

ORDER FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

December 24, 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

PREPARATION, PROMISES, AND PRAISE

(We invite you to quiet yourself in preparation for the worship of God when you hear the prelude music.)

Almighty God, as we gather in your house to worship, quiet our hearts and calm our spirits from the rush of life and the often persistent troubles of our world. As those who sought to know Jesus in the first century, we, too, "want to see Jesus" in our day and in our life more and more. O God, let it be for us today as we gather to worship You. Amen.

WELCOME AND INVITATION TO SHARE OUR LIFE IN CHRIST

Prelude "Now Sing We, Now Rejoice" arr. Manz
Gathering Music: "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" FirstKids
Kylie Woolard, solo; Madison Smith, solo

Call to Worship Rev. Don Hardman
Leader: Christ is coming! The angel announces good news!
People: Christ is coming! With Mary, we hear and wonder!
Leader: Let us prepare our hearts to receive Jesus, for the time is at hand.
People: Let us worship and rejoice!

*Hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" No. 194

*Prayer of Adoration

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Lord Jesus, we confess our frustration and confusion when you do not come to us as we expect. In our society, we look for the power of political clout, legal expertise, economic or educational advantage, or religious officialdom to save us. We consider that to be "down and out" is failure, and to be "up and in" is success. So we wear ourselves out striving to be self-sufficient materially and spiritually, certain that with enough effort we can dig our way out of difficulties, and earn our way into the kingdom of heaven. We pride ourselves in being big people and forget the humble way you entered this world as a baby. We confess the sin of ceasing to be open to grace and surprised by joy. Forgive us, we pray. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

God announces the best of all possible news, the news of salvation! There is one who comes to meet us in our need, Jesus the Christ. Therefore we need not be afraid; we need no longer be plagued by guilt and self-condemnation for God has compassion upon us who sorrow for our sin. God speaks the word that calms our souls. Our sins are forgiven, and in the presence of such love our fear is removed. Thanks be to God!

*Gloria Patri No. 579

(Let the children come forward during the singing of the Gloria.)

Lighting of the Advent Candle Ed & Debbie Bennett

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Children's Time Rev. Don Hardman
Children's Worship is provided for ages 4-3rd grade in Room 205. Parents, please escort your children to this room.

Duet "Away in a Manger"
Carolyn Fedison and Aaron Burton

*Hymn of Preparation "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" No. 311

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Lesson: 1 John 4:16 Page 1209

Leader: This is the word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God

Anthem "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" K. Lee Scott

Scripture Lessons: Philippians 2:1-8 Page 1162

Sermon: "God Loves You" Rev. Don Hardman

RESPONSE IN DEDICATION AND OBEDIENCE

Prayers of the People of God and Our Lord's Prayer

*Affirmation of Faith "The Apostles' Creed" Page 845

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;
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 of Our Gifts and Tithes

Offertory "Of the Father's Love Begotten" arr. Held

*The Doxology No. 731

*Prayer of Dedication

Welcome & Sacrament of Baptism

Please welcome new members Christopher Scott Hippeard and Colton Dewayne Fore, who will be baptized.

*Hymn "O Love Thou Wilt Not Let Me Go" No. 708

*Benediction "Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. Amen."

Postlude "God Rest You Merry" arr. Held

*The Congregation is asked to stand, as you are able.

CALENDAR

Today, 12/24 - Sunday School, 9:00 am; Worship, 10:30 am; Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 pm
Monday, 12/25 - Merry Christmas; Church office closed on Mondays
Tuesday, 12/26 - Church office closed
Wednesday, 12/26 - Church office closed
Thursday, 12/27 - Church office closed
Friday, 12/28 - Church office closed

* * * * *

REMINDERS

Elders: Don Andree, Phil Brown
Sound System: Kaye Wilkerson, Scott Rice, Rea Brown
Greeters Ramp Room (8:50-9:00 & 10:00-10:30): Dec. 24 - Don & Wendy Andree; Dec. 31 - Bud & Jesse Derey
Greeters Narthex (10:00-10:30): Dec. 24 - Ed & Debbie Bennett; Dec. 31 - Helen Thompson
Deacons on Duty: Dec. 24 - Helen Thompson, Carolyn Keyes
Acolytes: Dec. 24 - Elizabeth Rice; Dec. 31 - David Bean
Children's Worship: Dec. 24 - How the Church Tells Time - Leader: Missy Reed; Greeter: Mike Trail

* * * * *

PRAYER FOCUS FOR THE WEEK: - Pray you will love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
Matthew 22:37

* * * * *

PCC Food Needs - December - Beef Stew

* * * * *

Hearing devices are located in the Narthex to assist in listening to today's service

Pastor: Rev. Don Hardman
Director of Music & Children's Ministries: Mrs. Patricia K. Trail
Director of Youth & Christian Education: Mr. Pete G. Guillard
Organist: Mr. William Turner
Handbell Director: Dr. Erma Rose

Welcome to First Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We are glad you are here and we pray that, as we share with each other and worship our God, you will find here a special presence and blessing of God. If you are a guest with us this morning we hope you will come again and, if so led, consider making First EPC your church home.