

First Presbyterian Church, Elk Rapids
Sunday, December 3, 2023
9 AM Contemporary Service
Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Worship Songs

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Norm Veliquette & Judy Brummeler
Paul, Judith, Kathryn & Ben Wonacott

Reader 1: In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep.

Reader 2: A wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light,"

Reader 1: and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.

Reader 2: God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

All: And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

[Light first Advent candle.]

Message to the Children

Wayne Potter

Scripture Reading – Luke 1:5-24

Sermon

"Waiting in Hope"

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Song

Reception of New Members

Fran Albaugh

Rachel Hunter

Celebration of Communion

For Communion today everyone is invited to come forward by the center aisle to receive the gluten free bread and juice. After partaking of the elements, you may return to your seat by the side aisle.

Pastoral Prayer & 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.

Giving Back to God

- Our Offering- Your gifts honor God and help provide financial support of the ministries and mission of this church.
- Our Service- Get connected! Fill out a Connection Card to get more involved in the life and ministries of the church.
- Our Prayers- How can we help you in prayer today? Fill out a prayer card and let us know.
Please place your financial gift, Connection Card, or Prayer Card in the Offering Box in the narthex.

Minute for Mission

Sandi Gray

Closing Song

Charge and Blessing

Leader: In the coming week what does God call us to do?

**People: We are called to: Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;
deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;
and demonstrate Christ's way of love in service to the world.**

*For anyone desiring special prayers today, Nancy Muhlig will be at the front of the sanctuary to pray for you.
Please come forward after the service.*

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Lorraine Berak & Shelia Conrad, and our snack volunteer: Judy Husby.

Thank you to our communion servers: Lorraine Berak, Shelia Conrad, Mel Matchett, and Magen Misico.

First Presbyterian Church, Elk Rapids

Sunday, December 3, 2023

10:30 AM Traditional Service

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Prelude – “My Lord He Is’a Comin’ Soon” by Drennan

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Minute for Mission

Sandi Gray

Ringing of the Historic Church Bell

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Jim Lagowski & Eunice Thompson

Reader 1: In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep.

Reader 2: A wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,”

Reader 1: and there was light. And God saw that the light was good.

Reader 2: God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

All: And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

[Light first Advent candle.]

All: Christ is coming. Indeed, He is coming to make all things new. Eternal God, during this season of Advent, help us prepare Christ's way, help us center our hearts, minds and prayers on your holy presence in our midst. Transform us in our worship today, Lord, that we may become the people of God you call us to be. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn 363 – “*Rejoice, the Lord Is King!*”

Call to Confession

Sandi Gray

Preparing for Christ's coming requires honest examination of our lives and our hearts. Let us turn to God in prayer to confess our sins.

Prayer of Confession

Sandi Gray

All: Prince of Peace, the wars and rumors of wars betray our addiction to violence, our destructive and dehumanizing ways. We deserve your judgement and condemnation. Yet, you remain faithful, a steadfast source of peace during our warring madness. Holy God, turn us from evil. Return us to Christ and his path of peace. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Amen.

(Please pause for prayers of silent meditation)

Assurance of Pardon (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Sandi Gray

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

Anthem – “Every Valley” by Johnson

Scripture Reading – Luke 1:5-24

Sermon

“Waiting in Hope”

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Hymn 503 – “**Lord, We Have Come at Your Own Invitation**”

Celebration of Communion

For Communion today everyone is invited to come forward by the center aisle to receive the gluten free bread and juice. After partaking of the elements, you may return to your seat by the side aisle.

Pastoral Prayer and 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.

Giving Back to God

- Our Offering- Your gifts honor God and help provide financial support of the ministries and mission of this church.
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Doxology – “**Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow**”

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Offering Prayer

All: Christ calls us to live generous and grateful lives. Take these gifts we offer today, O God, and use them to the fulfillment of Christ's ministry. May these gifts help to free the captives, heal the sick, comfort the lonely, feed the hungry, and heal the wounded. As Christ's hands and feet, use us too, in service to building your beloved community. Amen.

Closing Hymn 347 – “**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence**”

Charge and Blessing

Leader: In the coming week what does God call us to do?

**People: We are called to: Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;
deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;
and demonstrate Christ's way of love in service to the world.**

Benediction

Benediction Response – *“Let There Be Peace On Earth”*

For anyone desiring special prayers today, Sandi Gray will be at the front of the sanctuary to pray for you. Please come forward after the service.

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Norm & Mary Frey, and our snack volunteer.

Thank you to our communion servers: Mary Anne Frey, Ken Kohlman, Don Reynolds, and Joanne Teague.

Thank you for your generous giving during this challenging time! Your gifts support all of the work and ministries of the church, as we continue to do the work of Christ in the world today. You can mail your pledges to the church at: First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids, 404 Spruce Street, Elk Rapids, MI 49629, give through online giving at www.erfpc.org (click on the Giving tab at the top right), or set up a one time or recurring donation by contacting our Treasurer, Mike Husby, at finmanager@erfpc.org. Again, we thank everyone for their continued support of the ministries and mission of the church!

Nursery – Qualified caregivers welcome infants and children during the service.

Thank You! We want to say a big thank you to all our volunteers who helped decorate the church for this Advent season. The group of volunteers who showed up included: Sara and Noah Bogard, Shelia Conrad, Barb Cole, Pam Coleman and Ken Kohlman, Deb Gamelin, Judy Matchett, Jan and Don Shurte, Phyllis Staley, Garry Sumerix, and Gloria Wheeler, with Anne Conrad organizing the group. We'd also like to thank Jennifer Snyder and the Deacons for organizing beautiful poinsettia plants that will arrive soon. We really appreciate all who have a part in making the church look festive for this special time.

December Family Event & Dinner – Sunday, December 3 at 5:00 PM at the Lighthouse

Our whole church family is invited to join us on Sunday, December 3 at 5:00 p.m. at the Lighthouse for a special event. We will have a delicious dinner (all provided for you to enjoy) and create Christmas crafts. For questions, contact Wayne Potter at 517-416-2813. Don't miss this fun event for everyone!

“An Unlikely Advent” Series – Mondays at 5:30 PM

Beginning Monday night Nov 27- Dec 18 we will be having our special Advent series. Each night we begin with a soup and bread supper at 5:30 followed by a video and group discussion. Join us for a discussion of some of the “fringe” participants in the Advent story. We can all name the principle players in the Nativity scene but what do Elizabeth and Zachariah teach us about hope and God's plans for us? No one likes a villain like King Herod but what does he teach us about God's grace? The Magi brought gifts but what else do they teach us about the life of Jesus? Finally, the shepherds were common people and yet the Holy Spirit visited them and they joined Jesus at the manger. Please sign up at the Activity Center and have a meal and discussion about the many things we learn while waiting for the birth of Jesus. We also have a sign-up sheet for those wishing to bring soup, bread, or dessert.

Christmas Concert – Sunday, December 10 at 4:00 PM

Everyone is invited to a Christmas Concert in the sanctuary on Sunday, December 10 at 4:00 p.m. The Community Choir will be sharing music and lessons for the Advent season. Don't miss this special event!

“Working Together - Celebrating God’s Good Gifts” – Stewardship Campaign

It takes many hands — working together — to accomplish all that takes place in a church like First Presbyterian Church. As Annie Johnson Flint wrote, “Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today.” As one who is “working together” with God and listening to God, will you make a fresh commitment to use the time, talents and treasure you have received from Him in an even greater way in 2024?

Thank you for your faithfulness to the Lord and to the ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Thank you for your consistency in giving of your time, talents and treasure to the work of the Lord here. And thank you for what you are going to do in the future in celebration of God’s good gifts! If you have not yet had a chance to pledge, please mail or drop it off at the church office. Additional pledge cards are available in the pews and at the Welcome Table in the narthex.

Christmas Memorial Plants – Christmas is a time to honor loved ones with a \$10.00 donation for a poinsettia plant to decorate the church sanctuary. The names of those you wish to remember will be in the Christmas Eve bulletin. To reserve your poinsettia, fill out the form at the Activity Center and return it with your donation to the box by Sunday, December 17.

Advent Candle Lighting/Devotional – Each Sunday morning in Advent a family/group/ or individuals light the Advent candles on the Advent Wreath in the Sanctuary and read a short devotion (provided by Pastor Jim). Would you consider being part of this for one of our Worship Services? Children are most welcome to be participate. Sign-up sheets can be found at the Activity Center.

New Book Study in January – Monday, January 8, 15 & 22 at 7:00 PM

The Gift of Empathy, Helping Others Feel Valued, Cared for and Understood will be the book study this January. The Adult Ed. along with the Stephen Ministry Team will be exploring how we can relate in empathetic ways that make a difference in people's lives. This will be a fresh approach to the topic of empathy, providing practical insights and real-life examples that will guide us all to better understand, connect with, and care for others in our homes, at work, in our church, in our community and beyond. There is a sign-up sheet at the Activity Table, so that books can be ordered. The three sessions will be held on Mondays: January 8, 15, and 22 from 7:00 - 8:30 PM.

2023 Annual Reports Due Friday, January 5 – Ministry Teams and Group Chairpersons, now is the time to begin putting together your Annual Report, covering the activities of your group or ministry team for 2023. Please try to keep your report to one page, put it in a Word document, and email it to the office (info@erfpc.org) by 9 a.m. Friday, January 5, 2024. If you have any questions, please contact Ellen Merillat at the church office (231-264-8167).

THESE DAYS devotional booklets for January through March 2024 have arrived and are on the Welcome table in the narthex. Stop and pick up your copy today!

The Welcome Project Update - The Welcome Project has been moving forward behind the scenes with the Elevator Building Committee working with the architect in sourcing a different type of elevator that does not require modification to the existing roof structure of the church. This elevator, called a LuLa, is a commercial elevator and is rated for a lower number of trips per day (not like a busy office building). Because of this change, the project is being rebid with the new bids being due on December 5. Three bidders are expected to respond. Once the bids are received, they will be evaluated by the Elevator Building Committee and the architect and then a recommendation will be made to the Trustees and Session. In the meantime, for those of you who have made a cash donation toward this project, your money has been invested and is earning interest which will be included toward the project.

Capturing our Stories to Mark 150th Anniversary - In 2024, First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids will celebrate our sesquicentennial anniversary (that's 150 years!). The Anniversary Task Force, headed by Laura Asiala and Jim Lagowski, is seeking youth and young adults who would be interested in interviewing senior members of our church family to capture stories, memories, and oral histories in

celebration of that milestone. Training and workshops will be provided. Contact Laura Wonacott Asiala at (989) 430-4644 or LEAsiala@gmail.com if that sounds interesting and you'd like to learn more.

Discovery Survey – Learn where your talents and interests match the needs of Ministry Teams by taking our Discovery Survey! The survey is designed to find where you might enjoy lending a hand, as well as to help our teams discover who they can call on when support is needed. The survey only takes a few minutes and is fun to do! Just scan the QR code or use this link: <https://volunteeraccelerator.ministryarchitects.com/ERFPC/survey.html>



Community Cupboard – Community Cash is back! Save your Village Market receipts **dated between September 1, 2023 and May 30, 2024** and turn them in one of three ways: In the lower left corner mail slot near the church office, in the box labeled “Community Cash” in the left corner of the brown box outside the Community Cupboard or mail them to Elk Rapids Community Cupboard, PO Box 572, Elk Rapids, MI 49629. Thank you for your continuous support.

The Community Cupboard is open every other Tuesday and Friday with a "shop for yourself system" for those in need. Call Pam Coleman at 847-445-8239 for more information or to set up an appointment. Plus, the Community Cupboard is accepting donations in a drop box outside the cupboard entrance on Chippewa Street or by mail to ERCC, Box 572, Elk Rapids MI 49629.

This Week's Activities

Sun. 12/3

9:00 a Contemporary Service
10:00 a Sunday School/Youth-LH
10:30 a Traditional Service
2:00 p Choir Rehearsal
5:00 p Family Dinner Event – LH

Mon. 12/4

5:30 p Soup Dinner - FHall
6:00 p An Unlikely Advent Prog. - FHall

Tues. 12/5

5:30 p Youth MT – LH
6:30 p Children's Ed MT – LH
6:30 p Deacons – FHall

Wed. 12/6

6:30 a Breakfast Club – LH
9:00 a Bulletin Items Due
3:00 p UpNorth Group – FHall
3:00 p Service at Samaritas
6:30 p Praise Team Practice

Thurs. 12/7

10:30 a Worship MT – Conf
7:00 p Trustess – FHall

Fri. 12/8

10:30 a Choir – FHall

Sat. 12/9

9:00 a Choir Dress Rehearsal