



First Presbyterian Church

149 Broad Street

Tonawanda, New York 14150 ~ 2111

Church: (716) 692-1319

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Chaffee

Come, Worship the Lord, Our God

3rd Sunday of Advent

CCLI License # 2839486

December 15, 2024

10:30am

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Candle Lighting

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah #85 vs. 3

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, let us rejoice this day in the God who is near, in everyone around us.

We will sing glad songs of the One who is rebuilding neighborhoods in our midst.

Come, let us rejoice always in Jesus who baptizes us with hope and compassion.

We will join in choruses of praise of the One who brings justice to the forgotten in our midst.

Come, let us rejoice again and again in the Spirit who offers us new life in every moment.

We will sing full throttle of the One who fills us with gifts to share with everyone in our midst.

GATHERING PRAYER

Merciful God, you come into our midst longing for communion with us, becoming one of us. Break our resistance to life with you, show us the path toward just relations, and bring us into your unimaginable peace; in Jesus' name. Amen.

***HYMN: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" #88 (vs 1-4)**

VENI EMMANUEL

CALL TO CONFESSION

Why should we fear? Whatever we have said or done; whoever we have neglected or whatever we refused to do, surely God has washed away with the waters of life, flowing into that crystal sea of forgiveness. Let us bring our lives to the One who comes to give us hope and life, in this and in every season, as we pray together, saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We admit, God of Advent, that it is easier to trust a politician's glib words than yours which were spoken so long ago. We know how afraid we are of tomorrow, because of what we do today, ignoring what you brought about so long ago. We, who have been given so much from your heart, find it hard to share even a smidgen from our abundance.

Forgive us, God our hope, and have mercy on us. Lift us to our feet; draw us close into your loving embrace; drench us the buckets of grace drawn from the deep wells of life, so we will have the courage to declare you as our God, as we follow Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with the Holy Spirit.

Silence is kept

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

As plain as the heart in our chests, the good new is this: God is our hope. God is our life. God is our future.

We will sing aloud, our voices at full throttle. We are forgiven, we are saved! Thanks be to God. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy Word, you are our guide and ultimate assurance. By your Holy Spirit, open us to your promises and commands and shower us again with the fire of your love. Amen.

Old Testament Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20 A Song of Joy

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgements against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸ as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

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

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN: Follow the Shepherds to Bethlehem

Responsive Psalm: Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice, the Lord is near

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always;

again I will say, Rejoice.

⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything,

but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

let your requests be made known to God.

⁷ **And the peace of God,**

which surpasses all understanding,

will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Gospel Reading: Luke 2:8-14 The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!'
This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON: "Follow the Shepherds"

Rev. Dr. Rebecca Chaffee

SERMON HYMN: "Angels, from the Realms of Glory" #143

REGENT SQUARE

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 bring to God our offerings, with thanksgiving that God provides more than enough for all. Let us give, as each is able, for the benefit of Christ's church and God's world.

THE OFFERTORY

DOXOLOGY: "All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night" #675 (vs 4)

TALLIS' CANON

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We will not be afraid, Loving God, to offer our hopes, our hearts, our treasures to you, but do so willingly, trusting that you will use them to bring life, joy, grace, and peace to all around us. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: "In the Bleak Midwinter" #144

CRANHAM

CHARGE

Setting aside our fears and worries, let us go.

We will go as God's people on this day, to remind everyone that God is as close to them as the beats of their hearts.

Setting aside our prejudices and assumptions, let us go.

We will go as Jesus' followers this day, to gather up the forgotten and bring them home, to embrace the lonely as sisters and brothers.

Setting aside our expectations and demands, let us go.

We will go as those graced by the Spirit, to share with others the waters from grace's deep wells, to offer that peace which never comes to an end.

BENEDICTION

Volunteers This Week:

Liturgist: Janet Haacker
Tech: Betsy Crocker
Usher(s): Bonnie Zimmer
Greeter(s): Diane & Bob Eshelman
Coffee Hour:

Volunteers Next Week 12/22/24

Liturgist: Diane Charsley
Tech: Betsy Crocker
Usher(s): Larry Rayner
Greeter(s): Terry Deluca, Ina Charsley
Coffee Hour: Marilee Mathias

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, Dec 15

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

Monday, Dec 16

10:00 am Alcoholics Anonymous (Circle II Basement)
6:00pm Church Stretch
7:00pm Session
7:00pm Ken-Ton Clergy Blue Christmas Service – Church of Nativity UCC

Tuesday, Dec 17

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

Wednesday, Dec 18

9:00am – 2:00pm Office Hours

Thursday, Dec 19

9:00am – 2:00pm Office Hours
10:00am Alcoholics Anonymous (Circle II Basement)
6:00pm-8:00pm Choirs Practice

Friday, Dec 20

5:30pm-8:00pm Friday Friendzee – “Sing for Your Supper”

Saturday, Dec 21

10:00am Alcoholics Anonymous (Circle II Basement)

Sunday, Dec 22

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

