

**First Presbyterian Church Worship Bulletin 12.18.22**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Gathering Music**

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Prayer of the Day and Lighting the Fourth Candle of Advent**

God of love and promise, you made a commitment to Joseph that you would make Jesus a savior to all. Renew your commitment with us, so that all may know the saving grace of your son, Jesus. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Prelude**

*Grazioso*

Arr: Arnold Sherman

**\*Call to Worship**

We are always looking for evidence that God is with us.

**That sign is in the One to come--the One that God is sending.**

We want to know for sure that everything is in God's care.

**And so we cry to the heavens in our distress. Our cries are heard!**

**God is responding in love and hope.**

Let us come before God with expectant hearts and spirits!

**Let us be ready to receive the blessed gift of the Savior. AMEN.**

**\*Hymn of Praise** *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child GTG146*

*1)Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger; there he lay,  
the undefiled, to the world a stranger.*

*Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior?*

*Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.*

*2)Angels sang about his birth; wise men sought and found him;  
heaven's star shone brightly forth, glory all around him.*

*Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing;  
all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ringing.*

*3)Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger;  
he is still undefiled, but no more a stranger.*

*Son of God, of humble birth, beautiful the story;  
praise his name in all the earth; hail the King of glory!*

### **Call to Confession**

Assured that God hears and knows all our burdens, let us turn our hearts and minds to the truth, confessing our sins to God and one another using the prayer in the bulletin based on Psalm 80. Let us pray together...

### **Laying Our Burdens Before Christ**

**God of love and peace, we have turned away from you, neglecting the welfare of your creation and ignoring the plight of your people. We have not helped our neighbors in need, kept peace within our families, or tended the vine you have planted in our own lives. Forgive us. Turn us to your way. Restore us and let your face shine upon us so we shall be saved. Amen.**

### **Prayer Song**      *While We Are Waiting, Come (2x)*

*While we are waiting, come, while we are waiting, come.*

*Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.*

### **Silent Reflection and Confession**

#### **\*Proclamation of the Gospel**

His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people. For the sake of the One God promised to send, named as God's Son and our salvation, who died, was raised, and through whom we receive grace, God forgives you all your sins. Receive that grace and celebrate. Amen and Alleluia!

#### **\*Passing the Peace of Christ**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another and share the love we have found in God with our neighbor. The love of Christ be with you!

**And also with you.**

Let us greet one another in the name of our coming Lord.

#### **\*The Gloria Patri**

### **Special Music**

*Parade of the Tin Soldiers*

Arr: Martha Lynn Thompson

***First Unison Prayer***

**Lord, make us protectors of bruised reeds: Where there is cold calculation, let us bring warm embrace; where there is hardness of heart, let us bring gentleness of spirit; where flint strikes granite, let us point toward mercy's dew; where others cast out, let us draw in; where others shame and blame, let us name with a divine claim; where there is a too easy clarity, let us bring questions, oh, so many, many questions.**

**O Divine Master, may we not so much seek to snuff out the smoldering wick as to reignite the flames of justice; to fear brokenness as to be transformed by it; to shout, "Crucify!" as to pray at the foot of the Cross.**

**For it is in being embraced by your mercy that we share it with others; it is in welcoming Mary into our home that God-possibilities flourish; it is in singing a new song that the birth of Messiah Jesus comes about.**

***Second Unison Prayer***

**O Lord, make vessels full of dreams: Where there are limits, let us see possibilities; where there are roadblocks, let us travel o'er mountains; where there are only naysayers, let us be deaf; where there is scarcity, let us see your abundance; where there is the unknown and uncertain, let us be known, for certain; where there is fear, let us dream.**

**O Divine dream-giver, may we not so much seek to live out our own life-script as to embrace your divine narrative; to avoid great challenge as to dream bigger dreams; to hear the Siren's call of our fears as to listen to the whispers of Holy Spirit.**

**For it is in heeding Holy Spirit that sons and daughters prophesy; it is in sacred whisper the young see visions and the old dream dreams; it is in Joseph's sleep, and our own, that God brings life among us.**

***Third Unison Prayer***

**Lord, make us mirror-looking saints: When tempted to peek out the window, place the mirror before us; when tempted to cast about for other's sins, let us confront our own; when tempted to name other's problems, let us confess our own; when confronted with the mirror, let our eyes remain open; when the mirror is friend or family, let us receive rebuke as a gift; when the mirror is enemy or "other," let us see your Hand of Grace.**

**O Divine Master, let us not so much seek to look outward as to look inward; to blame sin on others as to claim grace for all; to fret about our enemies as to affirm, "I have met the enemy...and the enemy is me."**

**For it is in honest humility that we are freed through forgiveness; it is in humble accountability that we are freed for forgiveness; it is in, with and by grace, your grace, the one and only grace that saves, that forgiveness flows through us to others, making enemy and stranger, friend and neighbor.**

***Fourth Unison Prayer***

**Immanuel, make us instruments of with-ness: When others keep their distance, let us connect; when relationships rupture, let us repair; when the Church rejects, let us embrace; where God-void is encountered, let us give birth; where God-cloudiness envelops, let us serve as midwife; where God-cry laments, let us bear *theotokos* into the world.**

**O Divine Master, may we not so much seek to be known as one who claims you as to be one who is with you; to claim your allegiance as**

to welcome your presence; to boast of our closeness to you as to rejoice in your presence with us.

For it is in being God-bearers that, like Mary, we bring grace; it is in having her courage and faith that God-Life is birthed; it is in Immanuel we learn you are not against us and we are not alone.

### ***Fifth Unison Prayer***

Lord, make us instruments of naming: Where anonymity cripples, let us seek to know another; where namelessness means forsaken, let us see, hear, and call to them; where society forgets, let us remember; where society ignores, let us notice; where encountered by those who are faceless, let us speak them into dignity.

O God of Joseph, may we not so much seek to claim parental rights as to embrace all children in love; to do what is expedient as to live according to what is just; to tolerate the kid as to embrace the child.

For it is in union and communion that community is formed; it is in loving the single mom that boys become men; it is in naming Jesus as one's own that Jesus finds a home.

### **Prayers of the Community & Lord's Prayer**

*To respect others' privacy, we ask that you first ask permission from an individual for whom you would like to request the congregation to pray. Please share only their first name and avoid detailed descriptions of their situation in awareness that your words are recorded online.*

### **Offering Our Gifts and Ourselves to God**

All that we have is the Lord's. All that we may become and receive is in God's hands. For the sake of the joy that is ours when our bonds grow deep with others, let us give generously for the well-being of the world.

**Offertory                      *Fantasy on Kingsfold*                      Arr: H. Dean Wagner**

**\*Doxology**

### **\*Prayer of Dedication**

Holy God, in your love, you bless us with many gifts, you retrieve us from despair and fear, you visit us with surprising proclamations, and you intend for us very good things. We thank you for your steadfast love, for sending signs of assurance, and for the gift of faith. Use our gifts to bring comfort and justice to those in need, reforming the ways of our world for the sake of new life. Amen.

### **\*Hymn of Sending**     *Joy to the World #40*

#### **Verse 1**

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.*

#### **Verse 2**

*Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.*

#### **Verse 3**

*No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.*

#### **Verse 4**

*He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

### **\*Benediction**

**Postlude**   *Joy To The World*   Arr: Terry Osman

**Remembering in Prayer**

**Praise and Thanksgiving:**   *(Lord, hear our praise):*   The blessing of the special music provided by the Allelulia Bells.

**Ministry of the Church in the Community:**   Alcoholics Anonymous

**Healing and Encouragement**   *(Lord, hear our prayer):*

**Homebound:**   Jean M, Ernie, Les and Jan, Carlene and Wayne, Sheri and Jim

**For those seeking healing and comfort:**   Walker and Daisy, Mac, Harold, Dan, Gene, Mary and Katie, Skip, Logan, Sharon, Carol, Mike and Carrie, Mary S, Scott, George, Bob, Marilyn, Ross, Zach S, Fable, Zachary R, Becky, Phil, Janet, Eric, Fred, Charity's father, those in recovery and their supporters, Chris' friends with prostate cancer, Bill's brother Dick, Preston, Nicholas F and his family, Cindy & Steve, Adam, and Ukraine.

**For our Community:**   Traveling mercies for people headed out of town to visit loved ones.

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