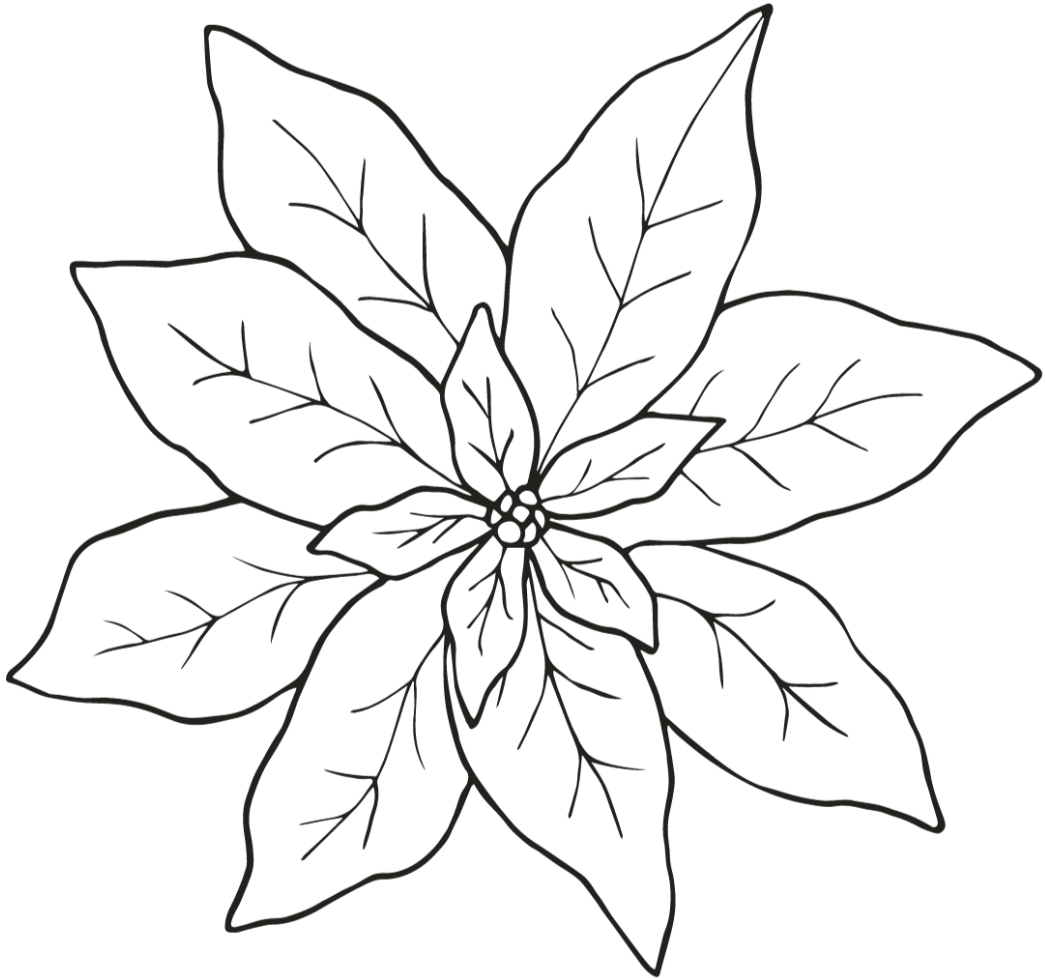


First Presbyterian Church

Third Sunday of Advent

December 17, 2023



Embodying Christ's inclusive love through heart, mind, and service

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Oak Ridge, Tennessee
A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

December 17, 2023 • Third Sunday of Advent
Lessons and Carols

**Please stand, in body or in spirit.*

Prelude

Welcome

Introit

People Look East

(hymn 105, verse 4)

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Star, is on the way.

***Call to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Candles**

God of joy, we seek you.

***Here and around the world we see misery and pain. Our world is imperfect,
and darkness clouds our vision.***

God of joy, we seek you.

***As we bring light to shadowed places in the world, we pause this Advent season
to prepare anew for the birth of Jesus, a sign of your love for us when we
need it most.***

Today we light the third candle of Advent, which is rose colored and symbolizes joy.
This candle takes us back to the joyful anticipation of the shepherds who journeyed to
see Jesus in Bethlehem.

***May the joy of this season fill our hearts and grace our lips, so that we might
reflect God's joy to all the world.***

***Hymn 94**

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

***Invitation to Confession**

***Litany of Confession and Assurance of Grace**

Holy God of promise, our words and our deeds remain far from your design for us.

When our spirits despair and we doubt your blessings to us,

forgive us, we pray. (silence)

When we distance ourselves from those we deem unworthy of care,

forgive us, we pray. (silence)

When our selfish actions leave others hungry for bread or for belonging,

forgive us, we pray. (silence)

God of mercy and grace, we thank you for your steadfast faithfulness to us.

***With gratitude, we claim your promise of redemption. With humility, we receive
your love and forgiveness. With joy, we renew our commitment to be your faithful
people. Alleluia! Amen.***

*The Peace of Christ

Not an easy peace, not an insignificant peace, not a halfhearted peace,
but the peace of God in Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

*Sung Response (from hymn 137)

***He came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
hallelujah forevermore.***

Anthem

Heaven Shall Not Wait

Reading

Joy Chose You

Ashworth

Hymn 102

Savior of the Nations, Come

Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

Musical Reflection

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

(hymn 129)

Call to Prayer

While We Are Waiting, Come

(hymn 92, verse 1)

Prayers of the People with The Lord's Prayer (ecumenical)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Moment for Mission

Hymn

Beloved People, Sing! Rejoice!

Reading

The Joy of the Shepherds

Hymn 117

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night
(verses 1-4)

Reading

Take Joy!

Fra Giovanni 1513

*Hymn 143

Angels, From the Realms of Glory
(verses 1 and 2)

*Charge and Blessing

*Sung Response

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

(hymn 132, verse 2)

***Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;
Now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!***

Postlude

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*The poinsettias for the season have been given in part by
Richard Ward and Susan Sharp, who wish to dedicate them to the glory of God.*

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Announcements

—Thank you to Sherrie Fairchild-Keyes for serving as liturgist this morning.

—You are invited to the fellowship hall after worship this morning for our annual cookie exchange and cider festivity!

—Our monthly potluck and Conversation on Loss is at 11:50 a.m. today in the parlor (if you don't have a dish to share, please come anyway. There's always plenty.) Today's topic: memory and hope. What is a memory you'd like to share about your loss, and what is your hope for the new year?

—The Service of Memory and Hope will be this Tuesday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m., in the sanctuary. The service is designed for anyone who'd like some quiet space away from the hustle and bustle of Christmas, and especially for those for whom this season is tough, regardless of the reason.

—Reminder: Contributions to FPCOR for 2023 must be received in the church office by Dec. 31. If you use the postal service, please allow time for any holiday-related postal delays. If you contribute online, also allow several days for your transaction to work its way through the system. And, if you make a contribution this month for 2024 to deduct it from this year's taxes, please note "2024 contribution" on the memo line. Thank you for your faithful giving!

LOOKING AHEAD

Dec. 24: morning worship at 10:30 a.m.; candlelight and Communion service at 7:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church—A PC(USA) Congregation

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❖ fpcor.org ❖ on Facebook at First Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, TN

❖ On Instagram [@firstpresbyterianchurchor](https://www.instagram.com/firstpresbyterianchurchor) ❖

Sharon Youngs, Pastor Anna Thomas, Director of Music

Peggy Hinkle, Organist Madison Green, Office Manager

Thank you for your continued support of the ministries of FPCOR.

You can mail your regular financial contribution to FPCOR (P.O. Box above)

or give online using the QR code to the right or via the link on fpcor.org.

