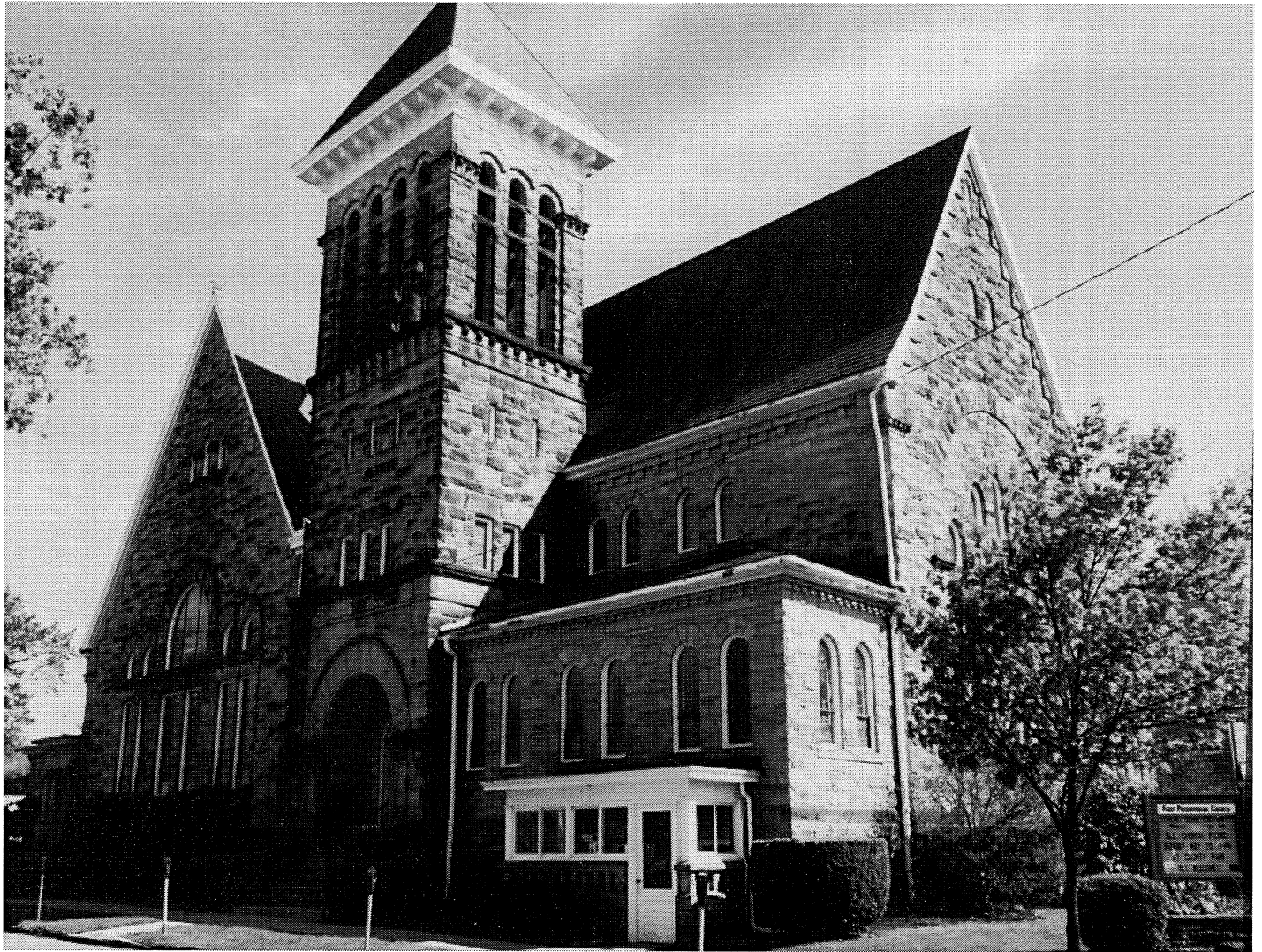


First Presbyterian Church



*Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2024*



700 Wood Street, Clarion, PA 16214

814-226-8145

churchoffice@clarionfirstpresby.org

www.clarionfirstpresby.org

We come together to worship, grow, and serve as disciples of Christ.

We Gather in God's Name

(Tune your car radio to 88.7 FM)

Third Sunday of Advent

Welcome and Announcements

Lector, Cindy Stants

We silently shift our focus to God and prepare to worship.

Prelude

Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending

Thomas Chesterton,
arr. William Owen

Chiming of the Trinity

Please join in reading or singing those parts of the service printed in **bold**.

Advent Reading and Candle Lighting

Hymn (Insert—vs. 1-4)

We Light the Advent Candles

Alex Kaczmarek, Robin Minich

Call to Worship

God, you are our salvation and trust.

Rejoice in the Lord, for our God is near.

You redeem your people; you restore our fortunes.

Rejoice in the Lord, for our God is near.

You have become for us our strength and salvation.

Rejoice in the Lord, for our God is near.

Let us sing to the Lord, who has done glorious things.

Let us offer joy, thanks, and praise this day. Hallelujah!

✠ When this symbol precedes an element of the service, please rise in body or spirit.

✠ Hymn No. 403

Open Now the Gates of Beauty

✠ Call to Confession

Remember that our great high priest, the Lord Jesus, can sympathize with us in our weaknesses, since in every respect he was tempted as we are, yet without sin. Because of this, we can approach the throne of God's grace with boldness, to seek to get rid of those things that drag us down and hurt others, to seek God's mercy, and to receive God's grace in our times of need. Friends, let us confess our sins to God.

✠ Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Merciful God, we confess that, in the midst of your glorious creation, we have neglected our role in its care. We ignore the cries of the hurting and the lonely, those on the margins and those who are oppressed. We focus on our own desires, while forgetting the needs of our neighbors. We have not prepared a way for the Lord, through either our words or our deeds, neither through our actions nor our thoughts. Grant us your mercy in forgiveness; and lead us to act with compassion and justice, guided by your glorious light. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

✠ Declaration of Forgiveness

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. Because of what Jesus did, we are forgiven. May the God of mercy, who forgives us of all our sin, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life.

Friends believe the Good News:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

✠ Gloria Patri

GLORIA PATRI

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

We Share God's Word

Time with the Children

Debra Owens

Prayer of Illumination

Cindy Stants

First Scripture

Zephaniah 3:14-20

(p. 877)

Second Scripture

Luke 3:7-18

(p. 60)

The words of scripture, inspired by God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Real Repentance”

Rev. Rebecca Mihm

Organ Interlude

✦ Hymn No. 163

Wild and Lone, the Prophet's Voice

We Give Thanks to God

✦ Affirmation of Faith

4.110 Heidelberg Catechism

God forbids not only outright theft and robbery, punishable by law. But in God's sight theft also includes all scheming and swindling in order to get our neighbor's good for ourselves, whether by force or means that appear legitimate, such as inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume; fraudulent merchandising; counterfeit money; excessive interest; or any other means forbidden by God.

Call for the Offering

Offering and Offertory

Waiting

Pepper Choplin

✦ Doxology

✦ Prayer of Dedication

Ordination/Installation of Officers—Bill Champion, Matt Kurtas, Kathy Larimer
Barb Beggs, Stacy Hoffman, Bert Louder

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

We Go Forth to Serve

✦ Hymn No. 93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

✦ Charge and Benediction

Postlude

People Look East

French melody,
arr. James Mansfield

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Advent Hymn: “We Light the Advent Candles” from *Worship & Rejoice* #175. Text: Gracia Grindal. Music: German folk tune. Text: © 1999 *Hope Publishing Company*. Livestreamed and reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-727612, all rights reserved.

1st Hymn: “Open Now the Gates of Beauty” from *Glory to God* #403. Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1732; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt. Music: Joachim Neander, 1680; harm. *The Chorale Book for England*, alt. Public Domain. Livestreamed with permission under CCLI Streaming Plus License™ A-21963048 and reprinted with permission under Church Copyright License © A-21963031, Public Domain.

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3rd Hymn: “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” from *Glory to God* #93. Text: Georg Weissel, 1642; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863. Music: *Musica Sacra*, c. 1788. Public Domain. Livestreamed with permission under CCLI Streaming Plus License™ A-21963048 and reprinted with permission under Church Copyright License © A-21963031, Public Domain.

Postlude: “People, Look East,” arr. James M. Mansfield. French melody. Livestreamed with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-727612, all rights reserved.

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DOXOLOGY

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

POSTLUDE

Please remember at the close of the service, the Postlude is a time to silently reflect on God and the mission to which we are called. We ask that you please remain silent and seated until the music has ended.

WELCOME VISITORS

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church. We are glad to provide hybrid and virtual worship services for this Sunday. Services are currently livestreamed on our Facebook page (First Presbyterian Church of Clarion) in real time, then archived to our website and YouTube channel.

At First Presbyterian Church our mission is to worship, grow, and serve as followers of Jesus. From our youngest to our oldest, we seek to worship God in our actions, grow in God's love, and serve God's people in our community and around the world. We hope that you will come join us so we may personally extend a warm welcome. If you have any questions or particular prayer needs, please feel free to contact the church office at 226-8145 between 9 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

For more information visit our website at www.clarionfirstpresby.org.

Find us on Facebook! (First Presbyterian Church of Clarion)

Video recordings of past sermons may be viewed by clicking the "Worship" link on our home page at www.clarionfirstpresby.org or a phone app is available at sermon.net (look for First Presbyterian Church—Clarion.) You can also choose to listen to an audio version. Simply pick the option that works best for you. Videos of Sunday worship are also posted on our Facebook page (see above).

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CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Mihm
Organist: Jean Mitrosky
Director of Music: Bonnie Champion
Treasurer: Ann Brooks
Secretary: Debra Owens
Sexton: Mike Hetrick
Sound Engineer: Josh Deitz
Video Engineer: Dan Willy

Ruling Elders:

<u>Class of 2024:</u>	<u>Class of 2025:</u>	<u>Class of 2026:</u>
Kathy Larimer	Jeff Deitz	Norma Kooman
Elaine Matticks	Jeff Kapp	Dave Larimer
Pam Reid	Kurt Nesbitt	Cindy Stants

Deacons:

<u>Class of 2024:</u>	<u>Class of 2025:</u>	<u>Class of 2026:</u>
Bonnie Champion	Kim Lewis	Robin Cable
Marianne Reynolds	Lee Seitz	Tamalyn Goble
Mary Swanger	Lori Smith	Joey Kunselman

WORSHIP NOTES

Pastor: Rev. Rebecca Mihm
Lector: Cindy Stants
Time with Children: Debra Owens
Director of Music: Bonnie Champion
Organist: Jean Mitrosky
Sound Engineer: Josh Deitz/Jeff Kapp
Video Engineer: Dan Willy/Kurt Nesbitt
Acolytes: Clara Stants, Jeremy Willy, Andrew Scovel, Nathan Scovel, Sawyer Kunselman, Audrina Champion
Ushers in Charge: Doug Bills, Josh, Meghan, Kennedy and Olivia Schmader

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

10:00 a.m. Worship
 Congregational Meeting
 11:00 a.m. Sunday School
 11:00 a.m. Cantata Rehearsal, Sanctuary

WEEKLY DEPOSIT SUMMARY

12/8/2024

Weekly Contributions

Envelope Contributions	\$4,505.00
Miscellaneous Cash Contributions	\$458.00
Total Contributions	\$4,963.00

Weekly Donations

Food Bags	\$400.00
Blessing Box	\$300.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$25.00
Xmas Flowers	\$56.00
Advent Books	\$11.00
Xmas Joy Offering	\$20.00
PDA Buckets	\$100.00
Men's Fellowship	\$190.00
Total	\$1,102.00
Total	\$6,065.00

NOTES:

THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBY

Tuesday, December 17

6:00 p.m. NA Meeting, Step Down Room

Wednesday, December 18

12:00 p.m. Advent Study, CE Opening Room

6:00 p.m. CE Team, Ministry Central

8:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous, Step Down Room

Thursday, December 19

10:00 a.m. Morning Circle, Marilyn Fox home

6:00 p.m. Joint Session/Deacon Dinner, Social Hall

6:00 p.m. Joyful Bells Rehearsal

7:00 p.m. Session Meeting, Social Hall

7:00 p.m. Deacons Meeting, Ministry Central

Next Sunday, December 22 Fourth Sunday of Advent

10:00 a.m. Worship

Cantata during worship

11:00 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Adult Choir Rehearsal

5:00 p.m. Caroling, Cocoa, and Cookies

Tuesday, December 24 Christmas Eve

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will have a Congregational Meeting after worship this morning. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the Pastor's terms of call which is on an insert in the bulletin.

Advent Study: Come join us for an Advent Study on Wednesdays. We will meet at noon in the CE Building. We will be focusing on Roth Boling's book, Seasons Greetings: Christmas Letters from Those Who Were There. The study will continue past the Advent season in order to cover all of the letters in the book.

Touched by a Child, Touched by a King: The Adult Choir will present this John Purifoy cantata during worship on Sunday, December 22nd. Follow the experiences of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and finally all those who believe today, in this combination of song, narration and Christmas texts.

Come join us for Caroling, Cocoa, and Cookies on December 22nd at 5:00 p.m. We will go out and sing and return for cocoa, cookies, and pizza. Please sign-up in the Ramp Room and bring a tray of cookies to the event. Pizza will be provided.

We are excited to announce that Edmon Rishmawi from Bethlehem, Israel will be doing a presentation during a covered-dish luncheon after worship on January 5, 2025. Edmon is the 63rd generation of his family to live in Bethlehem! Please sign up in the Ramp Room and bring a covered dish to the event.

I would like to thank the congregation for their generosity to the Men's Fellowship Christmas project. Through the

ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONTINUED)

parking permit sale during the ALF Parade Day, plus the monetary gifts that were given, we raised enough money to help 12 families. Twelve families received \$350 for a grand total of \$4,200.

Men's Fellowship/Bill

Disaster Clean-Up Buckets: The Mission Team is putting together clean-up buckets and hygiene kits to help those affected by the recent hurricanes. We are coordinating with Church World Service. The need is great and any help is much appreciated. If you choose to donate, please make your check payable to First Presbyterian Church with "clean-up buckets" on the memo line.

The Christmas Joy Offering dates back to the 1930's and equally benefits the Board of Pensions Assistance Program and Presbyterian racial ethnic education and leadership development. Please consider a gift to this fund now through December 22nd. Envelopes are in today's bulletin.

PRAYER LIST

Randy Cable

Margy Port

Shirley McKinley

Pauline Henry

Ruth Ann Minich

All our homebound members

Mary Biser

Charlotte Hartman

Ben McKinley

Laurie Dickey

Anthony Louder

Pat Hargest

Alice Davis

Alexandra Sharrar

Dr. Shannon Penland

Mary Kay Arth

Mason Martin and family

Angelo Gehenio

Joe Amato

Rob Summerville

Evie Renwick

Cori

Chuck Reninger

Grace Carroll

Mike Hiles

Kay Caller

Dan Clark

Amy Benhoff

Archer Kunselman

Lori Beth

Ryan Cornicki

Jerry Deitz

Greg Rhoads

Don Neideritter

Michael Kurtas, Jr.

Tom Minich

Rev. Robin Sharp

Bereaved

Please remember the friends and family of:

Peggy Seigworth

Patty Costen

Dr. Bob Armstrong

Around the World

Everyone serving in the US Military

Gitwe Congregation in

Rwanda, our faith partners

Homebound Member of the Week

Sam Spencer

Edgewood Heights

612 Keck Avenue

New Bethlehem, PA 16242

DECEMBER 15, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Living a life of repentance brings joy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 3:7-18	One more powerful is coming
Monday	Zephaniah 3:14-20	A song of joy
Tuesday	Philippians 4:4-7	The Lord is near
Wednesday	Isaiah 9:1-7	A child is born
Thursday	Hebrews 13:7-17	Service that pleases God
Friday	Luke 15:1-7	The parable of the lost sheep
Saturday	Isaiah 12:2-6	Thanksgiving and praise
Sunday	Luke 1:39-55	Mary visits Elizabeth

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

So with many other exhortations, [John the Baptist] proclaimed the good news to the people. Luke 3:18 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, may the good news of your coming fill our hearts with joy and lead us to love you and have compassion for others. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, bless our homes with joy this Advent. As we enjoy your gifts of food, make us ready for Jesus, the one who is to come. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God bless you with joy.

DECEMBER 15, 2024
HYMN OF THE WEEK
Joy to the World



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is some good news you have heard recently?
- A life of repentance brings joy and loving actions. How is that good news for us?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 3:7-18.

John the Baptist gets people's attention with words of condemnation, warning, and confrontation. And it works, or at least the crowd is riveted for a while. The people wonder what to do to get their lives in order. Simple: don't abuse your power and wealth; share; be generous. They are to show a life of repentance, which means living life differently because of God's ways and power. However, John's suggestions aren't the "how-to steps" to achieving a successful life. They are examples of behaviors of a life that trusts the good news. A life of repentance brings joy and loving actions. The good news of Jesus changes everything with the power of grace, mercy, and peace. John the Baptist describes it as the life that bears "fruits worthy of repentance" (v. 8).

Discuss: How would you describe the good news of Jesus to others?

Pray: Righteous God, we thank you that earthly powers that abuse others are condemned; we ask that your reign of peace bear the fruit of repentance in us, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how might your actions bring joy to someone this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The third candle on the Advent Wreath symbolizes the theme of joy. Discuss or think about the joy that Jesus brings to the world. Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, and the third candle of joy on the Advent Wreath.

Say: In Isaiah's song, he names God as the source of our salvation and the one to trust without fear. Isaiah cries out, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." Let us give thanks for the joy that Jesus brings. (Isaiah 12:2-3)

Pray: Thank you, Lord Jesus for giving us joy. Fill our lives with joy this Advent. Amen.



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In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org