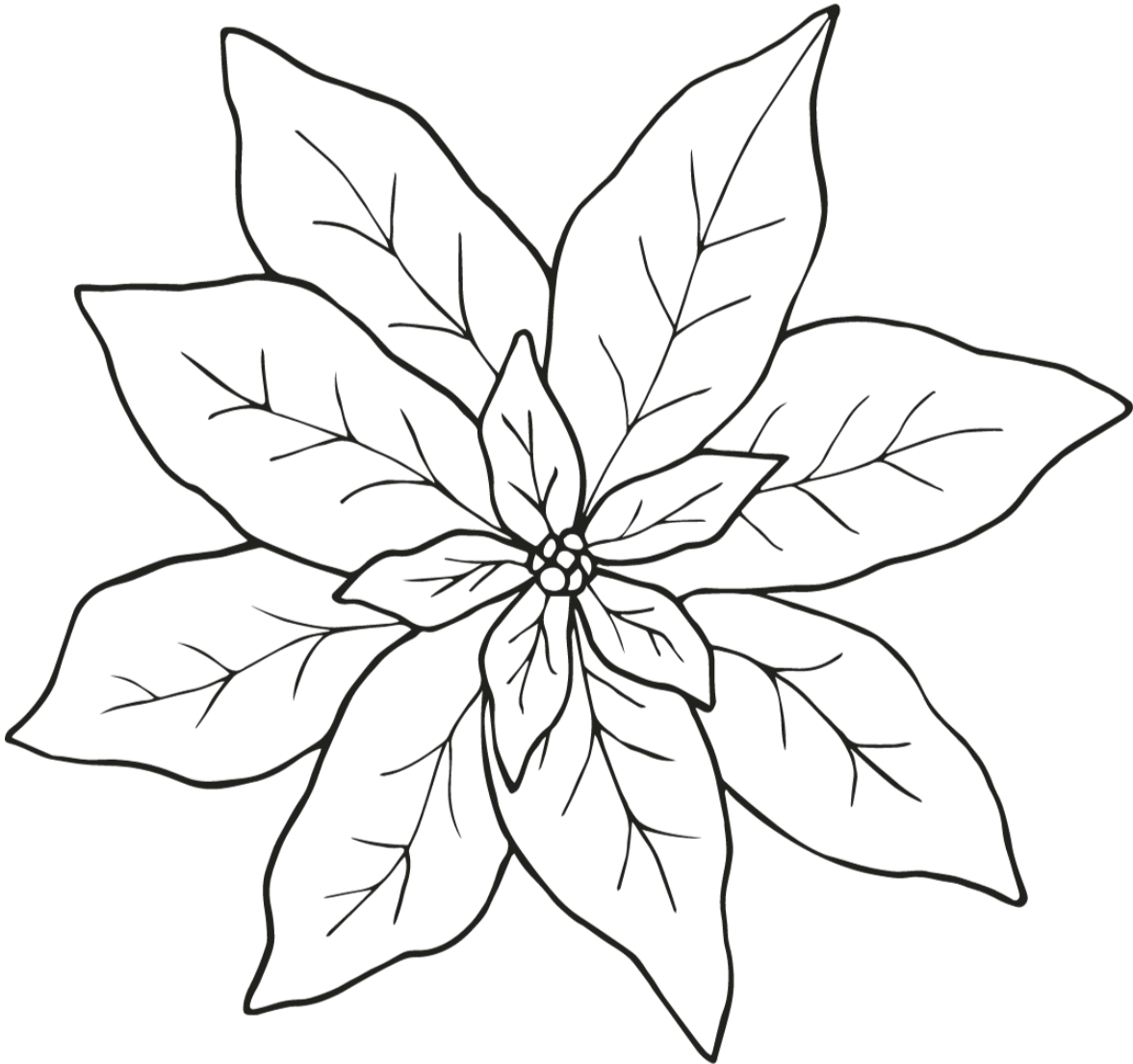


First Presbyterian Church

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 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 24, 2023 • *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

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

Prelude

Welcome

Introit

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

(hymn 123, verses 1-2)

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

We will sing about the wonders of your love forever, O God.

We will tell the world about your faithfulness to all generations.

We will declare that your love stands firm,

That your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens above.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

The journey to Bethlehem is nearing its end; the Messiah is soon to be born!

Let us worship the One who illumines our way to the Christ child.

***Hymn 107**

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

***Invitation to Confession**

(hymn 123, verse 3)

Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long;

beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong;

and we at war on earth hear not the tidings that they bring;

O, hush the noise and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

***Prayer of Confession**

(a moment for silent confession)

Holy God, you promise to do great things for us, yet we do not trust you. You extend your mercy to us, yet we doubt that it is enough to save us. You lift up the humble and fill the hungry with good things, and yet we still hesitate to follow you. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to truly trust your promises, that we might step out in faith to demonstrate your grace to others; in the name of the coming Christ child we pray. Amen.

***Assurance of Grace**

(hymn 123, verse 4)

And you, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,

who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,

look now, for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:

O, rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

***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 love: he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.

First Scripture Reading Psalm 89:1-5

Anthem *Minuet Noel* Shafferman

Second Scripture Reading Luke 1:26-38

Sermon *What Won't Wait:
Where Is God in This Mess?* Sharon Youngs

Musical Reflection

***Affirmation of Faith**

We believe that Jesus taught us to speak of hope as the coming of God's realm. We believe that God is at work in our world, turning hopeless and evil situations into good. We believe in the power of peace; that goodness and justice and love will triumph in the end, and that tyranny and oppression will not last forever. One day all tears will be wiped away, and the lamb will lie down with the lion. True peace and reconciliation are assured and guaranteed. This is our faith, and this is our hope.

Call to Prayer (hymn 115, verse 3)

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.

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.

Ordination and Installation of Ruling Elders

Sentences of Scripture

There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit gives them.

There are different ways of serving God, but the same Lord is served.

God works through each person in a unique way, but it is God's purpose that is accomplished.

To each is given a gift of the Spirit to be used for the common good.

Together we are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.

Presentation of Candidates

Constitutional Questions to the Candidates

Constitutional Questions to the Congregation

Do we, the members of the church, accept these brothers and sisters in Christ as ruling elders, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ? ***We do.***

Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the Church? ***We do.***

Laying On of Hands and Prayer of Ordination

Declaration of Ordination and Installation

***Hymn 113**

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Charge and Blessing

*Sung Response

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

(hymn 123, verse 5)

***For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
and the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.***

Postlude



*The poinsettias for the season have been given in part by
Chuck and Dale Hadden, who wish to dedicate them to the glory of God.*



Announcements

—Thank you to Mimi Tilley for serving as liturgist this morning.

—Today's affirmation of faith is adapted from *Third World Solidarity Day*, a 1987 publication of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace.

—Our Christmas Eve service this evening is at 7:00 p.m. It will include guest musicians, celebration of Communion, the lighting of candles, and the singing of "Silent Night."

—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

Sunday, Dec. 31—informal worship service with stories and songs, followed by a toast to the New Year.

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church!

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here. We hope you feel the love that is present and our joy in having you with us. If you'd like to know more about First Presbyterian Church, let's talk! Please speak with Sharon or any of the ushers after the service.

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 ❖

Sharon Youngs, Pastor Anna Thomas, Director of Music

Peggy Hinkle, Organist Madison Hinkle, Office Manager

*Thank you for your continued support of the ministries of FPCOR.
You can mail your regular financial contribution to FPC (P.O. Box above)
or give online using the QR code to the right or via the link on fpcor.org.*

