**OFFERTORY ANTHEM** 

The Birthday of the King Scott Beasley, Baritone

William H. Neidlinger

In the little village of Bethlehem,

There lay a Child one day, And the sky was bright with a holy light O'er the place where Jesus lay.

Refrain: Alleluia! O how the angels sang.

Alleluia! How it rang!

And the sky was bright with a holy light,

'Twas the birthday of a King.

'Twas a humble birth-blace, but O how much

God gave to us that day,

From the manger bed what a path has led,

What a perfect, holy way. [Refrain]

#### \*DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Abostles' Creed

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.

\*CLOSING HYMN

Of the Father's Love Begotten (vv. 1-3, 6)

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### \*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

**POSTLUDE Swiss Noels With Variations**  Louis-Claude Daquin

#### WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN....

The roses on the chancel are in honor of the births of Lucas Baxter Ragsdale, son of Jack and Haley Ragsdale, grandson of Dennis and Becky Ragsdale, and William Tyler Berry, son of Mary Emily Christiansen and Davis Berry, grandson of Debbie Christiansen.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be collected at both services tonight.

All are invited to join us in the fellowship hall to celebrate Ginny and Bill Morrow's 50th wedding anniversary following the 11 am service on December 31st. Heavy hors d'Oeuvres will be served. Let's gather together to show our love and appreciation for Ginny and Bill, and to congratulate them on reaching this incredible milestone in their journey together. We hope to see you all there!

#### WELCOME

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville. We have been part of the downtown Knoxville community since 1792. We embrace people from all walks of life and seek to share our spiritual journey with our community. We are part of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We are delighted that you have joined us in worship today.

To learn more about us, please make a note on the Friendship Pad, sign up for our Thursday newsletter, or connect with us at fpcknox.org, via the QR code to the right, or through social media.



Hearing enhancement devices and large print hymnals are available for use during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance.

#### **OFFERING**

You may place your offering in the offering plates when they are passed, or you are invited to give securely online at www.fpcknox.org/donate or by scanning the QR code to the right with your smart phone.



#### STAFF AND LEADERS IN WORSHIP

The Rev. Mark R. Curtis Senior Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Meredith Loftis

Associate Pastor

Dr. Andy Morgan

Director of Family Faith Formation

Mark Pace

Organist/Choirmaster

Mary Wilson **Adult Ministry Coordinator** 

Katie Norrell

**Director of Communications** 

Jane Holland Director of Finance/Facilities

Laura Harmon Church Administrator

Lauren Nunn Director of Parent's Day Out / Childcare Coordinator

Sandra Robinson Administrative Assistant

> Victor Lenoir Custodian

Paul Seguna Sound Engineer

## **WORSHIP MUSIC NOTES**

Hark, The Herald Angels Sing Silent Night, Holy Night Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence Tune: Picardy In the Bleak Midwinte Tune: Cranham

One License # 150707 One License # 1044267 Of the Father's Love Begotter Tune: Divinum Mysterium Swiss Noels with Variations

One License # 122252

## FOR OUR YOUNGER WORSHIPPERS

All children are welcome in worship at FPC. Children, Kindergarten through 2nd Grade, are invited to attend Children's Worship in the Children's Area (2nd floor) after Special Time with Young Disciples. Worship Bags are available at each entrance to the sanctuary. A nursery is available for children, in preschool and younger, in the Nursery rooms (2nd floor).



By Stushie Art



# FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**DECEMBER 24, 2023** 

Connect With Us







www.fpcknox.org

620 State Street Knoxville, TN 37902

<sup>\*</sup>Please stand if you are able.

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**P**RELUDE

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing Silent Night, Holy Night Adult Handbell Choir

Arr. Lloyd Larson Arr. Lloyd Larson

## **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

This is the day that the Lord has made: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT

Mary Wilson, William Wilson, and Maddie Pitt

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and set lights in the sky — sun and moon and stars. By these stars, our ancestors charted their journeys. By these stars, they knew God was with them.

Today we light four candles to bring the fire of the stars down from heaven to earth, to dwell among the people of God.

We name this candle Hope. We name this candle Peace. We name this candle loy. We name this candle Love. We too are on a journey, and we do not always know the way. But we chart our path by the star of love.

Even when sharp words rattle in our ears, and our hearts sit cold and numb, we set our face steadily towards the light.

Listen now to the wisdom of the early Christians: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God: if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:7-12). Lord Jesus, as we search for signs of love this week,

help us to become the signs of love that others are searching for. As these candles are but a glimpse of the light of the heavens, help us to be a glimpse of heaven's love. Amen. \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, always with us, always coming: We confess that we do not know how to prepare for your Advent. We have forgotten how to hope in miracles; we have ignored the promise of your kingdom; we get distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God.

Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds, the intelligent courage of the Magi, and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph, that we may journey with them to Bethlehem and find the good news of a child born for us. Now, in the quiet of our hearts, we ask you to make us ready for his coming...

(a moment for silent confession)

## \*Assurance of Pardon

Comfort, Comfort Now My People (verse 1) 87 \*Musical Response "Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God. "Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load. To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them! Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over."

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

\*MUSICAL RESPONSE O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 7) O Come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

#### THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:26-28 Rev. David Dennis <sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

**ANTHEM** How Beautiful are the Feet George F. Handel Molly Garrett, Eliza Foster, altos How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. Break forth into joy.

**SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON** 

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

<sup>1</sup> Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." 3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." <sup>4</sup> But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup> Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 6 I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 8 Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup> and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup> from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

"No Takebacks" **SERMON** Rev. Mark R. Curtis

## THE RESPONSE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

HYMN OF RESPONSE

In the Bleak Midwinter

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER Rev. Dr. Meredith Loftis 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.

RECEPTION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS