



# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WILMETTE

Sunday, December 17th, 2023

Third Sunday in Advent

Pageant Sunday

*Experience God. Grow Disciples. Transform Lives.*

\*PLEASE STAND

**BOLD TYPE INDICATES CONGREGATIONAL SPEAKING OR SINGING**

**PRELUDE** - *Christmas Carols*

Various composers/arrangers

## **ENTRANCE OF THE LIGHT**

The Acolyte brings in the light to remind us that we have gathered in the Light of Christ.

## **WELCOME AND COMMON LIFE**

## **LIGHTING OF THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD ADVENT CANDLES**

In our most desperate times, by day or by night, the hope of Christ may be found. We watch and we wait to witness the hope of heaven making a place here on earth. We light the candle of hope, because hope has come to us.

When we are overwhelmed with conflict without or within, the peace of Christ may be found. We welcome the peace of Christ, present among us and available to all. Today we light the candle of peace, because peace has come to us.

Whether we find ourselves in the dark, cozy realm of nighttime or the blazing brightness of day, God's good message of joy has come to us to cheer our hearts. Today we light the candle of joy, celebrating the good news of a baby to be born in Bethlehem.

**Welcome, joy of Christ! Even in times of grief and sorrow, you never forsake us or leave us alone. Fill our hearts with joy today.**

## **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Come to worship, all who seek and search for truth and justice.

**The light will guide your way to wisdom.**

Come to worship, all who wonder, wander, and wait for Jesus.

**The light will show you the way.**

Come to worship, to find comfort, rest, and peace.

**God is in the shadows, find peace under God's wings.**

Come to worship, all who seek safety from scary things.

**God is in the hiding places, and the darkness is safe.**

We gather to worship in light and in darkness.

**God is here among us. Let us worship!**

**\*OPENING HYMN NO. 107** - *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

REJOICE, REJOICE

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

In God's house, everyone is welcome—those who seem like they have it all together, and those who feel like their world is falling apart. No matter who we are, there's room for us here—in light and in darkness, and everywhere in between. With that confidence, we turn to God in prayer, speaking the truth of our lives, first in silent prayer.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God of lovingkindness, you show us a way of love and compassion, yet so often we choose apathy, ignorance, prejudice, or even hate. We confess the hateful words, ignorant thoughts, and careless deeds we have foisted upon each other, in spite of your love and sacrifice. We confess the jokes, smirks, eye rolls, mockery, disrespect, condescension, and all the ways our hate leaks out upon other humans, made in your image. We confess our history of associating light with goodness and dark with evil, for we know good and evil may be found in both light and dark places, among all kinds of people. Forgive us, God, and call us to a deeper understanding of what it means to love one another. Amen.**

### **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

Family of faith, God is faithful to turn us around and place us on healthy paths whenever we acknowledge our unloving and unjust selves. Rest in the assurance you are forgiven, loved, and ready to begin again. Thanks be to God! Amen.

### **\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

The peace of Christ be with you.  
**And also with you!**

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE - HYMN NO. 678 - *Our Darkness Is Never Darkness in Your Sight***

**Our darkness is never darkness in your sight:  
The deepest night is clear as the daylight.**

### **CHILDREN'S CHAPEL**

Children's Chapel will not meet today. Please stay in worship and enjoy the Pageant! The Nursery is available for babies and very young children.

### **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

God of lovingkindness, we do not always know how to love you or each other or ourselves. As we explore your message to us today, we choose to listen with humility. In this advent season of preparation, our hearts are prepared to be challenged and changed. Speak to us today. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READINGS - Genesis 1:1-5; Isaiah 45:3; Luke 2:8-14**

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

## HYMN OF RESPONSE - *O Holy Darkness, Loving Womb*

1. O — Ho - ly Dark - ness, lov - ing Womb, who  
 2. Cre - a - tive Dark - ness, clos - est friend, you —  
 3. O — Ho - ly Night of deep - est bliss, we —

<sup>3</sup>  
 nur - tures and cre - ates, sus - tain us through the  
 whis - per in — the night; you — calm our fears as  
 cel - e - brate your power; in - fuse us with your

<sup>6</sup>  
 long - est night with dreams of op - en gates. We  
 un - known paths sur - prise us with new sight. We  
 en - er - gy that — brings our seeds to flower. The

<sup>9</sup>  
 move in - side to mys - te - ry that in our cen - ter dwells, where  
 mar - vel at your boun - ty, your gifts so full and free, un -  
 voice out of the dark - ness ex - cites our warm - est zeal to —

<sup>13</sup>  
 streams of rich - est beau - ty flow from sac - red, liv - ing wells.  
 fold - ing as you wak - en us to — new re - al - i - ty.  
 bring to - gether — dark and light, true hol - i - ness re - veal.

## GOD'S HOLY DARKNESS - based on a book by Sharei Green and Neckah Selnick, adapted by Lindley Traynor

### SOLO - *O Holy Night*

Adolphe Adam

O Holy night, the sacred dark surrounds us - we are held in divine mystery.  
 Voice in the dark, whispers "come and follow," we are called, faith in what we can't see.  
 Our hearts desire, seed planted deep within us, to know ourselves to be with Christ our king.  
 Sacred Whole! The light and dark together,  
 The Lord our God is One, One with us, making us whole, with us, Immanuel! Immanuel!

O Holy night! The stars are brightly shining; it is the night of our dear Savior's birth.  
 Long lay the world in sin and error pining, 'til He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
 A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
 Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
 O night, O hold night, O night divine!

Verse 1: Lindley Traynor; Verse 2: Placide Cappeau

## THE NATIVITY PAGEANT

### The Annunciation

Solo - *My Soul Gives Glory to My God*

Marty Haugen

### The Nativity

Hymn No. 121 - *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (sing verses 1 and 2)

### The First Visitors

Anthem - *He Is Born/Sing Noel* French Carol/Liberian Folk Song, arr. Vicki H. Wright

### The Visit of the Magi

Hymn No. 151 - *We Three Kings of Orient Are* (sing all refrains and verse 5)

## CALL FOR OFFERING



*We invite you to give via the church website [www.fpcw.org](http://www.fpcw.org) (see QR code), our smartphone app, or by sending a check to the church office. An offering plate is also available as you exit the Sanctuary. We are grateful for your generosity.*

OFFERTORY ANTHEM - *Do You Hear What I Hear?*

Regney and Shayne, arr. H. Simone

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

\*SENDING HYMN NO. 136 - *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

GO TELL IT

\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE - *O Come All Ye Faithful*

Marcel Dupré

Join us after worship in the Church Lounge  
for fellowship, coffee, lemonade, and cookies.

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

Rev. Jeff Lehn, Pastoral Liturgist  
 Rev. Kara Smith-Laubenstein, Pastoral Liturgist  
 Peggy Massello, Director of Music and Organist  
 Chancel Choir  
 Wonee Kim, Pianist  
 Advent Candle Lighters: Linnea Jacobs,  
 Pierce and Gretchen Anderson  
 Ushers: Steve Reinhart and Frank Panzica  
 Greeters: Kevin and Amy McJoynt

**GOD'S HOLY DARKNESS CAST**

Narrators: Paul and Lindley Traynor  
 Ensemble:

Xander Karottki	Elizabeth Shuck
Eden Lehn	Max SooHoo
Evan Pan	Eve Springer
Sabra Reese Cox	Griffin Springer
Joe Shuck	Lark Traynor

**O HOLY NIGHT SOLOIST**

Daphne Traynor

**NATIVITY CAST**

Narrators: Bill and Guyneth Sharp  
 Joseph: John Gemmell  
 Mary: Maeve Scott

Angels:

Alana Haro	Elizabeth Shuck
Eden Lehn	Eve Springer
Chloe Macharia	Lark Traynor
Sabra Reese Cox	

Shepherds:

Emily Karottki	Evan Pan
Xander Karottki	Jackson SooHoo
Arianne Lehn	Mark SooHoo
Rose McGrath	Max SooHoo

Sheep:

Everly Brown	Simon Lehn
Adair Karottki	Emery Pan
Vesper Karottki	Alexander Shannahan
Noah Lehn	

Kings:

Carol Brown	Bill Springer
JB Shuck	

Singing Kings:

Bob Langewisch	Jesse Cox
Simon Floeter	

Pages:

Julian Brown	Griffin Springer
Joe Shuck	

**CHURCH CALENDAR FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK****Monday, December 18**

7:00 pm	Board of Deacons Meeting	Church Lounge
7:00 pm	Troop 5 and Crew 5 Meetings	Various Rooms

**Tuesday, December 19**

6:30 pm	Pack 5 Meeting	Fellowship Center
7:00 pm	Welcome and Connection Committee Meeting	Zoom

**Wednesday, December 20**

7:00 pm	Book Group Meeting	Church Lounge
7:30 pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal	Music Room

**Thursday, December 21**

10:00 am	Bible Study Meeting	Church Lounge/Zoom
7:00 pm	Men's Hour	Church Lounge
7:30 pm	Chancel Bells Rehearsal	Music Room

**Friday, December 22 and Saturday, December 23**

No Events Scheduled

**Sunday, December 24**

4:00 pm	Candlelight Worship	Sanctuary
9:00 pm	Candlelight Worship	Sanctuary



## Common Life

### Week of December 17th, 2023

## CONNECT, GROW, SHARE

### **Receive Meal Ministry Communications**

The Meal Ministry cares for families and individuals in our congregation by preparing and delivering meals to them while they recover from a health complication, a loss, or when they welcome a new child. If you would like to receive communications about the Meal Ministry, please contact Associate Pastor Kara Smith-Laubenstein ([ksmithlaubenstein@fpcw.org](mailto:ksmithlaubenstein@fpcw.org) | 847-256-3010 x102).

### **Pick Up an Advent Devotional**

This year's devotional offers weekly readings and questions for reflection on the themes of light and darkness. Readers will explore how their thoughts about light and darkness influence their views of God, faith, and the world. Visit the church office for a print copy; you will find the devotional on the desk as you enter. Contact the office to request a copy by mail or a PDF by email (847-256-3010 | [office@fpcw.org](mailto:office@fpcw.org)).

### **Make Your Pledge to the 2024 Stewardship Campaign**

We continue to welcome your pledge card by mail, hand delivery to the church office, and through [the online form](#). You will find an introduction and invitation to the 2024 Stewardship Campaign on the [stewardship page](#) of the church website. Thank you in advance for your commitment and generosity.

### **Show Hospitality In Our Church Parking Lot**

Now that the colder weather is upon us, we invite you to consider parking on the street (instead of in the church lot) and walking to the entrance when you come to the church building. This is a way to show hospitality to those who are visiting or who need to park in the lot due to ambulatory concerns or to make deliveries. We are asking church members and partner organization participants to consider this, especially on weeknight evenings (when most groups gather) and Sunday mornings. Thank you for helping us live out our value of hospitality.

## MISSION

### **Contribute Clothing to Under-Resourced Children at Learning Bridge Early Education Center**

This Evanston-based mission partner serves children between the ages of two and five, seventy percent of whom receive scholarship assistance. Many need warm clothing for the winter months ahead. Please consider contributing new and lightly worn coats, pajamas, and underwear in sizes 3T-6, slip-on winter boots in sizes 8-12, and appropriately-sized hats, scarves, mittens, and socks. Place items in the collection box outside the church office through January 3.



## Common Life

### Week of December 17th, 2023

## WELCOME & CONNECTION

### **Serve as a Greeter in 2024**

Welcome members and visitors as they enter the church or during Fellowship Hour. Read a complete description of this welcoming ministry and [sign up](#) online.

### **Stay Engaged On Your Social Channels**

Follow First Pres Wilmette on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). Share our weekday posts with your friends and tell us what you'd like to see from us on our social channels.

## ADULT GROUPS

### **Join the Book Group on Wednesday**

New York Times reviewer Elisabeth Egan called *Lessons In Chemistry*, the debut novel by Bonnie Garmus, irresistible. Read it and then join the Book Group for a discussion on Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 pm in the Church Lounge. Contact Joyce Knauff ([joyce@jckassociates.com](mailto:joyce@jckassociates.com)) for more information.

### **Participate in Bible Study During 2024**

The group gathers at 10:00 am on Thursdays in the Church Lounge and online. Rev. Jeff Lehn leads this study of scripture and how it informs our lives. Contact Bonnie Wehrenberg ([bwherbic007@att.net](mailto:bwherbic007@att.net)) with questions.

### **Attend Men's Council Saturdays in January**

Men's Council will begin with breakfast at 8:00 am on Saturday, January 6 in the Wallace Moore Fellowship Center and continue with a program on artificial intelligence. Weekly breakfasts and programs will continue into May. Contact Steve Polkoff ([odyssey1516@gmail.com](mailto:odyssey1516@gmail.com)) with questions.

### **Lunch with the Senior Supper Club the Winter**

Men and women age 65 and over share lunch this winter (through February) and will gather at 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 16 at Ridgeview Grill in Wilmette. Contact Bonnie Wehrenberg ([bwherbic007@att.net](mailto:bwherbic007@att.net)) for more information.

### **Use Our Bulletin Interactively Online**

Follow links and generate email messages by viewing our Sunday Bulletin online. Find it at [fpcw.org/worship-livestream/worship-archive/](http://fpcw.org/worship-livestream/worship-archive/)

**WELCOME** to worship at First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette! We're so glad you're here. Whether you're a long-time member or first-time visitor, we are blessed to have you with us. We hope joining us for worship today will nurture your heart and transform your mind. You are loved and never alone!

Our mission statement here is **"Experience God. Grow Disciples. Transform Lives."** As a church, we strive to be about that simple and challenging work day after day, in season and out of season. No matter what's happening in our lives or in the life of the world, we will continue to be agents of God's love in the world. We will keep growing as followers of Christ. We will keep loving and listening to our neighbors. We will continue praying for one another. We will keep the hand to plow, working to embody God's dream for the world. We will keep reminding ourselves that we are a work in progress.

I hope your heart will hear something personal and relevant this morning—a word of comfort, a spur to action, a call to a deeper relationship with God. After the service, please stick around. Introduce yourself to one of our pastors. We have lots of programs and community groups to feed your soul and expand your spirit. Try one out. You never know—you might just be home!

With gratitude in Christ,  
Pastors Jeff Lehn, Kara Smith-Laubenstein and Rev. Dr. Lolly Dominski

#### **INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT**

Gathered by the grace of Jesus Christ, we are a vibrant and supportive Christian family whose welcoming spirit reflects God's love for all people. We invite participation in all aspects of our church life by persons of every race, language national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, economic or marital status, or faith background.



#### **CHURCH OFFICE**

847-256-3010  
Monday-Thursday 9:00am-5:00pm  
Friday 9:00am-3:30pm

#### **CHURCH STAFF**

Rev. Jeff Lehn  
*Senior Pastor*  
[jlehn@fpcw.org](mailto:jlehn@fpcw.org) ext. 101

Rev. Kara Smith-Laubenstein  
*Associate Pastor*  
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Rev. Dr. Lolly Dominski  
*Parish Associate for Congregational Care*  
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