



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN EVANSTON

December 22, 2024 – 9:30 a.m.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

FOCUS

Prelude

Motet

(Josquin De Pres, c. 1445-1521)

The Fruit of Love

(Anthony Holborne, 1599)

EXALT

Welcome

Lighting the Fourth Advent Candle – Love

One reader: This morning, we continue our Advent journey by lighting the candle of love.

ALL: The words of Scripture fill us with delight

that God's love is incarnate, is embodied, in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Another: Receive these words, recorded for us in John's first letter, chapter 4, verses 7 through 12:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;

ALL: everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Another: Whoever does not love does not know God,

for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way:

ALL: God sent his only Son into the world

so that we might live through him.

Another: In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

ALL: Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

Another: No one has ever seen God;

ALL: if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

One reader: Over a hundred people, from the ages of two to eighty years old, were asked the question, "What makes you feel connected; what makes you feel loved?" From the voices of different generations, hear their answers, each of which points us to Christ, who was born and lived on earth as the embodiment of love.

Another: Handwritten notes.

One reader: Casseroles.

Another: Being invited in.

One reader: Reading a book together.

Another: The passing of the peace.

One reader: Family walks.

Another: Youth group.

One reader: When I see my friends at preschool.

Another: Surprise phone calls.

One reader: Making music with other people.

Another: Belly laughs.

One reader: An inside joke.

Another: Dancing with my spouse in the kitchen.

ALL: Today we light the candle of love.

May its light remind us that God's son, Jesus Christ, is love.

May He allow us to know God more fully

and enable us to weave deeper connections between neighbors.

(The fourth candle is lighted.)

One reader: In a lonely world, let this light shine bright.
From the very first generation, God has surrounded us with love.
From generation to generation, we are held in God's love.

ALL: Thanks be to God for that good news. Amen.

Opening Hymn Once in Royal David's City

*(Words: Cecil Francis Alexander, 1848, alt.; Music: Henry John Gauntlett, 1849;
CCLI Song #2649014)*

Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for His bed.
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all.
And his shelter was a stable, And His cradle was a stall.
With the poor, the mean, and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His own redeeming love,
For that child so dear and gentle Is our Lord in heaven above.
And He leads His children on To the place where He is gone.

Confession & Assurance of Pardon

Leader: One of the greatest gifts and challenges of faith
is that God designed us to be in community with one another –
Just as Christ came and dwelt among us,
Now as Christians, as the bearers of the image of Christ in our
world,

we are designed to be among each other, in community.

We need one another. We need one another to grow. We need one
another to love. And we need one another to see God more clearly.

So together, let us lift our voices in unison.

Let us lean into the ties that bind and pray to our merciful God.

All:

God of today and tomorrow,

We remember that when Mary was pregnant and deciding where to turn, she ran to her cousin Elizabeth's house. Elizabeth threw open the door with joy and showered blessings upon her.

We ask you to open similar opportunities to us both as individuals and as a church family.

We pray your forgiveness when,

by inattention or by intention,

we leave the door locked, the curtains drawn, and the lights off.

We confess the times we have showered critique or judgment and we ask your Spirit's help in showering blessings and joy in their place.

Gracious God, forgive us for our wrongs,

and give us the eyes to see your face

in the face of our neighbors.

Amen.

(Silent Prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, this is what I know—

God delights in us. God throws open the door, just like Elizabeth, and says, "Come on home. There is room for you here!"

And in that moment, we are blessed.

In that moment, we are forgiven.

In that moment, we are seen, healed, and welcomed home.

So, rest in this good news: you are saved by grace.

Let us respond together with joy in the words from Mary's song:

(Luke 1:46:55 NRSV)

All: "My soul magnifies the Lord,

and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant,

**Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed.”
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Carols

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

(v. 1 & 2 in Blue Hymnal #48; Words: German Carol, 15th c., trans. Theodore Baker (1851-1934), alt. "Rejoice in the Lord," 1985; Music: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengesang, Cologne, 1599, arr. Michael Praetorius, 1609, CCLI Song #3860933)

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung,
Of Jesse's lineage coming, By faithful prophets sung.
It came a floweret bright, Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The rose I have in mind.
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright She bore for us a Savior
When half spent was the night.

This flow'r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death he saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.

Away in a Manger (*Blue Hymnal #25*)

(Words: stanzas 1-2, "Little Children's Book for Schools & Families," c. 1885, stanza 3, John Thomas McFarland, 1892; Music: attr. James R. Murray, 1887; CCLI Song #38583)

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,

But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

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.

The First Nowell (*Blue Hymnal* #56, v. 1, 2, 6)

(Words & Music: English Traditional Carol, arr. David Willcocks, 1961; CCLI Song #7123432)

The first Nowell the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay;
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel!

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
That hath made heav'n and earth of nought,
And with His blood mankind hath bought.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Born is the King of Israel!

ENCOUNTER

Children's Moment **Passing the Peace of Christ**

Announcements

Scripture Luke 1:39-45, 56-58

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.

⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

Sermon

Generation to Generation: We See God in Each Other

Rev. Dr. Tassie Green, Interim Senior Pastor

RESPOND

Sharing of Tithes and Offerings

Congregational Anthem

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

(Words: Mirian Therese Winter, 1979, after Mary's Song "Magnificat" in Luke 1:46-55, Glory to God Hymnal #99; Music: tune "Azmon"/O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing; Carl Gottlieb Glaeser, 1828, arr. Lowell Mason, 1839; CCLI Song #91855)

My soul gives glory to my God; my heart pours out its praise.
God lifted up my lowliness in many marvelous ways.

My God has done great things for me: yes, holy is God's name.
All people will declare me blessed, and blessings they shall claim.

From age to age to all who fear, such mercy love imparts,
Dispensing justice far and near; dismissing selfish hearts.

Love casts the mighty from their thrones, promotes the insecure,
Leaves hungry spirits satisfied; the rich seem suddenly poor.

Praise God, whose loving covenant supports those in distress,
Remembering past promises with present faithfulness.

Doxology & Offering Prayer*

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow *(Blue Hymnal #592)*
(Words: Thomas Ken, 1695, 1709; Music: Genevan Psalter, 1551; CCLI Song #56204)

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

Offering Prayer

Prayers of the People & 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.

Closing Hymn

Joy Has Dawned

("Joy Has Dawned" Words & Music: Keith Getty & Stuart Townend, 2004; "Angels We Have Heard on High" Words: James Chadwick, 1813-1882, Music: French Carol Melody, CCLI Song #4408246)

Joy has dawned upon the world, Promised from creation;
God's salvation now unfurled, Hope for ev'ry nation.
Not with fanfares from above. Not with scenes of glory,
But a humble gift of love: Jesus, born of Mary.

Sounds of wonder fill the sky With the songs of angels,
As the mighty Prince of Life Shelters in a stable.
Hands that set each star in place, Shaped the earth in darkness,
Cling now to a mother's breast, Vulnerable and helpless.

Shepherds bow before the Lamb, Gazing at the glory;
Gifts of men from distant lands Prophesy the story.
Gold: a King is born today. Incense: God is with us.
Myrrh: His death will make a way; By His blood He'll win us.

Son of Adam, Son of heaven, Given as a ransom,
Reconciling God and man, Christ our mighty Champion.

What a Savior, what a Friend, What a glorious mystery.
Once a babe in Bethlehem, Now the Lord of history.

Sending & Benediction

Postlude

Canzone per sonare No. 2

(Giovanni Gabrieli, 1557-1612)

Today's Worship Service Leaders

Fiona Shonik, Jordan Olive, Alex Laskey, Sean Keenan, Serena Voltz, Brass Quintet

Dr. Rebecca Chu, Organist

Crofton Coleman, Worship Band Director, Vocals

Chancel Choir

Tina Laughlin, Percussion

Hannah Dixon McConnell, Dir of Worship, Vocals

Rev. Dr. Tassie Green, Interim Senior Pastor, Welcome, Sermon, Offering Prayer, Benediction

Kathleen Bowen, Janelle Fergus, Janice Fuller, Sarah Pooler, Jane Pranga, Nourish Bible Study, Advent Candle Lighting

Olga Ricketts-Peart, Confession, Prayers of the People

Winifred Johnson, Scripture Reading

Abigail Cunningham, Dir. of Children, Children's Message, Peace

Ben Graham, Dir. of Youth, Announcements

Evan Peters, A/V Coordinator, Live Audio

TBD, A/V Volunteer, Projection

TBD, A/V Volunteer, Video Switcher

Andy Wallgren, Facilities Manager

Carol Clanton, Marcia Smith, Ushers

Bob Hecker, Sharon Smith, Prayer Companions

***FELLOWSHIP TIME WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THIS MORNING'S SERVICE
IN ROY HALL ON THE SECOND FLOOR. ALL ARE WELCOME.***

Children's Worship, Adult Education & Sunday School

Children's Worship this morning

- **Time:** 9:45–10:45 a.m.
- **Location:** Blue Room

Join us for a fun and engaging lesson about the birth of Jesus! Kids will also enjoy snacks and a craft activity after our lesson! Children's Worship is held

regularly during our weekly Sunday services to provide young children with a safe and welcoming space to grow and develop in their faith.

Adult Education classes will resume Sunday, January 5, 2025.

Youth & Children's Education

K-4th GRADE – SLC Wing Blue Room

NO 5th Grade through High School Classes (Resuming January 5, 2025)

There will be no youth or children's Sunday School classes on Sunday, December 29.

Announcements

OPEN GYM SESSIONS DURING CHRISTMAS BREAK

We're thrilled to bring back a beloved OCOF tradition this winter break: **Open Gym!** On **December 23, 27, 30, and January 2** the Roy Hall Gym will be open from **9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** for families to enjoy. This is a fantastic opportunity for kids to play, stay active, and burn off some energy during the break. We hope you'll join us and make the most of this fun and relaxed time together!

Please note that this is **not a staffed event**, so if you choose to participate, you'll need to fill out a liability form at the front desk as well as use the sign in/sign out sheet. Here are a few important guidelines:

- **An adult must be present** to supervise their children at all times.
- **At least two adults must be present at all times, in accordance with the Child Protection Policy.**
- **If more than 5 children are participating**, an additional adult who is not directly related to the family is required.
- **Clean up after your group is finished.** We share this space with other groups and the school, so it's essential to leave it clean and ready for the next users.

This event is open to everyone—feel free to spread the word to other families who might be interested! We hope this provides a fun and safe option for keeping kids active during the winter break. Let both the youth director and children's director know if you have any questions!

This year's Christmas Eve special offering will go towards the First Friends

ministry to Syrian immigrants. Primarily an outreach to Syrian refugees who came to the United States because of the civil war in Syria. The ministry—started by Sally Ivaska, Pastor Younan Shiba, and Caryl Weinberg—began in 2016, with an Iftar dinner for newly arrived Muslim refugees, hosted by First Presbyterian Evanston and Syrian Christians for peace. It was followed by First Pres hosting a Thanksgiving dinner and then grew into the

training and equipping of volunteer teams to be friends to families located near Evanston. After adopting some 10 families as friends, the ministry, now under the leadership of Bridgette Gilchrist, has grown to embrace 24 individuals and families. And it continues to grow as these friends bring their friends to experience the love and “peace” they feel at the church and interacting with all our volunteers.

New Content on EVANSTONCHRISTMAS.ORG!

This year we purchased a new web address (also called a URL) that we are using to point to our Advent 2024 web pages for the Advent season. This is a great place to encourage family and friends to visit if they are interested in coming to one of our Advent events or our Christmas Day worship services. (Note: upper or lowercase letters don't matter when typing in web addresses, so evanstonchristmas.org works just fine, too.)



The First Pres building and offices will be closed on Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25, and on Thursday, December 26. The building and offices will also be closed Wednesday, January 1, 2025. Please note that many FPCE staff will either be working reduced hours or in some cases out of the office completely from December 23 through January 4.



Calling All Small Groups!

The Small Groups Committee would like to hear from all small groups about how you are doing and how we might support your group. If you have not already received and responded to a short questionnaire emailed to your group's leader, please use this QR Code or visit <https://firstpresevanston.org/sgsurvey2024> to do so. It'll only take a few minutes!

An abbreviated version of News & Notes will be emailed Thursday, December 26. Look for the January eNews with the month's schedule of events to be sent January 2, 2025.

(Continued on next page.)



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve

4 P.M.
INTERGENERATIONAL
SERVICE

10 P.M.
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Both Christmas Eve services will be streamed live on <https://live.firstprevevanston.org>.

SAVE THE DATE - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025

**CHILI
COOK-OFF**

YOUTH FUNDRAISER

ROY HALL - 11 A.M. - 1 P.M.

**PIE
CHALLENGE**

BRING YOUR 1970'S BEST
JULIA CHILD PIE

**FPCE Youth
Fundraiser**

Why attend?

- Delicious Food
- Fun for All Ages
- Competitions & Prizes
- Support FPCE Youth

TWO CONTESTS - DOUBLE THE FUN!

TWO CONTESTS - DOUBLE THE FUN!

SAVE THE DATE - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025

First Presbyterian Church
1427 Chicago Avenue, Evanston, IL 60201
(847) 864-1472 Fax: (847) 864-1494
Email address: info@firstpresevanston.org
www.firstpresevanston.org

Mission Statement:
***First Presbyterian Church of Evanston
exists to know Christ and to grow in him
as we serve and make disciples in Evanston, the Chicago area,
and the world.***



This QR code will take you to a web page with links for giving and recording your attendance at today's service via the Connect Card.

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Welcome! We're glad you are here. We ask everyone to complete and return this page. Please tear it off from the stapled bulletin and slip it into the offering basket every week. December 22, 2024

Your Name

Family members' names/ages

Street Address, City, State, Zip

Phone: Cell Home

Email address

- Send me the weekly E-newsletter
- First time visitor
- Occasional attendee
- Regular attendee/member

- Single
- Married
- Have children at home
- Junior/High School student
- College student/Graduate student

I'm interested in:

- Knowing Jesus better
- I need prayer or support
- I would like to speak with a pastor
- Joining a Small Group
- Joining the Welcome Team
- Worship Music Team
- Sound/AV/Video Team
- Prayer Team
- Becoming a Member
- I need a Stephen Minister
- Communion at home suggested for
_____ (name)

Please pray for:
(This is shared with pastors & confidential prayer team)