



FARMINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SERVICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2024

Worship Online at 11:00am Sunday Mornings

www.farmingtonpres.org

Click "Worship Together"

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

PRAYER OF PREPARATION[†]

Holy God, we hear your promise through the Prophet Isaiah, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" and again in the Revelation to John, "Behold, I am making all things new. These words are trustworthy and true. It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life." In this season of Advent, help us receive your hope as we celebrate the beautiful new beginning offered in Christ's birth.

May your steadfast, steadying and strengthening love be our companion, reminding us who we are and whose we are and wrapping around us with comfort, encouragement, challenge, and transformation. Amen.

WELCOME

PRELUDE "The Gift of Love"

Placido Domingo, Jr.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this morning to listen, for God is telling a story in our lives.

It's quite a story – full of the promises God makes and our struggles to trust; full of mystery and angels with surprising news; full of hard endings and unexpected new beginnings.

Come, hear the story; pay attention to the angels' message in your heart anew – a message for this time, a message for you.

It's a story of love beyond what we can imagine, so amazing that the only fitting response is to join all creation in worshipping God, the author and storyteller.

Come, and worship! Fling the doors of your hearts wide open and welcome our Lord to enter.

The story is still being woven, for Christ comes full of grace and truth, the Word made flesh, and makes our story holy.

*HYMN OF PRAISE – No. 93 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits; the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.

Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.

(Please be seated.)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

CALL TO RECONCILIATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, you share visions of what could be, but we declare them impossible. You speak of lions lying peacefully with lambs, but we respond with skepticism and uncertainty. You dream of justice being the way things are, and we offer excuses of why that just can't work. Forgive us for being more committed to what we see than having hope for what you envision. Open our hearts to have the trust of children who are ready risk hope and to dream dreams.

KYRIE

**Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

KYRIE—NO. 123 “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” Verse 3
Yet with the woes of sin and strife the world has suffered long; beneath the heavenly hymn have rolled two thousand years of wrong; and we at war on earth

hear not the tidings that they bring; O, hush the noise
and cease the strife to hear the angels sing!

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in Jesus Christ, born to us all so long ago in
Bethlehem of Judea.

We believe in Him whose birth glorified Bethlehem, but
for whom there was no room in the inn.

We believe in Him whose guiding star can bring
together the humble and wise everywhere.

We believe in Him who walked among the common
people, and was welcomed by those with open minds
and yearning hearts.

We believe in Him whose life changed the course of
history, over whom kings had no power, whose life
humbled the proud, toppled the mighty, and elevated
those of low degree.

We believe in Him whose love changed human hearts,
and whose life and death on the cross proved that it is
more important to serve than to be served.

We believe in Him who is the Prince of Peace, whose
spirit makes for justice and peace among all peoples.

We believe in Him who is Emmanuel, whose presence
changes the world through the power of love, faith and
hope.

THROUGH CHILDREN'S EYES

Nic Luter

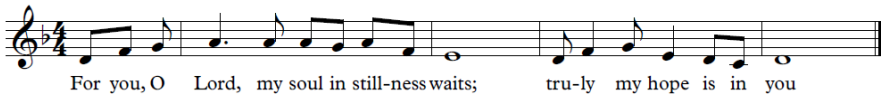
*All children are invited to come to the Chancel steps.
Afterward, young children may remain or proceed to the nursery.
Worship bags are available beside the entrance to the Sanctuary.*

Proclaim God's Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

NATIVITY PAGEANT[†]

No. 89 "For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits" Verse 1



Refrain. O Lord of Light, our only hope of glory, your radiance
shines in all who look to you, come light the hearts of all in dark
and shadow. **Refrain.**

No. 128 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" Verse 1

**Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall; oxen
lowing, little knowing Christ the babe is Lord of all.**

Swift are winging, angels singing, noels ringing, tidings bringing: Christ the babe is Lord of all! Christ the babe is Lord of all.

No. 143 “Angels, from the Realms of Glory” Verses 1 & 2

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o’er all the earth; you, who sang creation’s story, now proclaim Messiah’s birth: come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the new-born King!

Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o’er your flocks by night, God with us is now residing; yonder shines the infant light; come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the new-born King!

No. 132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” Verse 1

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today; ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now. Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

No. 145 “What Child Is This” Verses 1 & 3

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby. Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

No. 146 “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child”

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger; there he lay, the undefiled, to the world a stranger:

Such a babe in such a place, can he be the Savior? Ask the saved of all the race who have found his favor.

Angels sang about his birth; wise men sought and found him; heaven’s star shone brightly forth, glory all around him. Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, heard the angels singing; all the plains were lit that night; all the hills were ringing.

Gentle Mary laid her child lowly in a manger; he is still the undefiled, but no more a stranger. Son of God, of humble birth, beautiful the story; praise his name in all the earth, hail the King of glory!

SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS

Please remember those on our prayer list.

CENTERING HYMN – “In the Bleak Midwinter”

Verse 4

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.

RESPOND TO GOD

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Puer Nobis Nascitur

“What Star is This, with Beams So Bright”

What star is this, with beams so bright, more lovely than the noonday light? ‘Tis sent to announce a newborn king, glad tidings of our God to bring.

‘Tis now fulfilled what God decreed, “From Jacob shall a star proceed”; and lo! the eastern sages stand to read in heaven the Lord’s command.

While outward signs the star displays, an inward light the Lord conveys and urges them, with tender might, to seek the giver of the light.

O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek thy face, let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.

*DOXOLOGY – No. 113 “Angels We Have Heard on High” Verse 3

Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing; come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. *Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Emmanuel, shine your light and love upon these gifts and upon us. Dedicate them and us to changing the world so that it is more like you intend. Show us opportunities to share hope, to establish peace, to bring joy, and to express love as we make room in our lives for Jesus’s coming even now. Amen.

*HYMN - No. 110 “Love Has Come”

Love has come: a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it; hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love is born! Come, share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of his mother; what is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Ove is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

*SENDING FORTH HYMN - No. 155 “Raise a Song of Gladness”

Raise a song of gladness, peoples of the earth. Christ has come, bringing peace, joy to every heart. Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart! Alleluia, alleluia, joy to every heart!

*POSTLUDE “God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen” Traditional Carol

*Stand as able. **Bold Type** – congregation in unison

Participating in the service today:

Rev. Rebecca Luter, Pastor

Jim Thrash, Director of Music

Tom Bryant, Accompanist

Davis Howe, Interim Youth Director

Laurinda Ingram, Liturgist

Nic Luter, Children’s Moment

Mike Colley, Davis Howe, and Nic Luter, Nativity Pageant Narrators

Bo Bradham and Shelley Wann, Ushers

†Liturgy throughout Advent is adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed, A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org.

“A Tri-Told Nativity Pageant” written by Rev. Jay Banasiak, with contributions by Rev. Laura Becker

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THIS SERVICE IS BEING LIVE STREAMED
AND RECORDED. ATTENDEES
IMPLICITLY AGREE THAT THEY AND
ANY CHILDREN ACCOMPANYING
THEM MAY BE ON CAMERA.

Welcome IN THE NAME OF JESUS, THE CHRIST

We hope that you will sense the presence of the Holy Spirit in this place and find here a place that feels like home. We are grateful for the visitors and friends of the Farmington family who add to our community each week. **Need more information? Want to sign up for something? Looking for the livestream of worship?**

Go to our website: www.farmingtonpres.org

Need to give us information? Want to ask a question? Looking for assistance with signing up? Email us at: church@farmingtonpres.org

How do I join the church? Members are received by Profession of Faith, Reaffirmation of Faith, and Transfer of Membership from another congregation. If you are interested in joining, please let Rev. Rebecca know or email church@farmingtonpres.org. We look forward to officially welcoming you into the Farmington Presbyterian Church family!

Prayer Concerns and Pastoral Care You are encouraged to complete a Prayer Concern card in the pew rack to add someone to the church's prayer list. Copies of the complete list are available in the folder under the Prayer Board in the office. You may reach Rev. Rebecca Luter at (901)674-8000 or rluter@farmingtonpres.org.

Happenings AT FARMINGTON PRESBYTERIAN

This Sunday

Refreshments in the Narthex Following service, coffee and Christmas cookies will be served in the Narthex. All are encouraged to stay and enjoy a time of fellowship.

Youth Fellowship Each Sunday evening the youth meet from 5:30-7:30pm for a time of fellowship, games, faith-building, and food. Friends are welcome! Holiday schedule: Youth will meet December 22, will not meet December 29, and will resume meeting on January 5.

Sunday School Classes

Children's Sunday School Children meet at 10am in A6. Each week of Advent our class will listen to a short story based on the Scripture for worship for the day and engage in a related activity.

Youth Sunday School Youth (6th-12th grades) meet in the Youth Room at 10am. Join us as we reflect on the theme for worship each week of Advent.

The Life You've Always Wanted by John Ortberg A new study facilitated by Cooper Patterson will begin on October 13th in Fellowship Hall at 9:30am. If you have not been in an adult Sunday School class in the past, consider attending!

This Week

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be at 5pm on December 24 in the Sanctuary. If you know someone without a church home, invite them to attend with you.

Coming Up

Epiphany Sunday We will again observe the tradition of receiving Star Words for Epiphany in our worship on January 5. If you worship online would like to receive a Star Word in the mail, please let us know by emailing church@farmingtonpres.org.

Potluck Sunday Following worship on January 5, we will enjoy a potluck lunch together in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a dish to the kitchen (with warming instructions, if needed) prior to worship. If you are able to help with setup or cleanup, contact Paula Gale or Paula Patterson.

Boxing of the Green On the afternoon of January 5, we will pack away our Christmas decorations after Potluck. Please plan to stay and bid farewell to the Christmas season. Boxing the green always goes much more quickly than hanging the green!

The Holy Mystery of Discipleship Beginning January 12, and continuing for 7 weeks, we will study paradoxes experienced in the journey of faith. How does God cleanse our hearts in the wilderness? What is the power of weakness, the gain of letting go, or the joy in suffering? How does transformation come through small actions? How is faith found in simplicity and abundance in generosity? Join us in worship at 11am in person or on the livestream.

Room in the Inn Farmington Presbyterian will be hosting again Saturday, January 18, at The Cottage at Germantown United Methodist Church. This ministry provides housing for homeless persons. Each time we host, a group of people prepare a meal for the evening: a casserole or meat, side(s), salad, bread, and dessert. The meal should serve 22 adults. A group of 6-8 people host our guests by setting up at 5pm and welcoming the guests at 6pm. We eat together and visit or play games until 9:30pm. At 9pm, 2 overnight shepherds arrive to spend the night, prepare coffee and a to-go breakfast, and do light clean-up after the guests depart at 6am. After we host, 2 laundry angels volunteer to launder the sheets, pillow cases, and blankets after we host our guests. This is a great way for someone who cannot be there in the evenings to still be a part of this ministry. The sign-up is on the website.

Announcements

Fellowship Coffee Sign up to host Fellowship Coffee on our website to provide refreshments following worship, www.farmingtonpres.org Please keep it simple-something sweet and something salty.

Food Pantry Collection Farmington is collecting food pantry items for the Oakland Presbyterian Church Food Pantry. Canned meats, vegetables, pasta sauce, peanut butter, etc. can be dropped off in the basket by the West entrance of the church.

Bulletin Mailing List While we were all worshipping online, we sent a bulletin weekly to every household. If you are returning to worship in the Sanctuary and would like to be removed from the weekly mailing or if you are worshipping online and would like to be added to the weekly mailing, please email us at church@farmingtonpres.org and let us know.

Gathered to Worship...Sent to Serve In response to God's blessings and to support what God is doing through the Farmington family, you can make your offering through the website, using a checking account, or mail your offering to Farmington Presbyterian Church, 8245 Farmington Boulevard, Germantown, TN 38139.

This week at Farmington...we enjoyed the message and songs of the season with a Service of Lessons and Carols followed by a delectable Christmas lunch. Thank you to our musicians, readers, decorators, cooks, helpers, and all who had a part in it. Merry Christmas!

Remember in Prayer...Our Farmington Family, Session and Staff; Luv Bacerra, Jackie Baker, Hank Baron, Kevin Beard, Betty Boyd, Jeanne Carr, Judith Cassidy, Mary Lou Collins, Mark Fisher, Chelsea Moyer Fitzpatrick, Joe Gaul, Bill Harrington, Martha Hart, Robert Herring, Chris and Sabrina Johnson, Bill Jones, Bill Knight, Leslie Langston, Annette Main, Faye McKenzie, Sara Millar, Steve Moots, Nancy & Dennis Palmer, Pat Register, Bill Renfrow, Wayne Renfrow, Katie Robbins, Jack Scherer, Dee Scobey, Pat Sherman, Caitlin Shirazee, JoAnne Simpkins, William Stevens, Jon Still, B.J. Tanner, Kasi Wann, Frank Whited, Nathan Williams and from our Presbytery: First Presbyterian Church, McKenzie, TN.

Sympathy to the family and friends... of Rev. Arthur Lodge, retired PC (USA) pastor; of Brian Hailey, former colleague of Rebecca Luter; of Chris Kirchoff, son of Rev. Rick & Jane Kirchoff, retired pastor at Germantown United Methodist Church; and of Kathy VanderEcken, mother of Gretchen Burch, Director of FPDS.

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