

✠ **AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** “The Apostles’ Creed” (*unison*)
I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen!

Go Out as God’s People in the World

✠ **Closing Song #648** “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

✠ **BLESSING & CHARGE / VISION & MISSION** (*responsively*)

To walk in the light of God;

making JESUS known is FIRST at First!

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

✠ **POSTLUDE**

Following today’s service please join us in the upstairs
hall for coffee & conversation.



If you are **visiting** today, we thank you for coming and hope you return soon.

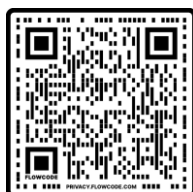
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First Presbyterian Church

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December 24, 2023

FOR PASTORAL CARE, PLEASE CALL:

The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford at 412-877-9310

Happy 4th week of Advent!



Today’s Worship Leaders:

Musician: Marcia Brannon

Coordinator of Vocal Leaders: Kathy Wallace

Officer Assisting: Leslie Crawford

Advent Candles: GNC Etna Group Leaders & Helper

Shirley Beckner, Kela Terri & Leslie Crawford

Pastor: The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford

December 24, 2023 – **4th Sunday of Advent** - 11am Worship

Assisted Listening Devices are available in the Sanctuary during Worship.

If you need instructions, please see the Greeter.

*(Those not wanting to be seen on the **video recording**, please sit under the balcony.)*

Hymnals: *green (Celebration) & red (The Hymnbook)*

Gathering of God's People

After the chimes, please be in quiet reverence & silence cell phones.

3 RINGS OF THE STEEPLE BELL & CHIMES

WELCOME by Leslie Crawford

ANNOUNCEMENTS *(See insert.)*

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP with LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE:

We continue the Advent season by lighting the candle of love. The disciple whom Jesus loved quotes in John 3:16 the words of Jesus spoken to Nicodemus, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." The Father offers Jesus as a gift of love to us and to the world.

† stand as able

† **Opening Song #240** "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

† **PRAYER OF CONFESSION:** from John 3:1-21 7 Ps 139:23-24 *(unison)*:
Nicodemus came to you, Jesus, hidden under the cloak of darkness with doubts in his heart and mind. We admit to you that we too have doubts that we hide from you. Shine your light on us to see if there is any offensive way in us for us to confess our sin and be forgiven. Amen.

† **ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS:** *(responsively)*

Hear the good news! Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us.

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

The old life has gone; a new life has begun.

Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

† **GLORIA PATRI / RESPONSE:** *(unison)* Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen, Amen.

Proclamation of God's Word

† **CALL TO GOD'S WORD:** John 10:35 & Romans 4:3 *(unison)*
"Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?"

† **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:** *(unison)*

SCRIPTURE: *Gospel* **Matthew 1:18-25** N.T. pg. 1374

SERMON Takeaway: **"Expectant Love"**
by the Reverend Dr. Janet A. Hufford.

Response to God's Word

† **Song of Response #255** "Lo! How a Rose E'er Blooming"

PRAYERS of JOYS & CONCERNS followed by **LORD'S PRAYER** *(unison)*
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.

SECONDS FOR STEWARDSHIP

(Receptacles for offerings are found at each exit.)

OFFERTORY

† **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

† **DOXOLOGY:** *(unison)* 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.