



9 AM Contemporary Service • Sunday, December 1, 2024

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Invitation to Worship

Marie Zandler

Leader: The light of God is coming into the world. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined."
(Isaiah 9:2)

All: Come, let us worship the living God!

Worship Song - **"O Come O Come Emmanuel"**

Greeting One Another in Christian Love

(Before you sit down, please turn and greet your neighbor. Also, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad located at the end of each pew and pass it along to the person next to you. Thanks!)

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Matt & Anne Conrad Family

Leader: As we journey through the Sundays of Advent, listen to the promises of God:

People: a righteous branch springs forth,

Leader: a promise of justice and righteousness,

People: a promise of safety.

Leader: Listen to the promise of Jesus:

People: the kingdom of God draws near.

Leader: Keep alert; watch for signs of hope.

People: Our Advent journey begins.

Leader: Today is the first Sunday in Advent. It is the beginning of our journey to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, who brought light into the lives of all people.
We light the first Advent candle.

(Light first candle)

Opening Prayer

Matt & Anne Conrad Family

All: God of every season, as we begin our journey through Advent, turn our hearts toward you. Guide us into your realm of peace and joy. Teach us to set aside our worries, as we walk in faithfulness and trust. May the love within us be born anew. Help us remain alert, that we may respond to pain and suffering and notice the signs of abundant life all around us. Come, Lord Jesus; come to us now, we pray. Amen.

Message to the Children

Wayne Potter

(Children are invited to come forward at this time for the children's message.)

Scripture Reading – Jeremiah 33:14-16

Sermon

"The Promise of Hope"

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Song - **"Hope Was Born This Night"**

Reception of New Members

Jerry Blight & Felicia Schulte-Blight

Katie Larsen

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.

Closing Song – *“In Christ Alone”*

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, Shelia Conrad 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: Christine Dewey.

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



10:30 AM Traditional Service • Sunday, December 1, 2024

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Prelude – *“Come and Worship”* by Johnson/Larson

Welcome

Rev. Jim Porter

Invitation and Centering Words

During this Advent season, we anticipate the light of God coming into the world, as the prophet Isaiah declared: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.” (Isaiah 9:2)

Ringling of the Historic Church Bell

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Les & Joanne Teague

Leader: As we journey through the Sundays of Advent, listen to the promises of God:

People: a righteous branch springs forth,

Leader: a promise of justice and righteousness,

People: a promise of safety.

Leader: Listen to the promise of Jesus:

People: the kingdom of God draws near.

Leader: Keep alert; watch for signs of hope.

People: Our Advent journey begins.

Leader: Today is the first Sunday in Advent. It is the beginning of our journey to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, who brought light into the lives of all people. We light the first Advent candle.

(Light first candle)

Opening Prayer

Les & Joanne Teague

All: God of every season, as we begin our journey through Advent, turn our hearts toward you.

Guide us into your realm of peace and joy. Teach us to set aside our worries, as we walk in faithfulness and trust. May the love within us be born anew. Help us remain alert, that we may respond to pain and suffering and notice the signs of abundant life all around us. Come, Lord Jesus; come to us now, we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn 93 – *“Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”*

Prayer of Confession

Joanne Teague

All: Compassionate God, show us your ways. Guide us in your paths and lead us in your truth. For your love is faithful, and your will brings us abundant life. It is easy to be distracted during this busy time of year. The worries of life threaten to overwhelm us. Remind us of who we are meant to be: merciful, faithful, patient, and loving. We will place our trust in you, no matter what happens. May we forget our past mistakes and live into a future filled with love. Amen.

(Please pause for prayers of silent meditation)

Assurance of Pardon

Joanne Teague

Leader: God’s mercy and steadfast love are eternal. God shows us the way to abundant life.

Passing the Peace

Joanne Teague

Leader: May God increase our love for one another and strengthen our hearts in holiness, as we greet one another in peace.

[Please greet one another with the words, “Peace be with you.” Responding, “And also with you.”

Also, after the Passing of the Peace, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad and pass it to your neighbor. Thanks!]

Anthem – *“Our Hope Is in Emmanuel”* by Johnson/Larson

Scripture Reading – Jeremiah 33:14-16

Sermon

“The Promise of Hope”

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Hymn 88 – *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”* (vs. 1, 6 & 7)

Reception of New Members

Kevin & Kim Hoch

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. *(The ushers will now come forward to receive this morning's offering. Please place your financial gift, Connection Card, and/or Prayer Card in the offering plate as it is passed along the pew. Please note: Pledge cards may be placed in the offering plate at this time as well.)*

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: We thank you, God, for the joy we feel this day. We are blessed by this community of love, this sanctuary of acceptance. We place our trust in you, knowing that you care for us. With deep gratitude for all you provide to us, we offer our gifts to you. Centered our hearts during this season of giving. Amen.

Closing Hymn 772 – **"Live into Hope"**

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, Joanne Teague 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: Dave Nussdorfer, and our snack volunteer: Susan Wiltse.

Thank you to our communion servers: Laura Asiala, Peggy Bushnell, Ginny Dorner, Ken Kohlman, and Betty Tezak (choir).

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.



Did You Know...

Peter Dougherty was the first Presbyterian minister to step foot on the shore of East Grand Traverse Bay near the mouth of Elk River in 1839.

Facts about the area and First Presbyterian Church from Adam Schuler.

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.

Christmas Concert – Saturday, December 7 at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary

Everyone is invited to a community Christmas Concert in Elk Rapids on Saturday, December 7 at 4:00 p.m. in our sanctuary, and at Church of the Hills in Bellaire on Sunday, December 8 at 4:00 p.m. We're excited to have 60 local singers, with music directors Dorothy Clore and Cheryl Knight. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to this special concert!

Advent programs are coming! Mark your calendars and join us for two wonderful Advent programs on December 9th and December 16th. Both evenings start with a soup, bread and dessert supper starting at 5:30 p.m. followed by a wonderful Advent program. On December 9th we'll be showing the Christmas story of the birth of Christ by the same people that have done The Chosen series. It is a unique blend of the story of the birth of Jesus with traditional Christmas music sung by children's choirs to Botticelli. On December 16th, come and hear our choir sing selections from their concert and join in a Christmas sing-along. Please sign up in the narthex.

Building a Future with Hope

Last Sunday, November 24 was Consecration Sunday. We celebrate God's blessings and our pledges. We have received 71 pledges to date. We thank everyone who has made a pledge. These promises of support enable us to plan for 2025 confidently, effectively, and efficiently. (If haven't already made your pledge, you can still turn it in to the church office in person or via mail).

Last Sunday, Rachel Hunter, along with 2-year-old Victoria and 3-month-old Eleanor, provided the moment for mission and stewardship in the early service. Tom Wiltse provided a moment for mission and stewardship in the late service. Excerpts from their testimony are below. (You can also go to the website and listen to Sunday's service for their full stories):

Rachel Hunter (Contemporary Service)

Everyone knows I have 4 kids—two 2-year olds, a 4-year old, and a 3-month old baby. I've been coming here for over a year and I thought I would share the story of how we came here. In a moment of weakness, I posted that I needed a nanny, and Shannon Van Den Berge reached out, because she had a friend she thought would be interested. God works in mysterious ways, because we met for coffee, and I found out she was expecting twins, and we had twins. It has grown into a great friendship with Shannon and Phil and she introduced us to First Presbyterian Church. I was looking for my forever (church) home and I found it. Thank you for that. I thank God ever Sunday we are here. And if you hear someone crying, it could be me! 😊 (But really, we're all ok.)

Tom Wiltse (Traditional Service)

Susan and I first visited this church in the mid-1970s and we were planning to visit a lot of churches in the area to see which one we would choose. We only ended up coming here (and stayed). We met with (Pastor) Barney Roepcke in a private meeting. He could be a little stern from the pulpit, but he was gracious in our private meeting, and one of the things that he explained to us is that we were not required to believe a single, rigid interpretation of scripture. We all have our doubts and struggles in certain details, but those should not diminish our faith or our place in the church.... Our daughters grew up in this church, and they remain active today. Anne (Conrad) was a Trustee and now a Ruling Elder. Nora is a Deacon at the 4th Presbyterian Church in Chicago. They were both fortunate to have Gloria Wheeler as one of their Sunday School teachers, and they had a lot of important mentors in this church...with a special 'shout out' to the 'Super Judies' (Husby & Matchett). We're blessed to be part of such a wonderful congregation, and we're deeply grateful for the ways this church has shaped our lives and the lives of our children.

Every generation builds on the past generation and provides the foundation for the next. Our collective commitment to support the church with our time, talents, and treasure makes that possible.

Thank you for your pledge. We are grateful to the giver and to God for the blessings He continues to bestow on this congregation.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" Jeremiah 29:11-13

The Flower Fund – The flower fund for the Deacons was started by Helen Buttars and used to purchase flowers or plants for the altar table, unless someone orders flowers for a special occasion. The Deacons want to continue this tradition, but unfortunately the fund is negative. One way you can help is by ordering a poinsettia from the Deacons for Christmas in honor or memory of someone. Watch for details and order forms as we get closer to the holidays.

Memorial Plants – Reserve Your Plant by Sunday, December 15

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 15.

2024 Annual Reports Due Monday, January 6 – 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 2024. 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 Monday, January 6, 2025. If you have any questions, please contact Ellen Merillat at the church office (231-264-8167).

YOUR Stephen Ministry – There are times when we experience difficulties: loss of a loved one, cancer, hospitalization, disability, discouragement, loneliness, and others. God never intended for us to go through these experiences alone. Stephen Ministers have received 50 hours of care giving training to minister to people experiencing a crisis, facing a challenge, or simply going through a tough time.

Did you know that over the years, 72 people have completed the training for Stephen Ministry and 21 people have completed the training to be Stephen Ministry Leaders. Your church family has been blessed with caring members who have studied and completed this training.

Take the Survey! Not sure where your gifts and talents lay? Or where you might be best suited to



serve? Then, take our Volunteer Accelerator Survey! It's fun, informative, and easy to do! Just scan the QR code to the left or click on the link:

<https://volunteeraccelerator.ministryarchitects.com/ERFPC/survey.html> Thanks for your willingness to help out!

Community Cupboard – Community Cash is back! Save your Village Market receipts dated between Sept 1, 2024 and May 30, 2025 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. You can mail or drop donations in the brown box too! Due to your generosity the Elk Rapids Community Cupboard came in 2nd place this year receiving over \$3000.00 from the Village Market. 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. Check out the website: <https://www.elkrapidscommunitycupboard.com>. Call Pam Coleman at 847-445-8239 for more information or to set up an appointment.

This Week's Activities

Sun. 12/1

9:00 a Contemporary Service
10:00 a SS & Youth – LH
10:30 a Traditional Service

Mon. 12/2

Tues. 12/3

Wed. 12/4

6:30 a Breakfast Club – LH
9:00 a Bulletin Items Due
2:00 p UpNorth Group – AEd
3:00 p Service at Autumn House
4:00 p Concert Dress Rehears.
6:30 p Praise Team Prac.

Thurs. 12/5

Fri. 12/6

10:30 a Choir Rehearsal – FHall

Sat. 12/7

4:00 p Christmas Concert–Sanc.