

First Presbyterian Church

Cedar Rapids • Iowa

Dec 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent | Christmas Pageant



WE GATHER FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE *Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing!* arr. Barbara Kinyon

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES #88
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 3)

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Here in worship—
 we pray together,
we stand together,
 we sing together,
we listen together.
 Here in worship, we are not alone.
So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry, remember this moment.
 We are not alone.
Let us worship Emmanuel, God-with-us.

*OPENING HYMN *What Child is This* #145

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of hope and new beginnings, we confess that we sometimes struggle to trust your presence with us. Like Joseph, we are afraid when your call disrupts our plans. We doubt when circumstances seem impossible. We forget that you are always working to bring light into our world.

Forgive us when fear keeps us from saying "yes" to your invitation. Help us to trust that you are with us, guiding us toward hope, joy, and peace. In the name of the One who came to dwell among us, we pray. Amen.

time for silent confession

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news: God does not leave us alone in our fear or uncertainty. The One who promised to be with Joseph is with us still—Emmanuel, God-with-us.

In Christ, we are forgiven, beloved, and made new. Thanks be to God!

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

During the passing of the peace, we share signs of peace and welcome others in our pews. Please turn to those around you as we celebrate God’s peace among us.

SCRIPTURE

In the beginning was the Word,
 And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Isaiah 41: 5-10 (p 621)

This is the Word of the Lord.
 Thanks be to God.
Matthew 1:18-25 (p 835)

For the Word of God in scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us,
 Thanks be to God!

A WORD FROM THE WORD Joseph

REFLECTIVE MOMENT

*Question: Even though we’re called to do difficult things, we don’t have to do them alone.
There are other people to help us. Who do you look to when you’re feeling scared?*

THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY *In the Bleak Midwinter* arr: Paul Fey

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God thank you for the gifts you have given us. Help us to see these gifts and to share them with others. We ask your blessing on all that we offer today. Thank you for your love, mercy and grace. We pray these things in your name, Amen.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

INTRODUCTION Pastor Heather

THE ANNUNCIATION Narrator: Leo Appleby Sparrow
Angel Gabriel: Moses Atchou
Mary: Rory Colbert

A STABLE FAR AWAY Narrator: Eli Davis
(Animals are invited to the nativity scene)

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem (vs. 1&3)

#121

O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!

Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light: The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!

So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav'n.

No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,

where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

THE FRIENDLY BEASTS

Narrator: Harry O'Donnell

(Innkeepers are invited to the nativity scene)

CHILDREN'S SONG

Away in the Manger

Children's Choir

JOSEPH & MARY TAKE THEIR PLACE

Narrator: Rowan Hoffman

Narrator: Ruby Davis

Joseph: Chuck Aalderks

Mary: Rory Colbert

Innkeeper: Eva Bott

JESUS IS BORN

Narrator: Warner Mitchell

Baby Jesus: Daniel Hopp

Parent Angel: Lindsey Hopp

CHILDREN'S SONG

Silent Night

Children's Choir

AN ANGEL CHORUS

Narrator: Grace Agbodjan

Shepherd: Landon Engles

(Angels are invited to the nativity scene)

HYMN

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (vs. 1 & 5)

#123

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,

from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:

"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all-gracious King."

The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old,

when with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold

when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,

and the whole world send back the song which now the angels sing.

ON THE HILLS OUTSIDE THE CITY

Narrator: Grace Agbodjan

(All shepherds are invited to the nativity scene)

HYMN

The First Nowell, (vs. 1&2)

#147

The first Nowell the angel did say was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,

in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Refrain: Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star shining in the east beyond them far;

and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night. [Refrain]

SHEPHERDS HEAR THE GOOD NEWS

Narrator: Ben Snapp

MAGI FROM AFAR

Narrator: Gus Keuseman

(Wise persons are invited to the nativity scene)

HYMN

We Three Kings (vs. 1 &5)

#151

We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar,

field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

Refrain: O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,

westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

Glorious now behold him arise, King and God and Sacrifice:

Alleluia! Alleluia! sounds through the earth and skies. [Refrain]

GIFTS FOR A BABY

Narrator: Gus Keuseman

JESUS' BIRTH IS FOR EVERYONE

Narrator: Eli Davis

(Any others who wish may join up front)

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray, cast out our sin and enter in,

be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels they're great glad tidings

tell, O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel. Amen.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Pastor Heather

*HYMN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

#132

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye head to what we say:

Jesus Christ is born today; ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.

Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul. and voice, now ye hear of endless bliss

Jesus Christ is born today; He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.

Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave

Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Good Christian Men Rejoice”

Paul Fey

JOYS & CONCERNS

WHEN THEY CANNOT JOIN US, WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS:

Irene Hamous. Doris Courtright.

BIRTHDAYS: 12/21 Koffi Apely, Bonnie Martin 12/23 Marilynn Musker 12/25 Jette Bounds, Holly Rasmussen 12/26 DeEtta Andersen 12/27 Catherine Mawusi

Insight Adult Education

Today, Mark Stoffer Hunter, spoke about *Cedar Rapids Outreach to Mississippi in the 1960s & 1970s*. Join us next on January 4th when Dalibor Mikulas, PhD, Vice-President, National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library speaks about *The Development of Democracy in Central Europe*.

Advent Devotionals This Year

Come check out the table in the Gathering Space for materials to deepen your faith this Advent season. We have a few devotional options for you, including one written by our members. There are also materials for Advent calendars to help you mark the time this December.

Need an Idea for a Holiday Card?

Come stop by our photo drop background. We'd love to get pictures of all of our members, friends & families out in front of our "gingerbread church."

Star Tree Thank You!

Thank you to everyone who participated in Star Tree this year. We had another very successful year providing gifts for 73 clients in Foundation 2! It is amazing knowing we can count on our members to support others in our community!

Stewardship 2026

In 2026, join us in offering inspiration, comfort, and hope to people in our community and around the world. First Pres strives to do these things and more every day. We can only do that with your *generosity* and commitment. Your pledge during December, as the church budget is put together, is essential for proclaiming Christ's love and forgiveness to ourselves and to others. In this season of thanksgiving and joy, please remember how God's love is shared through the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.

We have received 95 pledges totaling \$375,090.36. Our goal this year is 440,000.00.

To make your pledge, you may use the commitment card that was mailed to you, or pick up a card next time you're at church. Any Questions? Contact Stormy-stormy@fpccr.org

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Sunday December 21

9:00 am Nursery & Insight

10:00 am Worship Service

11:00 am Fellowship

2:30- 6:00 pm S.E.M.P.

Monday December 22

1:30-3:30 pm Bridge to Opportunities Group

Wednesday December 24

Christmas Eve

5:00pm Organ Recital

5:30 pm Family Friendly Worship

10:30 pm. Organ Recital

11:00 pm Service of Lessons and Carols

Thursday December 25

Merry Christmas!

Church Closed

Friday December 26

Church Closed

Sunday December 28

10:00 am Nursery

10:00 am Worship Service

11:00 am Fellowship

2:30- 6:00 pm S.E.M.P.

Leading In Worship

Pastor| Rev. Heather Hayes

Liturgist| Caroline Giddings

Children's Choir Director | Amy Morris

Advent Candle Lighters | Tim Seymour & Elbert Kocharla

Director Of Music| Fred Kiser

Organist| Ted Cronbaugh

Bell Choir

Ushers & Greeters | Darrel Wridner, Andy Aalderks, Cheryl Stramel

