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# Contemplative Communion Service

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DECEMBER 2023  
8:30 AM | Monteith Hall



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
1432 Washtenaw Ave | Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
[firstpresbyterian.org](http://firstpresbyterian.org)

# WELCOME

## We're glad you're here!

Thank you for joining us at this short service of communion. We will be using a simple spoken liturgy with no music.

### Ways to Give

Your gift allows us to carry out our mission as an inclusive and diverse faith community.

#### CASH/CHECK

Place in the offering plate on your way out or in the mail

#### ONLINE

<https://bit.ly/FPCvanco>

#### TEXT-TO-GIVE

Text the amount to 855-904-1523

#### VANCO MOBILE APP



**December 3, 2023**

ADVENT 1: SANCTUARY

POURING OF THE WATER

CANDLE LIGHTING

In the presence of God, we are in awe.  
Overwhelmed by God, we are speechless.  
Graced by God, we are thankful.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**We are humble before you, O God. We are in your place, in your time, in your presence, and we confess our awe before you. How can we stand before your power? How can we boast in the presence of your imagination? How can we claim wisdom before your foolishness? Everywhere we go, you stun and surprise us. All the world is your sanctuary, O God. Keep us ever mindful and meek. Amen.**

READING

Luke 1:5-23

REFLECTION

Jenny Keil

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Waiting expectantly, we are invited to come to Christ's table as a way to experience the grace of God. Therefore it is open to all.

The Lord be with you

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Now let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**How good it is to give thanks and praise.**

It is a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You create the world from chaos. By simply speaking, you set the cosmos into motion, and create all things from the dust of stars.

**Blessed are you, O God, Creator of heaven and earth.**

God of many blessings, you called out a family to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

**Blessed are you, God of Abraham and Sarah.**

God of salvation, when the people were but slaves in Egypt you called upon your servant Moses to speak salvation to Pharaoh, and lead your people out of slavery.

**Blessed are you, God of our salvation.**

When the people asked for a King, you anointed David to be a just ruler. Though flawed, David united the people. Later, you anointed the prophets, who called the people back to obedience, who spoke words of hope and restoration to those in exile when all around them, there was nothing but despair.

**A voice is crying out: “Clear the Lord’s way in the desert! Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!”**

You promised the coming of an anointed one, who would lead the people to peace and righteousness.

**“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.”**

John the Baptist came, telling the people to “Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!” Filled with expectant grace, we come to be transformed by what has already come, and waiting with hope for what is to come. We deck our halls with joy, but it is our hearts that truly matter.

**Prepare the way of the Lord in our world. Prepare the way of the Lord in our communities. Prepare the way of the Lord in our churches. Prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts.**

And so, in hopeful anticipation, we give thanks to you, God of Creation, God of Abraham and Sarah, God of salvation, God of the Law, God of King David, God of the Prophets, God of hope and deliverance, God of John, and God of us all. We join in praise and come together to sing unending hymn of the saints of glory.

Holy are you, and holy is your Son Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. Who is the one to whom John pointed in the wilderness.

**Holy are you, and Holy is your Son Jesus Christ.**

Who was born to us in a manger, for there was no room in the inn.  
**Holy are you, and Holy is your Son Jesus Christ.**

news to the poor. He restored the sight to the blind. He called the children to his side, taught the women, ate with sinners, and called out the religious leaders blinded by the letter of the Law. Who was betrayed by those who loved him, persecuted by those who feared him. crucified by those who thought that his death would be the end of him.

**Holy are you, and Holy is your Son Jesus Christ.**

Who, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And when the supper was over, took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said: “Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. Make us a Christmas people, secure in what has come, and hopeful for what is yet to be. Make us one with Christ and one with each other. Keep us vigilant in our Advent waiting until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, now and forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

(based on Luke 1: 78-79)

A new day is dawning!

Despite what we see and hear in the world around us,

**the sunrise is coming.**

When it comes, it will break through the darkness of our world—darkness caused by violence and death and hunger and despair.

And all those who now sit huddled in the shadows

**will be able to rise and walk with confidence in the light.**

Wherever we live, we go from here with courage and hope, to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.**

PASSING THE PEACE

## December 10, 2023

ADVENT 2: HOME

### POURING OF THE WATER

### CANDLE LIGHTING

You are welcome here. God is welcome here.

You are welcome here. We are welcome here.

Come and be here. Come and be you.

Holy God, come among us and be You.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**We are not always welcoming, O God, and we do not always feel welcome. We have not celebrated one another as the good gifts we are. We have not cried together in the seasons when we have needed a good cry. We have not visited one another often enough to gasp in joy or sigh in pain. Forgive us, O God. Teach us again to create home for friends and strangers, loved ones and enemies.**

### READING

Luke 1:39-45

### REFLECTION

Sandy Talbott

### SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Waiting expectantly, we are invited to come to Christ's table as a way to experience the grace of God. Therefore it is open to all.

The Lord be with you

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Now let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**How good it is to give thanks and praise.**

It is a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You create the world from chaos. By simply speaking, you set the cosmos into motion, and create all things from the dust of stars.

**Blessed are you, O God, Creator of heaven and earth.**

God of many blessings, you called out a family to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

**Blessed are you, God of Abraham and Sarah.**

God of salvation, when the people were but slaves in Egypt you called upon your servant Moses to speak salvation to Pharaoh, and lead your people out of slavery.

**Blessed are you, God of our salvation.**

When the people asked for a King, you anointed David to be a just ruler. Though flawed, David united the people. Later, you anointed the prophets, who called the people back to obedience, who spoke words of hope and restoration to those in exile when all around them, there was nothing but despair.

**A voice is crying out: “Clear the Lord’s way in the desert! Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!”**

You promised the coming of an anointed one, who would lead the people to peace and righteousness.

**“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”**

John the Baptist came, telling the people to “Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!” Filled with expectant grace, we come to be transformed by what has already come, and waiting with hope for what is to come. We deck our halls with joy, but it is our hearts that truly matter.

**Prepare the way of the Lord in our world. Prepare the way of the Lord in our communities. Prepare the way of the Lord in our churches. Prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts.**

And so, in hopeful anticipation, we give thanks to you, God of Creation, God of Abraham and Sarah, God of salvation, God of the Law, God of King David, God of the Prophets, God of hope and deliverance, God of John, and God of us all. We join in praise and come together to sing unending hymn of the saints of glory.

Holy are you, and holy is your Son Jesus Christ, who is the Word made flesh. Who is the one to whom John pointed in the wilderness.

**Holy are you, and Holy is your Son Jesus Christ.**

Who was born to us in a manger, for there was no room in the inn.  
**Holy are you, and Holy is your Son Jesus Christ.**

Who came to show us the way to your love. He proclaimed good news to the poor. He restored the sight to the blind. He called the children to his side, taught the women, ate with sinners, and called out the religious leaders blinded by the letter of the Law. Who was betrayed by those who loved him, persecuted by those who feared him. crucified by those who thought that his death would be the end of him.

**Holy are you, and Holy is your Son Jesus Christ.**

Who, on the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And when the supper was over, took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said: “Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. Make us a Christmas people, secure in what has come, and hopeful for what is yet to be. Make us one with Christ and one with each other. Keep us vigilant in our Advent waiting until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, now and forever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

(based on Luke 1: 78-79)

A new day is dawning!

Despite what we see and hear in the world around us,

**the sunrise is coming.**

When it comes, it will break through the darkness of our world—darkness caused by violence and death and hunger and despair.

And all those who now sit huddled in the shadows

**will be able to rise and walk with confidence in the light.**

Wherever we live, we go from here with courage and hope, to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.**

PASSING THE PEACE



## December 17, 2023

ADVENT 3 : BUSY PLACES LUKE 2:1-5

POURING OF THE WATER

CANDLE LIGHTING

The ways are crowded, God is not lost.  
The days are busy, God's time stands still.  
The journey is long, God's light guides our feet.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Our ways are not our own, O God. We hurry and race, twist and turn, trying to keep up, trying to get ahead, trying to stand out in the crowd. We change our ways at a moment's whim. We change our minds by fear or persuasion. We are told where to go, where not to go. We struggle to listen for you. We cannot sense your way. Where the ways are crowded and confused, guide us we pray. Where the noise fills our ears, bring a quiet piece to our hearts.**

READING

Luke 2:1-5

REFLECTION

Callie Feyen

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Waiting expectantly, we are invited to come to Christ's table as a way to experience the grace of God. Therefore it is open to all.

The Lord be with you

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Now let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**How good it is to give thanks and praise.**

It is a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You create the world from chaos. By simply speaking, you set the cosmos into motion, and create all things from the dust of stars.

**Blessed are you, O God, Creator of heaven and earth.**

God of many blessings, you called out a family to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.

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God of salvation, when the people were but slaves in Egypt you called upon your servant Moses to speak salvation to Pharaoh, and lead your people out of slavery.

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PASSING THE PEACE

## December 24, 2023

### ADVENT 4: FIELDS/WIDE OPEN SPACES

#### POURING OF THE WATER

#### CANDLE LIGHTING

Field and forest, glory to God!  
Sheep and sparrow, glory to God!  
Rock and river, glory to God!  
Let all creation give glory to God!

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**We are longing for wide open spaces to breathe and to be amazed, but so often we do not look up to see them. So often we do not look up to see you. We miss the beauty of a drop of dew, of a single snowflake. We fail to tune in to the bird's song. We forget to breathe deeply. Startle us, we pray. Wake us up, and our praises will echo across the open fields to your glory.**

#### READING

Luke 2:8-15

#### REFLECTION

Mel Rogers

#### SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

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PASSING THE PEACE



# The World is about to Turn

THE SEASON OF ADVENT

**Tuesday, December 5**  
**Advent Taizé Prayer Service**

7:00 p.m. | Monteith Hall

Experience a beautiful form of prayer, inspired by the ecumenical community in Taizé, France.

**Sunday, December 10**  
**The Glorious Sounds of Christmas Concert**

4:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

Share the joy of the holiday season at our festive Christmas concert featuring the Chancel Choir, Joyful Ringers, Sanctus Ringers, and Lemon Chapel Singers. A strolling reception follows the concert.

*Order your Christmas Poinsettias by Sunday, December 10.*

**Sunday, December 17**  
**Nativity Service**

9:30 a.m. | Sanctuary

Children are invited to choose a costume and a part to play in this no-rehearsal retelling of the nativity story. Join us for this joyful worship experience.

**Wednesday, December 20**  
**The Longest Night**

7:00 p.m. | Monteith Hall

Join us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God's presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle — and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness.

**Sunday, December 24**

*The 4th Sunday of Advent (December 24) worship will be held at 8:30 & 9:30 AM*

**Christmas Eve**

Candlelight Lessons & Carols  
5:00 & 8:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

A joyful Christmas Eve service featuring the Chancel Choir and Brass.

Come sing the carols and hear the traditional readings.


The 5:00 p.m. service will be livestreamed on our YouTube channel.

Candlelight Communion  
11:00 p.m. | Sanctuary

A traditional Christmas Eve service with Communion.

*The Christmas Eve Offering benefiting Frontera de Cristo will be received.*

## First Presbyterian Church

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