 Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping; Shepherds keeping
 Vigil till the morning new.
 Saw the glory, heard the story,
 Tidings of a Gospel true.
 Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,
 Praises voicing, Greet the morrow:
 Christ the Babe was born for you.

 READING AND PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Sermon: *"A Weary World Rejoices: A New and Glorious Morn . . ."*

Luke 2:8–14

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.
⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹² And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in highest heaven,
 and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Luke 2:25–34

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him ²⁶ and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, ²⁸ Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace,
 as you have promised.

³⁰ I have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared for all people.

³² He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
 and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

³³ Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. ³⁵ As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE WITH OUR OFFERINGS

The metal basket in the offering plate is for gifts to support our deacons' provision of care, support, and financial assistance to those in need.

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DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise Him all creatures here below;
 Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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HYMN #44: O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
 How still we see thee lie!
 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
 The silent stars go by.
 Yet in thy dark streets shineth
 The everlasting light;
 The hopes and fears of all the years
 Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
 And gathered all above,
 While mortals sleep, the angels keep
 Their watch of wondering love.
 O morning stars together
 Proclaim the holy birth!
 And praises sing to God the King,
 And peace to men on earth!

How silently, how silently,
 The wondrous gift is given!
 So God imparts to human hearts
 The blessings of His heaven.
 No ear may hear His coming,
 But in this world of sin,
 Where meek souls will receive Him still,
 The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
 Descend to us, we pray;
 Cast out our sin, and enter in,
 Be born in us today.
 We hear the Christmas angels
 The great glad tidings tell;
 O come to us, abide with us,
 Our Lord Emmanuel!

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

CALENDAR

TODAY	Sunday Worship (10:00 in the Sanctuary)
Tuesday, Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Family Service (5:00 pm) Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (10:00 pm)
Sunday, Dec 29	Sunday Worship (10:00 in the Sanctuary) Sharing Table (before and after the service)

The Office will be closed on weekdays between December 26 and January 6. As always, if there is a need to access the building you may call Chuck (847-800-7119).

Quick Reminder:

Invite someone to one of our Christmas Eve Services!

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