A CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 11, 2022

8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

*All who are able may stand.

Bold type spoken by the congregation

GATHERING. . .

The Prelude

Creator of the Stars of the Night

arr. Michael McCabe

The Welcome and Announcements

The Introit

Somebody’s Talking ‘Bout Jesus

Terry D. Taylor

Covenant Choir

The Lighting of the Advent Candle: JOY

The Old Testament Lesson:

Isaiah 35:1-10

Prayer

Sung Response

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.

Spoken Response:

People of God, in joy,
Let us walk in the light of the Lord!

The Prayer of Praise

You are a God of bounteous gifts, O Lord, and we bless Your Name. You bestow mercies without end. Your people stand upright; You give sight to the blind. You have no patience with injustice, and the meek You do not turn away. We open our hearts to Your presence, and our doors to the stranger. We gather as Your people, brought together by Your grace and made one by Your love. Blessing and honor and glory and power to You the One Eternal God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The Hymn 106

Prepare the Way, O Zion

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story!
REFRAIN: O blest is Christ who came in God’s most holy name.

He brings God’s rule, O Zion; He comes from heaven above. His rule is peace and freedom, and justice,
truth and love. Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding. REFRAIN

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior’s rule embrace, and tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing. REFRAIN

*The Prayer of Confession

Holy God, we confess that we do not always greet your advent in our lives with joy. We prefer the familiar and routine, and resist what is different and unexpected. We prefer our plans to your surprises. Forgive us for being too bound to old ways and tired habits. Make space in us for new life to spring up.
Give us courage to respond with joy and trust when you call us toward newness. Help us say “yes” to a future we have not imagined so that we may grow in wonder and love all our days. Amen.

*The Assurance of Pardon

God’s mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation.
Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior, who does great things for us. Hear the good news—in Jesus Christ we are forgiven, restored, and reconciled! Thanks be to God.

*Sung Response:  
O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy!

*The Peace and Greeting  
The peace of Christ be with you all. And also with you!

(The Peace and Greeting)  
(Please stand to greet one another in the name of Christ. For those worshiping at home, please share Christ’s peace with someone outside Your home this week.)

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD . . .

The Prayer for Illumination  
By Your Spirit, God of majesty, guide us as we travel Your Holy Way. Open our blind eyes and unstop our deaf ears, that we may leap with joy as we encounter Your Word. Through Christ our Lord we ask it. Amen.

(The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came)  
arr. T.A. Ohnesorge,

The Anthem  
The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes of flame;  
“All highly favored lady.” Gloria!  
“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee;  
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady.” Gloria!  
Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; “To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.  
“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name, most highly favored lady.” Gloria!  
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,  
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: “Most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

The Epistle Lesson: James 5:7-10  
*(The Hymn 96)  
On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry  

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry announces that the Lord is nigh;  
awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!  
Then cleansed be every life from sin; make straight the way for God within,  
and let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.  
We hail you as our Savior, Lord, our refuge and our great reward;  
without your grace we waste away like flowers that wither and decay.  
Stretch forth your hand; our health restore, and make us rise to fall no more.  
O let your face upon us shine and fill the world with love divine.

The Gospel Lesson: Matthew 11:2-11  
The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

The Sermon  
Advent’s Pondering and Perplexity  
Kim Clayton

The Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession  
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.

GOING FORTH TO SERVE IN GOD’S NAME . . .
My soul cries out with a joyful shout. You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

REFRAIN: My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. REFRAIN

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. REFRAIN

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast: God’s mercy must deliver us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp. This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. REFRAIN

*The Charge & Benediction

The Postlude

Episode on “Truro”

arr. Lani Smith

Please be seated in personal reflection until the Postlude ends.

“Earth laughs in flowers” ~ R W Emerson

Rejoice with Joy and singing! The flowers today are given by Diane and David Peterson in celebration of the third Sunday of Advent.

**Today’s Worship Leaders:**

Preacher, Kim Clayton

Liturgists: Michelle Abel, Brian Raska

Choir Masters: Mary Ann and Larry Casey

Organist: Amy Shirk

The Advent Lighters are Members of the Meditation Group at the 8:30 service and 3 year old-kindergarten LIFT class at the 11:00 service.

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Birthdays this week Dec. 7-Dec. 14

December 7: Steve Eckel, Elizabeth Saunders-Morris
December 8: Shirley Phillips, Barry Hall
December 9: Gwen Woolf
December 10: Bob Lang, Milton McNaug:FJ
December 12: David Hancock, Cecily Whalen
December 14: Tris4g:1Jn Fidler

Announcements for December 7-December 14

Welcome New Members — Last weekend we welcomed seven new members to the congregation: John and Nicole Strawn (children Vivian and Michael Strawn), Kathy Peck, Mary Ann Cruzen, Harry Charlesen, Barb LeRoy, and Mary Triola. Be on the lookout for a bulletin board introducing these members in the next few weeks.

It is with great sadness that we share the news of a former staff member. Paul Robb who served for 20 years as the organist/choir director at The Presbyterian Church of Fredericksburg died on November 17, 2022 after a long battle with leukemia. Paul was a gifted organist who shared his love of Bach and singing to enrich the worship services for many years. He and his wife, Joanne, have resided in the Ashland area where he continued to play organ at area churches. His memorial service will be held at Saint James the Less Episcopal Church in Ashland at 10:00am on Saturday, December 17, 2022.

“Paul created a standard of musical sophistication that we try to continue today.” Larry Casey

Stewardship Note—Special thanks to each of you for submitting your 2023 giving pledges! We are compiling the data and will report back when we have the totals. If you have not had a chance to offer your pledge yet, please remember that we will gratefully accept your pledge at any time. Blessings to all!

Lectionary Readings for Sunday, Dec. 11
Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

Lectionary Readings for Sunday, Dec. 18
Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Roman 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

Weekly Meetings & Activities

Wed. (12/7) — Meditation Group, 6pm (Zoom)
Pints and Parables, 7pm (6 Bears and a Goat Brewery)

Thurs. (12/8) — Ladies Morning Bible Study, 9:30am (MH)
Handbells, 6:00pm (Sanct. Balcony)
Stewardship Committee, 7:00pm (Conf. rm)
Adult Choir, 7:30pm (Choir Rm)

Fri. (12/9) — Kickoff for Make Space for Advent, 6-8pm (FH)
Food Truck and Movie Night, 6-8pm

Sat. (12/10) — Micah Breakfast, 7:00am (Lobby)

Sun. (12/11) — Worship, 8:30am (Sanct./Youtube)
LIFT Hour, 9:45am (FH)
Worship, 11am (Sanct.)
Youth Group Christmas Party, 12pm (Undercroft)
Reception for Rev. Michelle Abel, 12pm (Lobby)
Make Space for Advent, 12:00pm-2:00pm & LIFT hour (FH)
Session, 6:00pm (Middle House)

Mon. (12/12) — Keep it Moving-Body and Soul, 3:15pm (FH)
Print/Digital Committee, 6:30pm (Conf. rm)

Tues. (12/13) — Men’s Breakfast Group, 7:30am (Conf. rm)
PW Faith Circle Lunch, 12pm (Brocks)
PW Circle of Prayer, 1:30pm (Conf. rm)
Make Space for Advent, 6:00-8:00pm (FH)
Memorial Garden Committee, 7:00pm (Conf. rm)

Wed. (12/14) — Meditation Group, 6pm (Zoom)
Finance Committee, 7pm (Conf. Rm)

Church Family News

Capsule of Concern: Doris Glidden, Doris Gulatsi, Lou Silvey

We extend Christian sympathy to the family of our member, Richard Carlton Garner, who died on December 3, 2022. Please keep his parents Bill and Tricia Garner and his sister Anna Katherine in your prayers.

Birthdays this week Dec. 7-Dec. 14

December
7. Steve Eckel, Elizabeth Saunders-Morris
8. Shirley Phillips, Barry Hall
9. Gwen Woof
10. Bob Lang, Milton McNatt
12. David Hancock, Cecily Whalen
14. Tristin Fidler

Looking Ahead

December 18 - Lessons and Carols, 11:00 am service.
January 6—Epiphany Open House 6pm-8pm
January 8—All Ages LIFT
January 15—Winter session LIFT classes begin
January 24—Blood Drive, 11am-5pm (FH)

If you would like to order flowers for the sanctuary, in memory or honor of someone or just to add color to the sanctuary, please contact Sharon Humes:
pshumes1@gmail.com.
“Make Space for Advent” is an interactive experience for all ages. Stations around the Fellowship Hall engage families and individuals in creativity and reflection. Activities include a cooperative mosaic, luminaries, stars of gratitude, and a walk through the Christmas story. "Make Space" will be open December 11 from 12:00-2:00pm, December 13 from 6:00-8:00pm, and again on December 15 from 5:00-7:00pm.

**Suppers for Seven** is a small group fellowship opportunity for groups of about 7 people to gather together for dinner in homes or at restaurants. People who sign up are placed in groups, and will begin to meet in the new year. Sign ups are online or contact Scott Fischer, VaNavigator@msn.com Couples and singles are welcome to sign up.

**LIFT News**

**LIFT classes** - Click the link here for the list of classes or check the website. We hope you can join us.

If you are looking for ways to continue engaging with the lessons and materials mentioned during our weekly LIFT hour, check out our **take-home resources** on our website. Follow this link to download different take-home resources for you and your loved ones to explore together at home: [https://fredericksburgpc.org/resource-page](https://fredericksburgpc.org/resource-page)

The “Being Reformed” Class is our hybrid LIFT class. You can participate in this class in person in the conference room, or you can tune in via zoom. The zoom link is on our website or click on the following link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88141244845](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88141244845)

**MISSION/OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES**

**Calling all Knitters and Crocheters:** Presbyterian Women are off to a good start with hats and scarves for the winter clothesline. Please continue to knit and crochet. We have a long winter ahead of us and our neighbors can use our help. If you are interested in more information about how to be involved, please contact Pam Hinds, hindspw@aol.com. Be on the lookout for another mission get together in the new year. Keep on knitting and crocheting!!

**Cookies, bagged 6 to a bag, are needed** for the December 17 dinner. You can drop them off at church on Friday 16th or after 2 pm on December 17th. Contact Karen Johnson, ksjohnson422@msn.com, (540) 621-5685, if you would like to help at the dinner.

**Ladies Thursday Morning Bible Study.** You are welcome to join us on Thursday mornings at 9:30 am for fellowship and discussion of *Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water and Loving the Bible Again* by Rachel Held Evans. In this bible study, we are learning how to better understand what the Bible is and how it is meant to be read. Stories of Origin, Deliverance, War, Wisdom, Resistance, Gospel, Fish, and Church are presented for study and consideration. We are meeting Dec. 1 and 8 in the Middle House and Dec 15 in Fellowship Hall to walk the Labyrinth together.

Please plan to join us for our next blood drive on Tuesday, January 24, 2023 from 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. (Please note the new time change). Appointments are being taken now at redcrossblood.org. (Enter FredericksburgPresbyterian for the sponsor code) or 1-800 733-2767. For more information, please contact Linda Benn @ lkbrab@verizon.net or 540 370-1646.

**A Christmas Fun Fact:** The only Charlie Brown show that Linus is without his security blanket is in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. While sharing the message of “what Christmas is all about,” the story of the birth of Jesus, Linus drops his security blanket at the exact moment he says the words, “fear not!”.