

God's reconciling act in Jesus Christ is a mystery which the Scriptures describe in various ways. It is called

the sacrifice of a lamb,
a shepherd's life given for his sheep,
atonement by a priest;

again it is

ransom of a slave,
payment of debt,
vicarious satisfaction of a legal penalty, and
victory over the powers of evil.

These are expressions of a truth which remains beyond the reach of all theory in the depths of God's love for man. They reveal the gravity, cost, and sure achievement of God's reconciling work.

The risen Christ is the Savior for all people. Those joined to him by faith are set right with God and commissioned to serve as his reconciling community. Christ is head of this community, the church, which began with the apostles and continues through all generations.

Song for Centering #92 *While We Are Waiting Come*

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Prayers of the People

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.

Anthem *Gabriel's Message* (text from 7th-8th century Latin; hymn tune McBride) arr. Robert Benson

We Go Out In God's Name

*Having gathered together in God's name and been fed by God's Holy Word,
we go out in God's name bearing the peace of Christ to the world.*

◆ **Hymn for Commitment #132** *Good Christian Friends Rejoice*

◆ **Charge and Benediction**

◆ **Congregational Sung Benediction #105** *People Look East*

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able; trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.

◆ **Postlude**

◆ Please stand if able. Remain seated if need be.

Office: 302 West Church, Champaign, IL 61820 ♦ 217.356.7238
info@firstpres.church ♦ Rev. Matt Matthews (matt@firstpres.church) ♦ Rev. Joe Lundy (joseph@firstpres.church)
www.firstpres.church ♦ Facebook: fb.com/firstpreschampaign



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

December 17, 2023

Third Sunday in Advent



Welcome to First Presbyterian Church
Bienvenue à La Première Eglise Presbytérienne de Champaign
Bienvenidos a La Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana

삼페인 제일 장로교회에 오신것을 환영합니다.

Si vous souhaitez que le service soit traduit en français,
procurez-vous un récepteur et des écouteurs à l'arrière du sanctuaire.

Welcome to worship!

When you enter the worship space, please be mindful of the silent prayers of those around you.

We are presently worshiping in Westminster Hall while our elevator is being replaced.

*We invite you to share your contact info in the Friendship Pad when passed,
then to stay after the service for coffee and fellowship.*

*Mingle with other friends and guests and learn more about this congregation's ministry. **Welcome home!***

We Gather Together In God's Holy Name

God calls us together as "children." Wonderful it is to be so loved! Our natural response is worship.

Prelude

Chiming on the Hour of Tower Bell

Act of Friendship & Sharing of Prayer Concerns

Please pass the Friendship Pad and list prayer concerns on the prayer request cards in the pads.

Greeting & Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Wreath/We light the candle of joy.

Jim & Laurie Dey

Sung Response: He came down that we may have joy ... hallelujah forevermore.

Minute for Mission – Christmas Joy Offering

Rev. Dr. Rachel Matthews

♦Call to Worship

Sing, choirs of angels.

Sing in exultation!

Sing all you citizens of heaven above!

Glory to God—all glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore him, Christ, the LORD!

♦Hymn of Praise #133 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Call to Confession – Hymn #88 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (vs. 1)

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Corporate Confession

Holy God, we often “feel” our love for you and for neighbor. Forgive us when our love is only a feeling and never expressed in action. We know love is more than what we feel in our hearts, it is what we do with our hands. Help us, in Jesus’ name, follow in the footsteps of your son, our Lord.

O come, O come, Emmanuel. AMEN.

Assurance of Pardon

The proof of God's amazing love is this: While we were yet sinners, God greets us with a baby's cry from a Bethlehem manger.

Hallelujah!

God's Messiah has befriended us, taught us, challenged us, and walks with us into a new way of life.

The old life is gone; the new life has begun.

Believe the Gospel and be at peace:

In Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Alleluia!

Passing of the Peace

Invitation to the Offering (*We are invited to return God's tithes and give our offering.*)

Offertory – Sora Shepard

Response of Gratitude #648 *Thankful Hearts and Voices Raise*

Thankful hearts and voices raise; tell everyone what God has done.

Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and bear the name of Christ.

Send us with your promises and lead your people forth in joy

With shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia.

Prayer of Dedication & Thanksgiving

We Gather Around God's Holy Word

At the center of Christian life and worship is God's Word incarnate in Christ and God's Word as recorded in scripture. We hear the story of God's love in scripture and sacrament and we say, “Thanks be to God!”

Word with Children

Prayer for Illumination #83 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;

From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

Scripture *Luke 1:39-45*

This is the Word of the Lord./**Thanks be to God!**

Ceci est la Parole du Seigneur./**Gloire à Dieu** (pronounced “glow-ah ah dew”)

Sermon *And Why Has This Happened to Me?*

Matt Matthews

We Respond to God's Word

As God invites us to be disciples of his Son, we prayerfully respond to God with affirmations of faith and acts of self-giving, commitment, and thanksgiving.

Affirmation of Faith (from the Confession of 1967)

In Jesus of Nazareth, true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of sinful people. But his complete obedience led him into conflict with his people. His life and teaching judged their goodness, religious aspirations, and national hopes. Many rejected him and demanded his death. In giving himself freely for them, he took upon himself the judgment under which all people stand convicted. God raised him from the dead, vindicating him as Messiah and Lord. The victim of sin became victor, and won the victory over sin and death for all people.

This Week

Sunday, December 17

- 9:00 AM Worship/Westminster Hall
- 10:00 AM Sunday School/CE Building
- 10:00 AM Advent Study/Parlor
- 10:00 AM Session Meeting/Church Library
- 10:00 AM Easy English Fellowship/Room 204 & 207
- 10:15 AM Worship/Windsor of Savoy
- 2:30 PM Caroling to the Community/Gather in Church Parking Lot

Monday, December 18

- 1:00 PM Grow/Family Library
- 1:30 PM Women's Bible Study/Library
- 3:30 PM Environmental Team/Parlor & Zoom
- 5:30 PM AA/Centennial Hall

Tuesday, December 19

- 8:00 AM Men's Breakfast/Parlor & Zoom
- 5:00 PM DREAAM Martial Arts/Gym
- 7:30 PM Together on Tuesdays/Zoom

Wednesday, December 20

- 10:00 AM Deacon Training/Zoom
- 5:30 PM Dinners for One/TBD

Thursday, December 21

- 12:30 PM Bible Study/Windsor of Savoy
- 6:00 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal/Bell Room
- 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal/Choir Room

Friday, December 22 Church Office close at noon

- 8:15 AM Men's Prayer/Zoom

Saturday, December 23

- 6:00 PM French Worship Service/Chapel

Celebrate
the
GIFT of Christmas

Sunday, December 24 Christmas Eve

- 9:00 AM Worship Service
- 4:00 PM Family Service
- 8:00 PM Candlelight Service

Announcements

- We are glad you're here!** Questions about First Pres, contact **Pastor Matt Matthews** or call the church office. We are presently worshiping in Westminster Hall while our elevator is being replaced.
 - Please wear your **nametag** to help our new **Associate Pastor Joe Lundy** get acquainted.
 - Linda Sandquist** is our liturgist this morning. If you would like to serve, contact **Carol Miles**.
 - Grab a cup of coffee and join us this morning after worship in the Parlor as we continue our **Advent Study *Holy Disruption*** by Tracy Daub.
 - Judi Geistlinger** will preach this morning's service at the Windsor of Savoy.
 - We invite you to donate to the **Christmas decor** throughout the church in memory or honor of someone. With the change in worship location, we do not have the space for poinsettias this year. New greenery and other decor was purchased. If you would like to donate, mark your contribution "greenery" and indicate who it is in honor or memory of. All contributions will be noted in an upcoming bulletin.
 - The **Angel Tree/Advent Offering** support The Refugee Center and will be received throughout December. Monetary donations will go towards a refugee's first month's housing. Our church and other organizations will be collecting household items needed. We have a collection box in Westminster Hall. Items needed: full sheet set; twin sheet set; 1 tall trash can and one box of trash bags; 4 towel/washcloth sets; 2 small waste baskets; 1 set of pots and pans; 1 12+ piece dinnerware set; 1 kitchen utensil set; 2 can openers; 1 pack-n-play.
 - The **Christmas Joy Offering** will be received on Christmas Eve and again on Sunday, December 31.
 - Christmas Caroling** will take place this afternoon from 3-5 PM. Please meet at the church at 2:30 PM.
 - If you or a loved one is **in the hospital or in need of a pastoral visit**, contact the church office.
 - Check out the **book cart** in Westminster Hall. Donate a book for others to enjoy and take some.
 - The **December newsletter** is available in the kiosks or at firstpres.church/newsletter.
 - Please **do not park** in the spaces marked Reserved 24/7 behind the law office on Sundays.
 - If **unable to attend church**, watch our 9 AM service live each Sunday at firstpres.church/live. The Sunday **sermon** is available on-line anytime or on WDWS 1400AM the next Sunday at 10:30 AM.
 - Year-End Giving...**We encourage everyone to contribute to our end-of-year giving to finish the 2023 year strong! Members, visitors, pledgers, non-pledgers, and new members all make the difference here in our operating budget. For credit as 2023 contributions, donations must be received in the church office by December 31, 2023 at noon or postmarked by December 31, 2023. Any contributions received or postmarked on or after January 1, 2024 will be considered as 2024 contributions. Please keep in mind that December 31, 2023 is a Sunday if you plan to mail in any end-of-year contributions. If you make a prepayment in 2023 toward your 2024 giving, please make certain to note your contribution as 2024. By giving appreciated stock to the church for your pledge, you can receive a tax advantage. Please allow 2 weeks for completion of any stock transactions. Notify **Marcia Franks** (217.356.7238 or marcia@firstpres.church) in the church office at the time you notify your broker.
- Thank you all for your generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure! Best wishes from your Finance Team