

## **First Presbyterian Church**

149 Broad Street

Tonawanda, New York 14150 ~ 2111

Church: (716) 692-1319

Elder William Welch, IV

**Come, Worship the Lord, Our God**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

CCLI License # 2839486

January 26, 2025

10:30am

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Loud talkers and silent worriers,  
glad-handers and lonely wallflowers:

**God gathers us together to be the Body  
of wonder and joy, of hope and healing.**

Bystanders with hands shoved into our pockets,  
fraidy-cats whose feet are frozen in place:

**Jesus calls us to carry grace to outsiders,  
to walk with all those left behind.**

Kids who never offer answers in class,  
bashful folks whose tongues tie in knots:

**The Spirit anoints us to speak up for the voiceless,  
to partner with the poor to discover their gifts.**

## **GATHERING PRAYER**

Holy One, we thank you for the gift of the Bible, for its psalms and poems, myths and stories, histories, teachings, and prophecies. May the Holy Spirit who called out those ancient writings continue to call us out today, that our lives may reflect the first sermon of Jesus, our crucified and risen Christ, who brings good news to the poor and lets the oppressed go free. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**\*HYMN: "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn" #107**

**REJOICE, REJOICE**

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

We are afraid to join hands with others; we want to listen to those who speak falsely; we glibly offer silliness to those we love the most. Let us share with God how we have not been that Body we are made for, that God might reshape us into that holy community, even as we pray together, saying,

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Do we make you laugh or weep, Gracious God? We sing that we are one in your Spirit, but cannot tolerate those who disagree with us. We talk of being one Body, but fight over music or Bible versions or carpet colors. We affirm the giftedness of each person, but we heap honor on just a special few.**

**Forgive us, Creative God, that we dismember your Body so easily. May the words of our mouths speak peace to the brokenness in our world; may the hopes of our hearts bring wonder to those in despair; and may our love embrace all who are around us, even as we have been welcomed by your grace in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

*Silence is kept*

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Forgiven, we are filled by God's Spirit, commissioned to be Christ's hope, Christ's people for the world.

**Anointed, we can care for one another, weep with one another, serve one another, and live with one another. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

## PASSING OF THE PEACE

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

We have gathered before your Word, O God. We want to hear with understanding, so give us attentive ears. By the power of your Holy Spirit at work in the word read and proclaimed, make the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts acceptable to you, our Rock and Redeemer. Amen.

**Old Testament Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10** Ezra reads the law

<sup>1</sup>All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. <sup>2</sup>Accordingly, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup>He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

<sup>5</sup>And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup>Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

<sup>8</sup>So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. <sup>9</sup>And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

<sup>10</sup>Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD, and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

**Responsive Psalm 19:** The commandments give light to the eyes

<sup>1</sup>The heavens are telling the glory of God,

**and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.**

<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours forth speech,

**and night to night declares knowledge.**

<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words;

**their voice is not heard;**

<sup>4</sup>yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world.

**In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,**

<sup>5</sup>which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,

**and like a strong man runs its course with joy.**

<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens and its circuit to the end of them,

**and nothing is hid from its heat.**

<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;

**the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;**

<sup>8</sup>the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

**the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;**

<sup>9</sup>the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever;

**the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.**

<sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;

**sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.**

<sup>11</sup>Moreover, by them is your servant warned;

**in keeping them there is great reward.**

<sup>12</sup>But who can detect one's own errors?

**Clear me from hidden faults.**

<sup>13</sup>Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me.

**Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression.**

<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you,

**O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

**Gospel Reading: Luke 4:14-21** Jesus reads the prophet Isaiah

<sup>14</sup>Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region. <sup>15</sup>He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

<sup>16</sup>When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup>and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup>"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

<sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**SERMON: "The First Sermon"**

**Elder William Welch, IV**

**SERMON HYMN: "Spirit of the Living God" #288**

**LIVING GOD**

**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.**

**INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

Let us give generously from that which has been given to us, that through our offerings the good news of Jesus Christ may be fulfilled.

**THE OFFERTORY**

**DOXOLOGY: "In the Bleak Midwinter" #144 (vs 4)**

**CRANHAM**

## **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Though many different amounts and ways, when gathered up by you, our gifts become a food pantry, a rebuilt life, medicine for children, a caregiver to the lonely—your grace in action. In love we offer these gifts in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**CLOSING HYMN: “Live into Hope” #772**

**TRURO**

## **CHARGE**

Now, we are scattered by our God,  
**to go carry grace into a broken world.**

Now, Jesus scatters us,  
**to bring justice to the outsiders,  
to visit all who are alone and lonely.**

Now, filled with the Spirit, we are scattered,  
**to gather up the dispirited,  
to take hold of the lost and embrace them as family.**

## **BENEDICTION**

**We would like to thank Elder William Welch for sharing his gifts with us today.**

### **Volunteers This Week:**

Liturgist: Sue Schurr  
Tech: Betsy Crocker  
Usher(s): Jessica Schurr & Billy Welch  
Greeter(s): Janet Schurr  
Coffee Hour: Janet, Sue & Jessica Schurr

### **Volunteers Next Week 2/2/25**

Liturgist:  
Tech:  
Usher(s):  
Greeter(s):  
Coffee Hour: Terry DeLuca

## PRAYER CONCERNS

The prayer concerns have recently been updated. If you have a prayer request, please contact **Pastor Rebecca at 315-317-6140 or the church office at 716-692-1319.**

## CALENDAR

Sunday, Jan 26

9:30am All Age Faith Formation (Parlor)  
10:30 am Sunday Worship for all ages (Parlor)  
11:30am Coffee Fellowship for all ages (Parlor)

Monday, Jan 27

10:00 am Alcoholics Anonymous (Circle II Basement)  
6:00pm Church Stretch

Tuesday, Jan 28

9:00am – 2:00pm Office Hours  
10:00am-11:30am God Loves Me Storytime

Wednesday, Jan 29

9:00am – 2:00pm Office Hours  
11:00am or 7:00pm The Pastor's Study: *Prayer in the Night: For Those Who Work, or Watch, or Weep*

Thursday, Jan 30

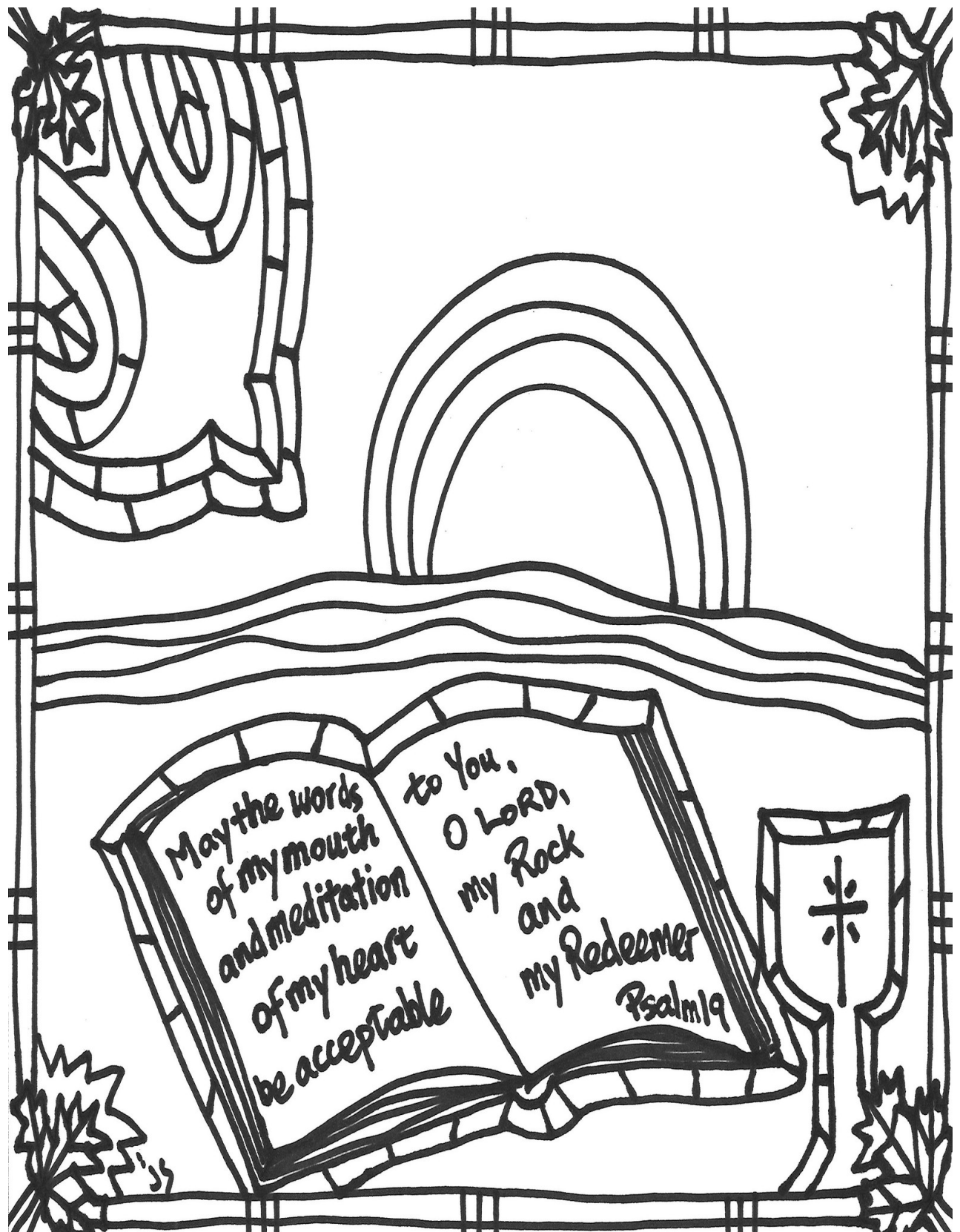
10:00am Alcoholics Anonymous (Circle II Basement)  
6:00pm-8:00pm Choirs Practice

Saturday, Feb 1

10:00am Alcoholics Anonymous (Circle II Basement)

Sunday, Feb 2

9:30am All Age Faith Formation (Parlor)  
10:30 am Sunday Worship for all ages (Sanctuary)  
11:30am Coffee Fellowship for all ages (Parlor)



Portions of the liturgy by Thom M. Shuman and Feasting on the Word. Images by Rev. John Stuart, stushieart.com.