



First Presbyterian Church of Mineral Ridge

**4th Sunday of Advent
December 24, 2023**

Welcome to our church! It is a joy to worship with you on this evening. We hope you have a wonderful Christmastime!

**Please stand in body or in spirit.*

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

SUNG RESPONSE #90 (GtG)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord; be strong; take heart!

We Gather as God's People

OPENING PRAYER – *Let us pray.*

O God of incarnate love, we come to this blessed Christmas Eve with the awe of the shepherds who,

when they beheld the Savior who had come into our world, praised your majesty and holy name. Your incarnation reveals your glory in all creation. In the nativity scene, we see the reflection of your image and glory — in the child and the family, the animals at the manger, the shepherds and magi who came to worship, following the star in the sky.

Help us to know that your image and glory are manifest in each face, each creature, each star around us on this holy night. We remember especially the children who hold the promise of your glory, their wonder and joy. And parents who bear the promised hope, wise people who, like the magi, seek to discern God's will and who witness to the promise of a Savior for all the earth. Tonight we seek your glory, O God, in all these faces — those with us this evening, those beloved ones who are gone but remain so present in memory.

Open our eyes on this holy night, to behold your light in the darkness of our broken world. Indeed, on this hallowed night, we hold tight to your promise that the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it, for after the waiting the true light that enlightens all has come into our world.

For this light and this promise, we lift our candles high on this silent night and give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

***CALL TO WORSHIP** – *Please stand and join me in the call to worship.*

How does a weary world rejoice?

We sing songs of hope.

We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us.

We tell the stories of what could be.

We listen for God's word.

We resist the temptation to give up or give in.

We remember Mary's song.

We gather for worship.

We hope.

We hope.

Against all odds, we hope.

Friends, this is the day that the Lord is still making.

Let us worship holy God.

***HYMN #99 (GtG)**

Song of Mary

My soul gives glory to my God,

My heart pours out its praise.

God lifted up my lowliness

In many marvelous ways.

My God has done great things for me:

Yes, holy is God's name.

All people will declare me blessed,

And blessings they shall claim.

From age to age to all who fear,

Such mercy love imparts,

Dispensing justice far and near,

Dismissing selfish hearts.

Love casts the mighty from their thrones,

Promotes the insecure,

Leaves hungry spirits satisfied;

The rich seem suddenly poor.

*Praise God, whose loving covenant
Supports those in distress,
Remembering past promises
With present faithfulness.*

CALL TO CONFESSION – *Please be seated.*

Family of faith, we all know that a small group of convicted people can change the world. That's how it's always been. People like Mary, people like Zechariah, people like John the Baptist. And yet, we rarely feel like we can be one of those people. We downplay our ability to make a difference. We choose pessimism over optimism. We sweep hope under the rug for the sake of realism. We forget the words to Mary's song. Fortunately for us, our God carries enough hope and grace for all of us. So let us go to God in prayer. Let us speak the truth of our lives, and let that honesty change us. Friends, please join me in a moment of silent prayer.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION - *Please join me in the unison prayer of confession.*

Holy God, more days than not, hope feels like the rain. We try to hold onto it with cupped hands, but eventually, it slips right on through. Forgive us for holding hope so loosely. Forgive us for allowing the realities of today to define tomorrow. We know that this world needs people of hope, so today we pray: turn us into those people. Teach us how to sing Mary's song of hope for the world. With open hearts we pray, amen.

KYRIE #572

“Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy up on us.”

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Body of Christ, no matter how many times we let hope slip through our fingers, we still belong to God. So hear and repeat these words after me:

I am God’s beloved.

I am God’s beloved.

I am forgiven.

I am forgiven.

I am blessed and sent to serve.

I am blessed and sent to serve.

This is the good news of the Gospel. This is a hope we can hang our hats on. Thanks be to God for God’s unending love. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE

O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE – *at this time, all children are invited up to hear a short message! After, kindergarten and younger can be dismissed to Story Circle with Olivia Meyers. Those older than kindergarten may return to their pews. We have activity bags available for their use in the back.*

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION– *Let us pray.*

Loving God, the grass withers and the flowers fade, but your Word stands forever. So today we pray— help us

to truly hear it. Allow your words to sink deep into the marrow of our bones. Allow your words to lift our hearts in hope, that we might feel one day closer to your promised day. With hopeful and grateful hearts we pray, amen.

FIRST READING

Luke 1: 46-65

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness 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. 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 thoughts 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 helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.'

*The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.***

SECOND READING

Luke 1: 65-80

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of

old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

*The Word of God for the People of God. **Amen.***

SERMON

Rev. Kori Robbins

We Respond to God's Love

***HYMN #821 (GtG)** *How Can I Keep From Singing*

*My life flows on in endless song,
above earth's lamentation.
I hear the clear, though far-off hymn
that hails a new creation.*

Refrain:

*No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Christ is lord of heaven and earth,
how can I keep from singing?*

*Through all the tumult and the strife,
I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing? [Refrain]*

*What though my joys and comforts die,
I know my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth. [Refrain]*

*The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his!
How can I keep from singing? [Refrain]*

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

We believe that hope can change the world. We believe that God uses ordinary people, like an unwed teenage mother, for extraordinary good. And we believe that each of these ordinary people can make a difference. We know that grief, fear, and suffering abound. We know that suffering quells joy and makes it harder to hope. But we choose hope anyway. In the face of hardship, we hope together. We hope with God. We hope for a better world. This is our song. We believe; help our unbelief. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – *You may be seated.*

Trusting indeed that you are always there, we pray to you now as your Son taught us, saying together,

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.

CALL FOR OFFERING

In the kingdom of God, we find that generosity of spirit, generosity of possessions & the radical sharing of skills are practiced openly. All gifts are important to God, so as the offering plate comes around, place your hand over it, committing to God that you will use your time, talent and treasures for furthering the work of God's kingdom.

OFFERTORY

***RESPONSE OF PRAISE #694 (GtG)**

Great God of every blessing,

of faithful, loving care

You are the fount of goodness,

the daily bread we share.

How can we hope to thank you?

The praise is but a start.

Sincerely and completely, I offer you my heart.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION** – *Please join me in saying the prayer of dedication.*

O God, give us such love and wonder that with shepherds and magi, and pilgrims through the ages, we may adore the holy child, the promised King, and with our gifts worship him, who is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

We Go Out to Serve God

***HYMN #13**

Prepare the Way

*Prepare the way O Zion
Your Christ is drawing near
Let every hill and valley
A level way appear
Greet One who comes in glory
Foretold in sacred story*

Chorus:

*O blest is Christ that came
In God's most holy name*

*Christ brings God's rule O Zion
He comes from heaven above
His rule is peace and freedom
And justice truth and love
Lift high your praise resounding
For grace and joy abounding **Chorus***

*Fling wide your gates, O Zion
Your Savior's rule embrace
And tidings of salvation
Proclaim in every place
All lands will bow rejoicing
Their adoration voicing **Chorus***

***BENEDICTION**

***CLOSING RESPONSE #743**

Step by Step

O God, You are my God and I will ever praise You

O God, You are my God and I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning

And I will learn to walk in Your ways

And step by step You'll lead me

And I will follow You all of my days

*Liturgy for Advent and Christmas has been provided by
A Sanctified Art, "How Does a Weary World Rejoice?"*

Prayer List

MEMBERS TO REMEMBER

Mary Alice Seaborn

Marlyne Young

Helen Redmond

Shirley Dull

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH, SUPPORT AND CONCERN

Names will be taken off after 6 weeks, unless noted.

Amos Rodgers & Cody Tittle (Marlene's friends)

James Tincher (Marlene's son)

Clayton & Eileen (Bev Myers' family friends)

Paul Stevens (Bev Myers' son)

Dennis Copanic (Val Copanic's father)

Graig Colantone (Nicole Pugh's father)

Dareen Craver-Angeloff (Rodney's mother)

Cheryl Fisher (Bev Meyers' Daughter)

Ella McBride (friend of Sherri Craver)

Bonnie Jorza (Linda Frayer's Sister-in-Law)

Cheryl Beanblossom (Valerie Copanic's sister)

Joan Williams

Rusty Garland

Kathy Garland

Cindi Farina (Marty O'Neill's friend)

Vince Fazio (Marty O'Neill's friend)

Rich Pilla (Lisa Sorg's step-dad)

Jodi Jorgensen (Lisa Sorg's friend)

Shirley Brodie

Mary Jane Hileman

Mason Blackburn (Mary J. Shaffer's friend)

PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

Eastminster Presbytery and staff
Our Mineral Ridge Church Family
Niles Community Services
Warren & Youngstown Rescue Missions
Refugees throughout the world
Rev. Kade Mastra (Indonesian Partner)
Peace and healing for our country
Casa de Buen Trato
Ukraine
World Leaders
Jed and Jenny Koball (Peru)
Our PC(USA) coworkers
Revs. Scott & Elmarie Parker
Victims of natural disasters
Citizens of Israel/Palestine

Announcements

*Information sent after Thursday at 9 am may not make it into
the bulletin.*

Reminder: Our Christmas Eve Service will be held
tonight at 5pm followed by a cookie table.

Office hours will vary as we approach the holidays.
Please call ahead or send a message to the church
email if you are planning to come into the office.

Join us on Sunday December 31st at 10:30am for a
special service of Lessons & Carols.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!



Birthday Wishes

Andrew Rendes 12/27

Alex Baker 12/30



Thank you for your Generosity

We need \$3,000 weekly to make our budget!

December 17th \$2,805

December 10th \$4,441.25

December 03rd \$2,783



Responsibilities

Pastor Rev. Kori Robbins

Liturgist Matt Glidewell

Elder Brian Williams

Deacon Melissa Keeley

Music Diane Koch

Story Circle Olivia Meyers

Media Alyssa Strange



THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, December 24th 10:30am Worship/
(4th Sunday of Advent) Cookie Table



Christmas Eve 5:00pm Christmas Service/
Cookie Table



Monday, December 25th 7:00pm Al-Anon/Ateen

Sunday, December 31st 10:30am Lessons & Carols

Staff

Pastor

Reverend Kori Robbins
(406)-560-5548
Pastor@FPCMR.org

Christian Educator

Carole Rummell

Administrative Assistant

April Dahl
330-652-5712

Custodian

Patty Postlethwait

Story Circle Attendant

Olivia Meyers

Media

Alyssa Strange

Hours

Pastor's Office Hours

Monday-Thursday
9am-3pm

General Office Hours

Tuesday/Thursday
9am-1pm

Church Info

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