



A Celebration Of Worship

First Presbyterian Church Portsmouth, Ohio

December 29, 2024
1st Sunday of Christmas
11 o'clock Worship Service

Lead by Ms. Michele Imes, Director of Music
Deacon Stephanie Scaggs, Liturgist
Dr. Phillip Roberts, Organist/Musician

We are glad you came...



Welcome to First Presbyterian Church TOGETHER WE CELEBRATE

WELCOME

Ms. Michele Imes

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deacon Stephanie Scaggs

SONG OF PREPARATION #155 "Raise a Song of Gladness" **GTG**

WELCOME TO ALL!

****A CALL TO WORSHIP***

Deacon Scaggs

L. Welcome to all:

happy or sad,
rejoicing or grieving,
seeking or believing.

Welcome to all, here is good news:

To you is born this day, in the city of David,
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

His name is Jesus, which means
"Liberator," "Rescuer," and "Deliverer."

His life changed the world.

His living presence changes us today.

Lift up your hearts. Rejoice! Give thanks to God!

PRAYER FOR THANKSGIVING

Deacon Scaggs

God of peace,

you hold the nations in your hand,
yet know and love us all.

By your Spirit, you gather us;
in Christ, you make us one.

As we come together,
show us who we are,
what we can be,

and where we should go,
through Jesus Christ, our Rescuer, Partner, and Friend. Amen.

*All: Living God, come to our world,
May the love of Christ shine brightly,
at the center of our lives,
spreading warmth and light,
in us, in this congregation, and everywhere.*

**HYMN: #143 "Angels We Have Heard on High" v. 1 and 2 GTG*

GREAT, HOLY ONE, SPREADING TIME AND SPACE . . .

(Acts 17:22–34a)

Revealed in Creation

Ms. Imes

- L. The apostle Paul visits the Greek city of Athens,
debates with philosophers,
and proclaims the one true God.
"Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way.

For as I went through the city
and looked carefully at the objects of your worship,
I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an
unknown god."

What therefore you worship as unknown,
this I proclaim to you.
The God who made the world and everything in it,...
who is the ruler of heaven and earth,
does not live in shrines made by human hands,
[but is the universal giver of life and breath—indeed, of
everything.]

God made all nations to inhabit the whole earth,
and allotted the times of their existence,
and the boundaries of the places where they would live,
so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for
God and find God though indeed God is not far from each one of us

For "In God we live and move and have our being..."

Here ends our reading.

Good Christian friends, rejoice!

Now ye need not fear the grave.

Jesus Christ was born to save!

HYMN: #132 "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!" vs. 1 and 2 GTG

RESCUING A WORLD GONE WRONG

(Romans 7:14–25; 8:1–2)

Mrs. Imes

The apostle Paul proclaims that we live in a world gone wrong, where humankind has gone astray from God, and we can't put ourselves right, or the world right, even when we want to.

I do not understand my own actions.

For I do not do what I want,
but I do the very thing I hate.

Now if I do what I do not want,
I agree that God's law is good....

I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

For I do not do the good I want,
but the evil I do not want is what I do....

...Wretched man that I am!

Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

There is therefore now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus
has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Here ends our reading.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come.

Let heaven and nature sing!

The living Christ can change the world
and break the curse of sin.

Thanks be to God!

HYMN: #134 "Joy to the World" vs. 1 and 4 **GTG**

SHOW US WHO YOU ARE

Deacon Scaggs

L. Listen to an ancient song of praise
that tells of God's unfailing love:
Bless the Living God, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless God's holy name.
Bless the living God, O my soul,
and remember all God's benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the Pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good as long as you live
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

SPECIAL MUSIC:

Dr. Phillip Roberts

[Leader continues...]

Deacon Scaggs

It is God who works vindication,
and justice for all who are oppressed....
The Living God is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,...
[and] does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is God's steadfast love
to all who come with reverence;
as far as the east is from the west,

so far has God removed our transgressions from us.

Here ends our reading.

May the holy child of Bethlehem
cast out our sin, enter in,
and be born in us today

HYMN: #121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1 and 4 **GTG**

PUTTING WRONGS RIGHT

(Psalm 146)

Deacon Scaggs

L. From the songs of ancient Israel,
we learn that God is not only awesome, but also active;
not neutral, but involved;
not a detached creator, but God among us,
longing to see justice done
and the humble lifted high:

Praise God, O my soul!

I will praise God as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Do not put your trust in rulers,

in mortals, in whom there is no help.

When their breath departs, they return to the earth;

on that very day their plans perish.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the Living God,

who made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that is in them;

who keeps faith forever;

who executes justice for the oppressed;

who gives food to the hungry.,

and sets the prisoners free;

who opens the eyes of the blind,

[and] lifts up those who are bowed down;

God loves [those who do justice,]

[and] watches over the strangers;
God upholds the orphan and the widow,
but brings to ruin the way of the wicked.
Here ends our reading.
Let us pray, and work, and hope
for justice, kindness,
and "peace on earth, goodwill to all."

HYMN: # 123 *"It Came upon the Midnight Clear"* v. 1 only **GTG**

WORKING WITH GENTLE PERSEVERANCE
(Isaiah 42:1-4)

Ms. Imes

The prophet Isaiah proclaims God's chosen One,
whose gentle strength will put things right.
Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one, in whom I take delight!
I have put my spirit on him;
he will establish justice among the nations.
He will not shout or raise his voice,
or make himself heard in the street.
He will not break a crushed reed
or snuff out a smoldering wick;
unfailingly he will establish justice.
He will never falter or be crushed
until he sets justice on earth,
while coasts and islands await his teaching.

Here ends our reading.
May God give us the gentle strength of persevering love.

BORN AMONG US
(Luke 2:1-8 REB)

Ms. Imes

L: The Gospel of Luke tells how Jesus was born,
and who greeted him:

In those days a decree was issued by the emperor Augustus

for a census to be taken throughout the Roman world.
This was the first registration of its kind;
it took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
Everyone made their way to their own towns to be
registered.

Joseph went up to Judea from the town of Nazareth in
Galilee, to register in the city of David called Bethlehem,
because he was of the house of David by descent;
and with him went Mary, his betrothed,
who was expecting her child.

While they were there the time came for her to have her
baby, and she gave birth to a son, her firstborn.
She wrapped him in swaddling clothes.
and laid him in a manger,
because there was no room for them at the inn.

Now in this same district there were shepherds out in the
fields, keeping watch through the night over their flock.
Here ends our reading.
Let us now sing the story of the shepherds, the angels,
and the glorious good news.

HYMN: #147 "*The First Nowell*" **GTG**

TEACHER, HEALER, FRIEND
(Luke 13:10–17)

Deacon Scaggs

Here is a story from the Gospel of Luke.

It shows us what Jesus was like when he grew up:
[Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the
Sabbath.

And just then there appeared a woman
with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years.

She was bent over

and was quite unable to stand up straight.

When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said,

“Woman, you are set free from your ailment.”
When he laid his hands on her,
Immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.

But the leader of the synagogue,
indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath,
kept saying to the crowd,
“There are six days on which work ought to be done;
come on those days and be cured,
and not on the Sabbath day.”

But the Lord answered him and said,
“You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath
untie his ox or his donkey from the manger
and lead it away to give it water?
And ought not this woman,
a daughter of Abraham
whom Satan bound for eighteen long years,
be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?”
When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame;
and the entire crowd was rejoicing
at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Here ends our reading.
Let us rejoice that God has come to us,
not with glamour, power, and wealth,
but through Jesus,
showing us God, with a human face.

SPECIAL MUSIC:

Dr. Roberts

OFFERING:

Deacon Scaggs

DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING:

Deacon Scaggs

A Light for All Nations
(Matthew 2:1–12)

Lighting of All Candles

Deacon Scaggs

Christ, the light of the world, gives each one of us light,
so that we too may shine
with gratitude, hope, and love.
Receive the light that comes to you:
it comes from the Christ candle,
but it reaches you only through your neighbors.
Receive the light from a brother or sister in Christ.
Hold the light, enjoy the light, and be thankful.

[the Christ Candle is lit – Michele]

HYMN: # 122 "Silent Night" vs. 1,3,4 GTG

*[Greeter/Usher lights a member's candle, and in turn, they light others
until everyone is lit. The lights are turned off or dimmed]*

A PRAYER OF PETITION:

Ms. Imes

L. Christ among us, Light of the World, (Matt. 11:28, 30*)
heal our brokenness, and bring us to wholeness,
ease our pain, and bring us hope, strength, and life.
Give us new heart, new hope, and a new song,
that our prayers and deeds may be one.
We ask it in your name. Amen.

SEEN, HEARD, TOUCHED, AND KNOWN

(1 John 1:1-4; John 1:10-18)

Ms. Imes

L. In his first letter, and also in his Gospel,
John shows us the meaning of Jesus' birth, life, death, and living
presence:

We declare to you what was from the beginning,
what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes,
what we have looked at and touched with our hands,
concerning the word of life this life was revealed, and we have seen it
and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the
Father and was revealed to us we declare to you what we have seen
and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us;
and truly our fellowship is with the Father
and with his Son Jesus Christ.

The Food Pantry is closed every first Thurs. of the month. Open 12-2P

Dec. 31: Food Pantry open, 12-2P

January 2: Food Pantry Closed

Jan. 5: Communion Sunday, Officers are installed, 11A

Jan. 7: Pastor meets with Church Professionals, Retreat review, 1P

Jan. 8: MCL meets, 4P

Jan. 2: Pastor serves on PSV Mediation Group, 2P

Jan. 15: Board of Session meets, 1P, Conf. Rm.

Jan. 17-18: Armbrust Student Loan Cmte. meets w/ K. Perry, 6P

Jan. 19: Pastor Kelvin Perry is our guest speaker at worship, 11A

Church Contact Information

Pastor & Church Secretary's Office Hours for the Week

Sunday: Worship and office hours. Mondays:

Home office (worship planning, prep, and meetings)

Tuesday thru Thursday: 10 A - 4 P Fridays: Off

Email: rjohnson.fpc@gmail.com or rev.ron.johnson@gmail.com

Pas. Study: (740)529-7117 M: (434)770-1052

Virginia M. Stinnett, Admin. Aid/Church Secretary,

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