



**First Presbyterian Church**  
Portsmouth, Ohio

December 21, 2025  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday In Advent  
11 o'clock Worship Service

Rev. Lisa Eye, Minister of Word and Sacrament, Pastor  
Ms. Michele Imes, Liturgist  
Ms. Michele Imes, Director of Music  
Dr. Phillip Roberts, Organist/Musician

***We are glad you came...***



# Welcome to First Presbyterian Church

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

### GATHERING TOGETHER AS COMMUNITY

#### *Something to ponder as you prepare for worship:*

*Because we were not able to gather for worship last Sunday, we will celebrate two Advent themes today – Joy and Love. Traditionally, the third week in Advent takes Joy as its central theme. It is sometimes called, “Gaudete Sunday” (gaudete means “rejoice” in Latin), or “Mary Sunday” because Mary’s song of joy, the Magnificat (from Luke 1:46b-55), is substituted for the Psalm reading. We also light the rose candle in the Advent wreath as another symbol for joy. This candle breaks the penitential purple, signaling the midpoint of Advent and a shift from reflection to joyful anticipation of Christ’s birth. While Advent is a time of longing and waiting in the shadows for Christ to come, there is also “anticipatory joy” in his arrival. The fourth week of Advent celebrates God’s expansive and persistent Love by entering into the world with us, as the child born to Mary, Immanuel.*

#### **WELCOMING THE COMMUNITY**

Ms. Michele Imes

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & CELEBRATIONS** *(Please see your Bulletin)*

#### **A PRELUDE TO BEGIN WORSHIP**

Dr. Phillip Roberts

#### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Ms. Michele Imes

What if joy were to break out unrestrained in our world?

What would we notice?

**The wilderness and dry land would be glad;  
the desert rejoice and blossom.**

The blind would see and the lame would walk.

Lepers would be cleansed, and the deaf would hear.

**The dead would rise and the poor would receive good news.**

May joy break out in our worship today as we anticipate the One who comes into our world!

**Come thou long expected Jesus!**

—adapted from Isaiah 35:1-2; Matthew 11:4-5



**\*PRAYER FOR THE DAY**

Ms. Michele Imes

God of Advent Joy, our souls magnify you, and our spirits rejoice in you, our Savior. As we draw near to the manger, focus our attention to your presence among us. Strengthen our faith as we consider the love, care, courage and trust of Mary and Joseph. Fill our hearts that we may sing with praise for the joy that you are bringing to your people. Amen.

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE #110**

*"Love Has Come"*

**GTG**

**LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

Michele Imes

We watch and wait for Christ's coming!

**We light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love,  
remembering the promises of God with prayer.**

We light this candle in hope.

We light this candle for peace.

We light this candle with joy.

This week, we light the candle of joy to remind us that darkness does not have the last word. Hear the words of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 35:1):

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom.*

And the song of Mary (Luke 1:46b-50):

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.  
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name;  
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation."*

We also light this candle for love. Out of love for the people of God, the Lord speaks through the prophet Isaiah 7:10-14:

*The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.*

### **Prayer (unison)**

**May the light of the candle of joy guide and inspire us as we work to spread God’s joy in the world around us. May the light of the candle of love give us courage to love our neighbors as ourselves, just as you love us in Jesus Christ. God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come. Amen.**

**Sung Response #88      “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Refrain:      GTG**  
***Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel!***  
***Shall come to thee, O Israel.***

### **\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

Ms. Imes

Let the desert rejoice,  
and let the dry ground be glad,  
for God has come to save us.  
Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sin.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)**

**God of majesty and glory, we are thirsty for your grace. You made a way for us in the wilderness, and still, in our foolishness, we go astray. We hide our eyes from your presence. We do not listen to your word. We are lifeless when we ought to dance with joy and speechless when we ought to sing praise. We are stingy with our love, forgetting that the love you offer us Forgive us, O Lord. Speak peace to our fearful hearts, strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees as we seek to follow in your holy way. Amen.**

*(Invitation to silent confession and reflection)*

## **DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

Rev. Lisa Eye

Emmanuel, God with us—what a glorious gift!  
The words of the prophet are fulfilled in the birth of a child.  
What is conceived of the Holy Spirit and carried in Mary's womb  
is the promise of eternal life.  
Hear and believe the promise: Jesus has come to save us!  
Thanks be to God!

**RESPONSE** #113

*“Angels We Have Heard on High” Refrain*

**GTG**

*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*

## **HEARING AND PROCLAIMING THE WORD**

### **PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING**

Rev. Eye

As your Holy Spirit spoke to the prophets, to Mary, and to Joseph, speak to us  
now through your Word that by hearing we too may receive faith and be  
strengthened to do your will. Amen.

### **OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

Isaiah 35:1-10

Rev. Eye

L: This is the Word of the Lord

*P: Praise be to God!*

### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

*“The Wilderness”*

Comp: Eric Thiman  
Soloist: Michele Imes

### **NEW TESTAMENT LESSON**

Matthew 1:18-25

Rev. Eye

L: This is the Word of the Lord

*P: Praise be to God!*

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

***AFFIRMATION of FAITH (unison)***

Rev. Eye

*(From A Sanctified Art: What Do You Fear?)*

**We have seen the valley.**

**We have seen a sky without stars.**

**We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.**

**We believe in God-with-us.**

**We believe in the hope of tomorrow.**

**We believe that good news is louder than fear.**

**We believe this good news is for all people.**

**So even when our knees shake,**

**even when our voice trembles,**

**even when fear is all around us,**

**we will hold onto that good news.**

**We will reach for each other.**

**We will look for God in our midst.**

**We will sing songs of joy.**

**We will proclaim:**

**Unto us, love is born.**

**We have seen the longest night,**

**and we have seen unimaginable love.**

**So still, we believe. Amen.**

***PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER***

Rev. Eye

...Receive all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, as we offer together the words Jesus taught us... **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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## **GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS TO THE LORD**

### ***INVITATION TO THE OFFERING***

Ms. Imes

The Spirit that was at work saving God's people in Isaiah's time  
is at work in our lives today.

The One who visited Joseph in a dream visits us still.

The child born of Mary lives in our midst when we gather in his name.

God is with us, Emmanuel.

In gratitude for this greatest of gifts, let us present our gifts to God.

### ***OFFERTORY INSTRUMENTAL***

Dr. Roberts

***\*THE DOXOLOGY*** #143 v. 4 *Angels, From the Realms of Glory*

**GTG**

*All creation, join in praising  
God the Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising  
to the eternal Three in One:  
Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn king!*

***\*THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION*** (*unison*)

Ms. Michele Imes

**We thank you gracious God for all the ways you work and heal and bless  
and free us. Accept these gifts given I great gratitude and in anticipation  
of Christ's return. Multiply them for your glory and for the good of all  
people. Amen.**

## **CALL TO MISSION**

***\*CLOSING HYMN*** #134 *"Joy to the World"*

**GTG**

**\*CONGREGATIONAL CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

Rev. Eye

In a fearful world,  
May you look for God's spirit.  
May you reach for each other's hands.  
May you choose courage whenever you can.  
And in all things, may you remember  
that good news is louder than fear.  
In the name of the one who calls,  
and the one who sends,  
and the one who journeys with—  
go in peace and  
be not afraid.  
Amen.

**ACOLYTE RECESSIONAL**

**\*SENDING SONG** #545      *"Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace"*      **GTG**

**POSTLUDE**    *(Please be seated for the postlude)*      Dr. Roberts

**\*The asterisk indicates when we rise to our feet in spirit, as we are able in body**

All music is used by permission.  
FPC CCLI Copyright License: 21474070  
Streaming License: 21474063  
FPC is a Licensed Copyright User, **Glory to God**, All music  
(see permission/license on file)

**THE PRAYER LIST IS POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD  
IN THE EDUCATION ANNEX**

Please pray for your ability to be faithful disciples, family, and friends; our church, pastor, the session, deacons, committees, lay leadership, our ministry, outreach, and stewardship, the Boney Fiddle community and its churches, public schools, city of Portsmouth and its leadership, state and national leadership, and those incarcerated.



## **Our Church and Community Calendar, Dec. 2025– January 2026**

**The FPC Food Pantry** will be closed until further notice due to Sanctuary Restoration.

**Dec. 24:** You are invited to join us as we celebrate Christmas Eve together at 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian, 6P. (There will not be a Christmas Eve service at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian)

**Dec. 24-27:** Church Office will be closed.

**Dec. 25: MERRY CHRISTMAS DAY!**

**Jan. 2026:** Armbrust meeting TBA.

**Jan. 1:** Church Office will be closed.

**Jan. 7:** Building Campaign Meeting, Conf. Rm, 1P.

**Jan. 11:** Congregational Meeting immediately following Worship, for the purpose of electing officers and presenting the 2026 Budget.

### **\*Worship Cancellation Policy Reminder:\***

Out of concern for the safety of our worshiping community, it is our policy to cancel worship anytime a Level 2 Snow Emergency is declared. Cancellations will be posted on WSAZ Channel 3-Huntington.

### **Church Contact Information**

Pastor & Church Secretary's Office Hours for the Week

Sunday: Worship and office hours. Mondays:

Home office (worship planning, prep, and meetings).

Tuesday thru Thursday: 10A - 4P in Office. Fridays: Off

Pastors Email: [leyefirstpresportsmouth@gmail.com](mailto:leyefirstpresportsmouth@gmail.com)

Pas. Study: (740)529-7117

Virginia M. Stinnett, Admin. Aid/Church Secretary,

[vstinnett.fpcport@gmail.com](mailto:vstinnett.fpcport@gmail.com)

Church Main Office: (740)353-4259

**EMAIL: [firstpresbyterian.portsmouth@gmail.com](mailto:firstpresbyterian.portsmouth@gmail.com)**

**<https://www.firstpresportsmouthoh.com>**

**<https://www.youtube.com/@firstconnections4806>**

**<https://facebook.com/firstpresbyterianchurchportsmouthohio>**



## SERMON NOTES

SERMON TITLE

SCRIPTURE VERSE(S)

WHAT DID I HEAR THAT RAISED QUESTIONS?

HOW CAN I APPLY THIS TO MY LIFE?

MY HEART-FELT PRAYER TO GOD FOR THOSE IN MY LIFE AND MYSELF