

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.

✠ An Affirmation of Faith

We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars. We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.
We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow. We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people.
So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.
We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst. We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: "Unto us, love is born."
We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love. So still, we believe. Amen.

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

Offertory *Someone To Watch Over Me*

Gary Winder, clarinet; Yuxi Chen, piano

Gershwin

Response of Gratitude #609 *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Prayer of Dedication & Thanksgiving

Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer (pg. 35; *in the language and wording most familiar to you.*)

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.*

Connecting with our Community

✠ **Hymn for Commitment #88** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (vs. 1-4)

✠ **Charge and Benediction**

✠ **Congregational Sung Benediction #92** *While We Are Waiting, Come* (vs. 3)

✠ **Postlude** *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus*

✠ Please stand as you are able in body or spirit.

Service Material References

Sanctified Art: What Do You Fear? Words for Worship.

A note about Cover Artwork: *To Build and to Plant* by Hannah Garrity; Inspired by *Jeremiah 1:4-10*; 32"x20" Paper lace and graphite drawing, backed with cyanotype print

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

December 21, 2025 **Fourth 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 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." How wonderful it is to be so loved! Our natural response is worship.

Prelude Of the Father's Love Begotten

Chiming of the Hour on Tower Bell

Greetings & Welcome/Act of Friendship & Prayer Concerns

Please pass the Friendship Pad, noting with whom you are sitting, and list prayer concerns on the prayer request cards in the pads.

Candle Lighting

In a world full of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

**We see love all around us. We see love when people hold open the door. We see
love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call after a long day.
We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional acts of empathy. We see
love all around us.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, love is all around us. Today we light the candle of love as a
reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world,
love is here. Love is world-changing. Love is shining bright. We only have to look for it.

Light candle

Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.

Hymn #85 *Light One Candle to Watch For Messiah* (vs. 4)

✠**Call to Worship** (✠Please stand as you are able in body or spirit.)

Jeremiah said, "I am only a boy."

Moses said, "Who am I to do this work?"

Mary said, "How can this be?"

We often say, "But God, I am afraid."

Even when we are afraid, God invites us closer.

So may we trust the Inviter.

May we heed God's invitation.

May we summon our courage and sing God's praise.

Let us worship our courageous, inviting, calling God. Amen!

✠**Hymn of Praise #100** *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*

Call to Confession *(Congregation may be seated.)*

Prayer of Confession

**Courageous God, you invite us to live into our call. You invite us to act, to serve, and to
trust. Instead of responding with a resounding "yes," we often hide our face. We dig
our heels in. We look for someone else to volunteer. Spark courage in us. Remind us
that every person is capable of making a difference. Remind us that even when we're
scared, we are not alone. You invite us forward. With baby steps we hope, we pray,
amen. *Silence is kept.***

Kyrie *Kyrie for Advent* (text: Stephen Fearing 2015 – sung to *Veni Emmanuel*)

**Forgive us Lord, for time when love was lost,
and moments when we never thought to care,
For times when we despair and subdue the Word that bring your people close to you.
Forgive, forgive, forgive us all our sins and help us love so newness can begin.**

Words of Forgiveness

Family of faith, no matter where your path has led you in the past, today is a new day. So join me in
declaring this good news:

We are known. We are forgiven! We are sent to serve.

May we step forward in faith, always moving closer to God's call. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

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

Scripture in French *Isaiah 41:5-10*

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

Anthem *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

arr. David Sims

Chancel Choir

Scripture in English *Matthew 1:18-25*

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

Message *In Breaking of God*

Rev. Beth Wagner

✠**Hymn for Reflection #110** *Love Has Come*

This Week

Sunday, December 21

9:00 AM	Worship/Sanctuary
10:10 AM	Sunday School/CE Building Classrooms
10:10 AM	Easy English Fellowship/Rooms 204 & 207
10:10 AM	Advent Study/Parlor
4:00 PM	Blue Christmas Worship/Sanctuary

Monday, December 22

1:00 PM GROW/Chapel
5:30 PM AA/Centennial Hall

Tuesday, December 23

10:30 AM Church Staff/Parlor & Zoom

Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve Church Office closes at 12 noon

4:00 PM Family Worship Service/Sanctuary
8:00 PM Worship/Sanctuary

Thursday, December 25 Church Office closed

Friday, December 26 Church Office closed

Saturday, December 27

6:00 PM Francophone Bethesda Fellowship/Chapel

The church office will be closed the following times over the holidays:

noon on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24;

Thursday, December 25;

Friday, December 26;

noon on New Year's Eve, Wednesday, December 31;

Thursday, January 1;

Friday, January 2.

We wish you a joyous and blessed holiday season!

Christmas Eve Wednesday, December 24

4 PM Family Service

Hear the Christmas story from scripture, sing Christmas carols, a wonderful storybook to convey our Christmas Eve message and the lighting of candles as our service ends. All are welcome to join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

8 PM Worship

Join us as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child at a contemplative worship service with choir, communion and candlelight.

Announcements

●**Large print bulletins** available for use on Sunday mornings. Ask an usher if you cannot find one.

- With our return to the sanctuary, we have access to our hearing assistant loop. This technology allows people with hearing aids equipped with **T-Coil technology** to hear the service through their hearing aids. If you know you have T-coil technology, plan to turn on the T-coil via your phone each Sunday morning.

●**Linda Sandquist** is our liturgist this morning. If you would like to serve as liturgist on a Sunday morning, contact **Carol Miles**.

• **We are glad you're here!** Questions about First Pres, see **either pastor** after the service or contact the church office (info@firstpres.church).

●Please wear your **nametag** to help our **staff** get acquainted.

●**Poinsettias will enhance our worship service throughout December.** If you would like to donate a plant at \$10 each, please mark your check/cash contribution with whom you are giving in memory or honor of.

●The Spiritual Formation Committee has chosen *A Surprising God – Advent Devotions for an Uncertain Time* for this year's **Advent Study** this morning immediately following worship in the Parlor.

●We are collecting royalties each time we hear a **Spiritual** in our service. Royalties were never paid for this music. Money we collect will go to the DREAAM Choir. A donation box is on the Welcome Center.

●The **Congregational Meeting for the Election of Church Officers** is this morning at the 9 AM worship service.

●**Blue Christmas Service** TODAY at 4 PM. An Advent service for those experiencing grief or for whom this season is a time of grieving. Members of the church and friends noted on *All Saints Day* along with those who have died more recently will be remembered.

●This afternoon members and friends are invited to an **Open House** for cookies and coffee from 1-3 PM at the home of **Michael Hogue and Bruce Rainey**, 1104 West Clark in Champaign.

●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 Meyer/Capel Law office on Sundays.

●**If unable to attend church**, watch our 9 AM service live each Sunday at firstpres.church/live. The Sunday **service video** is available on-line this week; audio sermon available the following Sunday at 10:30 AM on WDWS 1400AM.

●**Scam Alert ...** Please know that your pastors will **never** send a text, email or voicemail asking you to help them by purchasing gift cards. **This** is a scam, you should immediately delete the message. **If** you are unsure please reach out to the pastors directly to confirm the request is real.

Church Officers

Session

2026
Ends 12/31/2026
Carol Ann Green
Carol Miles
Ann Webbink
John Muirhead

2027
Ends 12/31/2027
Dick Arnould
Audry Kukusama
Bob Kirby

2028
Ends 12/31/2028
Trenna Thomas
Margaret Noonan
Darrell Carlson
Soo Choi

Mission Deacons

Sallie Hutton
Kathy Schoeffmann
Jane Alsberg

Sarah Lauffenberg
Linda Tauber-Olson
Kurt Ruthmansdorfer

Marty Carlson
Holly Nordheden
Nancy Whitford

Care Deacons

Pam Knox
Skip Pickering

Carol Arnould
Camille & Jack James
Linda Sandquist
Linda Peterson

Marilyn Lamkin
Gwen Pollard
Terry Noonan

Names in bold indicate new officers or re-elected for the term indicated.

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