

ORDER FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

December 17, 2023

3rd Sunday of Advent

PREPARATION, PROMISES, AND PRAISE

(We invite you to quiet yourself in preparation for the worship of God when you hear the prelude music.)

Almighty God, as we gather in your house to worship, quiet our hearts and calm our spirits from the rush of life and the, often persistent, troubles of our world. As those who sought to know Jesus in the first century, we, too, “want to see Jesus” in our day and in our life more and more. O God, let it be for us today as we gather to worship You. Amen.

WELCOME AND INVITATION TO SHARE OUR LIFE IN CHRIST

Prelude “Change Ring Prelude on ‘Divinum Mysterium’ Gramann Carillonneurs Handbell Choir

Call to Worship Rev. Don Hardman

Leader: I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God.
People: For you have clothed me with the garments of salvation, you have covered me with the robe of righteousness.
Leader: For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up.
People: So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all nations

*Hymn “Angels, from the Realms of Glory” No. 218

*Prayer of Adoration

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Compassionate God, though we believe you care for us, we confess our struggle with the fear that grips us in the darkness, the darkness in our souls and in the world. There are pits of despair from which we cannot rescue ourselves, and needs we cannot supply. Our only hope is in your deliverance, in the coming of Christ to enlighten our darkness, to lift us up and lead us into the new life you promise. But we wait with impatience and are vulnerable to becoming discouraged and doubtful. We confess that we are in danger of settling for what is now, instead of waiting in expectancy for what is coming. Forgive our sin, we pray. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. —Romans 8:15-17

*Gloria Patri No. 579

(Let the children come forward during the singing of the Gloria.)

Lighting of the Advent Candle Rick & Diana Harvey

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Children’s Time Rev. Don Hardman
Children’s Worship is provided for ages 4–3rd grade in Room 205. Parents, please escort your children to this room.

Sacrament of Baptism
We rejoice today in the baptism of Elisha John Aaron Burton, son of Aaron and Sarah Burton.

*Hymn of Preparation “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” No. 193

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 35:10 Page 709

Leader: This is the word of the Lord
People: Thanks be to God

Anthem “Advent Joy” arr. Young

Scripture Lessons: Nehemiah 8:10; Page 479 & Luke 2:10; Page 1014

Sermon: “The Joy of the Lord” Rev. Don Hardman

RESPONSE IN DEDICATION AND OBEDIENCE

Prayers of the People of God and Our Lord’s Prayer

*Affirmation of Faith “The Apostles’ Creed” Page 845

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

Offering of Our Gifts and Tithes

Offertory “Still, Still, Still” arr. Manz

*The Doxology No. 731

*Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates!” No. 198

*Benediction “Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel. Amen.”

Postlude “Sleepers Wake! A Voice Is Calling” Nicolai/Bach

*The Congregation is asked to stand, as you are able.

CALENDAR

Today, 12/17 - Sunday School, 9:00 am; Worship, 10:30 am; Roanoke Baroque, 3:00 pm; Session Mtg., 6:00 pm
Monday, 12/18 - Church office closed on Mondays
Tuesday, 12/19 - Men’s ZOOM Bible Study, 12:00 pm; Chancel Choir, 6:30 pm
Wednesday, 12/20 - Worship Commission Mtg., 11:00 am; Youth Group, 6:00 pm; First Kids, 6:00 pm; Carillon-
neurs, 7:00 pm
Thursday, 12/21 - Staff Mtg., 10:00 am
Friday, 12/22 - Prayer Mtg., 10:00 am

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REMINDERS

Elders: Don Andree, Phil Brown
Sound System: Kaye Wilkerson, Scott Rice, Rea Brown
Greeters Ramp Room (8:50-9:00 & 10:00-10:30): Dec. 17 - Bob & Donna Broyles; Dec. 24 - Don & Wendy Andree;
Dec. 31 - Bud & Jesse Derey
Greeters Narthex (10:00-10:30): Dec. 17 - Doug & Marlene Flynn; Dec. 24 - Ed & Debbie Bennett; Dec. 31 - Helen
Thompson
Deacons on Duty: Dec. 17 - Donna Broyles, Pat Guerrant; Dec. 24 - Helen Thompson, Carolyn Keyes
Acolytes: Dec. 17 - Bryleigh Trevett; Dec. 24 - Elizabeth Rice; Dec. 31 - David Bean
Children's Worship: Dec. 17 - Advent 4, The Magi Show the Way to Bethlehem - Leader, Deborah Mattern; Greet-
er; Pat Povtak; Dec. 24 - How the Church Tells Time - Leader: Missy Reed; Greeter: Mike Trail

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PRAYER FOCUS FOR THE WEEK: - Praise God for His salvation and protection. Psalm27:5. 71:3, 91:1-2

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PCC Food Needs - December - Beef Stew

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Hearing devices are located in the Narthex to assist in listening to today's service

Pastor: Rev. Don Hardman
Director of Music & Children’s Ministries: Mrs. Patricia K. Trail
Director of Youth & Christian Education: Mr. Pete G. Guillard
Organist: Mr. William Turner
Handbell Director: Dr. Erma Rose

Welcome to First Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We are glad you are here and we pray that, as we share with each other and worship our God, you will find here a special presence and blessing of God. If you are a guest with us this morning we hope you will come again and, if so led, consider making First EPC your church home.