

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP

4th Sunday of Advent

December 24, 202310:30 AM

Welcome and AnnouncementsRev. Dr. Lynn Miller

GATHERING

Prelude“Manger Lullabies” (Lani Smith)Rita Harmon

Advent Candle"He Came Down"

He came down, that we may have love;
He came down, that we may have love;
He came down, that we may have love; hallelujah, forevermore.

Lighting the Advent WreathSharon Thompson, Maci, and Abigail

May your hearts be filled with God’s love towards all people as you consider the life of sacrifice and encouragement of John the Baptist.
Thanks be to God.

*Hymn of Praise #40“Joy to the World”

*Call to ConfessionBill Wheeler

*Prayer of Confession

We look back on this season of Advent, Lord God,
And we confess
All the times we have forgotten what this season is about,
All the times we’ve wrapped ourselves too tightly
In planning and shopping and gift giving and sending,
All the time we’ve spent decorating and writing cards
And attending Christmas parties
to the point that we had no time
To sit in the dark,
To sit in silence,
To contemplate the Incarnation,
To give thanks for this one life that changed the world.
Remind us, O God, what life is about.
Turn us around and set us in the right direction.
Heal us, we pray,
And forgive the sins we now name silently...

*Assurance of Pardon

Friends, believe the good news.
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

*Assurance of Pardon Response #44

O Holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in be born in us today.

THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Sermon on the StepsCarrie Wyatt

*Hymn #28“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

First Reading2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (Pew Bible OT p.281)
Second ReadingLuke 1:26-38 (Pew Bible NT p.56)

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon from the Pulpit “How Can I Keep From Singing” Rev. Dr. Lynn Miller

Response"Cloth For The Cradle" (Scottish Tune)

Cloth for the cradle, cradle for the child, the child for our ev'ry joy and sorrow;
find him a shawl that's woven by us all to welcome the Lord of each tomorrow.
4. Wrinkled or fair, carefree or full of care,
Searchers of all the ages,
Weave into one a welcome for the Son,
The Savior of shepherds and of sages.
Cloth for the cradle, cradle for the child, the child for our ev'ry joy and sorrow;
find him a shawl that's woven by us all to welcome the Lord of each tomorrow.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

*Affirmation of Faith(A Declaration of Faith, 4.1)

Jesus, the long-expected Savior,
came into the world as a child,
descended from David,
conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of Mary, a virgin.
He lived as a Jew among Jews.
He announced to his people
the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth.
We affirm that Jesus was born of woman
as is every child,
yet born of God's power
as was no other child.
In the person and work of Jesus,
the very being of God and a human life
are united but not confused,
distinguished but not separated.
The coming of Jesus was itself
the coming of God's promised rule.
Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,
he brings about the relationship between God and humanity
that God always intended.

*Affirmation of Faith Response #582

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me, and to the Son,
whose grace has pardoned me, and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen

Prayers of the Peopleconcluding with the Lord’s Prayer (page 16 in hymnal)

Service of Giving

Offertory“Away In A Manger” (Johnson/Ricketts)Jim Simmons

*Doxology #592

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

*Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn #56“The First Nowell”

*Charge and BenedictionRev. Dr. Lynn Miller

*Postlude“Italian Hymn” (Broughton)Rita Harmon
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\*Please stand, in body or in spirit.

The flowers in worship today are given for the glory of God.

Please remember in prayer:  
Barbara Grinter; Family of Bryson Burgess; Helen Lowrey; Roberta Byars;  
Christopher Scott Henry; Patsy Spires; Kathy Miller Evans; Trish Tong; Hugh  
Fincher; Fran Ross; Buck Jolley; Justina Eddy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next week's lectionary readings are:  
Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148:1-14; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40.

Monthly Giving Opportunity  
The December giving opportunity is the Christmas Joy Offering, a PCUSA offering which supports retired church professionals. You may mark your check "Christmas Joy Gift" or put it in the MGO box in the worship space.

Weaving a Welcome  
The cradle is empty! We distributed the scarves and a few other "warming gifts" at the Soup Kitchen yesterday. As the temperatures get colder, let's continue to remember the child in the manger as we reach out to our neighbors in need of warmth.

CE on Wednesdays  
Beginning January 3, we will be digging into the idea of what it means to be an intentionally intergenerational church. We will have programs that help us more fully understand generations (our own and others') and programs that reach across generations. A full calendar will be published soon.

Youth  
The youth of the church will gather twice over the upcoming Christmas Break. On December 28, at 1:30 p.m., they will meet at the church, then go to Zakary's to enjoy something delicious to drink. They will then go to Jolly Park to see the lights. They will return to the church by 3:00 p.m. Please bring money to purchase your beverage. On Tuesday, January 2, they will go to Palmetto Patriots Home to play Bingo. They will meet at the church at 1:30 and return by 3:00. Adults are welcome to join them for both afternoons!

**Office News**  
The church office will be closed Monday & Tuesday, Dec. 25 & 26, and Monday, Jan. 1, for the holidays.

**THIS WEEK IN CHURCH HISTORY**

**24 December 1223:** Francis of Assisi gave the church a much-loved gift on Christmas Eve in 1223. Giovanni da Vellita, Francis' wealthy patron had constructed a rough hermitage in front of some caves in Greccio, Italy. There were woods above and below the caves and hermitage. Francis invited his neighbors and the friars to join him there for Christmas Eve mass. As they climbed the steep hills up to the hermitage, they saw that Francis had arranged for Giovanni to provide a manger in one of the caves. He gathered an ox and a donkey around it, with a man and woman in costume as Mary and Joseph and a wax doll for the Christ child. When everyone had gathered, Francis read the Gospel account of Christ's birth. Apparently Francis had sought (and received) the pope's permission to arrange this living nativity. He didn't want to be accused of taking the story of Christ's birth lightly - or as entertainment. It must have been a memorable retelling of the story for the peasants and friars, especially by the light of lamps, outdoors, with living people and animals arranged in front of them. Today, living nativity scenes are fairly common, but Francis' appears to have been the first -- 800 years ago today.

**Praying for Our Congregation**

We are praying for every member of our church family.  
Each week we invite you to pray for particular members.  
This week we are praying for:

Joyce Infante  
Samuel Wyatt  
Will Spires

**MEMBERS OF THE SESSION**

| <u>Class of 2023</u>  | <u>Class of 2024</u> | <u>Class of 2025</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Larry Sossamon        | Teresa Spires        | Nancy McElroy        |
| Bill Wheeler          | Dean Wyatt           | Mimi McCully         |
| Renee Wiseman (clerk) | Buck Jolley          |                      |

**STAFF**

Tonya Benton, Administrative Assistant, limepresbyterian@bellsouth.net  
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Sharon Thompson, Music Director, Mozart1121@aol.com  
Carrie Wyatt, Director Children & Youth Ministries, carewyatt@gmail.com

**CALENDAR of EVENTS**

**Sunday, December 24**  
9:45 AM Lectionary Bites – Parlor  
10:30 AM Worship – Chapel & via Facebook Live  
5:30 PM Christmas Eve Service  
**Monday, December 25**  
MERRY CHRISTMAS!  
**Tuesday, December 26**  
Church Office Closed  
**Sunday, December 31**  
9:45 AM Lectionary Bites – Parlor  
9:45 AM Chancel Choir Practice – Choir Room  
10:30 AM Worship – Chapel & via Facebook Live

**Upcoming**  
January 1 Church Office Closed  
January 14 Game Night in FLC 5pm

**NEXT STEPS**

- ☐ Pick up a hard copy of the LimeLight
- ☐ Mark May 18, 2024 on your calendar. We will host Foothills Presbytery that day!
- ☐ Turn in “Best of 2023” on Google Form or hard copy

QR code for electronic contributions:

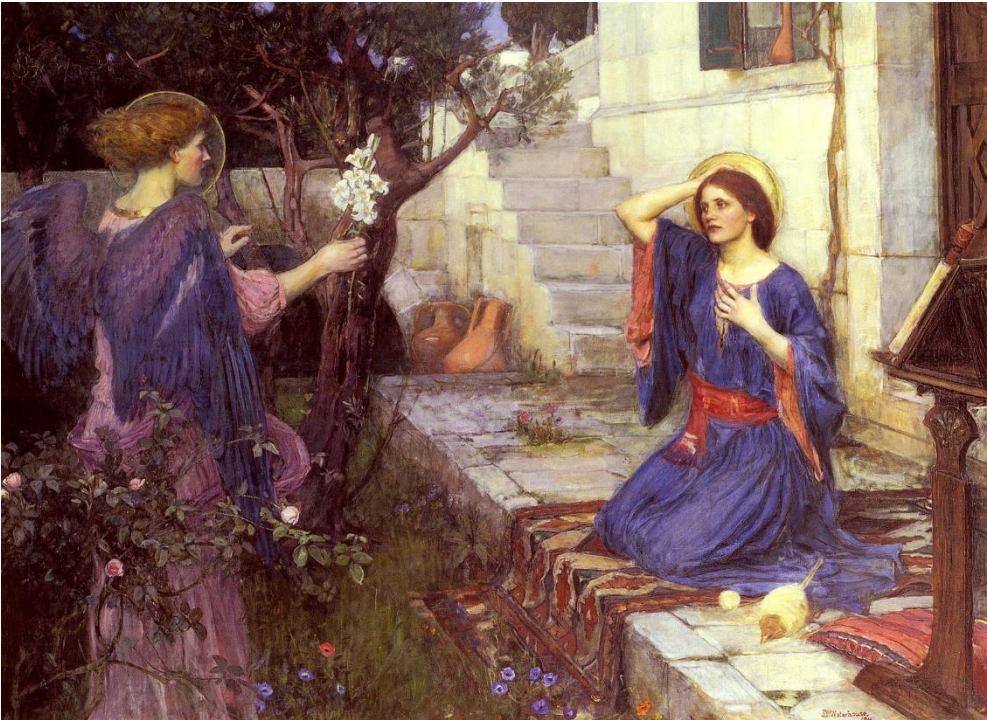


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**LIMESTONE**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PC(USA)

WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF A LOVING GOD,  
GATHERING, GROWING, GIVING, AND GOING TO SERVE,  
TOGETHER



J.W. Waterhouse. **The Annunciation.** 1914. Private Collection

She did not cry, ‘I cannot. I am not worthy,’  
Nor, ‘I have not the strength.’  
She did not submit with gritted teeth,  
raging, coerced.  
Bravest of all humans,  
consent illumined her.  
The room filled with its light,  
the lily glowed in it,  
and the iridescent wings.  
Consent,  
courage unparalleled,  
opened her utterly.

--Denise Levertov, "Annunciation"