



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
OF FARMINGTON

*Church of the Open Hands*

WELCOMING ALL; SHARING CHRIST; SERVING OTHERS

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



## December 22, 2024

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

### Prayer of Preparation

Blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of the universe, for you have kept us in life, sustained us, and brought us to this holy season. Amen.

### **We Enter into God's Presence**

\*Please stand in body or spirit

Prelude

*The First Noel*

arr. Jason Tonioli

Welcome / Greetings

Becca DeSloover

*Signing of the Friendship Pad & Prayer Cards*

Congregational Life

Becca DeSloover

Advent Reading & Lighting of the fourth candle (purple)

DeSloover Family

Show us your unfailing love, O God, our Savior;

**And grant us your salvation.**

Listen to what the Lord our God says:

**God promises peace to his people, who are God's beloved saints.**

The Lord will indeed give what is good.

**Righteousness goes before the Lord and prepares the way for his steps.**

May the Lord make his holy face to shine upon us in this time of Advent worship. May we see God's face and so know peace.

**Let us worship the Lord our God. Amen.**

*\*Opening Hymn #121      O Little Town of Bethlehem*

**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.**

**For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.**

**O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.**

**How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**

**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 the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!**

## **Celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism—Payton Waun**

Prayer of Confession

Lord Christ, we confess our willingness to be loved—

**But also our reluctance to love.**

We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love—

**But also our refusal to forgive.**

We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love—

**But also our resistance to follow you without question.**

In this Advent time, forgive us our failure to respond as we should. Come to us again, and by your grace, help us to receive you with joy, as did the shepherds with wonder and awe; as did Zechariah with patience and joy; as did Mary with obedience and love. Even so: come, Lord Jesus.

**Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy. Amen.**

Words of Assurance

The good news of this Advent season is forgiveness of sin and new life. Let us commit our lives to Christ's way of hope and peace.

**Thanks be to the Advent God, who comes to us, setting us free to love and serve.  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Amen.**

## **We Hear God's Word**

Scripture Reading

Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:39-55

Becca DeSloover

Micah 5:2-5a:

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight rulers.

Luke 1:39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Anthem

*Advent Hymn*

Sermon

Pastor Bruce Mulder

## **We Respond to God’s Word**

Offertory & Doxology

Pastor Bruce Mulder

*Collection of Prayer Cards*

Prayers of the People

Becca DeSloover

Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Lord’s Prayer

Becca DeSloover

Eternal God, for whom all people wait and search, we cry out today for a live and present Word from you.

**As our season of discontent approaches the day of your coming, we pray that you will speak to us in the graceful ways that you know best.**

Open our eyes that have been closed by fear and blinded by self-pity, that we may see you even in the anxieties and uncertainties that beset our days and threaten to overwhelm us like a cloud of darkness.

**Help us to see that amid the hustle and bustle of this holiday time, you have become incarnate, sanctifying the smallest tasks of love, generosity, and kindness that we are empowered by your grace to perform.**

We think of the needs of others at this time, O Lord, and we are embarrassed by our selfishness. May the answer to our prayers begin with us redeeming the times.

**Bring to all in need the end of their poverty; comfort their minds and hearts. Empower us, so we can help our neighbor— to share our joy and wealth, to provide a listening ear or friendly word, to help with errands or acts of kindness.**

Don’t allow us be content so long as conditions exist that advance human suffering from generation to generation through the repetition of hatred, ignorance, fear, and disease.

**We pray that the promise of your birth— that peace shall be on earth— may soon be fulfilled, in our troubled hearts and world.**

Come to us, Lord, for we need your presence in our own lives. We pray especially for those dear to us who are sick, or worried, or skeptical, or near the hour of their death.

**Comfort, comfort your people, and fill each heart with your love.**

We pray for the world into which you came and which you still love.

**Touch us once again with the hope that is the inheritance of those who love you and trust your promises.**

Through Jesus Christ, who is the joy of those who are content and the comfort of those who mourn, as we join in 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.**

## **We Follow God's Word into the World**

*\*Hymn of Sending#105*

*People Look East*

**People look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.**

**Make your house fair as you are able; trim the hearth and set the table.**

**Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there.**

**Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.**

**Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.**

**Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen.**

**Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim, shining  
beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.**

**Angels , announce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to earth. Set every  
peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.**

Benediction

Pastor Bruce Mulder

Postlude

*Angels from the Realms of Glory*

arr. Robert Thygerson



# Christmas Eve Service

We would like to extend a special invitation to all families of First Presbyterian to attend the Church on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4pm for our Children's Storytime Service. It will be a short, family- friendly worship that will be meaningful for all ages. Come and be filled with the Christmas Spirit and be home in time to put out cookies for Santa!

**Merry Christmas from everyone at First Presbyterian Church of Farmington**



## **Worship Liturgist**

We welcome Becca DeSloover as today's liturgist. Christmas Eve's liturgist will be Sharon Cressman. For information on serving as a liturgist to assist the pastor during worship, please contact Kari Gorman.

## **Pastor Nominating Committee**

During the month of December, we will be searching for members to join the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). The PNC is the committee elected by the congregation to conduct the process of finding candidates and eventually selecting our new pastor. If you are interested in serving on the PNC, please contact Session member, Martha Countegan, by email at [dcountegan@aol.com](mailto:dcountegan@aol.com).

## **Reminder to send in pledge form or letter of intent**

If you haven't done so already, please mail in your pledge form or letter of intent to the office or drop them off in the collection basket when you attend the Sunday service. We are putting

together our 2025 budget and need your pledge. Thank you for your generosity in supporting the programs and ministries of First Presbyterian Church of Farmington. We couldn't do what we do without you!

### **Recycle Your Old Toothbrushes, etc.**

Please start saving your old toothbrushes, empty toothpaste tubes and caps, toothbrush outer packaging and empty floss containers, any brand. Place them in the marked bin in the foyer. Colgate has started a program to recycle these hard-to-recycle items. Let's keep more items out of the landfill! Thanks for your care for planet Earth. Questions? See Sharon Cressman.

### **Custodian Needed!**

Your First Presbyterian Church of Farmington is actively seeking a part time custodian. The candidate should have a good background in building maintenance. The job is 20 hours per week. The pay for it position is \$20 per hour. Please refer any candidates to Bob Van Hamme @mvanhamme@twmi.rr.com

### **Join the new Hospitality Team**

The Membership Committee encourages you to join our Hospitality Team. Help us welcome guests each Sunday. Pastor Bruce will be leading a Hospitality training session. If interested reach out to Collee Tavor ([CMTcounseling@gmail.com](mailto:CMTcounseling@gmail.com)) or Tom Neal ([ttneal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ttneal@sbcglobal.net))

### **Stewardship 2025 – What does following Jesus mean to you?**

As we move through our process of change and transition toward a permanent pastor, what better way to move forward than by “following Jesus?” Last year we committed to being a “sailboat church,” depending on God's provision as the Holy Spirit guides us forward. May we all draw closer to Jesus as we explore what it truly means to follow him. Please feel free to share what “following Jesus” means to you on the Stewardship bulletin board in the foyer.

### **Adult Bible Discussion – The Wired Word**

Join our Bible discussion **Sundays at 9:00 a.m. in 208/210**. Advance copies are available the Saturday before by email. To get on the email list, please contact Tom Neal at [ttneal@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ttneal@sbcglobal.net).

### **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, eggs, cheese & crackers, veggies etc. Here's the upcoming schedule:

December 22: Last names beginning S-Z

December 29: Last names beginning A-D

January 5: Last names beginning E-K

January 12: Last names beginning L-R

January 19: Last names beginning S-Z

January 26: Last names beginning A-D



### **QR Code for Donations!**

If you ever forget to go to the ATM, or simply don't carry cash on you, we've decided to include the church QR code for a more streamlined donation process. To donate, just scan the QR code and follow the prompts!

<b>First Presbyterian Church Staff</b>	
<b>Ministers of the Church</b>	<b>Members of the Congregation</b>
Transitional Senior Pastor	Rev. Bruce Mulder
Pastoral Care Parish Associate	Rev. Craig Aue
Minister of Music	Peter Cartwright
Office Administrator	Liz Labourdeth
Administrative Assistant	Amanda May Schreiber
AV Tech Intern	Lidia Neathamer

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