

**December 22, 2024; 9:00 am**  
Fourth Sunday of Advent – LOVE

## **We Gather Together**

*Welcome to today's Service of Worship. Whether you are with us in person, joining us live on Zoom, watching on our YouTube channel, or listening on KFIZ, we are glad you are here. For those in person, please use the time before worship to fill in the Friendship Pad in your pew. We extend a special welcome to our visitors, and if you have not already received your welcome gift, please pick one up as you leave the sanctuary after worship.*

*Copies of the Glory to God hymnal and Common English Bibles are available at the back of the sanctuary for your use during worship.*

**Gathering Music:** *please join in singing the following Christmas Carols*

GTG 88 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" vs. 1-3

GTG 121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1 & 3

GTG 123 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" vs. 1 & 3

**Welcome & Announcements**

*Rev. Dr. Craig R. Alwin*

**Ringling of the Bell and entrance of the Light of Christ**

**Lighting the Candle of Love**

*Confirmation Class*

When the people were looking for deliverance, the prophet Micah declared, "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah...from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient day." (Micah 5:2).

But what if Micah is also talking to us, proclaiming, "But you, O Presbyterians in Fond du Lac of Wisconsin, from you shall come forth for me..." What? What might God be calling forth from us?

**Congregation: God invites us to receive the promise of God's salvation and the sustenance of God's mercy and grace, enabling us to live the promise as God-bearers to the world. As Christ was born in Bethlehem, so too we answer God's invitation to have Christ born among us today and every day.**

We light this candle of love as a sign of our commitment to live as people of God's promise, a promise of salvation and flourishing for all people that springs forth from God's love for all creation.

*Light 3 purple candles and the third (pink/rose) candle of the Advent Yule log during the singing of "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah."*

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/come-let-us-adore-him-advent-candle-lighting-liturgy-2024>

## **Sung Response: GTG #85**

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" v. 4

### **\*Call to Confession**

*Lew S.*

We, as part of the family of God, must continually re-learn to assess our worth by God's standards. Our value is not measured by the size of our bank accounts, the number of gifts under our trees, or by the beauty of our buildings. Our worth is based on people who find comfort and confidence in our presence. Insofar as we, the family of faith gathered here, fall short of this, we fail in God's purpose for us. Let us then be honest to admit this shortcoming, this corporate sin, ask forgiveness, be ready to obey what God has commanded, living a better, a more faithful, fruitful and joyful future. Let us pray together...

### **\*Prayer of Confession**

*Lew S.*

**The treasures of the church, O God, are your children in need, whom we have served. How often, though, we define our treasure in other terms, and so miss the joy of serving in your name. Give us the honesty of Elizabeth and the humility of Mary, we pray, that we may become your caring presence to those around us. Most holy God, in Christ you pour out your mercy to forgive our transgression. Hear us now as we confess our sin.**

### *Silent Confession*

*(In the silence of our hearts we confess our sins to God.)*

Lord Jesus, fill us with your love. **Speak the truth of your gracious forgiveness to us. May we readily, eagerly accept it, and then use it by sharing it. For in the sharing of this precious gift, it will remain available to us in never-ending supply. Such is the message and the example of Jesus Christ; in whose name we pray. Amen.**

#### **\*Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the words of the Christ, "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first must be slave of all. For the Son of man came not to be served but to serve..." Jesus gave to us in his own life the perfect example of loving obedience. Let us each one follow that example and know the love of holy obedience.

**Thanks be to God for so loving the world - and us - that we are led to life, life that is true and lasting in his name.**

#### **\*Sharing God's Peace**

The Peace of Christ be with you! **And also, with you!**

*(Please share the Peace of Christ with those around you using the ancient formula 'The Peace of Christ.' 'And also, with you.' Please be mindful of those who do not wish to shake hands or be too close. **We encourage you to use this time to send a text or emoji to someone who cannot be here.**)*

#### **\*Sung Response GTG 113 "Angels We Have Heard on High"**

**(chorus only)**

## **God's Word Is Proclaimed**

### **First Reading: Micah 5:2-5a (Common English Bible)**

(page 865 in the pew Bible, page 1128 Common English Bible)

As for you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
though you are the least significant of Judah's forces,  
one who is to be a ruler in Israel on my behalf will come out from you.  
His origin is from remote times, from ancient days.  
Therefore, he will give them up  
until the time when she who is in labor gives birth.  
The rest of his kin will return to the people of Israel.  
He will stand and shepherd his flock[a] in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
They will dwell secure,  
because he will surely become great throughout the earth;  
he will become one of peace.  
When Assyria invades our land and treads down our fortresses,  
then we will raise up against him seven shepherds and eight human  
princes.

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 1:39-55 (Common English Bible)**

(page 57 in the pew Bible, page 1243 Common English Bible)

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said,

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.  
He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.  
Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored  
because the mighty one has done great things for me.  
Holy is his name.  
He shows mercy to everyone,  
from one generation to the next,  
who honors him as God.  
He has shown strength with his arm.  
He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.  
He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty-handed.  
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,  
remembering his mercy,  
just as he promised to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

**Children's Time**

*Jennifer Zander*

**Sung Response: GTG 110 "Love Has Come"**

**Sermon: "Why Has This Happened to Me?"**

*Rev. Dr. Craig Alwin*

## Prayers of the People

Arnold L.	Gib D.	Pass Family
Bob & Ollive B.	Carol D.	Pat D.
Brian C.	Pete D.	Pat M.* (Bonnie H sister)
Chastity G. & Joan S.	Jesse F.	Paul W.
Corinne C.	Joan K. (Marcus A. mom)	Qualine S.* (Jodi A mom)
Danielle B.	Kathy A*(sis/Kevin B., sil/Kim B)	Sherry M.
Darren B.	Liam A.	Steven B.*
Dick and Maryann*	Lynn M.	Vern A.* (Debra S dad)
Elias B* (Laurie C grandson)	Marie L.	

### **Family of Elaney R, granddaughter of Andy & Debby L. [See obituary here.](#)**

The names in bold are new to the prayer list. The names with an asterisk (\*) are not church members. However, a church member has received permission to ask that they be lifted in prayer.

If you or someone you know wants to be added to our prayer list, contact a Deacon or the church staff. Prayer request cards are available in the Prayer Box located in the Narthex, in the church pews, or online ([click here](#)). You can place your prayer request in the offering plate or the lock box at the church office door. For electronic prayer requests, please complete the form and click submit.

If you have a pastoral concern, that happens before or after office hours, please call the office (920.922.0425), press #2 for Pastoral Care.

## 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.**

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.**

**Amen.**

## **We Respond to God's Word**

### **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

#### **The Confession of 1967 – Section B: The Love of God\*\***

God's sovereign love is a mystery beyond the reach of the human mind. Human thought ascribes to God superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness. But God reveals his love in Jesus Christ by showing power in the form of a servant, wisdom in the folly of the cross, and goodness in receiving sinful humans. The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator who made all things to serve the purpose of his love.

God has created humanity in a personal relation with himself that humans may respond to the love of the Creator. God expressed his love for all humankind through Israel, whom he chose to be his covenant people to serve him in love and faithfulness. Out of Israel God in due time raised up Jesus. He was the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

The reconciling work of Jesus was the supreme crisis in the life of humankind. His cross and resurrection become personal crisis and present hope for humans when the gospel is proclaimed and believed. In this experience the Spirit brings God's forgiveness to humans, moves them to respond in faith, repentance, and obedience, and initiates the new life in Christ.

The new life takes shape in a community in which humans know that God loves and accepts them in spite of what they are. They therefore accept themselves and love others, knowing that no human has any ground on which to stand, except God's grace.

*\*\* In the spirit of the purpose for writing C-67 (using more contemporary language), some wordings have been edited, such as changing "man" to "humanity" for the purpose of reclaiming the corporate nature of being the people of God and the body of Christ.*

## **The Practice of Gratitude**

*In response to God's Word and remembering all things come from God, we offer with thanks a portion of that which God has entrusted to us. The ushers will collect God's tithes and our offerings. For those who have given in other forms, there are cards in the pew racks that you may use as a tangible action of gratitude to God. No matter what we return to God in material forms, may we spiritually place our hearts, and our very lives, in God's hands, to be re-shaped for ministry in Christ, furthering God's kingdom here on earth.*

**Offering Music:** "The Wonder of it All"

*Carol W.*

**\*Offertory:** GTG 145 "What Child is This" vs. 3

**\*Offertory Prayer**

**\*Sending Song** GTG 366 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" vs. 1 & 4

**\*Taking the Light of Christ into the World**

**\*Charge and Benediction** (*Romans 5:13*)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith,  
so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Postlude:** "Hyfrydol"

*arr. by Jeffrey Honoré*



## **WEEKLY STATISTICS FOR DECEMBER 15,2024**

Individuals in Person: 125

Zoom Households: 9

<b><u>DATE</u></b>	<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b><u>NOTES</u></b>
12/15/2024	\$3049.00	Tithes/Offerings
	\$1115.00	Special Offerings
12/9-13/24	\$ 1151.00	Vanco Online "Tithes/Offerings"
	10.00	Special Offerings
	<hr/>	
	<b>\$5325.00</b>	<b>TOTAL INCOME FOR THE WEEK</b>

## **Financial Giving and Gratitude**

You can give online at [www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org) [Giving page](#). (Click on 'Online Giving'.) You can also give by cash or check on Sunday morning, or by mail. We are so very thankful for your contributions that help us do God's work in our church and in our community.

### **GETTING CONNECTED:**

Office Phone

920.922.0425

Office Email

[fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:fdloffice@fdlpresbyterian.org)

Website

[www.fdlpresbyterian.org](http://www.fdlpresbyterian.org)

Breeze Subdomain:

[FDLFirstPresb](#)

Facebook

[First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac](#)

YouTube

[First Presbyterian Church, Fond du Lac](#)

### **December**

**Deacon of the Month:**

Judy Dassow

**Elder of the Month:**

Terry Rehn

### **STAFF:**

Rev. Dr. Craig R. Alwin

[pastor@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:pastor@fdlpresbyterian.org)

Jennifer Zander

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Kris Bartelt

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Mary Robotka

[mrobotka@fdlpresbyterian.org](mailto:mrobotka@fdlpresbyterian.org)

**This Week**

**Sunday**

9:00-10:00am  
10:15-11:15am  
10:15-11:15am  
10:15-11:15am  
3:00-4:30pm

**December 22**

Worship  
Fellowship Time  
Growing Connections-Traditions  
Sunday School  
Cantata and Reception

**Monday**

10:00-11:30am  
1:00-3:00pm

**December 23**

Staff Meeting  
Christmas Eve Cookie Baking

**Tuesday**

5:00-6:00pm  
6:10-6:50pm  
7:00-8:00pm

**December 24**

Christmas Eve Moravian Love Feast  
Karaoke and Christmas Treat Potluck  
Christmas Eve Worship Candlelight Lessons and Carols

**Wednesday**

**December 25**

Merry Christmas Church Office Closed

**Thursday**

**December 26**

Church Office Closed

**Sunday**

9:00-10:00am  
10:15-11:15am  
10:15-11:15am

**December 29**

Worship  
Fellowship Time  
Growing Connections-Nativity Sharing Scavenger Hunt

**Monday**

10:00-11:30am

**December 30**

**Annual Reports are Due**  
Staff Meeting