



**First  
Presbyterian**  
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

# Service for the Lord's Day

December 15, 2024

10:30 am

The Third Sunday of Advent

*Please remember to silence your cell phone.*

\*Please stand as you are able.

Regular text is read by minister.

**Bold text is read by congregation.**

## THE GATHERING

### PRELUDE

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper  
People, Look East

arr. Wilbur Held  
arr. Robert Hobby

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Those attending worship are invited to fill out a blue card in the pew to register your attendance or express interest in the church's programs. You may place the cards in the offering plates as you depart at the end of the service. Those worshipping online are invited to click the blue tab on the worship page, "Visiting FPC? Let's Connect!"*

### INTROIT

Praise, I Will Praise You, Lord

Claude Frayssé

Praise, I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart.  
O God, I will tell the wonders of your ways, and glorify your name.  
Praise, I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart.  
In you I will find the source of all my joy. Alleluia!

### ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

The Teague Family

Each of our Advent candles represents God's generous goodness,  
the advent of Jesus, God's greatest gift,  
the Spirit's fluttering flicker of joy.  
As we light each candle, we recognize the gifts God has given us this week.

[The first candle is lit.]

God, we reach for unreasonable hope;  
**and you prepare an incomparable future.**

[The second candle is lit.]

God, we breathe in your peaceful refuge,  
**for you have made a place where we can safely rest.**

[The third candle is lit.]

Joy ebbs and flows each day, holy God,  
**so we pray to you in honesty.**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

O come, let us worship the triune God,  
**the one whose word always fulfills joy:**  
the Shaper of Life, the Savior of Humanity, the Spirit of Renewal.  
Jesus says: I am coming soon.  
**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY** (*Unison*)

**We wait in joyful expectation, O God,  
for your coming in Jesus Christ.  
As we worship you today,  
may we have eyes to see,  
and ears to hear,  
the good news you offer the world.  
Amen.**

**\*HYMN #645**

Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Today, as we confess our sins,  
we recognize how easily we overlook the gifts God gives us.  
Trusting in God's nearness and mercy, let us pray together in hope:  
**God, we long for a faith that is authentic and true.  
We hear your call to serve others, yet feel too worn out to make the food.  
We hunger to taste justice, but fear the burning spice of the meal.  
We want our place at your table, but resist sitting beside a stranger.  
We have lost our appetite for mere thoughts and prayers,  
but we fail to match our intentions to our actions.  
Forgive us and restore us our faith.  
Fill us with the healing power of your presence.**

*Prayers of confession continue in silence.*

**\*LORD, HAVE MERCY #575**

Lord, have mer - cy up - on us; Christ, have mer - cy up -  
- on us; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff contains the first two phrases, and the second staff contains the next two phrases. The music ends with a double bar line.

J. Christopher Pardini, 2005 © 2011 by MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc.

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

God knows we are imperfect.  
God did not invite us here today  
to scold us for what we have done  
or what we have failed to do.  
God has drawn us here that we might be transformed.  
God loves us and cares for us.  
In Christ, our sins are forgiven.

**We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

**\*RESPONSE OF PRAISE #654**

**In the Lord I'll be ever thankful;  
in the Lord I will rejoice!  
Look to God; do not be afraid.  
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.  
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.**

**\*SHARING THE PEACE**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.  
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you!**

*Please take a moment to greet those around you with God's peace.*

# THE WORD

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Jenny Anton

## FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Philippians 4:4-7

Pew Bible, pg. 198

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## ANTHEM

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Anonymous (16<sup>th</sup> century)

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.  
Let your softness be known unto all men: the Lord is e'en at hand.  
Be careful for nothing; but in all prayer and supplication  
let your petitions be manifest unto God, with giving of thanks.  
And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesu. Amen.

## SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Pew Bible, pg. 877

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## SERMON

"God Rejoices Over us"

Rev. Carmen Goetschius

## \*HYMN #94

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

## \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*(from the Confession of 1967, edited for inclusive language)*

**God's sovereign love is a mystery  
beyond the reach of the human mind.  
Human thought ascribes to God  
superlatives of power, wisdom, and goodness.  
But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ  
by showing power in the form of a servant,  
wisdom in the folly of the cross,  
and goodness in receiving sinful men and women.  
The power of God's love in Christ to transform the world  
discloses that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator  
who made all things to serve the purpose of God's love.**

*Thank you for your faithful support of the church.  
To learn about various ways to contribute to the life and ministry of this congregation,  
please refer to page 6 of the worship bulletin.*

**OFFERTORY**

People, Look East

arr. Linda R. Lamb

*(Sandy Castles and Emily Jo Jensen, handbells)*

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all people here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Text: © 1990 by Neil Weatherhogg Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, LM with refrain; Plainsong

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION**

**THE LORD'S PRAYER** (*Unison*)

**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.**

# THE SENDING

**\*HYMN #83**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

**\*BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

Prelude in F Major

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

*Music reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-706706.*

## CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS

*Contributions may be made by:*

*Leaving your gifts in the offering  
plates as you depart.*

*Mailing a check to the church office.*

*Scanning the QR code on the right.*

*Visiting [https://pushpay.com/g/  
firstpresportland](https://pushpay.com/g/firstpresportland).*



## IN MEMORIAM

*Our prayers are with the family of Sally Bowder, who died on  
November 22, and Don Larson, who died on December 5.*

*Blest are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*We join in holding in prayer: Kathy Callas, Louise Grose,  
Fran Hermanson, Russ Mendenhall, Gordon Priedeman,  
Bruce Purdy, Phyllis Whittington, and others facing illness and  
loss.*

## SANCTUARY FLOWERS

*Today's flowers in the sanctuary are given in  
loving memory of my sister, Sandra Lee,  
by Rick Lee.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### 2025 FPC Stewardship Campaign

**“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.”**  
**Lamentations 3:22**

Recently, we dedicated our 2025 pledges to FPC. Our 2025 goal is **\$740,000**. Our pledges make it possible for us to share God’s love within the congregation, community, and worldwide. We’re grateful that over **97 households** have pledged **\$573,577** to date! If you haven’t done so yet, we ask you to prayerfully consider making a pledge. Simply fill out a pledge card and place it in the offering plate. You can also pledge online. Go to [firstpresportland.org](http://firstpresportland.org) and click on the gold box that says “2025 Stewardship Campaign.” Thank you so much for your continued support!

### The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

Join us after worship **today** in Calvin Library for a discussion of *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. The movie explores themes like hearing the Christmas story, sacrifice, and acceptance. All ages are welcome!

### Young Adults Christmas Lunch

FPC’s Young-ish Adult group will gather **today** at **11:45 am** for a Christmas Lunch. Friends, partners, visitors—all are welcome to this time of fellowship and food!

### Christmas Poinsettias

Christmas poinsettia orders are due by **Monday, December 16**. Donations for this year’s poinsettias are **\$18** for each person remembered or honored. Names will be published in the worship bulletin on **December 22**.

### Blue Christmas Service

The holidays can be difficult for many, as grief, loneliness, and stress are often heightened during this season. Our Blue Christmas service provides a space for healing and reflection. Join us on **Wednesday, December 18, at 7:00 pm** in the sanctuary for a time of solace and support. All are welcome.

### Christmas Joy Offering

Each year at Christmastime, our congregation participates in the Christmas Joy Offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA). This offering assists church workers and their families with critical financial needs through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. It also supports young people at Presbyterian schools for students of color and future leaders in our church and the world. We will dedicate this offering on **Sunday, December 22**. Bring or mail your designated check to the church or give through the church website.

### FPC Christmas Eve Services

We hope you will join us on **Tuesday, December 24**, for two beautiful Christmas Eve services. At **5:00 pm**, we’ll have a family-friendly service with a pop-up Christmas pageant that’s sure to delight. Then, at **9:00 pm**, come together for our traditional Lessons and Carols service with candlelight as we celebrate the birth of our Savior. We look forward to joining in worship and reflection on this holy night. All are welcome!

### Red Cross Blood Drive

Our winter blood drive will take place on **Tuesday, December 31, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm** in Geneva Hall. To sign up, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

### Volunteer Study

Did you know that men and women are equally likely to volunteer? We didn’t. That’s one of the valuable insights from our volunteer study. So far, we’ve received volunteer data from committees and various volunteer activities, but we also need some individual feedback. If you’d like to help by looking at what we’ve recorded for your volunteer time, send a note to Pete Vanden Bosch at [petevandenbosch@gmail.com](mailto:petevandenbosch@gmail.com).

### Youth Ice Skating Event Postponed

Our youth ice skating event is being postponed until January. Stay tuned for more information.



*Love God.  
Love Our Neighbors.*

### Vision Statement

We commit to be a church that is:

**Engaged:** A forward-thinking and involved congregation committed to each other and to the wider community.

**Inclusive:** A faith community that affirms and welcomes all people.

**Compassionate:** A congregation that follows in Christ's way, advancing the well-being and dignity of all people, working for a just and equitable society, and caring for all creation.

**Faithful:** Living our faith authentically with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love while expanding the circle where God's love is known.

## CHURCH STAFF

### Principal Church Staff:

Rev. Heidi Bolt, Interim Pastor  
 Rev. Brenna Dykman, Associate Pastor  
 Rev. Carmen Goetschius, Associate Pastor  
 Rev. David Dornack, Parish Associate  
 Greg Homza, Director of Music Ministries  
 Marc Lavender, Church Business Administrator

[hbolt@firstpresportland.org](mailto:hbolt@firstpresportland.org)  
[bdykman@firstpresportland.org](mailto:bdykman@firstpresportland.org)  
[cgoetschius@firstpresportland.org](mailto:cgoetschius@firstpresportland.org)  
[ddornack@firstpresportland.org](mailto:ddornack@firstpresportland.org)  
[ghomza@firstpresportland.org](mailto:ghomza@firstpresportland.org)  
[cba@firstpresportland.org](mailto:cba@firstpresportland.org)

### Support Staff:

Alexis Crawford, Receptionist  
 Deb Davis, Bookkeeper  
 Bill Edwards, Sexton & Wedding Coordinator  
 John Kelly, Facility Manager  
 Sheila Riche, Communications

[office@firstpresportland.org](mailto:office@firstpresportland.org)  
[ap@firstpresportland.org](mailto:ap@firstpresportland.org)  
[events@firstpresportland.org](mailto:events@firstpresportland.org)  
[facility@firstpresportland.org](mailto:facility@firstpresportland.org)  
[communications@firstpresportland.org](mailto:communications@firstpresportland.org)



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[@FirstPresPortland](https://www.instagram.com/FirstPresPortland)

### Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday | 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

## First Presbyterian Church

1200 SW Alder Street, Portland, OR 97205  
[www.firstpresportland.org](http://www.firstpresportland.org)  
 (503) 228-7331