



**First Presbyterian Church**  
Portsmouth, Ohio

December 15, 2024  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday In Advent  
11 o'clock Worship Service

**Rev. Ronald Johnson, Minister of Word and Sacrament, Pastor**  
**Elder Diane Boster, Liturgist**  
**Ms. Michele Imes, Director of Music**  
**Dr. Phillip Roberts, Organist/Musician**

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



# Welcome to First Presbyterian Church

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent

### GATHERING TOGETHER AS COMMUNITY

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Ron Johnson

#### WELCOME

#### THE COMMUNITY GATHERS/PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

#### PRELUDE

Dr. Phillip Roberts

#### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Elder Diane Boster

L. A voice cries, " In the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord;  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

*P. We are preparing our hearts for the God of joy to come into  
the world.*

L. God's joy flows into our lives through the gift of the Christ child.

*P. The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with  
joy.*

L. God calls us out of the exile of sin with the good news of  
restoration. God has built a highway through the wilderness.  
Immanuel has come into our lives, and we know God has  
the power to keep God's promises.

*ALL. God calls us to strengthen our faith and prepare our hearts  
to glorify God. We are joyful people waiting for the return of  
our God.*

—adapted from Isaiah 40:3 and Romans 4:21

#### PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Elder Boster

*\*HYMN OF PRAISE #132 "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" GTG*

#### ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Elder Boster

L. No matter what troubles overwhelm us today,  
Isaiah reminds us that in our preparation and passionate pursuit  
of God's coming kingdom, we must not forget that God's  
salvation has come and is coming. "With joy, you will draw  
water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3). With joy, you will

remember that God's salvation is already present among us.

*P. Faced with the troubles and the suffering of the world, we choose to live in joyful presence to God and one another. We will not turn away from the pain and the hurt in our world, and we will not stop rejoicing in God, whose salvation fills us to overflowing that God's love might flow through us and flood our troubled world with hope, peace, and joy.*

L. We light this candle of joy as a sign of our commitment to be present to ourselves, our friends, our families, and our neighbors that in sharing our vulnerable lives we might share in the glorious joy of God's salvation together.

[Light the third (pink/rose) candle.]

**RESPONSE** #88 "O Come, O Come, Emanuel" verse 6 only **GTG**

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

Elder Boster

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** *(spoken in unison)*

Elder Boster

*Great God, as we prepare to behold the birth of Jesus again, we are mindful of how we have failed to receive the fullness of that gift. The story points us to your glory, yet we struggle to join in the song of praise and thanksgiving. We are distracted and confused, so focused on things of little significance that we overlook the good news of great joy that you have prepared. Tell us again that the Savior is born. Tell us again that we are forgiven. Tell us again that our lives can be abundant in faith, hope, and love because of what you have given us in Jesus Christ. Amen. (Invitation to silent confession and reflection)*

**DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

Rev. Johnson

L. ...This is good news!

*P. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!*

**RESPONSE** #447 "We Are Forgiven" **GTG**

## **THE WORD PROCLAIMED**

**PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING**

Rev. Johnson

### **FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON**

Isaiah 25:6-9 NIV Rev. Johnson

<sup>6</sup> On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare  
a feast of rich food for all peoples,  
a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.

<sup>7</sup> On this mountain he will destroy  
the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;

<sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever.

The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces;  
he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth.

The Lord has spoken.

<sup>9</sup> In that day they will say,

"Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us.

This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his  
salvation."

### **SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON**

Luke 2:15-20 NIV Rev. Johnson

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said  
to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has  
happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was  
lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word  
concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it  
were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up  
all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned,  
glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen,  
which were just as they had been told.

### **THIRD SCRIPTURE LESSON**

Romans 6:3-11 NIV Elder Boster

<sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were  
baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through  
baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the  
dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly  
also be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old  
self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done  
away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin <sup>7</sup> because anyone who  
has died has been set free from sin.

<sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. <sup>10</sup> The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

<sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

L: This is the Word of the Lord

*P: Praise be to God!*

**SPECIAL MUSIC**

Dr. Roberts

**THE MESSAGE**

“The Gift of Christmas: Joy”

Rev. Johnson

**AFFIRMATION of FAITH** *(from The Confession of 1967)*

*Out of Israel, God, in due time, raised up Jesus. His faith and obedience were the response of the perfect child of God. He was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel, the beginning of the new creation, and the pioneer of the new humanity. He gave history its meaning and direction and called the church to be his servant for the reconciliation of the world.*

**HYMN**

#99 “Mary’s Song” **GTG**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Rev. Johnson

L. ...Generous God,

**P. Send joy to the world again.**

L. We offer our prayers in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our hope, our peace, and our joy, who taught us to pray these words together:

**The Lord’s Prayer**

*Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.*

*Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sin, as we forgive those who sin against us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

## GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS TO THE LORD

*INVITATION TO THE OFFERING*

Elder Boster

*OFFERTORY INSTRUMENTAL*

Ms. Imes

*\*The 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.**

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

Elder Boster

*Just and joyful God, we bring our gifts with hearts that rejoice in your goodness to us, in Christ and in creation. Send your Holy Spirit to bless them and us with the power to shine the light of Christ into lives where Jesus can turn despair into joy.*

## CALL TO MISSION

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

*\*CONGREGATIONAL CHARGE*

Rev. Johnson

*\*THE BLESSING*

Rev. Johnson

*ACOLYTE RECESSIONAL*

*\*SENDING SONG* #540 "Shalom, chaverim" **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.**



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

## **Our Church and Community Calendar, December – January 2025**

*The Food Pantry is closed every first Thurs. of the month. Open 12-2P*

- Dec. 15: Annual Congregational Meeting with lunch, 12:30P  
Dec. 16: Treasurer in, 11A  
Dec. 16: Pastor meets with Kelvin Perry, 3P, Zoom  
Dec. 17: Lesson's and Carols Program, 7:30, Cornerstone Church?  
Dec. 19: Food Pantry Open, 12-2P  
Dec. 19: Treasure away  
Dec. 23: Pastor serves as COM Liaison, 12:30P  
Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Worship Service, 2<sup>nd</sup> PC (FPC invited), 6P  
Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1: FPC Office Closed  
Dec. 29: Worship in Music, 11A  
**January 2:** Food Pantry Closed  
Jan. 5: Communion Sunday, Officers are installed, 11A  
Jan. 7: Pastor meets with Church Professionals, Retreat review, 1P  
Jan. 8: MCL meets, 4P  
Jan. 2: Pastor serves on Mediation Group, 2P  
Jan. 15: Board of Session meets, 1P, Conf. Rm.  
Jan. 17-18: Armbrust Student Loan Cmte. meets w/ K. Perry, 6P  
Jan. 19: Pastor Kelvin Perry is our guest speaker at worship, 11A

### **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: 10 A - 4 P Fridays: Off

Email: [rjohnson.fpc@gmail.com](mailto:rjohnson.fpc@gmail.com) or [rev.ron.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:rev.ron.johnson@gmail.com)

Pas. Study: (740)529-7117 M: (434)770-1052

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

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

Church Office: (740)353-4259 or (740)529-7117

Office Hrs. Tues-Thurs: 9A-3:35P

**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? \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WOULD I LIKE TO STUDY FURTHER? \_\_\_\_\_

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