



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WILMETTE
Sunday, December 31st, 2023
First Sunday After Christmas Day
Experience God. Grow Disciples. Transform Lives.

*PLEASE STAND

BOLD TYPE INDICATES CONGREGATIONAL SPEAKING OR SINGING

PRELUDE - *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Plainsong, arr. Wilber Held

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

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.

Full of honor and majesty is the Lord's work, and his righteousness endures forever.

The Lord sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever.

Holy and awesome is the Lord's name!

Based on Psalm 111

***OPENING HYMN NO. 143** - *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

REGENT SQUARE

CALL TO CONFESSION

Forgiveness, healing, transformation, redemption, and salvation can all be ours—not because we can earn them through what we do but because God is merciful. Jesus told his disciples “the truth will set you free.” Trusting in God’s grace, let us speak the truth and confess our sins to God, first in silent prayer.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Bethlehem, you bless us richly; forgive us when we neglect to express our gratitude to you. You provide all we need and more; forgive our reluctance to share. You reach out to us in love over and over again; forgive us when we turn away from you. You hold us close to your heart; forgive us for keeping others at arm's length. You shine in the shadows of our soul; forgive us for not sharing your light. You offer us guidance for our journeys through life; forgive us for not seeking your wisdom. You lift us from where we have fallen; forgive us when we resist offering a helping hand to others. You grace us with joy; forgive us when we cling to fear. Loving Lord, heal the wounds we carry, forgive the error of our ways, and lead us to new life. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The transforming love and power of God seen in the unexpected surprise of Christmas is available to us each day. Through Emmanuel, God With Us, our sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God!

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

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

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE - HYMN NO. 137 - *He Came Down*

HE CAME DOWN

**He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.**

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

Today is a Family Worship Sunday and so there is no Children's Chapel. Children are invited to worship with their families. Activity bags for use during worship are available in the Narthex (the entrance to the Sanctuary).

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God you are beyond knowing, shrouded in wonder and mystery and yet as close to us as our very breath. Illuminate our hearts and minds through your Word so that our love for you and for all your creation might grow deeper. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING - John 1:1-18 (New Testament page 91)

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

SERMON - *Finding Joy and Freedom in the Word*

Rev. Dr. Lolly Dominski

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 459 - *O Word of God Incarnate*

MUNICH

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.**

CALL FOR OFFERING



We invite you to give via the church website 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 - *Born in the Night, Mary's Child*

Geoffrey Ainger, harm. Richard Wetzel

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE - The Doxology**

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

***SENDING HYMN NO. 110** - *Love Has Come*

BRING A TORCH

FOLLOWING THE LIGHT

The Acolyte carries the light as we go out, to remind us that we both follow and carry Christ's
Light into the World.

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE** - *God Rest You Merry*

English Carol, arr. Wilber Held

WORSHIP LEADERS:

Rev. Dr. Lolly Dominski, Preaching

Laura Lyman, Liturgist

Peggy Massello, Director of Worship & Music and Organist

Ray Hopkins, Usher

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



Common Life Week of December 31st, 2023

CONNECT, GROW, SHARE

Take Down the Greens

Help prepare our Advent and Christmas decorations for 2024! Participants will gather in the Sanctuary immediately after the 10:00 am worship service on Sunday, January 7.

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 | 847-256-3010 x102).

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.

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.

RACIAL JUSTICE

Join the Call to Racial Justice in 2024

In February, Racial Justice Pilgrimage attendees will lead a discussion about their trip. Also in February, Vic and Mary Doucette, founders of the [Social Justice Resource Center](#), will lead their *Becoming a White Bridge Builder* workshop. In March, Jahmal Cole will speak about the good work at [My Block, My Hood, My City](#). In April, we will exhibit the work of [artist Jevoid Simmons](#) in the Chapel. Simmons's folk art chronicles his family's migration from the South in the early 1950s. In May we will offer a bus tour to a Chicago neighborhood rich with Black history. [Chicago historian Sherman 'Dilla' Thomas](#) will lead. Watch for more information about these and additional opportunities throughout the new year.

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 31st, 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.

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.

ADULT GROUPS

Come for Men's Council on Saturday

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) with questions.

Attend Adult Faith Formation Next Sunday

Rev. Jeff Lehn will begin a study using *From Widows to Warriors: Women's Stories from the Old Testament* by Lynn Japinga on Sunday, January 7 at 8:45 am in the Church Lounge with online attendance available.

Join the Book Group on January 17

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, January 17 at 7:00 pm in the Church Lounge. Note this discussion's rescheduled date. Contact Joyce Knauff (joyce@jckassociates.com) for more information.

Lunch with the Senior Supper Club this 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 (bwherbie007@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/

2024 ADULT GROUPS AT FIRST PRES WILMETTE

Our adult group ministry strives to encourage all members to be a part of this wonderful way to grow in faith. We'd love to see you at one of our small group gatherings!

STUDY, BOOK, AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

Adult Faith Formation – Sundays, 8:45-9:45 am, Church Lounge, Led by Rev. Jeff Lehn

Join any Sunday for lively discussion on the current study series. Contact Jeff Lehn jlehn@fpcw.org.

Bible Study – Thursdays, 10:00-11:00 am, Church Lounge, Led by Rev. Jeff Lehn

We study scripture and consider how it informs our lives. Contact Bonnie Wehrenberg bwherbie007@att.net.

Book Group – 3rd Wednesday (January 17), 7:00 pm, Church Lounge

Members take turns leading the book discussion. Contact Joyce Knauff joyce@jckassociates.com.

FELLOWSHIP AND MEAL GROUPS

Lunch Hour Loop Group – 1st Wednesday, Noon, Zoom, Hosted by Rev. Jeff Lehn – on hiatus

The “Loop Group” meets for fellowship, connection and prayer. We know many of us are stressed at work and could use a small group to be supported and encouraged by. You can work from anywhere to join this group—and you are always free to eat your lunch while we meet! Contact Jeff Lehn jlehn@fpcw.org.

Parents of High School Youth

Parents meet several times a year in a member's home or at the church. Raising teenagers is always a challenge, and as our youth gather together to navigate their lives as Christians, their parents join together to lend support to one another. Contact Iris Boaz iboaz@ameritech.net.

Senior Supper Club – 3rd Tuesday (January 16), 1:00 pm, Ridgeview Grill in Wilmette

If you are over 65 and want to get to know others more casually, please join us! Note our move to afternoons through February. Contact Bonnie Wehrenberg bwherbie007@att.net.

WOMEN'S GROUPS

Lunch Group for Women – 2nd Wednesday (January 10), 11:30 am, Church Lounge

Each month a member leads the discussion. Contact Nancy Freeman njwfreeman@gmail.com.

Westminster Place “Spoke” – 4th Wednesday (January 31), 10:00-11:00 am, Westminster Place

The group meets in a member's home at Westminster Place and follows a provided study guide with discussion facilitated by Rev. Kara Smith-Laubenstein. Participation also possible through phone conferencing. Note our November move to the 5th Wednesday. Contact Anne Menard amenard4347@yahoo.com.

MEN'S GROUPS

Men's Hour – Thursdays, 7:00 pm, Church Lounge

Participants share a brief group reading, silent five-minute meditation, and an opportunity to share thoughts and experiences in turn. No homework or reservations required, and drop-ins are always welcome! Contact Paul Traynor paultraynor@haymoon.com.

Men's Council – Saturdays, 8:00-9:30 am, Wallace Moore Fellowship Center and Church Lounge

Meets October through mid-May. Participants gather for breakfast and then listen to an interesting program. All are welcome any Saturday. Contact Steve Polkoff odyssey1516@gmail.com.

Calendar for the Week of December 31, 2023

Sunday, December 31

9:55 am	Livestream Worship Service	YouTube
10:00 am	In-Person Worship Service	Sanctuary
11:00 am	Fellowship Hour	Church Lounge

Monday, January 1

National Holiday; church office closed

Tuesday, January 2

No Events Scheduled

Wednesday, January 3

No Events Scheduled

Thursday, January 4

10:00 am	Bible Study	Church Lounge
6:00 pm	Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting	Upper Room
7:00 pm	Men's Hour	Church Lounge

Friday, January 5

No Events Scheduled

Saturday, January 6

7:30 am	Troop 5 Parent Troop Leadership Meeting	Upper Room
8:00 am	Men's Council	WMFC
1:30 pm	Troop 5 Court of Honor	Sanctuary
3:00 pm	Troop 5 Court of Honor Reception	WMFC

Sunday, January 7

8:45 am	5th-8th Grade Twelve Days of Christmas Party	Yellow Room
8:45 am	Adult Faith Formation	Church Lounge
9:45 am	Nursery Care for Ages 0-3	Nursery
9:55 am	Livestream Worship Service	YouTube
10:00 am	In-Person Worship Service	Sanctuary
11:00 am	Fellowship Hour	Church Lounge
11:00 am	Taking Down the Greens	Throughout
5:00 pm	Tower Senior High Fellowship	Tower
5:30 pm	Troop 5 Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting	Upper Room
6:30 pm	Tower Senior High Dinner	WMFC
7:30 pm	Crew 5 Bike Trek Planning Meeting	Upper Room

WMFC = Wallace Moore Fellowship Center

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.

We 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
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