

THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

questions and answers

A FESTIVE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT TELLING THE
STORY OF GOD'S LOVE AND THE BIRTH OF
JESUS CHRIST!

written by Michele and Angela Elmer

DECEMBER 17, 2023

10am



Welcome to First Presbyterian Church!

This is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it! Whether you are visiting First Presbyterian Church for the first time, or are a longtime member or friend, your presence today is a blessing to our community!

Three very important commitments guide our lives together at First Presbyterian Church: *worship*, *mission* and *discipleship*. In worship we commune with God and with one another, sing and pray, and through mission, both local and international, we live out Jesus' call to 'feed my sheep' and serve the least.' In study, prayer, and community, we develop as life-long disciples of Jesus, working for a more peaceful and just world.

Following worship, please stick around for fellowship time. Enjoy a cup of coffee. Spend time in the sanctuary in prayer. Introduce yourself to me and your fellow worshippers. We're glad you're here!

Pastor Andrew
(410) 916-1673 + andrew.long1085@gmail.com

If you are new here, please introduce yourself to our pastor or worship leader.

Hearing help is available during all worship services - hearing aids are available in the narthex.

Nursery Care is available for children to age 4 during all worship Services. You can find the nursery in the education wing of the building. A restroom and quiet room can be found in the narthex.

If you are in need of prayer, please see our Pastor before or after worship, or write your prayer requests in the green book at the front of the sanctuary

Sunday School for pre-school through grade 6 meets after "Young Disciples Time." No Sunday School today.

*The Christmas trees in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of **Norman R. Ahlheim** by Cindy & her family.*

The wreath on the front doors of the church is given to the Glory of God by Mr. and Mrs. John B. Johnson, Jr.

Chiming The Hour of Worship



Pastor's Greeting and Words of Welcome

Prelude

Christmas Bell Medley
Handbells

arr. Bob Ivey

***Call to Worship and Lighting The Third Advent Candle**

Arise, shine, for your light has come!

And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you!

The sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.

You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.

As we light the third candle on the Advent wreath, which is pink to represent the joy of Christmas, we proclaim the praises of him, **who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light!**

Let us worship God together!

***Opening Hymn #244**

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

***Prayer of the Day**

Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon

Confession is not so much about the wrongs we have committed against God and neighbor, but about our nature that often resists the healing grace of God. We are all wounded. We have all wounded others. God stands ready to heal us once again. Let us pray together:

Holy Lord, merciful God, you sent John the Baptist to be a burning and shining light. Forgive us, O Lord, for too often, we fail to reflect your burning light. Our hearts become hard and our words harsh. Forgive us, O Lord, for too often we fail to embrace your shining light, for it is then that our thoughts become selfish and our judgments sinful. Forgive us, O Lord, for too often, we fail to shine with your marvelous light and our minds become darkened and our motives deceitful.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

a time of silence is kept

Amen.

Life and light is what Christ brings
to each of us and all of creation.

He rises with healing in his wings
for the salvation of all.

Know that you are forgiven and be at peace!

Thanks be to God!

***Response** *from “Angels We Have Heard On High”*

Gloria, in excelsis deo!

Gloria, in excelsis deo!

Reception of New Members

Anthem

“Rise Up, Shepherd”

arr. John Leavitt

There’s a star in the East on Christmas morn;

Rise up, shepherd, and follow;

It will lead to the place where the Christ was born;

Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Refrain:

Follow, follow;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
Follow the Star of Bethlehem;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

Leave your sheep, leave your sheep, and leave your lambs;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow;
Leave your ewes and your rams, leave your ewes and rams;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow. [Refrain]

If you take good heed to the angel's words;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow;
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds;
Rise up, shepherd, and follow. [Refrain]



We Listen For God



Prayer for Illumination

The Christmas Story: Questions and Answers

by Michele and Angela Elmer

Affirmation of Faith *Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of
heaven and earth,**

**and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was
conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and
buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose
again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and
sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the
dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the
resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.
Amen.**



We Respond To God



Community Connect

At this time in worship we share information on how you can connect even better with the community at FPC Watertown. During this time we also share our joys and concerns, as well as any other relevant information to our life together.

Song of Offering #186

“Lord, Be Glorified”



Donations can be made by either scanning the QR code from the Venmo app or by searching for_of_Watertown.

Musical Offering

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

arr. Dan Forrest

The Prayers of The People and The Lord’s Prayer

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

God who restores, you have done great things for us and we rejoice! So often you have filled us with laughter, even turning tears of sadness into shouts of joy. You send prophets, who point the way to justice and show the way to you.

Light of the world, **live among us always.**

We thank you for sending good news to the world in Jesus Christ. Through him, so much of what has been destroyed can be restored and so much of the pain of the world can be healed.

Light of the world, **live among us always.**

In this season of light, we lift up in prayer so many who wait in darkness:

people oppressed by poverty and discrimination,
by political upheaval or dangerous rulers;
people imprisoned wrongly
and also those imprisoned justly.

Light of the world, **live among us always.**

Right what is wrong among us and in us and restore us to you, to others, to ourselves.

Light of the world, **live among us always.**

Make the brokenhearted whole again; comfort those who mourn; repair our ruined cities.

Light of the world, **live among us always.**

In all the jostling and jingling of these days, do not let us lose sight of you or those whom you especially came to serve: people who are in need of healing, people who are overlooked or underserved, the ones who are lost, and the ones we have made to feel little and least.

Light of the world, **live among us always.**

Light of the world,
live among us always,
full of grace and truth.

Hear us now as we pray to you in the name of Jesus Christ, as he taught us:

**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.**

***Closing Hymn #275**

“Sing We Now of Christmas”

***Blessing and Benediction**

***Passing the Peace of Christ**

The Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Please safely share some sign of
Christ's peace with your neighbors.

Postlude

“Ring Christmas Bells: Tell All the World Jesus Is King!”
arr. Alfred Fedak

To the congregation, thank you for joining us in answering the questions about The Christmas Story. To the adults in this year's pageant, thank you for finding your inner child. To all the children who are participating, thank you for asking questions and showing us how to be children!

Michele and Angela



First Presbyterian Church

Watertown, NY + www.watertownfirstpres.org

December 17, 2023 + 10:00 a.m.