



First Presbyterian Church of Defiance
December 17, 2023 – Third Sunday of Advent
501 Washington Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512
419-782-2781 www.1presby.com

WELCOME TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DEFIANCE.

***As you enter this holy space, please enter with reverence,
respecting those who are preparing for worship.***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Mike Winners and Joel Youkers for special music this morning.

Tuesday: 6 pm Joint Meeting of Deacons and Elders over supper.

Wednesday: 6 pm Carols, Soup & Crafts at FPC Napoleon

Christmas Eve: 10 am Casual Brunch & Worship in the Annex; bring something to share.

7 pm Christmas Eve Worship

GATHER

PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

As the hand is made for holding and the eye for seeing, you have created me for joy, O God. Share with me in finding that joy everywhere: in the violet's beauty, in the lark's melody, in the child's face, in a mother's love, in the purity of Jesus. Amen.

(Traditional Scottish Gaelic prayer as in The Westminster Collection of Christian Prayers, D.M Stewart, 2002)

PRELUDE

CHRISTMAS MEDLEY – ROBERT HUGHES

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: We stand amazed: Our God can part the sea.

P: God can bring water from a rock,

L: and provide bread in the desert.

P: Our God can walk on water.

L: He can heal the sick, and turn water into wine.

P: Our God sets the stars in the sky.

L: God hears our voice when we cry,

P: and is closer than our own breath.

L: There is nothing our God cannot do.

P: We stand in awe. We worship God with wonder.

***HYMN 123**

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR (ALL STANZAS)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

L: How does a weary world practice joy?

P: By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.

L: By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy babies.

P: By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

L: By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up for our community.

P: There are a million ways to practice joy.

L: So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge.

P: With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.

HYMN 88

O COME THOU WISDOM FROM ON HIGH (STANZA 2)

CALL TO CONFESSION

If you spend any time with a child, you will quickly notice that children see the world differently. For a child, a ladybug is a miracle. A pine tree is a wonder. Curiosity is a love language, and water is not only for survival, but for joy. As adults, we forget this language of awe and wonder, and when we do, we distance ourselves from God. In confession, we have the opportunity to close that distance. So let us return to God with hearts wide open. Let us return to God in prayer.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe. We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts. We praise those who have answers, and assume that wonder is an answerless game. Forgive us for closing that door to you. Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children. Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that like Zechariah, when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of praise. With hearts open wide, we pray, amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Family of faith, just as we marvel at mountains and newborns, at sunrises and sunsets, God marvels at us. There is nothing you could do or leave undone that could prevent God from loving you. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: We are forgiven. We are loved. We belong to God.

THE PEACE

L: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

P: And also, with you.

L: Please share Christ's peace with one another.

***HYMN 119**

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING (STANZA 1)

HEAR

WeKIRK WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 126 AND LUKE 1: 57-66

SERMON

AMAZEMENT AS A BALM FOR THE WEARY

SPECIAL MUSIC

O HOLY NIGHT – MIKE WINNERS

RESPOND

OFFERING NOTE

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

SCATTER TO SERVE

***HYMN 93**

LIFT UP YOUR HEADS

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Family of faith, as you leave this time, you go into a weary world— so speak tenderly. Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope. And remember that Christ took on flesh for you. You are God’s beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it.

POSTLUDE

JOY TO THE WORLD – MIKE WINNERS

**Please rise in body or in spirit*

Liturgy adapted from liturgy written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

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PLEASE PRAY FOR Evan Bates, Larry Bates, Joy Reid, Lynn Peters, Alton Myers, Sheron Lee, Wilma Sponsler and her daughter, Helen, Scott Solether, Jack Hess, Dave Roth (Youkers), Karen Solether, Dick (Wilma Sponsler), Nancy Black, Karen Barber, Karl Leckrone, Raegan Wonderly, Nancy Berkheiser (West Unity CRE), Kellie Hahn (Mike Price), Sue D’Ambrosia (Nikki’s mother-in-law), Nicole D’Ambrosia, Carla Knoop, (Marilyn), Marty & Deb Kennedy (Elaine), Judy Chase (Lilly & Asher’s great-aunt), the family of the Rev. Dr AnnMarie Montgomery.