

First Presbyterian Church

Serving Christ in Milledgeville

210 S. Wayne Street, Milledgeville, Georgia 31061
478-452-9394; fpchurch@windstream.net; www.fpcmilledgevilleorg
Like us on Facebook

DECEMBER 22, 2024

advent worship

WORDS

FOR THE **BEGINNING**

— HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK —

*First
Presbyterian
Church*
OF MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA

Followers of Christ, called to serve our community
and be an actively-engaging light to the world.

We live into our faith, inspired by our worship, encouraged by our fellowship, empowered by our studies. As a Matthew 25 Congregation, we answer the call to provide food and shelter to those in need. As a More Light Presbyterians Congregation, we provide a safe and affirming worshipping community for LGBTQIA+ persons, celebrating the uniqueness and dignity of each person as they seek a home for their faith and confidence in the promises of God for them.

December 22, 2024
Fourth Sunday in Advent

PRELUDE

Noel Suisse

Louis-Claude DaQuin

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are delighted that you have joined us this Lord's Day. If you'd like to learn more about our mission and ministry, we invite you to speak to Rev. Susan. Restrooms & changing table are at the end of the hall to the left. Thank you for being with us!

GATHERING AROUND GOD'S WORD

CHORAL INTROIT

College students gather

arr. Anna Strickland

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In this weary world,

Congregation: we sing of joy.

Leader: In this fragile world,

Congregation: we lift each other up.

Leader: In this beautiful world,

Congregation: we look for God.

Leader: In this tender world,

Congregation: we hold onto hope.

Leader: This is the invitation of faith. So in this time of worship, may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.

Congregation: With hope in our hearts, amen!

CHILDREN'S TIME

Gloria Burns

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Leader: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Congregation: Let us begin with tenderness. Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve. Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope. Let us begin with love.

Leader: Yes, let us start with love. Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Congregation: May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone. May the truth in these lights help us begin again.

Leader: May it be so! Amen.

*HYMN 107

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

CALL TO CONFESSION

Friends, hope can feel slippery. One moment we may believe that change will come, that good will win, that the suffering of today will not be the suffering of tomorrow. The next moment we can receive word of more gun violence, of more mudslinging, or yet another missile headed toward a group of humans. Hope can feel slippery. Fortunately for us, God's grace is not. No matter what we are able to hold, God is able to hold onto us. So trusting that God's grace does not let us go, join me in the prayer of confession:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, you paint pictures of what could be,

but we declare those visions impossible.

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,

but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.

You dream of a more just day,

but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.

Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams, and to not be afraid of either. With gratitude we pray, amen.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

CHORAL RESPONSE *In Taiwan the dreamers flood the streets* arr. Anna Strickland
DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, No matter what you hold onto, and no matter what you let slip through your hands, God is holding onto you. That good news will never change. So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel: Today is a new day. Today, we have reason to hope. Today, we are forgiven. And the same will be true tomorrow. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

HYMN NO. 581

***Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end!
Amen, amen***

PEACE
ANTHEM

The Linden Tree
*In heaven stood a linden tree
With pure white flowers laden;
Yet not a bloom was fair as she,
Sweet Mary, chosen maiden.
Great Gabriel, God's angel bright,
From high above came winging
to one, the purest in God's sight,
A joyful message bringing.
"Hail, Mary, blessed virgin mild,
With God you have found favor;
You shall conceive and bear a child,
to all the world a Savior."
"My soul does magnify the Lord!
I am His servant lowly;
Be all according to His word,"
Said Mary, meek and holy.
Away the angel flew to share
The news of Mary's duty;
And heav'n rejoiced that she would bear
The Blossom of all Beauty.*

Crawford R. Thoburn

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy God, the stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before. We've arranged the nativity scenes. We've read the children's books. We've seen the movies. We've sung the songs. But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again. Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now. We are listening. We are hopeful. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT
GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25
Luke 1:46-55

Pew Bible Page #
NT P 1
NT P 57

SERMON

Reverend Susan Balfour

*HYMN 99

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope, a God who fills our nights with stars, who follows winter with spring, who dwells with and among us. We believe that this God has dreams for creation, dreams of justice like a mighty stream and swords that will be beaten into plow shares. Therefore, we push cynicism aside. We risk vulnerability. We hold onto hope, and we declare: "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

INVITATION TO OFFERING



Holy God, you meet us in our vulnerability, entering the places where hope feels far away. You draw near to our depression and anxiety, to our addictions and grief, to the problems that feel impossibly big. So we bring our offering of hope, our lives and our labors, with the prayer that God's will may be done through them. You may present your offering at the front of the sanctuary, or if you prefer to contribute electronically, you can do so using the PayPal QR Code in your bulletin or visit our website at fpcmilledgeville.org.



Scan. Pay. Go.

OFFERTORY

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hugo Gehrke

*DOXOLOGY

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!***

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

Gracious God, in gratitude for all that you have given us, we bring our tithes, offerings and labor to help feed a world hungry for healing and hope; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

BEARING GOD'S WORD INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN 87

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Go in Peace. AMEN!

CHORAL BENEDICTION

Ethnic music rings out

arr. Anna Strickland

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

Hugo Gehrke

Liturgy written by Reverend Sarah Are Speed, Sanctified Art .



Lord, hear our prayers

LIMITED MOBILITY

Helen Danuser

CHURCH FAMILY:

Wesley Applebury, cancer recurrence and treatment, attending seminary in Atlanta, **Columbia Theological Seminary, D. Wesley Applebury, Box 289, 701 S. Columbia Dr., Decatur, GA 30030**
Nan Carpenter, ongoing health concerns
Ellen Thompson, waiting on double hip replacement

EXTENDED FAMILY:

Nannette Green Allen, childhood friend of Margaret Ivester with serious health issues
Mark Archer, Sunda Coleman's brother-in-law, hip replacement, recovering at home
Julie Balfour, Susan Balfour's sister, ongoing health issues
Michael Bledsoe, Mary Lucik's grandson, multiple health concerns
Nick Carruthers, Sunda Coleman's great nephew, recovering from car accident in hospital
Blake Connolly, Mary Lucik's great grandson, ongoing health concerns
Taylor Croghan, Craig Callender's niece, EDS diagnosis
Susan Eilers, Mary Lucik's friend, cancer
Don Goggans, Elaine Goggans' son, stage four cancer
Kathy Hall, Gini Wilkerson's mother, knee replacement surgery
Marshall Hodgman, Donna Gautier's son, recovering from heart surgery at home
Alonzo Kelley, Craig Callender's father, Stage 4 Melanoma
Velma Kelley, Craig Callender's grandmother, ongoing health concerns
Elizabeth Knobel, Carolyn Morgan's daughter, ongoing health concerns
Donald Lucik, Mary Lucik's son, recovering from back surgery
Charles Morgan, Jenifer Flory's father, in rehab center following surgery
Joanne Murphy, Kathy Carroll's mother, ongoing health issues- at Carlyle House in Macon
Paul Orman, Barbra Orman's husband, ongoing health concerns
Ambrirea Pearson, Sunda Coleman's granddaughter, ongoing health concerns
Chris Pearson, Sunda Coleman's son, recovering at home; dialysis
Shaylee Pearson, Sunda's great-granddaughter, ongoing health concerns
Runette Pounds, Sunda Coleman's mother, ongoing health concerns
Gloria Roberts, Bill Werts' cousin, recovering from a traumatic fall
Bob Smart, Anne Smart's husband, ankylosing spondylitis
Windy Spaide, Craig Callender's sister, ongoing health concerns
Randy Stewart, Haywood Edwards son-in-law, ongoing health concerns
Ike Thomas, ongoing cancer treatments
Dudley Weathers, Anne Weathers' husband, at home in hospice care
Wayne Woodard, Ruby Werts' brother, diagnosed with Parkinson's

IN ASSISTED LIVING

George and Nan Carpenter, PO Box 527, Jefferson, GA 30549
Jude Hirsch, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
Nancy Holbrook, The Dublin Place, 504 Fire Tower Rd, Dublin GA 31021
Maryanne Morris, Fellowship Home at Meriwether, 10 Meriwether Place
Runette Pounds, Oaks at Lake Wildwood, Rm 109 Cherry St, 6191 Peake Rd, Macon, GA 31220
Suzy Smith, The Haven 1061 Willow Run Rd., Unit 4, Greensboro GA 30642

THIS WEEK AT OUR CHURCH: December 22- December 29

Today	9:30	Sunday School
	10:15	Children's Sunday School
	11:00	Worship
	12:00	Youth Group
	1:00	The Bridge UMC Worship
Tuesday	9:30	Food Pantry
	11:00	The Bridge UMC Worship
	5:30	Christmas Candlelight Service
Wednesday	Merry Christmas	
	Office Closed	
Thursday	Office Closed	
Friday	Office Closed	
Sunday	9:30	Sunday School
	10:15	Children's Sunday School
	11:00	Worship
	12:00	Milly Free Fridge Service Opportunity



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER
ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE



To give by phone, call 800-872-3283. To send a check, please designate where you want your gift to go on the memo line and mail to: Presbyterian Church (USA), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

Offerings in December	\$14,857.88
Anticipated December expenses:	\$21,014.00
(Monthly expenditures may exceed anticipated amounts)	



Join us for worship in-person, online at Facebook Live or on the radio at 102.3 WKZR radio every week.

Sunday: 9:30AM **Zoom Sunday School Class**, we are studying *The Collected Sermons of Walter Brueggemann*
www.Zoom.com, Meeting ID: 852 8172 1781
Passcode: 085809

Fellowship Sunday School Class, studying *Who Needs God* by Harold Kushner, meeting in the Parlor Room

10:15AM **Children's Sunday School Class**, singing, crafts and stories, meeting in the Craft Room Upstairs

Wednesday: 6:30PM **Wednesday Night Potluck and Bible Study**, studying Letters to the Romans, meeting in the Fellowship Hall

Hope Is Worth the Risk

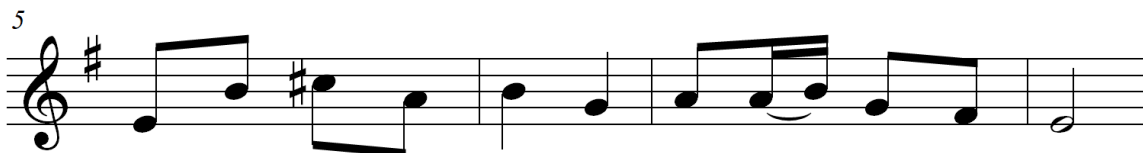
NOËL NOUVELET 11.10.11.10

Words by Anna Strickland, 2024

Traditional French melody



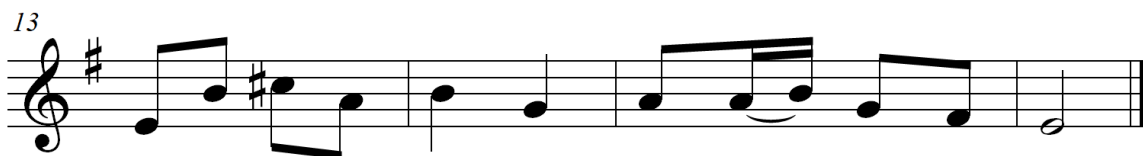
Col - lege stu - dents ga - ther pro - tes - ting for peace
Young girls in I - ran to pro - test the re - gime
In Tai - wan the dream - ers flood the streets with blooms
Li - ber - i - an wom - en scarred by ci - vil war
Eth - nic mu - sic rings out from the Bal - tic Sea
Age to age and coast to coast peo - ple have stood



Stand - ing firm in spite of vio - lence from po - lice
Take off their hi - jabs to let their hair be seen
Sun - flow - ers and li - lies li - ber - ty's per - fume
Keep the peace talks go - ing by bar - ring the doors
As the peo - ple sing their right to li - ber - ty
Risk - ing some - thing big in hope of some - thing good



Em - pires will fight with force or pol - i - tics



Still the Spi - rit whis - pers, "Hope is worth the risk"

107 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for an - gels
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em - man - u -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when all the
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night. Though dark the



her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for soon he is
 el comes a - sing - ing; his hum - ble song is qui - et and
 world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so qui - et and
 win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall crown you with



born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing. Come as a ba - by
 near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing; mu - sic to heal the
 free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing. Then shall the mute break
 light; be strong and lov - ing and fear - less. Love be our song and



weak and poor, to bring all hearts to - geth - er, he o - pens
 bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing - kind - ness. The thun - der
 forth in song, the lame shall leap in won - der, the weak be
 love our prayer and love our end - less sto - ry; may God fill

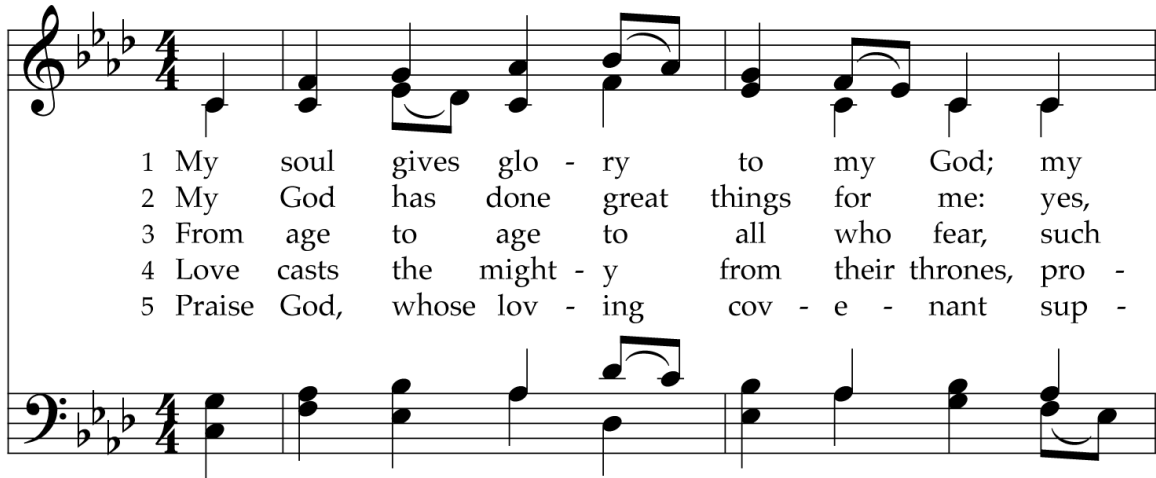


wide the heaven - ly door and lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
 of his an - thems rolls to shat - ter all ha - tred and vio - lence.
 raised a - bove the strong, and weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 ev - ery day we share and bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

After attending a carol concert, the author and composer of this hymn was moved to create a contemporary, accessible carol that drew on the familiar images in a new way. There are echoes here of passages such as Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 7:14/Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 35:5-6, Isaiah 2:4.

My Soul Gives Glory to My God 99

Song of Mary



1 My soul gives glo - ry to my God; my
 2 My God has done great things for me: yes,
 3 From age to age to all who fear, such
 4 Love casts the might - y from their thrones, pro -
 5 Praise God, whose lov - ing cov - e - nant sup -



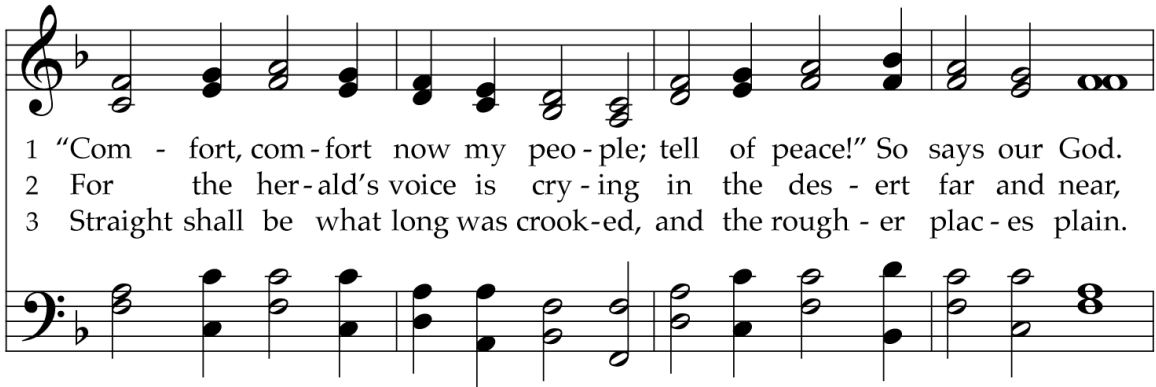
heart pours out its praise. God lift - ed up my
 ho - ly is God's name. All peo - ple will de -
 mer - cy love im - parts, dis - pens - ing jus - tice
 motes the in - se - cure, leaves hun - gry spir - its
 ports those in dis - tress, re - mem - ber - ing past



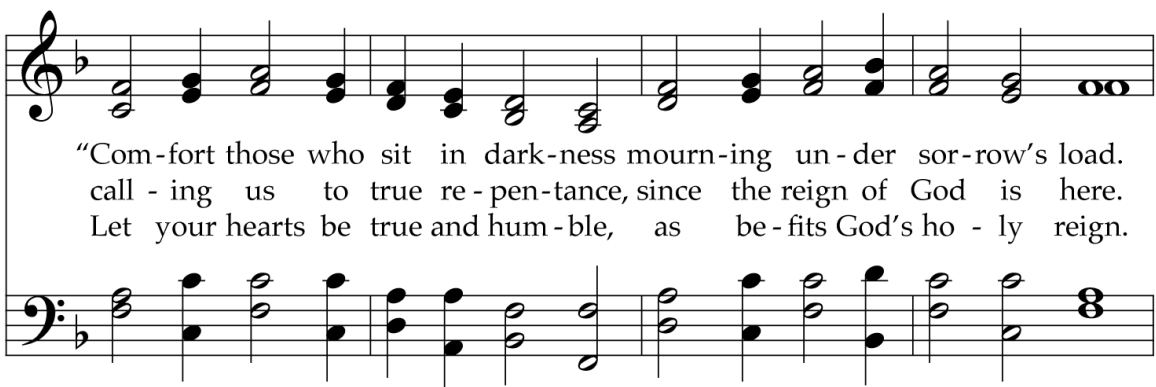
low - li - ness in man - y mar - vel - ous ways.
 clare me blessed, and bless - ings they shall claim.
 far and near, dis - miss - ing self - ish hearts.
 sat - is - fied; the rich seem sud - den - ly poor.
 prom - is - es with pres - ent faith - ful - ness.

This 20th-century paraphrase is based on the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), commonly known by its opening Latin word, *Magnificat*. This song of praise offers clear reminders that God's purposes often lead to the reversal of human values, exalting the poor and dethroning the mighty.

Comfort, Comfort Now My People 87



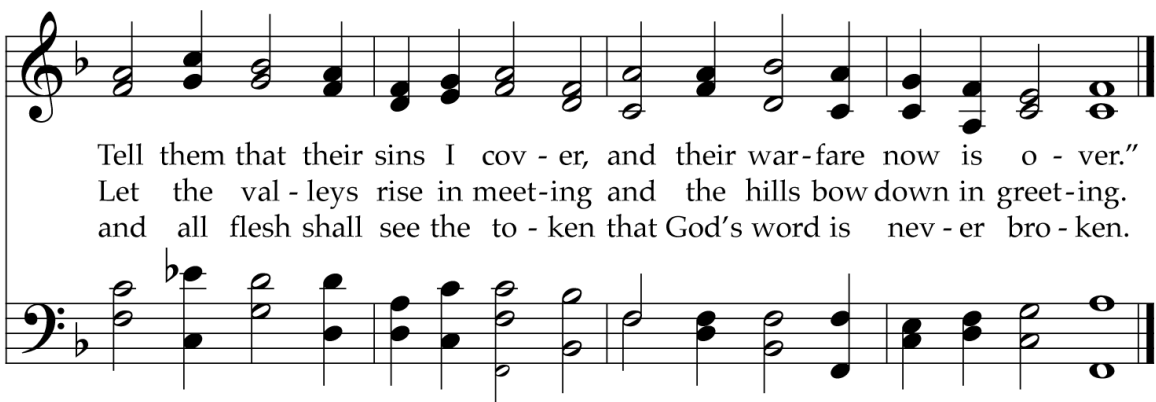
1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



"Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits God's ho - ly reign.



To my peo - ple now pro - claim that my par - don waits for them!
 O, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their sins I cov - er, and their war - fare now is o - ver."
 Let the val - leys rise in meet - ing and the hills bow down in greet - ing.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

This 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1-5 was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set here to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, probably derived from an earlier French folksong.