

Energy • Intelligence • Imagination • Love

Blue Christmas A Service of Wholeness and Healing

December 10, 2025 at 7:30 PM



In the Bleak Midwinter by Lauren Kindle



Welcome to First Presbyterian Church of Davenport

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church of Davenport, a church where EVERYONE is welcome. On behalf of the entire First Pres family, we want you to know that we are so glad you're here. We are a proud congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA), where We Choose WELCOME!

We welcome followers of Jesus who are solid in their faith, and we welcome questioning believers seeking deeper meaning in their life. We welcome those who come from different faith backgrounds, such as Methodists, Lutherans, and Catholics, and those with no faith background at all; for we are all one in Christ Jesus. No matter where you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here!

We hope you experience the warmth and friendliness of our congregation. It is a place that long-term members have described as their spiritual home for generations. It is also a place where people newer to our community of faith have found a safe and sacred space for themselves and their families.

Nursery care is available during the worship service for children (birth through kindergarten). The nursery is staffed by trained and background-checked caregivers from 8:15 AM to 11:30 AM. The nursery is on the third floor of the Christian Education (CE) building. Ask a worship host if you need assistance locating this space.

Kirkwood Choir is offered during the service, after the Children's Message. Kirkwood Choir provides music for worship throughout the program year.

MusikGarten, a program for parents/caregivers and young children (birth through kindergarten), is provided after the service in room #310 of the CE building. MusikGarten is our unique program that allows participation in a fun, energetic environment while instilling a love and understanding of music in young children. Check today's bulletin for schedule.

Sunday School classes for children, youth, and adults are offered after the service. Children and youth Sunday school is located on the third floor of the CE building. High School youth are encouraged to be helpers in the elementary classes. Adult Sunday school is in Von Maur Hall. Please ask a worship host if you need assistance locating these spaces.

COVENANT NETWORK OF PRESBYTERIANS

Our Session (church council) has adopted a bold vision of creating safe and sacred space for all. We aren't perfect at it, but we are joyfully beginning to live into this new vision. We are an open and affirming congregation, and a proud member of the

Covenant Network of Presbyterians (covnetpres.org). The Session and members of First Pres extend a sincere welcome to persons of all races, nationalities, genders, and sexual orientations. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and communion, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the church.



We are a Matthew 25 church in the PC(USA). Matthew 25 congregations identify themselves as working toward one or more of three goals: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty.

Land Acknowledgement: First Presbyterian Church gratefully acknowledges the Indigenous Peoples on whose ancestral homelands we gather, as well as the diverse and vibrant Indigenous communities who make Iowa and Illinois their home today. The communities we serve through our ministries occupy the traditional homelands of the people of the Kiikaapoi, Myaamia, Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, Peoria, Sauk, and Meskwaki nations. We honor these and numerous Indigenous tribes who first made the banks of the Mississippi River a center for arts and commerce.

Worshipers who are comfortably able are invited to stand in body or spirit.
 Bold indicates congregational response.

Blue Christmas A Service of Wholeness and Healing Order of Worship

As we begin worship, please silence your cell phones. Take a quiet moment to center yourself in the presence of God. We invite you to meditate silently on art, music, and Scripture.

Preparing for the Word

Prelude Benedictus Alex Rowley (1892-1958)

† Call to Worship

The Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer

One: Today we come looking for the Christ child.

All: We come, bringing our hurts, our worries, our fears.

One: We come seeking relief from pain. With the psalmist of old we say,

All: "O Lord, you are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.

Give heed to my cry, for I am brought very low."

Poem Yesterday's Pain Ann Weems

Some of us walk into Advent tethered to our unresolved yesterdays the pain still stabbing, the hurt still throbbing. It's not that we don't know better; it's just that we can't stand up anymore by ourselves. On the way to Bethlehem, will you give us a hand?

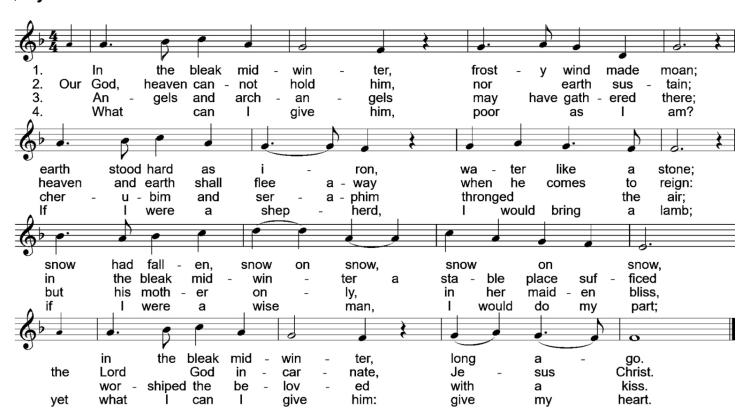
Reflection

Let There Be Peace on Earth Alex Gilson, guitar Jill Jackson, Sy Miller

Opening Prayer (Unison)

The Rev. Pat Halverson

God of mercy, hear our prayer in this Advent season for ourselves, and for our families and friends who live with the struggles of illness and the pain of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Christ, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.



Prayer of Confession

The Rev. Pat Halverson

One: Dear Lord, we come to you this day to express our failures and confusion regarding our relationship with you:

All: You know that we come to you with heavy hearts that we find hard to unburden. It is particularly in this time of year when the darkness of long solstice nights collides with the brilliance of Christmas lights, that we find it hard to express our losses.

One: We may be confused, sad, lonely, and feeling our losses without remembering that you are always there to support us. We tend even toward anger at you, Lord, because we feel in some way it is your will that we are unhappy. Sometimes we feel cut off from you because we allow our many hurts to engulf us. Sometimes we lack trust in you.

All: Open us to the understanding that you are the source of all love and we need not feel so alone in our grief. Grant us wisdom to know that you—most of all—can be trusted, and that you are with us, especially when we are at our absolute worst.

Assurance of Forgiveness

One: Let us open our lives to God's healing presence and receive our Lord's acceptance of us!

All: We know, God of Love, that you are always with us even in our very darkest of times. We know that you forgive our many transgressions and that by leaning into your infinite patience and strength, we receive your mercy, your care, and your grace today. Amen.

Hymn of Response

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying



Listening for the Word

Prayer of Illumination

God of knowledge and power, we pause again to hear you speak to us through the words of your ancient texts; words that are ever new. May our hearts be open to hear your words that our lives may be transformed through the power of your Holy Spirit. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Lesson from the Gospels

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

A Celtic Advent Prayer

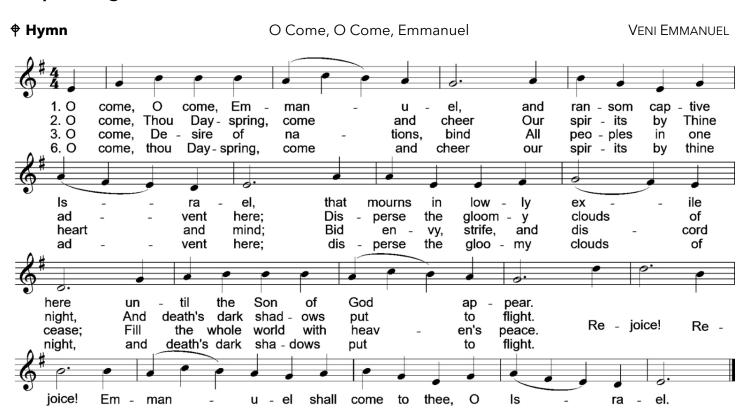
In the lonely places, the wilderness, where we stand forlorn, windswept and alone, your voice calls out: "Prepare a way for the Lord."

In the dark places, the shadows, where we hide our fears, embrace our tears, your voice calls out: "Prepare a way for the Lord."

For the desert places in which we walk, the streets we roam, the paths we cross, guide our feet, take us to places where you would go, give us words that you would use, that in this Advent season of promise and preparation we might point the way with John the Baptist to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, and cheer us by thy drawing nigh; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come again and with us ever dwell.

Responding to the Word



Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Litany of Candle Lighting

The First Candle - HOPE

One: We light this first candle of hope in memory of those persons we have lost through death. It is through hope in Christ that we trust that their lives are now eternal.

All: We remember them by name in our hearts. We give thanks for them and for their lives. We treasure the memories in this difficult season.

The Second Candle - PEACE

One: We light this second candle of peace to ask for deliverance from the pain of loss;

All: All of the losses we face that bring sadness and darkness to this time of year-the loss of relationships, the loss of health, the loss of jobs, the loss of financial security.

One: We ask that God bring us comfort and wholeness. We realize that the pain of loss can be heightened at this time of year, and we ask for peace that passes all human understanding.

All: Lord, thank you for release and healing.

The Third Candle - JOY

One: We light this third candle of joy for each of us.

All: We offer up to God our pasts, the times of regret and sorrow, the times of mourning, the difficult memories, the times of grief and sadness, and of loneliness and pain. We ask that God take away the darkness and bring us joy.

One: "...the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

The Fourth Candle - LOVE

One: We light this fourth candle of love as a symbol of faith and promise.

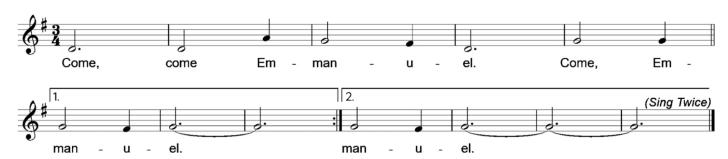
All: We invite and celebrate the coming of the One who promises us no more suffering...the One who promises us light and love.

One: "...Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."



Come, Come Emmanuel



Charge and Benediction

Please exit in silence



WORSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

Worship Hosts - Pam Paulsen

Sound/Video Technicians - Mitch Doremus, Jim Middleton

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Today's liturgical elements are from various sources and used in a spirit of gratitude in the worship of God.

"Blue Christmas: A Service of Wholeness and Healing" by Jean Givens

Psalms of Lament by Ann Weems

Prayers & Creeds. (2013, November 30). Celtic Advent Prayer.

prayersandcreeds.wordpress.com/2013/11/30/celtic-advent-prayer/

Alec Rowley, "Benedictus," ©2000 Augsburg Fortress

Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, "Let There Be Peace on Earth," ©1983 Jan-Lee Music

JOYS & CONCERNS

In Our Prayers: families and victims of gun violence; the people of Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and all who groan under oppression and those in need of God's healing grace; Harold Saunders, Alan Havercamp, Linda Bengfort, Brenda Boyd, Shawn Lambrecht (son of Cathy Lambrecht), Jim Woods, Carol Phoenix, Julie Pedigo (sister of Carol Phoenix), and Wayne Hean.

(Names will be listed in the list above for 30 days unless otherwise requested.)

Mission Partners: Homes and Services; Churches United; Habitat for Humanity Quad Cities; and P.U.N.C.H.

Hospital Visits: The Pastors and Deacons make hospital visits when patients give permission.

In-Touch Information: For anyone who is homebound and would enjoy contact from one of First Presbyterian's In-Touch members, please contact Deacon Colleen Dueñas (563-514-6396).

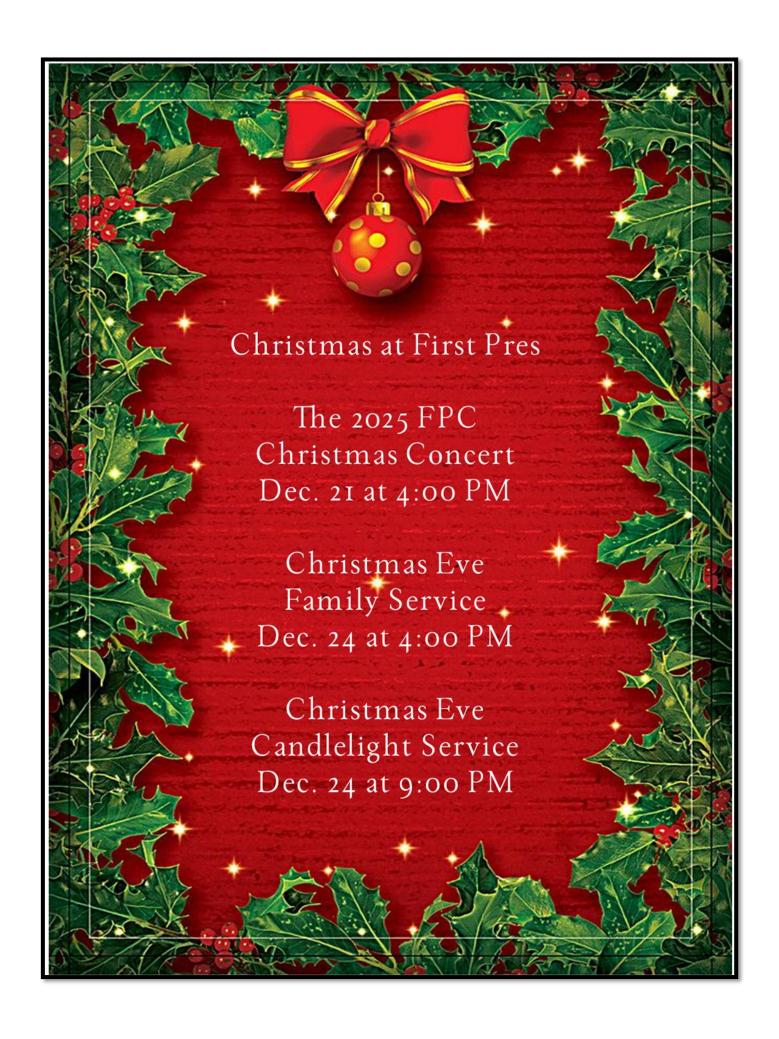
The Prayer Chain: Connects those who need prayer with those who commit to a ministry of prayer. Contact Mary Ann Francois (563-355-5292).

Printed Prayer Requests: Require permission from the person(s) in need of prayer before prayers are printed in the bulletin. The best way to assure a hospital visit or a prayer is to contact the church office directly (563-326-1691).

Prayer Shawls: Prayer shawls are available for you to give to those you know who are experiencing a challenge or joy. For your choosing, a variety of shawls are hanging on the coat rack near the main office.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

Visit the First Pres website to view the f	www.fpcdavenport.org/calendar	
Thursday, December 11 Sermon Talks Clean Team TOPS Vesper Bells Rehearsal Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal	9:00 AM - 10:00 AM 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM 6:00 PM - 6:45 PM 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Von Maur Hall FPC Building Von Maur Hall Chapel Choir Room
Friday, December 12 Caring Closet Alex Gilson's Students' Piano Recital	2:00 PM - 5:00 PM 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	CE Building 1 st Floor Sanctuary
Saturday, December 13 Caring Closet Young Adult Christmas Party	9:00 - 12:00 PM 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	CE Building 1 st Floor Fellowship Hall
Sunday, December 14 Nursery Open Worship Service Kirkwood Choir Manna & More Chamber Chorale Rehearsal Youth Group Scout Troop 7 Meeting	8:15 AM - 11:30 AM 9:30 AM 9:45 AM - 10:30 AM 10:35 AM - 11:30 AM 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	CE Building 3 rd Floor Sanctuary & Online CE Building 3 rd Floor Fellowship Hall Choir Room CE Building 3 rd Floor Gym
Monday, December 15 Pickle Ball Staff Meeting FPC Book Club (Between the Covers) Personnel Session Meeting	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Gym Von Maur Hall Parlor Von Maur Hall Von Maur Hall/Zoom
Tuesday, December 16 Caring Closet & Lunches	9:00 ам - 12:00 рм	CE Building 1st Floor



FPC STAFF

First Presbyterian Church ◆ 1702 Iowa Street ◆ Davenport, Iowa 52803 ◆ Phone: 563-326-1691

Our Staff

Rev. Dr. Kris Schondelmeyer, Pastor/Head of Staff	Ext 230	schondelmeyer@fpcdavenport.org
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Abby Schondelmeyer* Co-Director of Christian Education		cefy@fpcdavenport.org
Kathy Knox*, Nursery Caregiver		
Deanna Herman*, Nursery Caregiver		
Matt Bishop, Director of Music & Arts	Ext 201	bishop@fpcdavenport.org
Alex Gilson, Principal Organist & Assistant Director of Music	Ext 223	gilson@fpcdavenport.org
Linda Bengfort*, Assistant Choral Director		
Kathy Middleton*, Assistant Choral Director for Children		
Jim Middleton*, Director of Office Administration		office@fpcdavenport.org
Diana Miller-Bur*, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor	Ext 235	millerbur@fpcdavenport.org
Kristine Olson, Director of Financial and Business Administration	Ext 219	olson@fpcdavenport.org
Tammy Versluis*, Accounting Assistant		
Darren Long, Director of Building and Grounds	Ext 205	long@fpcdavenport.org
Chad Dean*, Custodian		
		* Part-time employee

ELDERS AND DEACONS

Elders

Class of 2025 Dan Breinich Nancy Chapman Bonnie Johnson Nathan Kabel Zoe McCullum Julia Meyer Kristine Oswald Mark Ruebling Vicki Stegall	Class of 2026 Dianna Darland Denny Jorgenson Kathy Knox Cathy Pratscher-Woods Jed Steckel	Class of 2027 Dan Darland Craig Foster Paula Hartmann Sharon Simmonds Jay Williams Erin Yingling	Co-Clerks of Session Julia Meyer Mark Jones
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Deacons

Class of 2025 Colleen Dueñas (Vice Moderator) Terri Sheetz (Moderator) Doug Wells	Class of 2026 Andy Bowles Edwards Lois Boyer Connie Connolly John Gere Al Frohlich Bob Lehnherr Amy Saskowski	Class of 2027 Elizabeth Breinich Andrew Darland Steve Earp Sue Ervin Heidi Pedersen Mason Pedersen Sherry Williams
	Sarah Soenksen	Sherry Williams

Katrina Williams