



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
Church of Nashville

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 24, 2023

11:00 a.m.



To know Christ, to make Him known and to exhibit His love through worship, education and service.

WORDS OF PREPARATION

"They saw no miracle to convince them. They heard no teaching to persuade them. They saw nothing but a newborn infant, helpless and weak, needing a mother's care like any of us. And yet when they saw that infant, they believed that they saw the divine Savior of the world!"

—J. C. Ryle

ORDER OF WORSHIP

†VOLUNTARY

Claire de Noël (A Christmas Fantasy)
Claude Debussy

Austrian Carol (Still, Still, Still)
Franz Gruber
arr. David Ice

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH CANDLE OF ADVENT

The McConnell Family

Reader 1: We wait for light, and lo! There is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

Reader 2: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

Reader 1: For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples.

Reader 2: But the LORD will arise upon you, and nations shall come to your light.

Reader 1: The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night.

All: For the LORD will be your everlasting light and your God will be your glory.

†INTROIT

O Holy Night
Adolphe Adam

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining. 'Til he appears and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices. For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees; O hear the Angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born O night, O Holy night, O night divine! Led by the light of faith serenely beaming. With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand. So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming. Here come the Wise Men from Orient land. The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger. In all our trials born to be our friend. He knows our need, to our weakness is no stranger. Behold your King; before him lowly bend. Truly he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his Gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother. And in his name, all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we. Let all within us praise his Holy name. Christ is the Lord; O praise his name forever! His power and glory evermore proclaim.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Mallory Hammond

Pastor: Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness; let the earth open,
that salvation may spring up.

All: Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Pastor: The Word was made flesh,

All: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Pastor: Jesus, joy of the angels, and crown of all the saints:

All: Glory to you, O Lord!

*+CHRISTMAS PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High
GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night,
and the mountains in reply echoing their brave delight.**

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo, gloria in excelsis Deo.

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing.

Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *Refrain*

The First Noel
THE FIRST NOEL

**The first Noel the angel did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Refrain

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

**They looked up and saw a star
shining in the east beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night. *Refrain***

O Come, All Ye Faithful
ADESTE FIDELIS

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant;
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**True God from true God, Light from light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
very God, begotten, not created!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

*PRAYER OF ADORATION

Cathryn Rolfe

FIRST LESSON | Isaiah 9:2–7 (page 573)

² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

Gage Arnold

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in the darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst, expecting little, and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace and live in the truth of Christ the Lord.

A moment for silent confession.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*RESPONSE OF GRATITUDE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
MENDELSSOHN

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH | Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Whether you are a longtime member or a guest, please mark your presence
by signing the friendship pad and greet those seated near you as you pass it along.*

‡BLESSING OF THE YOUNG DISCIPLES

SCRIPTURE READING | Matthew 2:1–6 (page 807)

¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴ and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: ⁶ “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Pastor: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON

Where Should I Go?

Dr. Ryan Moore

“Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” —Matthew 2:2

OFFERTORY

Thou Who Wast Rich Beyond All Splendor
QUELLE EST CETTE ODEUR AGREABLE

Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor, all for love’s sake becamest poor; thrones for a manger didst surrender, sapphire paved courts for stable floor. Thou who wast rich beyond all splendor, all for love’s sake becamest poor. Thou who are God beyond all praising, all for love’s sake becamest man; stooping so low, but sinners raising, heav’nward by thine eternal plan. Thou who are God beyond all praising, all for love’s sake becamest man. Thou who art love beyond all telling, Savior and King, we worship thee. Emmanuel within us dwelling, make us what thou wouldst have us be. Thou who art love beyond all telling, Savior and King, we worship thee.

As you reflect on the Lord’s goodness, you can make an offering by dropping your gift in the offering plate, texting “GIVE” to 707-475-3005, or donating online at fpcnashville.org.

THE LORD’S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Dr. Sandra Randleman

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Communion at First Presbyterian Church is offered to all baptized Christians and will be served today by intinction. When your row is called, come forward, take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup, and receive both elements together. All bread is gluten free and the cup is juice.

ANTHEM

Interlude from “Ceremony of Carols”
Benjamin Britten (ASCAP)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Dr. Stuart Gordon

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.

*CLOSING HYMN 134

Joy to the World
ANTIOCH

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*CLOSING VOLUNTARY

Toccata on “Joy to the World” (Antioch)
Craig Phillips

* *Those who are able, please stand.*
† *Latecomers may be seated.*

PARTICIPANTS IN THE SERVICE

Ryan Moore, PhD – *Pastor*
Stuart Gordon, DMin – *Senior Associate Pastor for Christian Formation & Witness*
Sandra Randleman, DMin – *Associate Pastor for Congregational Care & Missions*
Gage Arnold, MDiv – *Director of Youth Programming*
Mallory Hammond – *Director of Ministry with Children & Their Families*
Raphael Bundage, DMA – *Director of Music*
Rhonda Swanson, MM – *Assistant Organist*
Claire Paschal – *Soprano*
Emily Stone – *Harp*
Lighting the Advent Wreath – Liz, Scott, Abby, Maggie McConnell
Acolytes – Kennedy & Graham Swafford

SUPPORTING FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

You can make a gift or fulfill a pledge payment by placing your gift in the offering plate, texting “GIVE” to 707-475-3005, donating online at fpcnashville.org, or scan the QR code.



NEWS AND EVENTS

Epiphany Bonfire and All-Church Flag Football Game

January 7 | 3:00 p.m. | Football Game: Upper Fields, Epiphany Bonfire: South Lawn — Join your church family for hymn singing and burning of the greens at our annual Epiphany Bonfire. It's been a tradition since Victorian England to celebrate the end of Christmas on Twelfth Night, taking down the evergreens of the Christmas season and lighting a bonfire. We will kick off the festivities this year with an all-church flag football game in the Upper Fields. Football fans of all ages are invited to play pick-up flag football, and spectators and cheerleaders are encouraged to cheer players on as they compete. We hope you will join us!

Inquirers Class | *Sundays, January 7–28 | 9:45 a.m. | Courtenay Lounge* — Interested in learning more about First Presbyterian Church or becoming a member? Join us for a four-part Inquirers Class each Sunday during the Education Hour on January 7, 14, 21, and 28. Visit linktr.ee/fpcnashville to register or contact Julia Wilk (615-473-8742 or jwilk@fpcnashville.org).

Registration for the 2024 Spring Music Academy Is Now Open | *January–April | Monday–Thursday from 3:15–6:15 p.m. | Cheek House Chapel* — FPC's Music Academy offers vocal and instrumental lessons to allow our younger disciples and adults to explore their God-given artistic gifts in voice, violin, harp, piano, organ, and now guitar. The spring semester runs from January–April. Lessons are held Monday–Thursday evenings from 3:15–6:15 p.m. in the Cheek House Chapel. Registration closes January 12. Visit linktr.ee/fpcnashville to register.

Save the Date: Calvin University January Series | *January 15–February 2 | 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. | Lunch and livestreamed lecture in the Jones Session Room* — First Presbyterian Church is hosting Calvin College's January Series. This 15-day virtual lecture series aims to cultivate deep thought and conversations about important issues of the day in order to inspire cultural renewal and make us better global citizens in God's world. We look forward to sharing more details in the coming days!

MISSIONS

Christmas Joy Offering — Today, we will collect a special Christmas Joy Offering to support leadership development in the Presbyterian church, particularly in communities of color. To contribute, please use the envelopes in the back of the pews. Your gifts will provide critical financial support to church workers in their time of need and will be distributed equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions.

STEWARDSHIP AND GENEROSITY

2023 Year-End Giving — As 2023 draws to a close; this is a great time to make a tax-deductible year-end contribution to First Presbyterian Church. Your contributions are vital because they enable us to fulfill our mission commitments. There are many ways to give, each suited to different financial situations:

- **To donate cash**, visit fpcnashville.org/generosity/ and click the give button. Doing this will also allow you to see what you have already given in 2023 (if you have donated online).
- **To submit stock**, please contact Carsen Rooney at Wiley Bros. The account details for a contribution can be found at fpcnashville.org/generosity/.
- **To give directly from an IRA** (members above 70½ years old), please contact the institution that manages the IRA.

All cash, check, and credit card gifts must be made to the church by Sunday, December 31. Giving via ACH, stocks, or IRA must be made by Friday, December 29, the year's last trading day. As a reminder, the church office will be closed on December 25, and 29, so please plan accordingly. If you still need to fulfill your 2023 commitment, please do so by the end of the year by visiting fpcnashville.org/generosity/. Also, it's not too late to make a pledge for 2024; please go to fpcnashville.org/2024-generosity/ and let us know how much you expect to contribute to FPC in the coming year. Thank you for your generous support of FPC.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULES

The Church Office is closed on December 25, 29, and January 1.

Sunday School classes will not meet today or December 31.

Nursery and Young Children & Worship are not provided today.

BEST WISHES TO COURTNEY AND BILL MOTT!

Courtney, Older Adult Ministry Assistant, and Bill Mott, Director of Resource Development, are wrapping up their time on staff this month. They are headed to Houston, TX, where Bill has accepted an interim head of school position at St. Thomas Episcopal School. Bill has led the stewardship efforts for our congregation since August 2022, and Courtney joined him on staff part-time earlier this year to support the programming needs of our First Friends ministry. We are grateful for their service to this congregation and look forward to welcoming them home after their time in Houston is complete. Thank you Bill and Courtney!

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2023

WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sunday, December 24

Journey to Bethlehem Live Nativity

5:00 p.m. (livestreamed) | *Sanctuary*

A lively pageant will be led by our children at this year's 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Join shepherds, angels, wise men, and more on a *Journey to Bethlehem*.

Lessons and Carols

8:00 (livestreamed) & 10:30 p.m. (New time!) | *Sanctuary*

This beloved service, first celebrated in the English cathedral town of Truro in 1880, features Scripture readings that recount salvation history, with hymns and choral anthems sung in response. Communion will be celebrated at the 10:30 p.m. service. The service culminates in the candlelit singing of "Silent Night."

CHRISTMASTIDE

Christmas Day Worship

Monday, December 25

11:00 a.m. | *Stanford Chapel*

Happy Birthday, Jesus! Spend an hour worshipping the newborn King with your church family at this informal, relaxed service. We will enjoy some birthday cake and children are welcome to come in pajamas.

First Sunday of Christmas

Sunday, December 31

11:00 a.m. (livestreamed) | *Sanctuary*

On Sunday, December 31, there will be only one worship service, at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. Nursery care will be available, beginning at 10:45 a.m. Young Children & Worship will not be provided.



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