

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.

Anthem *There Is Faint Music* (text – Nancy Buckley; music – Dan Forrest)

Affirmation of Faith

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 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.

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.

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 #119** *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*

◆ **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.

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN

December 24, 2023

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 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 love. Bill & Clemmie Ackermann

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

♦Call to Worship (John Bell, The Iona Community)

Light looked down and saw darkness.

"I will go there," said Light.

Peace looked down and saw war.

"I will go there," said Peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred.

"I will go there," said Love.

So he, The Lord of Light,
the Prince of Peace,
the King of Love,
came down
and crept in beside us.

Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord!

The Lord's name be praised.

♦Hymn of Praise #134 *Joy to the World*

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 (—Adapted from Rachel Henderlite, 1950)

We come to You, O Christ, confessing to You the fears that twist our lives and keep us from
the inner calm and peace that come from You:

Women **The fear of ourselves, that we cannot do what is expected of us . . .**

Men **The fear of being found out for our littleness and self-pride . . .**

All **The fear of being left out when joy and blessing come to others . . .**

Choir **The fear of not being ready when opportunities present themselves for
service . . .**

All **The fear of death, that when it comes our time to die, we shall not have
done the things we would have done, because we were afraid to venture
out . . .**

Lord Christ, we find ourselves shrinking back before the unknown, wanting
assurance where we must have faith; We find ourselves hesitating to follow You, O Christ,
afraid the cost may be too great.

All **Forgive us, Lord, and give us strength and peace that only You can give.
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. A M E N .**

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, believe the Gospel and be at peace:

**In Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. The old life is gone; the new life has begun.
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 2:8-12*

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 the Shepherds Were Sore Afraid*

Matt Matthews

This Week

Sunday, December 24

- 9:00 AM Worship/Westminster Hall
- 10:00 AM Easy English Fellowship/Rooms 104 & 105
- 10:15 AM Worship/Windsor of Savoy
- 4:00 PM Family Service/Westminster Hall
- 8:00 PM Candlelight Service/Westminster Hall

Monday, December 25 Church Office Closed

- 5:30 PM AA/Centennial Hall

Tuesday, December 26 Church Office Closed

Wednesday, December 27 Church Office close at noon

Thursday, December 28 Church Office close at noon

Friday, December 29 Church Office close at noon

- 8:15 AM Men's Prayer/Zoom

Saturday, December 30

- 4:30 PM McDonald-McLaughlin Wedding Rehearsal/Sanctuary
- 6:00 PM French Worship Service/Chapel

Celebrate
the
GIFT of Christmas

Sunday, December 24 Christmas Eve

- 4:00 PM Family Service
- 8:00 PM Candlelight Service

*May your heart be lifted in praise this Christmas
for the wonderful gift of Jesus
and the joy He brings to our lives.*

Announcements

●**We are glad you're here!** Questions about First Pres, contact **Pastor Matt Matthews** or call the church office. We are presently worshipping in Westminster Hall while our elevator is being replaced.

●Please wear your **nametag** to help our new **Associate Pastor Joe Lundy** get acquainted.

●**Linda Peterson** is our liturgist this morning. If you would like to serve, contact **Carol Miles**.

●**The Rev. Dr. Rachel Matthews** 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.

●The **Christmas Joy Offering** will be received TODAY and again on Sunday, December 31.

●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. Our Christmas Eve Services at 4 and 8 PM will also be live streamed at firstpres.church/live.

●**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