

WORSHIP



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH of
RICHARDSON

DECEMBER 21, 2025 | FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID, GIVE ME YOUR HAND

Responding to God's love and grace, we WORSHIP with joy, NURTURE with faith, and SERVE others with love.

At First Presbyterian Church of Richardson, we believe that God's love is for everyone—without exception. We welcome all people to worship, serve, and grow with us, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, marital status, or economic circumstance. We affirm the worth and dignity of every person as a beloved child of God, created in God's image. As a church rooted in God's grace, we seek to live with open hearts and open minds. We commit to being a safe and affirming space for all, especially those who have been hurt or excluded by the church in the past. In our worship, our leadership, our fellowship, and our service—we welcome you. We see you. We honor your full humanity. You are welcome here. You are not alone. You are loved.



"I Am With You" by Lauren Wright Pittman | Inspired by Isaiah 41:5-10

We Gather Around the Word

WELCOME

OPENING VOLUNTARY

“Noel!”

Iris Ackenhusen
Terry Metzger, Organ

*CALL TO WORSHIP | *Responsively*

Mike Haun, Liturgist

Here in worship—

we pray together,

we stand together,

we sing together,

we listen together.

Here in worship—we are not alone.

So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry, remember this moment.

We are not alone. Let us worship our with-us God.

*OPENING HYMN | #105 “People Look East”

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE | Love

FPCR Confirmation Class

RESPONSE | #85 “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” (v. 4)



CALL TO CONFESSION *and* PRAYER OF CONFESSION | *Responsively* from *A Sanctified Art, First Sunday in Advent*

When you were afraid, did I stay by your side?

Did I offer my hand, or did I leave you alone?

When you were afraid, did I choose solidarity?

Did I see your fear, or did I only see mine?

Friend, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too.

So take a deep breath, and let's start again. Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

Now we must ask—when you were afraid, did we stay by your side?

Did we offer our hands, or did we leave you alone?

When you were afraid, did we choose solidarity?

Did we see your fear? Or did we only see ours?

Friends, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too.

So take a deep breath, and let's start again. Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

**Please stand in body or spirit*

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS | *Responsively*

We accept your grace and would love to start again.

May it be so, with God's help. Alleluia, Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI | #88 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (*Refrain*)

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The Peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

TIME FOR TINY THEOLOGIANs

Children of all ages are welcome to join us up front for a brief children's lesson. Children between the ages of 0-kindergarten are then welcome to go to the nursery following the lesson, or return to their seats.

ANTHEM

"Happy Birthday, Jesus"

by Carol Cymbala

FPCR Children's Choir

*Happy birthday, Jesus I'm so glad it's Christmas
All the tinsel and lights and the presents are nice but the real gift is You
Happy birthday, Jesus I'm so glad it's Christmas
All the carols and bells make the holiday swell and it's all about You
Happy birthday, Jesus Jesus I love You*

We Proclaim the Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 41:5-10
Matthew 1:18-25

NRSV OT Pg. 669
NRSV NT Pg. 1

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.
Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Alice Hernandez

We Respond to the Word

HYMN OF RESPONSE | "We're Not Alone" (*See back of bulletin*)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH | *Unison*

**We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars.
We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.
We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow.
We believe that good news is louder than fear.
We believe this good news is for all people.
So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles,
even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.
We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst.
We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born.
We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love.
So still, we believe. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and 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.**

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

CALL FOR OFFERING

OFFERTORY

"Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine"

Lloyd Pfautsch

The Sanctuary Choir, Amanda Hollis, Director

Terry Metzger, Organ

*Joseph dearest, Joseph mine, help me cradle the child divine;
God reward thee and all that's thine in paradise, so prays the mother Mary.
He came among us at Christmastime, at Christmastime, in Bethlehem; let us bring him from far and wide
Love's diadem: Jesus, Jesus, lo, he comes, and loves, and saves, and frees us!
Gladly, dear one, lady mine, help I cradle this child of thine;
God's own light on us both shall shine in paradise, as prays the mother Mary.
All shall come and bow the knee; wise and happy their souls shall be,
loving such a divinity, as all may see in Jesus, Son of Mary.*

*HYMN OF THANKS | #145 "What Child is This?" (v. 3)

*So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh, come, peasant, king, to own him;
the King of kings salvation brings, let loving hearts enthrone him.
This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.*

We Are Sent Out to Bear the Word in the World

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*SENDING HYMN | #377 "I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

*BENEDICTION

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

"Noel for the Fourth Sunday of Advent"

Charles - Alexis Chauvet

Terry Metzger, Organ

*Today's liturgy was adapted from liturgy written by
Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*

WEEK AT A GLANCE:

Sunday, December 21

Coffee Class: 9 am, A111

Present Word: 9 am, A109

Children's Sunday School: 9-10:15 am, CE Building

Nursery: 9-11:30 am, CE Building

Worship: 10:30 am, In-Person & Online

Tuesday, December 23

Prayer Group: 6:30 am, Phone

Wednesday, December 24 (Office Closed)

Children & Family Christmas Eve Service: 5 pm, Sanctuary

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service: 7 pm, Sanctuary

Saturday, December 27

Taiwanese Ministry Bible Study: 2-4 pm, Library

Sunday, December 28

Coffee Class: 9 am, A111

Present Word: 9 am, A109

Children's Sunday School: 9-10:15 am, CE Building

Nursery: 9-11:30 am, CE Building

Lessons & Carols: 10:30 am, In-Person & Online

**For the full events
calendar that includes
our Community Partners,
please scan the QR code.**



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

from the Staff of FPCR!

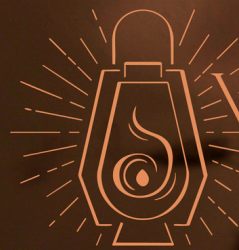
**The church office will be CLOSED
Wednesday, December 24 - Sunday, January 4**



Christmas Eve Services

5 PM | Family Service

7 PM | Candlelight Service



What do
you fear?

GOOD NEWS IS LOUDER THAN FEAR

Revised Child Protection Training

Our insurance provider requires that all employees and volunteers who work with children or vulnerable adults must complete the insurance company's online child protection training program. Marilyn has worked with their staff and has been successful in setting up our online account. Most of the staff has already completed the program.

This is a new training and is required for all volunteers working with youth or vulnerable adults, even if you have completed FPCR's child protection training within the last 3 years.

If you anticipate that you will be interacting with the youth or vulnerable adults in the future please contact Marilyn at marilyn@fpcrichardson.org. She will submit your name and email address to the provider and they will send you an email with a link to the program. If you have any questions, please contact Marilyn or Bob Wright for further information.

Next Week: Christmastide



What do
you fear?

LET FEAR FUEL A FIRE FOR JUSTICE

Lessons & Carols

We're Not Alone

ADESTE FIDELES Irr. with refrain

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

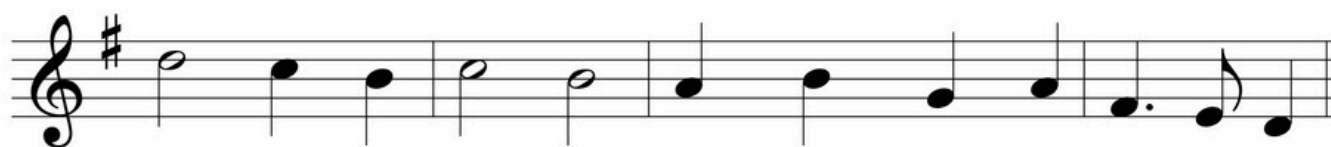
Music by John Francis Wade, 1751



Fear all a - round you tells you you're a - lone____
Give me your hand to hold when you feel frigh - tened
When peo - ple live in fear____ for their safe - ty
For - ward we march to - geth - er toward God's kin - dom



Urg - ing you to build walls and i - so - late
We can up - hold each o - ther in____ our fear
Let us put priv - ilege on the line____ for them
Build - ing a big - ger ta - ble, not tall - er walls



I know your fear be - cause I feel it, too____
Per - son by per - son, we'll find strength to - geth - er
Stand with our sib - lings in____ sol - i - dar - i - ty
Work - ing to - geth - er, no - thing is im - poss-i - ble



When fear grows deep in - side us, re - mem - ber what u - nites us



No, no - thing can di - vide us; we're not a - lone



The Fourth Sunday of Advent | What do you fear?
WHEN YOU'RE AFRAID, GIVE ME YOUR HAND



I Am With You

by Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Isaiah 41:5-10

11"x14" Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper

Here we find the Israelites far from home, living in Babylonian exile. Fear and uncertainty hang heavy with the looming threat of Persian invasion.

"The coastlands have seen and are afraid, the ends of the earth tremble" (Isaiah 45:5). As some scramble to find courage in idols, God calls those exiled from Judah to be heartened by their rootedness in God's story.

The image that formed in my mind was a community nestled in God's hands amid the Mediterranean coastlands—the same lands conquered by the Babylonians, and to which the exiles longed to return.

While I was creating this image, the U.S. President shared an AI-generated video of his "vision" for Gaza, those same coastlands referenced in Isaiah. I was

shaken by the contrast between his imagined future and the reality of U.S.-funded devastation. The video transformed rubble and the bone-chilling cries of mothers into panning vistas of high-rise beachfront resorts and casinos, rebranding Gaza as the "Riviera of the Middle East."¹⁰

This bombastic vision mocks a people clinging to threads of existence. Watching the powerful revel in the demise of the vulnerable is horrifying—but fitting. In Isaiah, God's people are exiled under the thumb of a world power. Fearful artisans solder golden idols, hoping for security. But God is not found in the hands of the powerful or the shine of idols. God is present amid the rubble, comforting the forsaken and reminding them of their place in God's story. No matter which empire holds sway, God sides with the subjugated and disenfranchised. Despite the fear that causes the very earth to tremble, God accompanies the downtrodden, upholding them with a steady hand.

From my study of this passage and shock at the video, a counter-vision of hope emerged. Coastal Mediterranean plants—bougainvillea for peace, lantana for liveliness, and red valerian for strength—anchor the shifting sand. God's hands cradle the community like a fragile flame as their light resiliently radiates. The twelve figures in simplified Palestinian garb represent the exiled Judeans in Isaiah, the Palestinians in modern day Gaza, and all crushed by empire—each cherished by a faithful God. The hands in the image *could* also be ours. —REV. LAUREN WRIGHT PITTMAN

¹⁰ Some of the imagery included: a child holding a golden balloon in the shape of the U.S. President's head, crowds standing beneath a golden statue of said President, billionaire Elon Musk basking as money rained from the sky, and the U.S. President lounging poolside with the Israeli Prime Minister. While this imagery flashes, a song plays with the lyrics, "No need to fear, Trump Gaza is finally here."