



Third Sunday of Advent • December 17, 2023
Glorify God, Make Disciples of Jesus Christ, and Meet Human Needs

GATHERING

Light of the world, you greet me this morning with new possibilities. Shine brightly, I pray, until I see into the dark places of this world, and into the dark places of my own life. I want to follow you in paths of justice, speak up with you for liberty, and bend with you toward the brokenhearted, even the broken places within myself. I trade in my faint spirit for your mantle of praise, and with my whole being I will rejoice in you. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME

PRELUDE Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming M. Drischner

* **CALL TO WORSHIP**

We are witnesses to the light of Christ!

The Promised One of God comforts all who mourn.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, hold fast to what is good.

We are witnesses to the light of Christ!

* **HYMN 106** Prepare the Way, O Zion BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE Howard & Margaret Lingg (8:30 A.M.)
Troy, Tammy, & Kaylee Bleeker (11 A.M.)

CONFESSION AND PARDON

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, you love justice; why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form of evil? You have given us the gift of your Spirit, the words of the prophets, and the Word himself; You have sent the light into the world; but we have we loved darkness rather than light. Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Now, O Lord, transform us as we continue our confession in silence.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, Believe the Good News of the Gospel.

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

* **ACT OF PRAISE** Gloria Patri Hymn 581

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NRSV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

OT pg. 691

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM (11 A.M.)

Song of Mary

M. Rizza

Chancel Choir; April Basiletti, soloist

My Lord and Savior is my song, He fills my spirit with delight; to raise me up His arm is strong, the lowly precious in His sight. Magnificat anima mea, Dominum (My soul magnifies the Lord). My name shall live from age to age and ev'ry tongue His servant bless. For mercy is their heritage, whose hearts the Holy One confess. The proud beguiled by dreams of pow'r, divided and degraded lie. He casts them down from throne and tow'r, and stoops to lift the humble high. He feeds the hungry at His board and sends the rich unfilled away. And, mindful of His promised word, has answered Israel's pray'rs today. With all the elders of our race and those unborn who seek His birth, I sing the glory of His race and bring eternity to earth.

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES (11 A.M.)

Sarah Whitfield

(Afterward, children in kindergarten through 2nd grade will be dismissed to Kids-4-God.)

* HYMN 96

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

WINCHESTER NEW

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:39-55 (NRSV)

This is the Word of the Lord.

NT pg. 57

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Mary's Song

Rev. Mark Hults

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

RESPONDING

* AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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; on 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.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Advent Message

M. How

Come, Lord Jesus, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, O come quickly. The voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Come, Lord Jesus, come, yea come quickly. Come, Lord, come. Amen.

* DOXOLOGY

Hymn 606

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

* 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, 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.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION (8:30 A.M.)

(Gluten-Free Bread)

SENDING

* HYMN 744

Arise, Your Light Is Come!

FESTAL SONG

* **BENEDICTION**

* **POSTLUDE**

Festal Song

J. Schaffner

TODAY IN WORSHIP

WORSHIP LEADERS: Tom Chamberlain, Mark Hults, Fred Lundy, Sarah Whitfield

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST: Mitch Rorick

8:30 & 11 A.M. ORGANIST: Emeritus Director of Music and Organist Dr. Mark Coffey

CHANCEL CHOIR

CHAPEL USHER: Jeanne Thomas; **SANCTUARY USHERS:** Maralyn Foote, Louis Motz, Mary Lou Schubert

VIDEO TEAM: Kaylee Bleeker, Troy Bleeker, John Rayl; **SOUND:** Bruce Brashear

THE FLOWERS IN WORSHIP are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of my husband, Ben, by Eleanor Samuels on what would have been our 66th anniversary.

THE CHRISTMAS JOY GIFT OFFERING is being received for three Sundays and provides assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and students in their time of promise. There are Christmas Joy envelopes in the pews or gifts may be mailed to the church. Please write "Joy Gift" in the memo line. For more information, visit <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>

Thank you for joining us in worship today. We pray that you experience Christ's presence in our midst and that His presence will sustain you in the week ahead. Visitors are welcome to participate in the worship and the work of First Presbyterian Church. You can find a "Three Steps to Membership" card with information about how to join the church in the pew racks. If you feel a call to commit your life to Jesus Christ and His Church, please speak to the pastor or an elder after worship.

Prayer of Belief: *Lord Jesus Christ, I admit I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through you, I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment, and offering forgiveness. I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior. Amen.* (If you are saying this prayer for the first time today, please let the pastor or elder on duty know.)

Senior Pastor

Rev. Mark Hults - pastor@1stpc.org

Director of Music and Organist

Mitch Rorick - music@1stpc.org

Director of Young Adult & Family Ministry

Fred Lundy - youngadult@1stpc.org

Parish Associate, Director of College Ministry

Rev. Scott Stuart - college@1stpc.org

Preschool Director

Lisa Hershkowitz - preschool@1stpc.org

Business Manager

Trudy Bonerba - business@1stpc.org

Operations and Administrative Associate

Laura Montgomery - assistant@1stpc.org

Communications Specialist

Jenny Chamberlain - communications@1stpc.org

Event Sexton and Music Clerk

Andrew Netardus - events@1stpc.org

Head Sexton - Tony Cogdill

Sexton - Margaret Hill

FPC Weekly Figures

In-Person Attendance	226
Weekly Budget Requirement	\$35,061
Received Week of 12/10/23	\$21,340
Weekly Offering	\$18,226
Designated Offerings	\$2,664
Other Revenue	--
Preschool	\$450
YTD Budget Requirements	\$841,454
YTD Received	\$752,772
YTD Expenses	\$691,592

Prepare the Way, O Zion 106



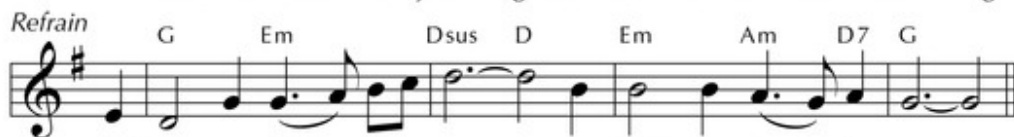
1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
 2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
 3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sav - ior's rule em - brace,



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
 and ti - dings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



O blest is Christ who came in God's most ho - ly name.

Guitar chords do not correspond with keyboard harmony.

This engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40:3-5 and Psalm 24:7-10 has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to a version of an even older Swedish tune, which in turn seems to be derived from a German folktune that spread to Scandinavia.

TEXT: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1812, rev. 1819; trans. Augustus Nelson, 1958;
 adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980, alt.
 MUSIC: *Then Svenska Psalmboken*, 1697; arr. *American Lutheran Hymnal*, 1930
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BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN
 7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain

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OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NRSV)

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; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to 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. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For 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. ⁹Their 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. ¹⁰I 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. ¹¹For 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

96 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an -
 2 Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; make
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our
 4 Stretch forth your hand; our health re - store, and

nounc - es that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 straight the way for God with - in, and let us all our
 ref - uge and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 make us rise to fall no more. O let your face up -

for he brings glad ti - dings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.

This hymn shows how once-unconnected parts can work together. The text about John the Baptist was written in Latin in the 18th century and translated into English in the 19th century. Similarly, the 17th-century melody was adapted to its present form in the 19th century.

TEXT: Charles Coffin, 1736; trans. John Chandler, 1837, alt.

MUSIC: *Musikalisches Handbuch*, 1690; harm. William Henry Monk, 1847, alt.

WINCHESTER NEW

LM

(alternate tune: PUER NOBIS NASCITUR)

GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:39-55 (NRSV)

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." ⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION

744 Arise, Your Light Is Come!

1 A - rise, your light is come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;
 2 A - rise, your light is come! Fling wide the pris - on door;
 3 A - rise, your light is come! All you in sor - row born,
 4 A - rise, your light is come! The moun - tains burst in song!

show forth the glo - ry of your God, which shines on you to - day.
 pro - claim the cap - tives' lib - er - ty, good ti - dings to the poor.
 bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.
 Rise up like ea - gles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Echoing imagery from Isaiah 61:1-2 and other passages, this text was created as an inclusive-language alternative to an older hymn using this late 19th-century tune. Because it is a song of encouragement rather than a song of praise, it is not directed to God but to people.

TEXT: Ruth Duck, 1974
MUSIC: William H. Walter, 1894
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FESTAL SONG
SM
(this tune in a lower key, 815)

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GLORIFY GOD

Christmas Eve Worship will be held in the sanctuary at 6 p.m. with carols, candlelight, and Holy Communion. The Prelude, beginning at 5:30 p.m., will include the Chancel Choir, Jubilate Ringers, chamber orchestra, and several soloists. If you cannot attend our Christmas Eve Worship, you may join us on YouTube.

Christmas Eve Nursery opens at 5:15 p.m. and runs through the end of the worship service. Please contact Jenna Mueller (see her email below) with any questions or to volunteer to help this Christmas Eve.

There will not be an 8:30 a.m. Service on Sunday, December 24. Please join us for the fourth Sunday of Advent at 11 a.m. worship in the sanctuary.

MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

Nursery Care (6 weeks old through pre-kindergarten) is available on Sundays from 10:45 a.m. through the end of the 11 a.m. worship service. Email Jenna Mueller at jdmueller2009@gmail.com with questions or to sign up. Families, please find the sign-in cart upstairs in the Christian Education building by room 204. ***The nursery is seeking the donation of a pack 'n play for the nursery as well as the following items for a Nursing room: glider, white noise machine, bassinet, and changing table.*

Children's Worship Bags are located in the narthex, and Gordon Hall. Pick one up before the service to help your child participate in worship. After the service, please return all bags to the baskets. We encourage your family to discuss worship together - even if you don't use the guide.

Time for Young Disciples: All children are invited to the front steps for a special lesson during 11 a.m. worship. Afterward, children in kindergarten through 2nd grade will be dismissed to Kids-4-God and all others will return to sit with their families.

Kids-4-God: Children (K-2) will gather in Room 217 after the Time for Young Disciples to engage with their faith through the end of the service. Families will reunite with their children in Gordon Hall following the worship service. Volunteers are needed to help with this and Sunday School. Please contact Evelyn Lewis at citytr122@gmail.com.

Youth Connection: (6th-12th grade) You are invited to end the semester with our Christmas Party tonight, Sunday, December 17 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Lentz home. Please contact Fred Lundy with questions.

Gordon Hoover Sunday School: Meet in the Church Library at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Enter through the Mary Gate or the sanctuary. All are welcome! Email Perry Foote at palbertfoote@gmail.com with questions.

December 17 1 Corinthians 6 Bob Bailey
December 24 Christmas Party All are welcome!

MEET HUMAN NEEDS

Let Us Remember in Prayer and Correspondence:

Marilyn Ast, Melda Bassett, Jayne Fox, Carol Hayes-Christiansen, Kay Koons, Elizabeth Miller, and Marjorie Pedrick. Our men and women in the services: Ashley Dace, Matt Gowdy, Brian Hill, and Dan Williams; and first responders: Nick Gonzalez and Paul Samala.

Hope for the Holidays: Gifts are due today! Purchase and wrap your gifts, **SECURELY ATTACH THE TAG**, and return by this Sunday, December 17 (extended deadline) or make a check out to the church to help purchase gifts (write *Hope for the Holidays* in the memo). We appreciate everyone who brings joy to the families of Family Promise.


Stop by the Montreat Christmas Table in Gordon Hall to shop for stocking stuffers this December. All proceeds help to offset transportation and housing expenses for those attending Montreat next summer.

Year-End Giving: Contributions made through Sunday, December 31, 2023 will be credited to the 2023 calendar year. They may be placed in the offering plate on Sunday, December 31, made online by midnight on December 31, or postmarked by December 31. The office will be closed December 25-29, as well as Monday, January 1. Contact Trudy Bonerba with questions.

Concert for a Cause: The Florida State University Singers will present a concert, under the direction of Kevin Fenton, on Sunday, January 21 at 4 p.m. They will be joined by the Santa Fe Singers and the Gainesville High School Chamber Choir. The free-will offering supports Filter of Hope, whose mission is to provide families living in poverty easy access to clean, safe drinking water by manufacturing and distributing simple, life-saving water filters.

Ushers Needed in January: Ushers greet parishioners, distribute bulletins, and help people to a seat. They also take up a collection at the offering time. Please contact Laura Montgomery in the office by phone or email to fill this need.

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Is there something you would like to announce in the Bugle or Bulletin? Contact communications@1stpc.org