



First Presbyterian Church of Defiance

December 31, 2023 – Christmastide

501 Washington Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512

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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.***

GATHER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to the New Wineskins Band for leading worship today!

A New Year full of blessings and peace to all!

In your honor, Ann and Norm have made a contribution to the work of World Central Kitchens, now operating in Israel & Gaza as well as continuing work in the Ukraine and other places where war and disaster are present.

PRAYER IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Gracious God, when our world turns upside down or when the road ahead is unclear, we return to ritual. We come to the sanctuary. We break bread at table. We pour water, recalling the gift of baptism. We greet one another as family. And we listen to your Word. Today we pray - meet us in this moment. Meet us in these rituals that anchor us and speak a word of hope. We are listening. We are drawing near. We are seeking you. Amen.

PRELUDE

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Every year we celebrate Christmas.

P: Every month we break bread.

L: Every week we gather for worship.

P: Every day we count our blessings.

L: Every minute God is near.

P: Yes, every minute God is near.

L: These are the rituals of our faith.

P: Let us worship Holy God.

***SPECIAL MUSIC**

LORD I LIFT YOUR NAME ON HIGH

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Church family, our faith is decorated with rituals and rhythms that help tie us to God. Confession is one of those rituals. Every week we gather in this space and tell the truth about our lives. Every week God hears our prayers and offers us grace. This holy dance of confession and mercy is one of the many rituals we cannot live without. So let us embrace this holy tradition together. Let us pray:

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of rhythms, we confess: our faith would not be what it is without rituals. Unlike you, we depend on bread and water. We have to return to this space again and again to hear old, familiar stories. For if we stopped, we know it would not take long before we lost our way. Forgive us for our fragility, and thank you for giving us ordinary rituals and rhythms to hold onto. As we begin this new year help us maintain and discover the rituals will help us grow in faith, hope, and love. With grateful and humble hearts we pray, amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

***ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

Friends, it is not enough to hear once a month or once a year that you are forgiven. We need to hear it every single week. Every single week we need to be reminded that we are held in God's loving embrace. So, hear this good news: no matter where you are on your journey of life, love, or faith, and no matter what you have done or left undone, you belong to God. You are claimed. You are known. You are forgiven. This is the good news of the gospel! Thanks be to God! Amen!

***THE PEACE**

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

P: And also, with you.

L: Please share signs of peace with one another.

***SPECIAL MUSIC**

ANOTHER HALLELUJAH (CHRISTMAS EDITION)

HEAR

WeKIRK WORD

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 2: 21- 38

SERMON

DEDICATION

RESPOND

SPECIAL MUSIC

CANTICLE OF THE TURNING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING NOTE

We are still receiving the Christmas Joy Gift Offering and special gifts to Pay Down School Lunches at our area schools. Thank you for keeping up with your tithes, pledges and gifts to the church.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SCATTER TO SERVE

*SPECIAL MUSIC

GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN

*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

**Please rise in body or in spirit*

Cover art is by Omar Lopez at unsplash.com. Liturgy adapted from A Sanctified Art, Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2023, written by Sarah Speed.

PLEASE PRAY FOR Evan Bates, Larry Bates, Joy Reid, Lynn Peters, Alton Myers, Sharon Lee, Wilma Sponsler, Scott Solether, Jack Hess, Dave Roth (Youkers), Karen Solether, Dick (Wilma Sponsler), Nancy Black, Karen Barber, Karl Leckrone, Raegan Wonderly, Sue D'Ambrosia (Nikki's mother-in-law), Carla Knoop & Carolyn Knoop, (Marilyn), Marty & Deb Kennedy (Elaine), Nicole D'Ambrosia, Judy Chase, and the many in our area recovering from Covid.