

Worship at First Presbyterian Church

The FOURTH week of Advent (LOVE)

Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 10 am

*"This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us
and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." (1 John 4:10)*

PRELUDE

WELCOME

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HYMN #22: *ANGELS FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY*

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

*Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;
Yonder shines the infant light. *[Refrain]*

Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen His natal star. *[Refrain]*

All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One. *[Refrain]*

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASSING THE PEACE, PRAYERS FOR THE CONGREGATION

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

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HYMN #384: *O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO*

O love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O light that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

O joy that seekest me through pain,
 I cannot close my heart to Thee;
 I trace the rainbow through the rain,
 And feel the promise is not vain
 That morn shall tearless be.

O cross that liftest up my head,
 I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
 I lay in dust life's glory dead,
 And from the ground there blossoms red
 Life that shall endless be.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *AND* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

(You are invited to join in unison with the pastor, or to follow along in silence)

Loving and Forgiving God,
 we confess our willingness to be loved
 but also our reluctance to love.

We confess our readiness to accept your forgiveness
 but also our hesitation to extend forgiveness to others.

We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love
 but also our resistance to follow you without question.

We tend to keep the good news of Jesus' birth confined to the Christmas season
 and fail to yearn for his presence each moment in our waiting hearts.

In this Advent time, forgive us our failure to respond as we should.

Come to us anew, and by your grace, assist us to receive you:

with joy, as the shepherds;
 with gratitude, as Simeon;
 with obedience, as Mary;
 with love, as you have loved us.
 Come, Lord Jesus.

After corporate prayer we will have a few moments of silence for personal confession.

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HYMN #37: *INFANT HOLY, INFANT LOWLY*

Infant holy, Infant lowly,
 for His bed a cattle stall;
 Oxen lowing, little knowing
 Christ the Babe is Lord of all.
 Swift are winging, Angels singing,
 Noels ringing, Tidings bringing:
 Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping; Shepherds keeping
 Vigil till the morning new.
 Saw the glory, heard the story,
 Tidings of a Gospel true.
 Thus rejoicing, Free from sorrow,
 Praises voicing, Greet the morrow:
 Christ the Babe was born for you.

CHOIR: *WHAT SHALL I GIVE?*

READING AND PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Sermon: *"Where Is Jesus When Life Turns Upside Down?"*

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. ²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ³⁰ "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For the word of God will never fail."

³⁸ Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Matthew 1:18-25

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

²⁰ As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

²² All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

²³ "Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel,
which means 'God is with us.'"

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE WITH OUR OFFERINGS

*The metal basket in the offering plate is for gifts to support
our deacons' provision of care, support, and financial assistance to those in need.*

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DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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HYMN #31: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King.
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel. *[Refrain]*

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. *[Refrain]*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

CALENDAR

TODAY	Choir Practice (9:00 in the Parlor) Sunday Worship (10:00 in the Sanctuary) Blue Christmas Service (5:00 pm with meal to follow)
Wednesday, Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Family Service (5:00 pm) Christmas Eve Traditional Candlelight Service (10:00 pm)
Sunday, Dec. 28	Sunday Worship (10:00 in the Sanctuary)
LOOKING AHEAD	January 4: Congregational Meeting January 11: Potluck after the service

The church office will be closed from December 26 – January 2. If you need access to the building, please call Chuck (847-800-7119) or William (360-660-5704).

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