

First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020

Family Sunday

THOSE
WHO *keep awake*
DREAM



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

Ann Arbor | Michigan

Making God's Love Visible

1 Come, thou long - ex - spect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.

Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Please know that, in recording all the parts of this liturgy — spoken, sung and played — we have carefully observed responsible norms of social distancing.

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

The Advent Wreath—four candles (three blue, one rose) in a perfect circle of evergreen symbolizing the eternity of God —helps us to “keep our lamps trimmed and burning” as we anticipate the coming of Christ, symbolized by the large white candle in the center.

Advent Paraments and Stoles were commissioned and made by quilter and artist, Beth Taylor of Durham, NC for the pulpit, lectern, communion table, and stoles for our pastors. The front banners are new this year.

GATHERING

WELCOME AND LIFE IN THE CHURCH

FAITH IN ACTION *Covid-19 Safety Update*

OPENING VOLUNTARY *“Sleepers, wake!” A Voice Astounds Us*

Johann Sebastian Bach

HANDBELL INTROIT *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

arr. Dave VanderMeer

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

The world says, “All is lost.”

God says, “All is loved.”

The darkness says, “The light is dying.”

The light says, “The fire is catching.”

Fear says, “Cover your eyes and your ears.”

Hope says, “Wait, watch, and listen.”

As we light our first Advent candle,

we pray for holy hope of God.

Come now; O Child of Mary.

Come now, O Prince of Hope.

HYMN 82 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

HYFRYDOL

This hymn is found on the preceding page of this bulletin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Original Dreamer,

Over and over again in scripture,

we hear your dream for a beautiful world.

We hear your dream for peace and reconciliation.

We hear your dream for harmony and togetherness.

We hear your dream for community and hope.

We hear your dreams, and yet we do not open our eyes.

We continue to live with the curtains drawn,

the covers pulled tight,

eyes shut to the realities of the world.

Forgive us. Kindle a hope in us that will burn through the darkest nights.

Give us the strength and the will to keep awake in this sleeping world.

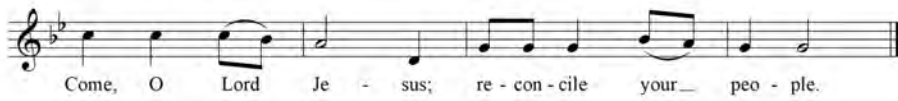
With hope we pray...

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE



This is Stanza 4 of Hymn 103, *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* (o-so-so).

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING Isaiah 64:1–9

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A CONVERSATION WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING Mark 13:24–37

The grass withers; the flower fades—

the word of our God endures forever.

SERMON

This prayer is offered on behalf of the congregation and in the name of Jesus Christ.

It seeks the “illumination” of the Holy Spirit, and calls upon God to help us be open and receptive to the life-giving words of Holy Scripture. This trinitarian prayer is a very important part of reformed worship because of the importance we place on the reading and preaching of the Word.

RESPONDING

Did you notice that the singers now have new masks? These are special masks for singers that have extra filter protection inside the masks and an extended frontal piece. These have been provided to our singers by the Safety Committee.

Use these offertory moments to savor your gratitude for the abundance of God's love — and to consider your own response in loving service. As you consider making your offering, remember that the church's regular expenses continue in these difficult times. And the community around us needs your financial support: your faithful giving is like the breath of life to mission programs we love, neighbors in need, members who are hurting. Thank you for your faithful generosity!

Ways to give: online on the First Pres homepage ... via "Text-to-Give" (855-904-1523) ... use our Give+ app ... put a check in the mail ... or scan the QR code below. (Call Finance Manager Anna Miller if you need assistance.)



HYMN 94

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

SUO GAN

Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
Christ, e - ter - nal sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,
Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in;
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
Come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.
Seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plan - ted, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ the mom - ing star of splen - dor gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the stran - ger, in the out - cast, hid from view;
Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

Prayer of Dedication

Offertory *E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come*

Paul Manz

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord Almighty God,
Who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!

Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein,
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming, is coming soon!

E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;
They need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their all!

Doxology

OLD HUNDRETH

**All praise, eternal Christ, to thee,
Whose advent sets thy people free;
Once more upon thy people shine,
and fill the world with love divine. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

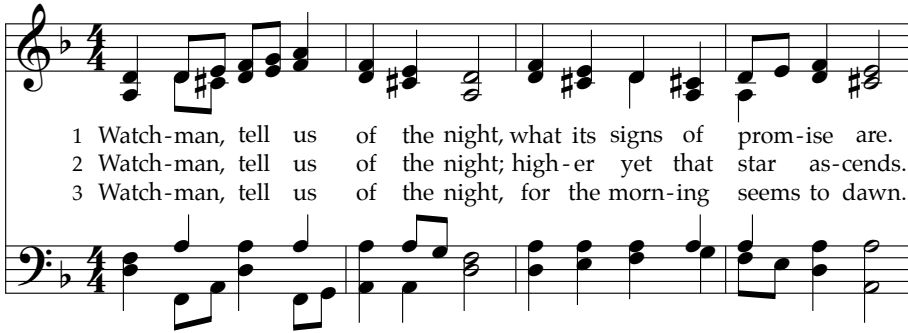
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

SENDING

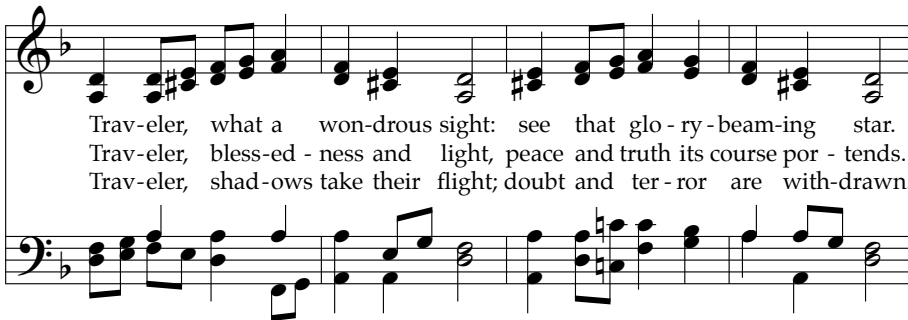
HYMN 97

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night

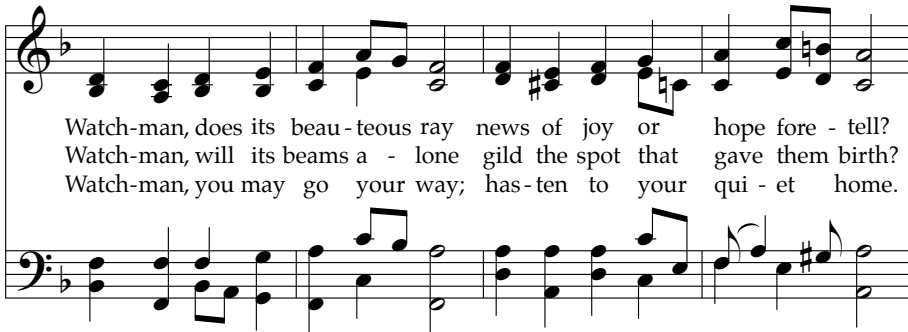
ABERYSTWYTH



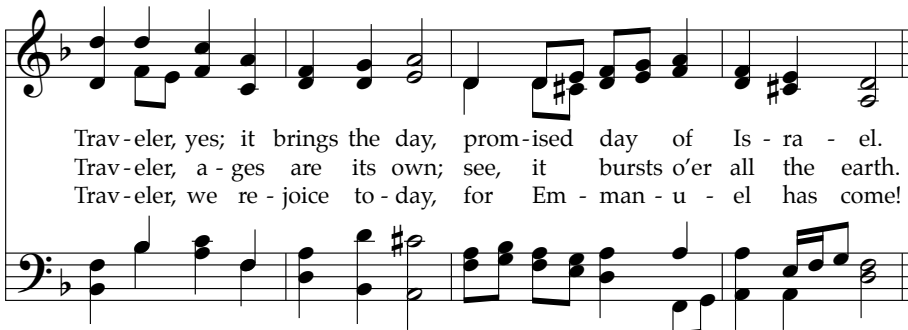
1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom-ise are.
2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high-er yet that star as-cends.
3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn-ing seems to dawn.



Trav-eler, what a won-drous sight: see that glo-ry-beam-ing star.
Trav-eler, bless-ed-ness and light, peace and truth its course por-tends.
Trav-eler, shad-ows take their flight; doubt and ter-ror are with-drawn.



Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore-tell?
Watch-man, will its beams a-lone gild the spot that gave them birth?
Watch-man, you may go your way; has-ten to your qui-et home.



Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, prom-ised day of Is-ra-el.
Trav-eler, a-ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.
Trav-eler, we re-joice to-day, for Em-man-u-el has come!

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

This is Stanza 7 of Hymn 88, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (VENI EMMANUEL).

Please sign our virtual Friendship Pad.

If you are worshipping with us via YouTube, Facebook, or radio, either click below to let us know that you joined us for worship today or sign the pad on our website at <https://bit.ly/2Rlig2l>

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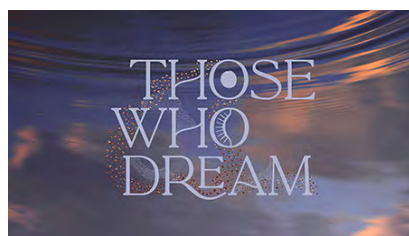
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WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

Leaders of Worship: Welcome – Andrew Frazier; Liturgists – Evans McGowan and Rick Spalding; Lighting of the Advent Candle – the Gerety Family: Peregrine, Heather, Ezzie, Elspeth, Josiah, and Evie; Scripture Reader – Emma Schneidewind; Children’s Message – Amy Ruhf and Mark Mares; Preacher – Melissa Anne Rogers; Youth Handbell Choir; Soloists – Lorna Hildebrandt, Imani Mchunu, Heidi Hess-Willis, Tyrese Byrd, David Magumba, Benton DeGroot, and Brent Ivey; Organist – Paul Haebig; Conductor – Dave VanderMeer; Videographer – Bill Hall; Sound technician – Rol Kibler

A word about our Advent theme, “Those Who Dream” —

The season of Advent this year invites us to consider “Those Who Dream” - and to imagine joining them. As we remember this line from the 126th Psalm – *When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream...* – we contemplate the promise of God’s nearness, the intimations that all is not lost, the signs of the power of love even with so much arrayed against it in this world. Are we dreaming when we imagine, with Isaiah, a world where the crooked way is made straight and the rough way smooth? Are we dreaming when, with Mary, we sing the joy of fulfillment and justice? Are we dreaming when we cry out with John the Baptist for a world without hypocrisy and deceit? Are we dreaming to hope, as Jesus himself taught us to hope, that the poor in spirit are blessed and beloved of God? Even as the cold gathers and the dark deepens toward the Light, we are becoming like those who dream...



Join Rev. Rogers for a virtual Coffee Hour Sunday immediately following the Called Congregational Meeting. For the first 20–30 minutes, we have group conversation, and then we split into small groups. Around 11:15, Coffee Hour conversations end. If you have questions or need help, please contact Rev. Rogers.

Today’s conversation prompt: Who or what gives you hope as we begin this Advent season? Click here to enter Coffee Hour: <https://firstpresbyterian.org/event/virtual-coffee-hour>

Chancel Flowers are given by Bradley Taylor in loving memory of his dear friend Susan Jones Collins; by Burt Voss in loving memory of Jackie Voss; and by Kirk Profit in loving memory of his parents Lewis and Maxine Profit.

A word about the banners from artist Ellen Phillips: The Scriptural passages for the first Sunday of Advent seem particularly appropriate as we near the end of 2020. These words from Isaiah speak just as powerfully to us in 2020 as they did then. Vast areas of our nation have suffered from devastating fires. Other areas have been pounded and flooded by one hurricane after another. People have become more polarized and angry, even to the point of violence. *We have all become like one who is unclean, and our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.* And all across the globe a life threatening virus persists. *We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind take us away.* We no longer can safely come together to worship. Singing together has become a dangerous activity. *There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you.* It is necessary to hide our faces from each other. Touching and hugging and even shaking hands have become a threat. *You have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.* These days can make us wonder where God is. We know intellectually that *Indeed, O Lord, you are our Father;* nevertheless we wonder as we contemplate a time we call Advent, *Will you keep silent, and punish us so severely?* The landscape seems very bleak and that is what I have designed for this first banner. Charred leafless tree trunks, barren rocky soil, and a clouded sky seem to be all that there is at this point. Our constant prayer should be, *Restore us, O God of Hosts. Let your face shine that we might be saved.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Session has called a virtual Congregational Meeting for today, Sunday, November 29, for the purpose of electing one elder and one deacon to fill unexpired terms and to elect one member for the 2021 Congregational Nominating Committee. This meeting will begin immediately following the Closing Voluntary. Zoom connection information is available on our website. Coffee Hour will follow the Called Congregational Meeting.

Next Sunday is Communion Sunday. As we come to the Lord's Table to be fed and nurtured in our faith, we also come to feed others and lend support to those in need. Financial contributions and food donations throughout the month of December will be overseen by T2A2/Young Adults. Foor Gatherers of Ann Arbor is the recipient of your generosity.

We are the Church TOGETHER, in Faith, Love, and the Spirit Stewardship Update: As of November 18, 297 pledges totaling \$1,120,556 have been received. This represents 65.9% of our \$1,700,000 goal. If you have not turned in your pledge yet, First Pres still needs your help as we plan the 2021 budget. Thank you for all you do to share your Faith, Love and the Spirit through the ministries of First Pres!

Welcome First Pres member Barb Delancey, RN, as our Interim Wellness Coordinator. Barb will help us continue the work of parish nursing and pastoral care until a new First Pres Parish Nurse and Wellness Coordinator is hired. We are grateful for her service and availability. Until then, please keep the search committee and candidates in your prayers. To access support and help from Barb, please contact Rev. Rogers or the Church Office.

Publications Coordinator Mary Jones is retiring after serving First Pres for more than 17 years. Coffee Hour on Sunday, December 20, will be a time to celebrate Mary and to send her off with our gratitude and blessing. Contributions toward a special gift for Mary may be sent to the attention of Finance Manager Anna Miller or may be dropped off at the church Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00. Checks should be made payable to First Pres with the purpose noted on the memo line. Please see the December newsletter for other ways to participate in thanking Mary for her faithful service.

Technology Coordinator Lisa Haddrill is leaving First Pres after serving for more than nine years. Coffee Hour on Sunday, December 27, will be a time to celebrate Lisa and to thank her for her faithful service. Contributions toward a special gift for Lisa may be sent to the attention of Finance Manager Anna Miller or may be dropped off at the church Monday through Thursday, 9:00 to 3:00. Checks should be made payable to First Pres with the purpose noted on the memo line.

Donate Chancel flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one. There are available dates in upcoming weeks. *We Adore Flowers* in Ypsilanti is our new florist. Cost is now \$75. Contact the Church Office (662-4466) for more information.

Give a poinsettia to beautify worship on December 20 and 24 in honor or memory of a loved one. Poinsettias are \$20 and can be ordered until noon on Friday, December 11. After worship on December 20, poinsettias will be delivered to those shut-in or grieving in our congregation. Questions? Contact the Church Office at (734) 662-4466. <https://firstpresbyterian.wufoo.com/forms/poinsettias-2020/>

Sign up to receive our Advent Email Devotional based on our Advent theme, "Those Who Dream..." If you are not already signed up to receive devotionals, you may do so online or by contacting the Church Office.

Story Slam 2020: "For Those Who Dream" is presented virtually on Sunday, December 13, at 7:00 p.m. Check out our website or the December issue of First Press for more information.

Mature Singles are enjoying dinners in restaurants on Friday evenings, but planning only one or two weeks at a time. Please call Marcy (995-2519) if you would like more information.

Women: Stay Connected! PW Moderator Ginny Bell sends out timely information in email blasts. Contact Ginny (virginiabell2013@gmail.com) to be added to the email list.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Please contact Beca Torres-Davenport, Coordinator of Children's Education & Family Ministry, for information about opportunities to connect and resources for children and families. Beca can be reached at btorresdavenport@firstpresbyterian.org.

Children's faith formation classes do not meet this Sunday as this is Family Sunday. **Children's choir** does not meet on Family Sundays.

Nativity Worship Service. Join Beca and Mark for a fresh retelling of the Birth of Jesus. We will premier the Illustrated Ministry "Do Not Be Afraid" Christmas pageant as a First Presbyterian-Ann Arbor Christmas Eve service on First Pres' Facebook and YouTube Channel. Just as in previous years, we have roles for everyone of every age, and backdrops to make the story come alive! Children can be a Star-bearer, an Angel, a Shepherd, or a Magi. Sign up **today** to participate and receive a digital script. The digital recording will be done using Zoom on Saturday, December 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Please contact Rev. Mark Mares, Minister of Youth & Families, for information about the numerous ways youth are connecting at this time. Mark can be reached at mmares@firstpresbyterian.org.

Youth faith formation classes do not meet this Sunday as this is Family Sunday.

Middle School and High School Youth Group gatherings alternate between in-person (first and third Sundays) and virtual (second and fourth Sundays) of each month. We gather together for games and fellowship as a large group and break out into Middle School/High School groups for conversations. Contact Pastor Mark for more information. All are welcome!

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

First Friends meets via Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85415813175>) at 11:00 a.m. today to discuss "White Liberalism and the Illusion of Racial Progress."

Exploring the Faith does not meet today.

Bible Study @ 5:00 does not meet today.

Journeys Bible Study meets via Zoom (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/295007173>) this fall on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month at 11:30 a.m. For more information, contact Rev. Frazier (afrazier@firstpresbyterian.org).

CONGREGATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Tea with the Residents! Join us every Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. via Facebook Live for a cup of tea and conversation. This time together includes prayer, a brief check-in, and a bit of conversation.

Take a virtual tour of Ethan Phillips' Art Against Homelessness Exhibition. Homelessness is experienced by nearly 5,000 Washtenaw County residents annually. To raise awareness about this issue, which has been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic, Ethan Phillips, a rising Eagle scout in Troop 7 and a member of our youth group, has created a virtual art exhibition as part of his Eagle project. Working with volunteer artists and First Presbyterian Church, a wide variety of pieces have been created. Use this link for a virtual tour of the exhibit: www.artagainsthomeslessness.weebly.com

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

First Presbyterian Church is seeking a Parish Nurse & Wellness Coordinator who values the integration of holistic wellness and faith in caring for our beloved congregation. We invite you to review more details about the job description posted by the Parish Nurse Search Committee (PNSC) on the church website. If you or someone you know has interest in this part-time paid position, please let the PNSC know by submitting your application before December 15. PNSC co-chairs Sharon Sheldon and Tara Shantz would also be excited to hear from you if you have additional application inquiries. Email: parishnursesearch@firstpresbyterian.org.

2020 Family-to-Family Christmas

Every year our congregation generously provides Christmas gifts of food, clothing, and toys for families in the Washtenaw County area. As those who have participated will attest, the act of reaching out to others in need adds a poignant reminder of the meaning and celebration of our Lord's birth. We ask you to consider giving from the heart by participating in the program in any of the following ways:

Adopt a Family. Sign up online to request information on a family to adopt now through December 13. The recommended minimum amount to spend per family member is \$30. Once you have received the family information, contact the family to let them know they have a donor, clarify gift needs, and determine a delivery method. We encourage donors to speak with, email, or write notes for their families during this isolating time. Due to Covid-19, all deliveries must be contactless. Delivery options are to: shop and ship the gifts directly to the family; mail gift cards to the family; or arrange a date for contactless delivery of the gifts (leaving them at the door). You may request that a volunteer do contactless delivery of your gifts on your behalf.

Donation. Make a financial contribution of any amount (please indicate Family-to-Family on your check). Your donation will help purchase gift cards for families not directly adopted. Financial contributions are also used to assist families at Alpha House during the holidays.

Volunteer. Volunteers are needed to deliver gifts on Sunday, December 20.

For more information, see the online sign-up link on the First Pres website, or contact Julie Morrison at jdornmorrison@gmail.com or 646-5351.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Robin Agnew, Administrative Assistant
Barb DeLancey, Interim Wellness Coordinator
Reverend Andrew Frazier, Resident Minister
Pat Gilbreath, Welcome Center Volunteer Coordinator
Lisa Haddrill, Technology Coordinator
Dr. Paul Haebig, Interim Organist
Almer Harris, Maintenance Specialist
Reverend Khayla Johnson, Resident Minister
Mary Jones, Publications Coordinator
Cindy King, Administrative Assistant
Reverend Mark Mares, Minister of Youth & Families
Reverend Evans McGowan, Campus Ministries Coordinator
Kellie McInchak, Children's Choir Director
Anna Miller, Finance Manager
Adrian Prundeanu, Facilities Manager
Linda Robinson, Office Manager
Reverend Melissa Anne Rogers, Associate Pastor
Reverend Amy Ruhf, Resident Minister
Reverend Jay Sanderford, Associate Pastor
Reverend Dr. Rick Spalding, Interim Pastor
Beca Torres-Davenport, Coordinator of Children's Education & Family Ministry
David VanderMeer, Minister of Music & Fine Arts
Alyssa Walker, Finance Assistant



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