

THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

HYMN OF RESPONSE *Joy to the World* 134

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER Rev. Dr. Meredith Loftis
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.

RECEPTION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Blessed is the Lord* Dan Forrest
Benedictus, blessed is our Lord. Benedictus, welcome His incarnate word. Chosen first among the priests to serve within the temple walls, Zacharias stood in awe when he heard the angel call. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will come, salvation's horn. God incarnate, word made flesh, to a virgin shall be born. Christ brings light to sin's dark night; our Dayspring, Jesus from on high. Saints and angels sing God's praise. All the earth and heavens reply.

DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *The Nicene Creed*
We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN** *Arise, Your Light Is Come!* 744

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Toccata on "Hark, a Thrilling Voice is Sounding"* G. Macchia

WELCOME

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville. We have been part of the downtown Knoxville community since 1792. We embrace people from all walks of life and seek to share our spiritual journey with our community. We are part of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are delighted that you have joined us in worship today.

To learn more about us, please make a note on the Friendship Pad, sign up for our Thursday newsletter, or connect with us at fpcknox.org, via the QR code to the right, or through social media.



Hearing enhancement devices and large print hymnals are available for use during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance.

OFFERING

You may place your offering in the offering plates when they are passed, or you are invited to give securely online at www.fpcknox.org/donate or by scanning the QR code to the right with your smart phone.



STAFF AND LEADERS IN WORSHIP

The Rev. Mark R. Curtis Senior Pastor	Laura Harmon Church Administrator
The Rev. Dr. Meredith Loftis Associate Pastor	Lauren Nunn Director of Parent's Day Out / Childcare Coordinator
Dr. Andy Morgan Director of Family Faith Formation	Sandra Robinson Administrative Assistant
Mark Pace Organist/Choirmaster	Victor Lenoir Custodian
Mary Wilson Adult Ministry Coordinator	Paul Seguna Sound Engineer
Katie Norrell Director of Communications	Parson Campen Crucifer
Jane Holland Director of Finance/Facilities	Campbell Long Bible Bearer

WORSHIP MUSIC NOTES

A Joyful Ring
Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness
Tune: Christ, Be Our Light
Canticle of Turning
Joy to the World
Tune: Antioch

One License # 97554
One License # 80229
Once License # 93962

Arise, Your Light Is Come!
Tune: Festal Song
Toccata on "Hark a Thrilling Voice"

One License # 08411
One License # 1061499

FOR OUR YOUNGER WORSHIPPERS

All children are welcome in worship at FPC. Children, Kindergarten through 2nd Grade, are invited to attend Children's Worship in the Children's Area (2nd floor) after Special Time with Young Disciples. Worship Bags are available at each entrance to the sanctuary. A nursery is available for children, in preschool and younger, in the Nursery rooms (2nd floor).



First Presbyterian Church
FOR CHRIST IN THE HEART OF KNOXVILLE

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 17, 2023

Connect With Us



www.fpcknox.org

620 State Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

THE PREPARATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

PRELUDE *A Joyful Ring* Barbara Kinyon
Good King Wenceslas Arr. Cathy Moglebust
Joyful Noise Handbell Choir

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

This is the day that the Lord has made;
Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT

 Joy Jennifer and Iain Phillips

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,
and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars.
By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys.
By these stars, they knew God was with them.

**Today we light three candles to bring the fire of the stars
down from heaven to earth,
to dwell among the people of God.**

We name this candle Hope.

We name this candle Peace.

We name this candle Joy.

We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way.
But we chart our path by the star of joy.

**Even when despair is all around us
and apathy seems to overshadow all we do,
we set our face steadily towards the light.**

Listen now to the prophecy of Isaiah:

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to provide for those who mourn in Zion —
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.” (Isaiah 61:1-3).

**Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of joy this week,
help us to become the signs of joy
that others are searching for.
As these candles are but a glimpse
of the light of the heavens,
help us to be a glimpse of heaven’s joy. Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN** *Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness* 314

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Who are we, O God, that you should come to us? You come
though we lose sight of your presence in our lives. You pour
out blessings upon us that we too often use to glorify
ourselves. We continue to place our needs above the needs of
those who have nothing. Yet you have come to your people
and redeemed us in your Son. As we prepare to celebrate his
birth, make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your word,
and move us by your Spirit to bless your people...**

(a moment for silent confession)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

***MUSICAL RESPONSE** *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* (verse 1) 87
“Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!” So says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow’s load.
To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.”

PASSING OF THE PEACE

***MUSICAL RESPONSE** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (verse 7) 88
*O Come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven’s
peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON *Luke 1:46b-55* Jane Luhn
⁴⁶ “My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹ for the Mighty
One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰ His mercy is
for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹ He has shown
strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of
their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and
sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in
remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our
ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

ANTHEM *Canticle of the Turning* Arr. Hal Hopson
*My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and
my spirit sings of the Wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not
spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about
to turn? My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice
burn. Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near and the world is about to*

*turn! Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and
your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you
yearn, you will show your might. Put the strong to flight for the world is
about to turn. My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your
justice burn. Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near, and the world is
about to turn! From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone
will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears ev'ry tyrant
from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more for the food they can
never earn. There are tables spread; ev'ry mouth be fed for the world is
about to turn. My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your
justice burn. Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near, and the world is
about to turn! Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who
holds us fast. God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's
crushing grasp. This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise
which holds us bound 'til the spear and rod can be crushed by God who is
turning the world around. My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the
fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near, and
the world is about to turn!*

SPECIAL TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Dr. Andy Morgan

SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON

 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has
anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to
bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and
release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to
provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead
of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise
instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the
planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴ They shall build up the
ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall
repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸ For I
the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully
give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant
with them. ⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and
their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰ I will greatly
rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has
clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the
robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings
forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up
before all the nations.

SERMON

“Prelude”

Rev. Mark R. Curtis

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN....

Annual Christmas Pageant and Dinner - We are thrilled to announce that the Christmas Pageant will be held this evening at 5 pm with dinner to follow in the Fellowship Hall. Please join us for this joyous celebration of Christ's birth.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected during the morning services of Dec 24th. The Christmas Joy Offering offers critical financial support to church workers and their families and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, equipping communities of color.

Please join us on Christmas Eve. Our annual Christmas Eve family service will take place at 5 pm, and the 10:30 pm service will begin with a beautiful 10 pm prelude, so get here early! Both services will include communion and candle lighting, stories and wonderful music. There will be selections for handbells as well as choral anthems for the season accompanied by a string quartet.

All are invited join us in the fellowship hall to celebrate Ginny and Bill Morrow's 50th wedding anniversary following the 11 am service on December 31st. Heavy hors d'Oeuvres will be served. Let's gather together to show our love and appreciation for Ginny and Bill, and to congratulate them on reaching this incredible milestone in their journey together. We hope to see you all there!

The finance committee is very thankful to God for the generosity of the faithful First Presbyterian Church family. We are asking you to please ensure that your 2023 contributions reach the church office in time to be deposited in the bank during this calendar year. All contributions received after Dec. 27 will not be deposited until January 2 and will be credited to your 2024 giving record. For any questions, please contact Jane Holland at jane@fpcknox.org.

Bridge Refugee Services recently completed a successful sewing class at First Presbyterian with eight dedicated students. Sewing classes provide refugees with more than just a skill; they offer empowerment and a means of self-sufficiency. These classes not only teach a practical trade but also create a sense of community and belonging, helping refugees integrate into their new surroundings. By learning sewing skills, refugees gain an opportunity to generate income, contribute to their families' livelihoods, and build a foundation for a more secure future.

Now, in preparation for an upcoming beginner class, Bridge Refugee Services is seeking donations for ten sewing machines and Singer sewing supply bags. Contributions can be made through the Bridge Refugee Website. If you are interested in supporting this cause or would like further details, please contact Kayla Davis at kdavis@bridgerefugees.org.

Bridge Refugee Services extends gratitude to all supporters, emphasizing the tangible impact their support has in transforming the lives of refugees.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

The greens of Advent point to the Christian symbolism of the everlasting nature of God and through him everlasting life. Advent is a period of anticipation and reflection as we move toward Christmas. Your generous donations have served to support our flower ministry and the work of our devoted flower guild. If you wish to honor or remember a loved one during this sacred season the flower ministry welcomes your donations. We would love to arrange with them in mind. If you wish to make a donation and dedication, a donation of \$20.00 per name is suggested.

You may email your flower forms to laura@fpcknox.org (please only list one name per line) OR for the first time, you can submit your Christmas flower dedications online. Under the "Quick Links" button on the website, there is a menu item for Christmas Flowers. You can pay in our online giving portal in the "Christmas Flowers" category or by dropping a check in the offering plate or church office. Please be sure to designate "Christmas Flowers" in the memo line. All submissions must be received by noon on December 18th. Thank you for supporting the flower guild!

In Memory Of

In Honor Of

Given By

