

*Holy Jesus, every day
Keep us in the narrow way;
And, when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide,
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.*

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“Away in a Manger”

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven to live with Thee there.*

*POSTLUDE “Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella” (arr. Rick Robertson)
Rick Robertson, piano

*Please stand if you are able

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

Family of Audrey Baribault
Natalie Bishop
Family of Richard Bray
Pete Chambers
Family of Marty Davis
Harriet Flick
Chris Hester
Teresa Howell
Vickie Lonidier
Allison Parrish
Doug Walker

TODAY’S WORSHIP LEADERS:

Liturgist: Jayne Pauley

Elders on Duty: Pat Briggs, Chris Hester

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Happy Birthday this week to: (12/21) Ethan Carne; (12/22) Chris Bailey, Kathey Sandiford; (12/25) Lindley Brown, Pam Craig; (12/26) Sandy Mann

Please remember to RSVP for the Christmas Eve Service by either calling the church office or using the link sent out in the newsletter.

We will be collecting a Christmas Joy Special Offering on Christmas Eve. This offering supports Presbyterian-related schools and colleges of color as well providing assistance for current and retired church workers and their families with critical financial needs.

There will be a congregational meeting today following the worship service for the purpose of selecting elders-elect for the Class of 2023. The elder nominating committee has selected the following people:

John Darden, Jolene Davis, Gary Knox, Doug Pauley

Nominations can be made from the floor; however, please ensure you have the person’s permission first.

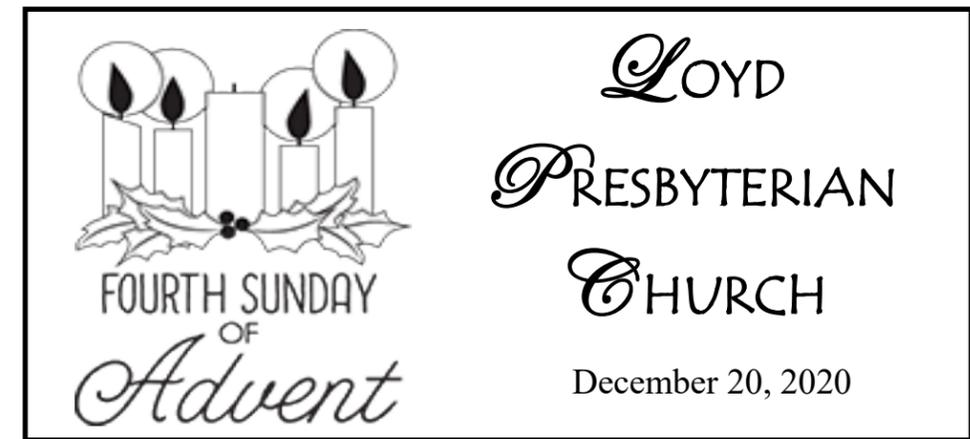
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Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
A Partner in Education with Long Cane Elementary School

WIFI password: buddyloyd

*If you are interested in church membership,
or have a question about the life and ministry of this congregation,
please speak with one of our elders.*



CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE “Carol of the Birds” (arr. Rick Robertson)
Rick Robertson, piano

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*HYMN “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

*Good Christian friends rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Give ye heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ is born today;
Ox and ass before Him bow,
And He is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!*

*Good Christian friends, rejoice
With heart, and soul, and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
To gain the everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: LOVE

Bernice Griffeth and Koren Stapp

In the ancient world, various peoples lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in Holy Spirit for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love; and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

Leader: God of hope, Prince of peace, Jubilee Judge, and Lord of love, your goodness is beyond our wildest imaginings. You give us more than we can think to ask, coming to us with impossible possibility in the union of flesh and spirit. Teach us to love this world and all people as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*CORPORATE PRAYER OF CONFESSION (IN UNISON)

Gracious God, in whom all things are possible, we confess that we have doubted what we cannot explain. We have sought strength and enjoyment apart from you. We have taken pride in ownership more than giving praise through stewardship. We have neglected to thank you, either in good times or when you have supported us during days of uncertainty. We have resisted the newness you offer. Forgive us, we pray, for installing ourselves as reigning deities. Lead us, rather, in paths of trust and obedience. Amen.

*PERSONAL AND PRIVATE CONFESSION OF SIN

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON (IN UNISON)

God does not run away from steadfast love, even when we are unfaithful. The Rock of our salvation keeps covenant with us despite our iniquity. God's mercy is for all who humbly seek it. God fills the hungry with good things, but the rich are sent away empty. If we have chosen to receive forgiveness and to move away for self-absorption, we will understand God's pardon and live joyously within it.

*APOSTLE'S CREED (IN UNISON)

**I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of
God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic church; the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

MUSICAL MEDITATION

“Gesu Bambino” (Pietro Yon)
Elizabeth Arena, soprano

Today we welcome Elizabeth Arena as our guest musician. Elizabeth studied Vocal Performance at Indiana University and currently is a Supply Chain Specialist at Milliken & Co.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Mike Pauley

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me to bring good news to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to announce release to captives and freedom to those in prison. He has sent me to proclaim that the time has come when the Lord will save his people and defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn, to give to those who mourn in Zion joy and gladness instead of grief, a song of praise instead of sorrow. They will be like trees that the Lord himself has planted. They will all do what is right, and God will be praised for what he has done. They will rebuild cities that have long been in ruins.

The Lord says, “I love justice and I hate oppression and crime. I will faithfully reward my people and make an eternal covenant with them. They will be famous among the nations; everyone who sees them will know that they are a people whom I have blessed.” Jerusalem rejoices because of what the Lord has done. She is like a bride dressed for her wedding. God has clothed with salvation and victory. As surely as seeds sprout and grow, the Sovereign Lord will save his people, and all the nations will praise him.

THE SERMON

Rev. Dave Omerod

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (IN UNISON)

**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.**

*HYMN

“As with Gladness Men of Old”

*As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding start behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Evermore be led to Thee.*