

First Presbyterian Church of Rolla
Worship Service for the Fourth Sunday of Advent
Dec. 24, 2023

Pre-Service Music: *Creator of the Stars of Night* - Ryan H. Jones

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude: *Christmas Lullaby* - John Turner

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Litany for the Fourth Sunday in Advent

Advent Song#103: *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* vs. 1

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us and shares our flesh and bones.

As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we dream and wait for you.

Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.

**Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good,
and banish all our fears.**

We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior.

Amen.

Candle Lighting Carol #85: *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* vs. 4

Responsive Call to Worship and Prayer of the Day

Forever is a very long time.

We will sing of God's steadfast love forever.

Forever is a very long time.

God's faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

Forever is a very long time.

We will trust God forever. Let us worship God!

Prayer of the Day

Great God, we join our voices with David, singing of your steadfast love and faithfulness. We join our voices with Mary, saying, “You have done great things.” We offer our prayers of thanksgiving to you, God of wisdom. Strengthen us with the good news that in Jesus Christ you have been with us from the beginning and will be with us until the end, that we may give you glory and honor forever and forever. Amen.

Opening Hymn #100: *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout* (stand)

Call to Confession

Together let us confess our sin and lament the ways
in which we have been separated from God, praying:

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, as we watch and wait for signs of your expansive love, forgive our narrow thinking. As we repent in the wilderness with John, we confess that we often lack the imagination to testify to the coming light. As we visit the home of Elizabeth, we lament our loss of wonder and our failure to recognize miracles among us. Even as we hear the witness of the angels and the shepherds, we confess that we do not make haste to go and see the Christ. Forgive our apathy and small-mindedness. When the wait is over and all is finished, open our minds to recognize the strength and wisdom of Christ, God with us. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon

Hear this good news: in Christ there is strength and wisdom,
expansive love and everlasting grace.

**We are forgiven and transformed to go and proclaim the wonder
of the one who is coming.**

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Passing the Peace of Christ

Gloria #581: *Glory Be to the Father* (please stand)

Hymn of the Day #99: *My Soul Gives Glory to My God*

Time for sharing joys and concerns, and the prayer list.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Worship leader will lead the prayers.

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world.

Merciful God. **Receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all of our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior, who taught us to pray:

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

Hymn #82:

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

(seated)

Prayer for Illumination:

Gracious God, King of Glory, as we turn to your Word for us, may the Spirit of God rest upon us. Help us to be steadfast in our hearing, in our speaking, in our believing, and in our living. Amen.

Scriptures for the Day

Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Epistle Lesson: Romans 16:25 - 27

Gospel Lesson: Luke 1:26 – 38, 46b-55

Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of the Lord is forever.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon:

Mary Knew

Jonathan Kimball

Affirmation of Faith: Prayer for Listening and Speaking – First Presbyterian, Rolla
(please stand)

In all the relationships of our church life, community life, and personal life may we follow the teachings of Jesus. May we endeavor to speak the truth in love and be guided by scripture in our thoughts, decisions, and actions. May we respect and listen deeply to one another, keep confidences, and avoid gossip and triangulation. May we pray for and with one another, building each other up, realizing every soul is precious to God. Amen.

Dedication of Tithes and Offerings (stand)

Offering #710: *We Lift Our Voices*

Prayer of Dedication:

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Sending Hymn #106: *Prepare the Way, O Zion* (stand)

Charge and Benediction:

Prepare for the coming of the Christ Child with anticipation and joy.
Share the good news of His glory in all that you do.
Go in peace. Live in love. **Serve the Lord**

Postlude: *Joyful Recessional* - Gary Norman

*Scriptures are read from the NRSV translation. Music presented by Jeff Sandquist, Mary Kwantes, and Lorie Francis. Worship led and sermon provided by Jonathan Kimball.
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