

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

of Wausau, Wisconsin

Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

GATHERING

** Please rise in body or spirit where indicated.
Text in **bold type** is to be spoken or sung in unison*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *My Faith Looks Up To Thee* Lowell Mason

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING *Where the Promise Shines* The Promise of Joy

VOCALS BEGINS

*Where the world is waiting for an unknown day, where a voice forgotten, cries "Prepare the way!"
Show us in a manger our redemption's sign; bring us to a morning where the promise shines.*

CONGREGATION JOINS THE CHORUS



Lead us on, lead us on to a morn - ing where the
prom - ise shines. Lead us on, lead us on
to a morn - ing where the prom - ise shines.

RESPONSIVE LITANY

Advent is a time for God's people to reawaken their longing.

Sorrow may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

In the darkness, we long to see the light.

Sorrow may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

In the silence, we long for a comforting word.

Sorrow may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

In hardship, we long for an act of love.

Sorrow may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

In Christ, we celebrate and rejoice in the promise of joy.

Sorrow may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

CANDLE LIGHTING

Today we light three candles. The first candle radiates the hope given through Jesus Christ. The second candle calls us to embrace and extend Christ's peace to an unsettled world. The third candle extends the promise of joy to restless souls. Though darkness is present and earthly trials weigh heavy, the promise of Advent offers true joy that sustains a weary people.

CONGREGATION - REPEAT "LEAD US ON" CHORUS

PRAYER

Gracious Lord, our joy is found in you, for not only did you enter into this world, but you became the hope of the world. From the cradle to the cross, you invite us to share in your victory. This is the fountain from which our joy flows. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN

While We Are Waiting, Come

92, v. 1,3

1 While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.

Refrain: Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.

3 Come, Savior, quickly come;
come, Savior, quickly come. (Refrain)

CALL TO CONFESSION

Let the desert rejoice, and let the dry land be glad, for God has come to save us.
Let us confess our sin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of majesty and glory, we are thirsty for your grace. You made a way for us in the wilderness, and still, in our foolishness, we go astray. We hide our eyes from your presence. We do not listen to your word. We are lifeless when we ought to dance and speechless when we ought to sing.

Forgive us, O Lord. Speak peace to our fearful hearts, strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees as we seek to follow in your holy way. Amen.

Please continue in silent reflection and your personal prayer of confession.

SUNG RESPONSE

Blest Be the God of Israel

109, v. 3

**On those who sit in darkness the sun begins to rise,
The dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness. Sing a song of redemption!
Let sorrow and sighing be no more. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!

May the peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

SUNG RESPONSE

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

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.**

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

“WAITING” – Advent Hymn and Carol Sunday

Exodus 19:16 Lord of Might - ¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

O Come O Come Emmanuel

soloists

Isaiah 11:1, 10 – A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse and a branch grow out of his roots. From this lineage a Savior is promised. On that day [this] shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

O Come O Come Emmanuel

choir

Numbers 24:17 He is the Morning Star ¹⁷ I see him but not now;
I behold him but not near – a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a scepter shall rise out of Israel;
it shall crush the foreheads of Moab and the heads of all the Shethites.

In Advent, we wait, remembering the birth of Christ we celebrate at Christmas. It is a time of waiting – of patience – of hope

Awe... Mystery...

In this silence and awe, we reflect on the mystery of the incarnation.

In celebration and awe, we experience this miracle of birth.

Take a moment to think about this mystery and miracle.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

choir

Psalms 33:20 Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield.

Psalms 130:5 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you;
therefore he will rise up to show mercy to you.

For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

Hab 2:3 For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
it speaks of the end and does not lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.

Lyricist Christina Rossetti wrote about this waiting and contrasted it to the harshness of our world. The harshness of earth compared with the humble birth and the glory of heaven and sums it up in her final line, “What can I give him: give my heart.”

In the Bleak Midwinter

choir and congregation

1 In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

2 Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

3 Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

4 What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Earlier we read from Isaiah 11 about a stem shooting up from a stump. He brings life out of death. Advent points to Christmas. Christmas points to Easter. Easter points to the second coming of Christ when he makes all things new.

Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming

choir and soloists

Carol of the Bells

handbell choir

Bells ringing in front of the grocery store. Come, give, serve those in need. Bells from churches. Come, hear God's Word. Worship him. Bells beckon us. Call for a response. When Christ was born, Angels made that call proclaiming Christ's birth. Proclaiming the newborn king. Forever we are reconciled with God through Jesus Christ.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

choir and congregation

1 Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king.
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;
with the angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

2 Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

3 Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

Angels We Have Heard on High

choir and congregation

1 Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

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!

In one of his many “Coop’s Columns” on the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship website, former Calvin College chaplain, Dale Cooper, recalls a moment in which he was travelling home to his young family after spending the summer in Geneva. He was calling his wife from Chicago’s O’Hare airport to arrange his pick-up in Grand Rapids, when his then four-year-old son asked for the phone. Cooper writes, “His only words to me—a sigh, really: ‘Daddy, when am I going to be where you are?’” (Cooper, “Coop’s Column – Spirit at Work: Guarantor”).

It is this sigh—an expression of longing that we express when we sing the words of Charles Wesley’s beautiful Advent hymn, “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus.” For though we know that Christ goes with us and before us every day, we long for the day when we are with Him in all of the fullness and glory He will bring. And just as a four-year-old may crawl into his parent’s arms after an extended absence, so too we long for the day when we will be at rest in Christ, enfolded in the embrace of our Savior.

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

solo trumpet
then choir/congregation

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.19

Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus.

His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God.

He was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity.

He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.

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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As a farmer plants the seeds and waits for the rains to come, let us entrust our gifts to the Lord as we await the coming of God's reign.

OFFERTORY

You are invited to use the time of offering to reflect on how you show your gratitude to God, whether through acts of service or through sharing of resources. Offering plates are available at the doors to leave a gift before or immediately after the service, or you may give online at www.firstpreswausau.org or through your Realm login.

***SUNG RESPONSE** *Savior of the Nations, Come* # 102, v. 4
Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word;
To the Holy Trinity praise we sing eternally.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Thanks be to you, O God, maker of heaven and earth, giver of justice, lover of righteousness, hope of the afflicted, and friend of the poor. Your faithfulness never fails. Take and use these gifts we offer to further your purpose in the world and to fulfill the promise of the world to come; through Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

SENDING OUT

***HYMN** *People, Look East* # 105, v. 1,2,4

1 People, look east. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able;
trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Rose, is on the way.

4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Star, is on the way.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

***POSTLUDE** *People, Look East*

Following worship, all are invited to the parlor for a time of fellowship and refreshment.

Thank you to those who helped us with worship today:

Rev. Rachel A. Wann, senior pastor
Mike Fischer, music director/pianist
The Chancel and Handbell Choirs
Katherine Wright, minute for mission
Pete Hesert, doorkeeper

Rev. Joy Nelson-Jeffers, pastoral associate
Gail Smith, liturgist
Matt Rueth, trumpet soloist
Rick Builer, sound and video
The Indermuehle Team, hospitality

Mary Anderson and Marcia Glashagel, bulletin assembly

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