

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 7, 2025
COMMUNION SUNDAY / 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
As you arrive for worship, greet each other with a smile and soft words, but please remember there are those who cherish a time of quiet before worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

Cheryl Mayhew, organist
James Moffatt

“The First Noel”

ADVENT READING

Reader: Jake Light

L: We all know the story about the birth of Jesus. Most of us will spend not only large amounts of money but large amounts of time the month of December preparing for Christmas – buying gifts, going to parties, attending or participating in Christmas programs, decorating our homes and traveling to be with friends and family. But are we preparing our hearts for the real Christmas?

So, let’s simplify what this big deal is all about. There was a baby born to Mary and Joseph in a manger, witnessed by several animals and sought out by shepherds and wise men who followed a star to Bethlehem. While we are at it, we can throw in a few angels to our story. Can we think of the power of God through these simple things?

Can you imagine, a “donkey”, an animal of PEACE, would not only carry a very pregnant Mary to Bethlehem but would also witness the birth of the would-be King, Jesus Christ. But this was not the only time that God would use a donkey, the most lowly and humble creature, for His great glory. In 1 Kings 1:33, it was written that the lineage of Jesus, King David, at the end of his life, had his son Solomon paraded into the city on a donkey. This was done to assure the people that his son was the true heir. How ironic that Jesus, too, would choose a donkey colt, pure in spirit, to ride into Jerusalem in time for Passover. The donkey was chosen to portray Jesus as a ruler, just as King David had his son do. But more importantly, the donkey was also there to witness God’s prophecy of the Messiah who would bring salvation and PEACE to mankind.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE OF PEACE

L: We light this second candle of Advent, the candle of PEACE, to witness the news of the birth of God’s Son just as the donkey did in the manger and to be carried to salvation.

† OPENING HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

#249

† PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Dear Lord, remind us of how fortunate we are to be chosen by you, just like the donkey was chosen to serve You. Forgive us if we stray from Your will and don’t share the PEACE that You promised through the birth of Your Son. Help us to remain humble and grateful just as the donkey who was willing to be used to ensure Your great plan for us. Give us the courage to be PEACE-keepers and messengers of the good news. Amen .

† WORDS OF ASSURANCE (responsive)

L: We are God’s people who are given the task to keep PEACE and share God’s word.
P: Let us celebrate the birth of Christ and share this good news!
All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen!

† GLORIA PATRI

words on screen

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost: As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”
(R. Thygerson)
(Children are dismissed to Sunday School)

Chancel Choir

OFFERING

Offertory *“Bring a Torch Jeannette, Isabella”* Christopher Uehlein

† Doxology words on screen

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

† Prayer of Dedication

HYMN OF PREPARATION

“Emmanuel”

#243

MESSAGE

“Be Brave and Have Hope”
Isaiah 40:3-5; Matthew 3:1-12

Rev. Dr. Erin McGee

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

-Apostle’s Creed (Green hymnal-inside cover)
-Prayer of Thanksgiving
-Serving of the Elements
-The Lord’s Prayer
-Servers: Mark Wisely, Clint Gingerich, Paul Auble, Claudia MacRae

† CLOSING HYMN

“Away in a Manger”

#262

† BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Arr. by Harold DeCou

†Please stand if you are able.

Join us in Fellowship Hall following the service for coffee and refreshments.

- * Please sign and date the attendance pad.
- * Be sure to silence your cell phones.
- * We have a fully staffed Nursery available for newborn through 2 years old. Located in the upstairs hallway (nearest the back door), the 2nd door on the left. A changing table is available in the Nursery, as well.

Thank you to Claudia MacRae who is authoring our Advent Readings this season.

We welcome **Reverend Dr. Erin McGee**, Transitional Lead Presbyter of White Water Valley Presbytery, to the pulpit today. She will moderate the congregational meeting following our worship service.

SCRIPTURE & MESSAGE NOTES

Isaiah 40:3-5 (NRSV)
A voice cries out:
“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.
⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Matthew 3:1-12 (NRSV)
In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,
“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”