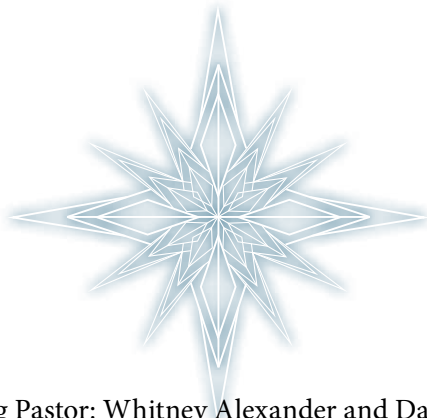




ORDER *of* WORSHIP

DECEMBER 24, AD 2023
SIX O'CLOCK



Assisting Pastor: Whitney Alexander and Darin Travis

PRELUDE

Borislava Iltcheva, violin
Stefka Madere, violin
Aaron Farrell, viola
Susannah Knoll, cello

LESSON ONE

The Announcement
Luke 1:26–28, 31–33, 38

CAROL

*“O Come, All Ye Faithful” ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold him, born the King of angels!

Refrain:

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
O sing, all ye citizens of heav’n above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest! [Refrain]

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv’n;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! [Refrain]

PRAYER OF PRAISE

THE LIGHTING *of the* CHRIST CANDLE

Carol and Peter Lazar will light the Christ Candle.

LESSON TWO

The Journey

Luke 2:1-7

CAROL

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond’ring love,
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men the earth.

O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

LESSON THREE

The Angels and Shepherds

Luke 2:8-20

CAROL

*“The First Noel” THE FIRST NOEL

The first Noel, the angel did say,
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

Refrain:

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night. [Refrain]

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heav’nly Lord,
That hath made heaven and earth of naught,
And with his blood mankind hath bought. [Refrain]

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

“All Along the Watchtower”

Gerrit Dawson

Prayer of Freeing Faith

Lord Jesus, on this holy day, we are glad to come home to you. We have wandered far, down rugged paths of self-assertion. We sought fulfillment apart from you, and so we found only emptiness. We sought peace apart from you, and so we found only restlessness. We sought life apart from you, and so we found only death. Forgive us. We would return to our heart of hearts and find you there. We would return to you, knowing that you are as close as our own heartbeat. You are as near as our next breath. Only our stubborn sin keeps us from you. Oh, forgive us. We would draw near to you again in communion. We would come to the manger to see the Lord of life, to receive your body and blood, and so be joined to you again. Amen.

OFFERTORY

Your special offering helps The Christian Outreach Center and the daily operations of Gardere Community Christian School.

“Of the Father’s Love Begotten” arranged by Christopher Phillips

CELEBRATION *of the* LORD’S SUPPER

COMMUNION MEDITATION

THE LIGHTING *of the* CANDLES

Ushers will light the candles at the end of each pew. Please turn and offer the light to the person next to you. To prevent wax dripping, always keep lit candles straight up. Turn unlit candles horizontally to catch the flame.

CAROLS

*“Silent Night! Holy Night!” STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.
Round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

*"Joy to the World!" ANTIOCH

Joy to the world! the Lord is come; let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns; let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.

***BENEDICTION**

Please place your candle in the baskets as you exit the Sanctuary.

POSTLUDE

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

We are pleased to receive a special Christmas Offering in the spirit of the greatest gift ever given—the gift of the Son of God to redeem unworthy sinners and restore them to life. Christ has asked us to give from what he has given us “to proclaim good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19).

All donations to the Christmas Offering this season will be given to The Christian Outreach Center and the daily operations of Gardere Community Christian School.

In the pew racks, you will find envelopes for your convenience. Please use them to include your gift in the collection of the offering this morning. Make all checks payable to First Presbyterian Church and designate “Christmas Offering.”

Members and visitors alike are encouraged to give.

MEMORIAL POINSETTIAS

Our beautiful Sanctuary is decorated with poinsettias purchased by church members, family and friends.

PASTORAL STAFF

Gerrit Dawson, Senior Pastor

Whitney Alexander, Associate Pastor of Missions

Barry Phillips, Ministry Executive

Darin Travis, Associate Pastor for Discipleship

Scott Graham, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care and Prayer

Colton Underwood, Associate Pastor of Children Youth and Families

May the peace of Christ go with you this Christmas season and throughout the new year. Thank you for sharing Christmas Eve with us.

~The Elders and Staff of First Presbyterian Church

On Sunday, December 31, we will have one 10.30 am service in the Sanctuary.

**For parents with small children, our nursery is available in the Education Building for children through age four.

Sanctuary services are videotaped and livestreamed.



DEEPER IN CHRIST, FURTHER INTO THE WORLD

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