

First Presbyterian Church
Salem, Ohio

December 24, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve



Worship will be live streamed on
Facebook: First Presbyterian Church of Salem, Ohio,
You Tube: [www.youtube / FPCSALEM](http://www.youtube.com/FPCSALEM); and
our website, www.fpcsaalem.org.

"We are centered in Christ and powered by love."

WHO IS GOING TO BETHLEHEM?

PRELUDE

<i>Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella</i>	<i>Alfred Fedak</i>
<i>Medley: What Child, Away in a Manger and Lullay, Lullay</i>	<i>Thommy Brinkley</i>
<i>How Great Our Joy</i>	<i>Joyce Jones</i>
<i>Carols for Quiet Stops</i>	<i>J. Fischer</i>
<i>Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light</i>	<i>J.S. Bach</i>

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Prophet Isaiah said:

The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who lived in a land of deep darkness –
On them light has shined.

**What has come into being in him was life
And the life is the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
And the darkness did not overcome it.**

God is with us

God is coming into our lives in a new way
The birth of the Christ-child is the renewal of hope
**A reminder that Christ will come again
Keep watch for the light; it is drawing near.**

HYMN – *Prepare the Way of the Lord*

Prepare the Way of the Lord, Prepare the way of the Lord,
and all people will see the salvation of our God.

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND CHRIST CANDLE

Ross and Alice Jackson

HYMN – *Comfort, Comfort You My People*

Comfort, comfort you my people,
Tell of peace, thus says our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness
Bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover,
And their warfare now is over.

*HYMN 9

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

*INVITATION TO CONFESSION

We gather in a place lit by twinkling lights, bright with love and hope. But we are not separated from the darkness of the world, the cold and brokenness that touches all. Tonight we come before God with our love, hope, peace and joy, but we also come as those who need to be healed, who need to be forgiven, who need the Christ child today and always. Let us pray together:

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*Unison*)

On this holy night of Christmas, we come together before God and with one another, confessing the ways in which we have been caught up in the frenzied spirit of the holidays and turned away from Your Spirit of Peace; the times we have focused so much on our own lives and desires, that we have neglected the voices of your children who cry out for Justice; in our focus on making the season perfect, we have turned away from the hurting people and broken places in our world in need of Healing; in the times we have dismissed Christmas as a time only for children, and stubbornly closed our hearts to your amazing gift of Love. O Holy Child of Bethlehem, Word Become Flesh, our Savior and King, hear us as we humbly pray; cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. Amen.

(Moments of Silent Prayer)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Hear the good news of Christmas.

Today God reveals to us the wonders of divine love.

For unto us a Child is born;

unto us a Son is given.

His name shall be called Wonderful,

Counselor,

The Mighty God,

the Everlasting Father,

the Prince of Peace.

Friends, believe in the miracle of love

that we celebrate tonight;

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

*GLORIA PATRI (*Unison; Hymn 579*)

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. Amen.

THE PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**God of light, you have revealed your very self to us in your son
Jesus Christ, your one Word made flesh, who lived among us,
full of grace and truth. Open us to your revelation once again,
that in the words of your holy scripture we might know your
presence and follow in your light always. Amen.**

ANTHEM

The Wexford Carol

The Haviland Choir

David Hamilton

Jayne Bricker, Soloist

Dayspring Music, Inc., CCL#2595933

Good people all, this Christmastime,
consider well and bear in mind
what our good God for us has done
in sending His beloved Son.

With humble hearts, we all should pray
to God with love this Christmas day.
In Bethlehem up on that morn,
there was a blessed Messiah born.

With thankful heart and joyful mind,
the shepherds went the Babe to find.
And as God's angel had foretold,
they did our Savior Christ behold.

With humble hearts, we all should pray
to God with love this Christmas day.
In Bethlehem upon that morn,
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RUTH (*Jan Cox*)

Ruth 1:16-17; 19a

JOSHUA (*Ray Cox*)

1 Samuel 16:1b, 5b-13a

HYMN 49

Once in Royal David's City

MICAH (*Mark Smith*)

Micah 5:2-5

ANTHEM

The Haviland Choir

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

arr. M. Praetorius

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to men a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

JOSEPH (*Paul Fennema*)

Luke 2:1-5

HYMN 44

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ANGEL (*Noelle Lathom*)

Luke 2:10-12

SHEPHERD (*Barbara Yonker*)

Luke 2:8-9; 15-20

HYMN 23

Angels We Have Heard on High

SERMON

"Something Good is Born Among Us in Bethlehem"

Rev. Annie Parker

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (*Unison; The Apostles' Creed*)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,**

**the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

CALL TO OFFERING / OFFERTORY

The Holy Mother Sings

J. Fischer

*Loose Cash Offering tonight will go to the Board of Deacons.
Christmas Joy Offering envelopes are in the Pew Racks.*

*RESPONSE HYMN 592 (*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*)

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*Unison*)

Holy God, as we gather this evening, all our attention is focused on a baby, lying in a makeshift bed in an "it-will-have-to-do" stable. It's not lost on us that you sent your Son, our Savior, into the world among the poorest of the poor and told us: "This will be a sign to you." As we present gifts to you, we pray that they might reach those in the greatest need, that they might lift those in the deepest despair, and that they might bring peace and compassion to those who find themselves amidst conflict. We pray this in the name of that Holy Child, Jesus the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer! Amen.

THE INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

*All who seek the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ
are invited to share in the Lord's Supper.*

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (*sins*)

May the God of silent nights be with you!

May the God of herald angels be with you!

Open your hearts to the One born in the little town of Bethlehem.

May Emmanuel come to abide in our hearts.

Join all believers in singing of our joy this night.

May our voices blend with those of the angels and shepherds.

You crept into chaos so long ago,

Star-shaper,

so creation might be born:

sheep gathering on hillsides,

stars glittering in the night skies,

sea horses frolicking in warm waters.

Silently, you gathered up the dust,

shaping us in your image

as the Spirit breathed life into us.

All the gifts of your heart were for us,

but we slammed the door of our hearts,

saying there was no room for you in our lives.

Prophets came time and again,

scattering your clues throughout the Story,

but we were too busy enjoying

the sleights of hand done by sin and death.

When you saw we could not

understand the Mystery on our own,

you sent Jesus, to reveal everything to us.

As we gather with our church family and friends,

as we join with the voices around us,

we sing praises to you this Christmas night:

We will not be afraid,

for great joy is ours this night;

we will look for the signs of your presence,

grace swaddled in hope,

love wrapped around broken hearts.

Glory to you, God in the highest heavens!

May peace fill the lives of all your children!

Leaving your side, God of holiness,
your Child came to walk with us
through the cold streets of our lives.

Born in poverty's shadows,
he is the light which illumines
your heart for us.

Unwrapped from glory's embrace,
he gathers us from all the corners
of our confused choices to make us one with you.

Placed in a rude feeding trough
layered with our fears and doubts,
he breathes in your hopes
and lives your will, until
he is placed in death's cold embrace,
waiting in the silence,
where he breathes in resurrection's breath,
and brings forth life for all who follow.

On this night, when we sing of the baby in the manger,
as the shadow of the cross is cast by the stars,
we proclaim that mystery called incarnation:

**Christ is our light,
and we will join the angels in singing the good news;
Christ is our life,
and we will join the disciples in telling the Story;
Christ is our promise,
and we wait for the joy of his return.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*Unison*)

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE CUP

The bread and the cup will be received by coming forward and given a piece of bread, taking the cup, and returning the cup to a tray. If you cannot come forward, you will be served in the pew.

PRAYER (*Unison*)

Bread of heaven, let us not be unchanged by tonight. Let us not pass by the table in silence; let us not leave the table empty. Dwell in our hearts, and shine in our lives, that we might know your deep, deep peace, and share it with the world. Fill us with your love, that we might walk hand in hand with you all our days. We pray in the holy name of the Christ-child, born for us this night. Amen.

*THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

*“The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.” ~ John 1:5*

*When all the lights are extinguished, upon the minister’s
request, please turn your candlelight on.
At the conclusion of ‘Silent Night’, turn your candle off and
place it in the box near the exit as you leave.*

*HYMN 60

Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent Night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: “Alleluia;
Christ, the Savior, is born, Christ, the Savior, is born.”

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Let us go to be the gift another needs,
**sharing God's blessings of love and grace,
running to tell the Story we heard from the shepherds.**
Let us go to be the comfort which can swaddle others,
**sharing Jesus' compassion with the poor and needy,
welcoming the holiness offered by the most vulnerable we
meet.**

Let us go to enkindle the lives around us,
**sharing the Spirit's peace with all the broken,
learning the language of hope from the children in our midst.**

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** (*Hymn 40, vss. 1, 2*) *Joy to the World!*

***POSTLUDE**

French Carol: Gloria

Jason Payne

*Please stand if you are able.

*Parts of tonight's Service and Liturgy came from or were inspired by
the Lectionary Liturgies and Together in Worship Websites.*

Blessings Jars – Place your coins in the red containers at the Sanctuary entrances, then place the empty jar under the table. The money donated will be given to Hurricane Relief.

The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us who have pointed us to God. Although we cannot give the perfect gift, we can give generously to support and be with our past, present, and future leaders in their time of promise and their time of need.

Contributions received in the Church Office by Noon on Tuesday, December 31, 2024, will be credited to 2024 giving. Contributions received on or after Thursday, January 2, 2025, will be credited to 2025 giving. The only exceptions are contributions mailed to the church and postmarked on or before December 31, 2024.

2025 Offering Envelopes are available in Fellowship Hall. If you do not have envelopes, but would like a box, please call the Church Office.

2025 Flower and Bulletin Donors are needed. Vases are \$10 each and Bulletins are \$15 a Sunday. Please call the Church Office if you have a standing flower and/or bulletin order and wish to continue in 2025.

2025 Calendars, compliments of Stark Memorial Funeral Home, are at Sanctuary entrances.

Annual Reports for 2024 are due in the Church Office by Friday, January 3, 2025. Reports will be distributed the week before the Annual Congregational/Corporation Meeting.

2025 Per Capita Apportionment is \$33.00 per Active Member. Per Capita is an assessment paid to General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery for each member of the congregation. Per Capita funding is how Presbyterians mutually share the costs of coming together to discern the Spirit's leading for the future.

Vision Statement

*To glorify God and share the Spirit and love of Christ
with our community and the world.*

Wednesday, December 25 – Merry Christmas!

Sunday, December 29

9:00 Adult Church School Class (Library)

10:00 Coffee Hour (FH)

10:30 Service of Worship

Tuesday, December 31

9:00-12:00 Church Office Hours

Wednesday, January 1, 2025 – Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 5

9:00 Adult Church School Class (Library) / Youth Church School

10:00 Coffee Hour (FH)

10:30 Service of Worship

Congregational Meeting after Worship to Elect Officers

Planning Session for Session after Worship

Monday, January 6

6:30 Troops 3 and 2003G (B/209)

7:00 Board of Deacons (Library)

Tuesday, January 7

8:30 am Investment Committee via Zoom

1:00-9:00 United Quilt Guild (FH)

Pastor..... Rev. Annie Parker, 330-720-5884
pastorannie@fpcsalem.org
Clerk of Session.....Barbara Loudon, bloudon@neo.rr.com
Director of Music.....John Krauss, wjohnkrauss@gmail.com
Organist Nancy McNeal
Director, Handbells/Youth Choirs Cheryl McDevitt, chermcd@aol.com
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