



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF FARMINGTON

Church of the Open Hands

26165 Farmington Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 474-6170
www.farmington-pres.org

December 17, 2023

3rd Sunday in Advent

Prayer of Preparation

Holy Light, God of faithful witnesses, please shine in our hearts with all the joys of your coming Son. May we be delivered from trusting the artificial lights of our generation, and from the ephemeral, decorative lights of this season. Bring us into the open place where, dazed yet not afraid, we may praise you with wonder and adore you with profound joyfulness. Through Jesus of Nazareth, our Christ and Savior. Amen!

We Enter into God's Presence

**Please stand in body or spirit*

Welcome / Greetings

MJ Floreno

Signing of the Friendship Pad & Prayer Cards

Advent Reading & Lighting of the third candle (pink)

Jim Tubbs and Mary Carson

Congregational Life

MJ Floreno

Prelude

Hope

Forest Green arr.
Joel Raney

*Call to Worship

MJ Floreno

This Advent, we hope and pray for:
Joy as we journey together,
Sight for the blind and healing for the sick,
Freedom for the prisoners and good news for the poor,
Release for the oppressed with justice for all
and love for each other.
And the coming of God's topsy-turvy, inside out, upside-down Kingdom.

1 The people who walked in darkness a waken to see a great light. The people who dwelt in the land of the shadow ride to a star shining bright.

**[REFRAIN] His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Father forever,
Prince of Peace. Peace. Peace.**

2 For God has enlarged the nation, and prospered the fruit of it's land. God's people are blest with the harvest of victory, gift from a bountiful hand.

**[REFRAIN] His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Father forever,
Prince of Peace. Peace. Peace.**

3 The yoke of the despair and bondage, the chains of the slave master's rod are shattered and scattered like dust in a wind storm, loosed by the justice of God.

**[REFRAIN] His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Father forever,
Prince of Peace. Peace. Peace.**

4 For us now a child is given, for all the despised and forlorn. The rule of compassion shall rest on his shoulder. God's own Messiah is born!

**[REFRAIN] His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Father forever,
Prince of Peace. Peace. Peace.**

5 How vast is our God's dominion! How far truth and mercy extend. The zeal of the Lord will accomplish its purpose: justice shall reign without end.

**[REFRAIN] His name is Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Father forever,
Prince of Peace. Peace. Peace.**

Prayer of Brokenness/Confession

When we remember all the mistakes we have made, all the careless words we have spoken, all the contempt we have given to those around us, we have trouble looking God in the eye. But God gazes at us with mercy and love, waiting to forgive us, even as we hesitate to speak of the brokenness of our hearts. Trusting in that forgiveness, let us pray together now:

**Again we must confess, Master of the Universe,
our struggles to be faithful disciples.
Entrusted with all your gifts,
we become fearful once again of misusing them,
missing the chance to be a blessing to others.
Invited to dance in the light of your love,
we stand against the wall once again,
keeping company with our old friend, sin.
Called to be emptied for those who struggle in life,
we fill ourselves once again, with scorn
for the poor choices they make.**

Have mercy, Journeying God, have mercy on us.

Once again, open our eyes to your kingdom in our midst, so we might discover that your day of hope and grace has already come in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Silence prayer

Assurance of Pardon

This is the good news: God intends for us to find life, to embrace hope, to receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ, our Servant.

The end of our journey is not rejection and emptiness, but the fullness of grace and hope in our God. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. Amen.

We Hear God's Word

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11

Rev. Marjorie Wilhelmi

New Revised Standard Version

The Good News of Deliverance

61 The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and release to the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

Anthem

E'en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come
Chancel Choir

Paul Manz

Sermon

Surprised by Joy
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rev. Marjorie Wilhelmi

We Respond to God's Word

Offertory & Doxology
Collection of Prayer Cards

Rev. Marjorie Wilhelmi

**Direct, control, suggest, this day,
in all I design, do, or say,
that all my powers, with all of their might,
might serve you both day and night.**

arr. Shari Fiore

Prayers of the People

MJ Floreno

Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Lord's Prayer

MJ Floreno

Holy God of hope and promise: when the children were in deep despair, you promised them a sign, the indication of a Savior coming into their midst. As we bring you our tithes and offerings this day, so many of us are discouraged, trying to find our way. We need your sign, we need your Son, not as simply a reminder of history but as a new direction, a revolution of love that starts in our hearts, a resurrection of compassion that looks beyond self and the accumulation of more and more things that don't satisfy. We need what only a Savior can give us. Guide us by your signs on this day and as we begin the journey to Bethlehem once again. In the Savior's name, we pray as... in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together;

"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."

We Follow God's Word into the World

*Hymn of Sending #93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Georg Weissel

**1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.**

**2 Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart
from earthly use for heaven's employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.**

**3 Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.
Let me thy inner presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.**

Benediction

Rev. Marjorie Wilhelmi

Postlude

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Swedish folk tune
arr. Paul Manz

Today's flowers are presented by MJ and Paul Floreno in honor of Robert David Goldi's first birthday and Heather Jenkins for her 50th birthday.

Please welcome Rev. Marjorie Wilhelmi back, as today's guest preacher.

Marjorie has served the Detroit Presbytery as Associate Pastor at Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian, as Senior Pastor and Head of Staff at Northbrook Presbyterian Church in Beverly Hills, and as Parish Associate at Kirk in the Hills. She is certified by the Shalem Institute in Contemplative Leadership and a recent graduate of Living School for Action and Contemplation.

Worship Liturgist

We welcome MJ Floreno as today's liturgist. Sharon Cressman will serve as liturgist on December 24th at 10:00 a.m. and Mary Carson will serve as liturgist for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24th at 4:00 p.m. For information on serving as a liturgist to assist the pastor during worship, please contact Kari Gorman.



2023 Christmas Poinsettias

Craig & Pam Aue (2) In memory and in honor of loved ones

Leslie Black & Michael Rogers (2) In honor of family near and far

Alvine Cooper In honor of all those who serve in many ways

Randy & Tracy Edwards In honor of loved ones

Ellen & Jeff Ely In memory of Engelina Jansema, Ellen's mother

Anne & Rick Fuller In memory of our niece, Jill Heather

Dale Hawkins In honor of the Hawkins family

Jerry & Marcia Howe In memory of our parents

Mary Kinney (2) In honor of my children Julie, Will/Carol Kinney and grandchildren Andrea and Caitlyn; and in memory of my beloved husband, William L. Kinney

Rob & Sally Kirsten In memory of our parents, Peter & Louise Kirsten and Charles & Mary Shaw

Luna & Dwight Kish (3) In memory of Marilyn and Andrew Kish and Constantine Kapatais

Eddie & Becky Matteson Prayers for Peace on Earth

Don & Sue Schwartz In memory of our mothers, Mary Ellen and Joyce

Sue Smith In memory of Robert and June Lymperis


Jim Tubbs In memory of Lee & Jim Tubbs


Group Discussion & Pray-A-Thon: TODAY after the service

Over the past 4 weeks, the Future Church Task Force participated in a group study of the book *Sailboat Church* by Joan S. Gray. Several ideas were generated from this discussion. We'd like to invite you to join us as we gather in prayer and discussion over the future of our church - our vision, our mission, next steps. Even if you didn't join the book study, please join us anyway. We'll gather **in the Parlor at 11:30am**. Grab some coffee and goodies and come enjoy some prayer time and fellowship in the Parlor.

Gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering help with critical financial assistance to eligible church workers and retired pastors and their families in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

You can donate via check (in pew envelopes or use the QR code below.





CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP, MINISTRY, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

What child is this?

THE PERFECT GIFT.

Christmas Joy Offering

The Mission Ministry is pleased to sponsor the Christmas Joy Offering every year. There are Christmas Joy envelopes in the pews or you can mail your offering to the church office. Be sure to mark it specifically for Christmas Joy. Christmas Joy offerings go to support retired clergy and leadership development for the future, a very important cause that we heartily support. Thank you for your generosity.

Hospitality Time Schedule

You are invited to bring ONE food item on ONE Sunday each month. Your Sunday depends on the first letter of your last name. It would be greatly appreciated if you are also able to help with set-up or clean-up. Please note healthy options are welcome as well, such as fruit, cheese & crackers, veggies etc. Here's the upcoming schedule:

- December 24: Last names beginning E-K
- December 31: Last names beginning L-K
- January 7: Last names beginning S-Z
- January 14: Last names beginning A-D

2024 Worship Flower sign-up available

Please consider giving flowers in memory of a loved one or to recognize a special occasion such as a birthday or anniversary or to the glory of God. **An arrangement is \$25** and enhances our in-person and livestreamed worship services. More than one arrangement may be



ordered for any Sunday and will be displayed on plant stands near the pulpit during the service. Your donation will also be acknowledged in that Sunday's worship bulletin. Please sign up on the flower calendar on the kiosk or order through the church office at least one week in advance. You may take home the flowers after the service, ask to have the flowers delivered to you or request to have them delivered to one of our homebound members.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

There are two opportunities to worship with your church family on Christmas Eve. On Sunday, December 24th we will hold our traditional Sunday morning worship beginning at 10:00am. We will hold a special service at 4:00pm as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord on Christmas Day. Please join us and invite your extended family and friends to participate in this meaningful Christmas Even candlelight worship service for all ages.



Carol Sing & Holiday Sweater Contest

Please join us December 31st during our regular worship service at 10:00am for a Carol Sing and fun time of fellowship. Don't forget to wear your favorite holiday sweater!

2024 Offering Envelopes

Those who have used numbered envelopes in 2023 will automatically receive envelopes for 2024, unless you inform us otherwise. If you have NOT used envelopes this year, but DO wish to have them for next year, please contact the church office at 248-474-6170 to make your request known. Numbered envelopes facilitate the speed and accuracy of the data entry process for our offering counters, so we do encourage you to use envelopes if you contribute manually on a regular basis. We also encourage the use of electronic debit. If you wish to automatically submit your pledge electronically from your bank account monthly, please call the church office to have the forms mailed to you. If you have any questions, please call the church office at (248) 474-6170.

Important year-end information regarding contributions

Please be aware that the last bank deposit for contributions for the tax year 2023 will be made on Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2023. This means contributions must be received in the church office by Sunday, December 24, 2023. Any monies received in the mail after these dates will not be counted or deposited until after the end of the year and will be counted as 2024 contributions. Please note these dates so that you will know in advance how to plan your year-end giving.

Annual Meeting scheduled February 4, 2024; annual reports due- JANUARY 10, 2024

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 4, 2024, in Knox Hall and via Zoom following the worship service. Reports to be included in the 2023 Annual Report should be emailed to the church office no later than Wednesday, January 10, 2024. The 2023 Annual Report will be emailed to members who have signed up through the church website to receive the FYI newsletter, the annual report and other important church information via email (to sign up, please go to www.farmington-pres.org). A few printed copies of the 2023 Annual Report will be available at the welcome center on Sunday, January 28, 2024, or you may contact the church office to request a hard copy.

COVID-19 or Flu Symptoms

Please be mindful if you have symptoms, stay home and take care of yourself and others.

Adult Bible Discussion – The Wired Word

Join our Bible discussion **Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in the Library**. Advance copies are available the Saturday before by email. Remembered For 'Life of Service and Compassion' To get on the email list contact Tom Neal at ttneal@sbcglobal.net.

News from the Church Office

Office hours are as follows: **Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.** It is a good idea to call ahead if you need to come into the building.

As a reminder please contact the church office via telephone at (248) 474-6170 or email at info@farmington-pres.org.

First Presbyterian Church Staff

Ministers of the Church

Pastoral Care Parish Associate

Minister of Music & Organist/Pianist

Office Administrative Assistant

Office Assistant

AV Tech Intern

Members of the Congregation

The Rev. Craig S. Aue

Shari Fiore-Bloom

Carly Vivio

Amanda Schreiber

Jaiden Thomas



Farmington First Presbyterian Church

The Church of the Open Hands

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