

## Sundays

Nursery Care 9:00 a.m.  
Breakfast 9:00 a.m.  
Christian Education 9:30 a.m.  
Worship 10:30 a.m.  
Fellowship following service  
Youth activities 4:00 p.m.

2701 Rochester Avenue  
Iowa City, IA 52245  
319-351-2660  
[www.firstpresioiowacity.org](http://www.firstpresioiowacity.org)

### Welcome to FPC.

Our prayer is that all will be blessed by the Word read and proclaimed as we are bound together by the Spirit as a community of faith. Children are invited to participate in our worship and welcome as loved, squirmy, laughing, crying children of God. We have busy bags for younger children and binders for young readers to help them in their journey, and a staffed nursery is available for children under 5.

✦ *Please rise, in body or spirit.*

***Bold lines** are spoken or sung by **All**. Non-bold lines are spoken or sung by one.*

*Please be seated by a Gathered Community Pad and sign in so that we may have a record of your time with us.*



Want to give  
online?  
Scan our QR  
Code or text  
FPCIC to 73256



*We seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ and his call to the realm of God: the practice of justice, mercy and faith. Our mission is represented by the Celtic cross, a shepherd's crook, the extension of the right arm of fellowship into the world and the church's hospitality toward the world.*

24 December 2023  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent  
Love

### Greeting

Psalm 118: 24

This is the day that the Lord has made | **We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

### Prelude

*Before the Marvel of this Night*

Zach Unke

### ✦ Gathering Prayer

Christina Rosetti, alt

Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love Divine,  
**Love was born at Christmas, Star and Angels gave the sign.**  
Worship we the Godhead, Love Incarnate, Love Divine,  
**Worship we our Jesus, but wherewith for sacred sign?**  
Love shall be our token, Love be yours and love be mine,  
**Love to God and love to all!**

### ✦ Gathering Hymn 105

*People, Look East*

### ✦ Call to Confession

Jesus's birth is so close, and yet we are so far from preparing our hearts for him. Come, let us confess our sin before God and neighbor.

### ✦ Prayer of Communal Confession

**Gracious and most merciful God, we have sinned against you in thought and word and deed, both in what we have done and what we have left undone. With signs of joy, peace, and hope all around us, we have still kept ourselves apart. In the midst of mourning and sadness, we have forgotten what it is to love the living. On this of all days, we confess that we desire to be more like Jesus, showing love to God and love to all, but do not know how. Please God, show us the way.**

### ✦ Time of Individual Confession

### ✦ Words of Assurance

Hear the Good News. Through God's infinite love comes God's infinite grace. You are forgiven. Amen.

### ✦ Confessional Response 87

*Comfort, Comfort Now My People (v 1)*

**"Comfort, comfort now my peo-ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.  
"Com-fort those who sit in dark-ness mourn-ing un-der sor-row's load.  
To my peo-ple now pro-claim that my par-don waits for them! Tell them  
that their sins I cov-er, and their war-fare now is o-ver."**

### ✦ The Peace

The peace of Jesus Christ be with you. | **And also with you.**  
*(The people may exchange signs of Christ's peace and reconciling love.)*

### Prayer for Illumination

Holy Spirit, reveal how we might better discern God's hope for us. Amen.

**Response** Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. | **Thanks be to God.**

### Children's Time

*All children, if they are so moved, are invited to join Pastor Nathan near the Advent wreath*

*Sing: Light of Jesus (echo: light of Jesus), show the way (show the way). Shine in us forever (shine in us forever); this we pray (this we pray).*

**With the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, we watch and wait for the coming of Christ who will bring light and peace to all the world.**

**With John the Baptist, we cry out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord! Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."**

**With Mary, the mother of Jesus, we rejoice, for the Mighty One has done great things for us. How holy is God's name!**

**With Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we tell the story of Jesus, the child of Bethlehem, who came to save us, and is coming again in glory.**

### The Second Lesson

Luke 1:26-38

Pew Bible, New Testament, p. 49

### Response

The words of the prophets for the people of God. | **Thanks be to God.**

### Hymn (next page)

*Now the Heavens Start to Whisper*

### Message

"Waiting for Love"

Pastor Nathan Willard

### Preparation for Prayer 88

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel (v2)*

**O come, thou Wis-dom from on high, who or-derst all things might-i-ly: to us the path of knowl-edge show; and teach us in her ways to go.**

### Prayers of the People and Silent Prayer

*During the prayers of the people, please respond to the words "God in your mercy" with "Hear our prayer."*

### Preparation for Prayer 88

*O Come, O Come Emmanuel (v7)*

**O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind; bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.**

### The Lord's 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**

### Invitation to the Offering

### Offertory

*Celtic Cradle Song*

arr. by Linda R. Lamb

### ✠Doxology (tune: 607)

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen**

### ✠Prayer of Dedication

**Thank you, God, for your love in this world. We dedicate these gifts to finding new ways to warm our hearts and let it live. Amen.**

# Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, music John Bell and Graham Maule, 1990; alt

1 Now the heav-ens start to whis-per, as the veil is grow-ing thin.  
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon-light now be-gin to drift a - way.  
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis-dom's seed,

Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:  
Dia-mond bril-liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.  
come to bless with fire and fra-grance hours of yearn-ing, hurt, and need.

Seed of prom-ise, deep-ly plan-ted, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!  
Christ, the morn-ing star of splen-dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.  
In the lone - ly, in the strang-er, in the out - cast, hid from view.

Like the soil be - neath the frost-line, hearts grow soft to wel-come him.  
Hea-ven's em - ber fans to full-ness; hearts grow warm to wel-come him.  
child who comes to grace the man-ger, teach our hearts to wel-come you.

## Commissioning

✦ Sending Hymn 266

*Joy to the World*

✦ Charge and Blessing

## Postlude

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Hal Hopson

## WORSHIP LEADERSHIP THIS MORNING

Preacher:	Pastor Nathan Willard
Ministry of Music:	JuBELLation, Melissa Moll, J. Kyle Coleman
Liturgist:	Jamie Helmick
Ushers:	Steve Schomberg
Elder:	Mary Ellen Stamp
Fellowship:	Worship and Arts Ministry



### *Holiday Hours*

The church office will be closed Christmas through January 1. The staff will be back in the office on January 2, 2024.

*Merry Christmas*

## Poinsettia Donations Given for the Glory of God! Emmanuel!

The poinsettias that beautify our Sanctuary this Christmas are given to the Glory of God and in memory or in honor of friends and family.

Sara Burton in memory of Maren Virginia Mondul  
Richard and Ann Burton in memory of their parents  
Maeleen Thorius in memory of Jerry Thorius  
Linda Couch in memory of Leland and Gladys Blake, Carl and DeeDee Couch  
Mary Beth Davis in memory of Sarah Parker, Stanley and Elizabeth Davis  
Jen and Vivian Adams in memory of Lou Leeper  
Candace Wiebener in memory of Howard and Bernice Wiebener  
Steve and Kathy Smith in memory of David and Mary Noble, Earl and Lois Smith  
Steve and Karen Hurt and Kevin Viksten in memory of Ray and Esther Viksten  
Debbie Beermann in memory of Carol Janssen  
David Van Dusseldorp in memory of Dean Van Dusseldorp  
Susan Van Duyn in memory of her parents Richard and Joyce Van Duyn  
Dwight and Pauline Miller in memory of their loved ones  
Mary and Jim Linn in memory of their parents  
Barbara Meier in memory of Dallis Meier  
Jeanie Wade-Nagle in memory of Gary Nagle, Harold Wade and Ray and Vivian Nagle  
Tom and Wanda Martin in memory of their parents  
Nancy Ross and family in memory of Don Ross  
Elizabeth Bolin in honor of Ginny Hall and in memory of Bob Hall and Dorothy Bolin  
Dwight Younkin in honor of Irene Watson  
Linda Younkin in honor of Sarah Oswald  
Kathy Maxey in honor of all who grieve the loss of a loved one this past year  
Glenn and Audrey Van Roekel



## First Presbyterian Church Staff

### PASTOR

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### ENDOWMENT & MEMORIAL COORDINATORS

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