

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

The First Presbyterian Church
of Howard County

*First Sunday of Advent
November 30, 2025*

8:30 a.m. In-person

10:30 a.m. In-person & Livestream Service



GATHER

*Let all enter the sanctuary in a spirit of prayer.
Words in **bold** are read by the congregation.*

**Those who are able may stand*

Please remember to turn your cell phones to silent.

*This worship service is being livestreamed to the internet,
and you may appear on our Facebook page and YouTube channel.*

*For our online congregation - Let us know you are here! Post a greeting!
And remember that you can place a request in the Prayer Journal
in the comments on both You Tube and Facebook Live.*

Prelude

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent

Picardy, arr. M. Hayes

Introit

Light One Candle

Mark Patterson

Light One Candle

M.P.

Mark Patterson (ASCAP)

With purpose (♩ = 88)

1 Light one can - dle for hope,

5 hope that the whole world needs.

7 Light one can - dle for hope,

9 hope that the Sav - ior will bring;

12 hope that the Sav - ior will bring.

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Young ChildrenSing, by Mark Patterson, ISBN 0-8006-7680-7
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Call to Worship

O Lord, open my lips.

And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The Lord shall come when morning dawns, and earth's dark night is past.

As the sentry waits for daybreak, so my soul hopes for the Lord.

Lighting of the Candle of Hope

Ruth Circle

* Hymn 93

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

Truro

(see next page for hymn)

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93

1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the
 2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
 3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to

King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
 thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me thy in - ner

draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 pres - ence feel; thy grace and love in me re - veal.

Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7–10, this text then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Merciful Savior, your incarnational life was the model of perfect joy and contentment because you perfectly trusted your heavenly Father. We see the serenity, the peace and the graciousness that were hallmarks of your life, and we know that they are good. In contrast, we know all too well the anxiety, fear, restlessness and competition that relentlessly drive us to worry, depression and exhaustion. This is not how you intended us to live, where Sabbath is seldom observed, silence is constantly drowned out, and rest for body and soul is disregarded, if not disdained. Forgive us, Lord. Forgive us, too, for believing that we can change by trying harder. Instead, transform us from the inside out. Grant us the renewal, restoration and rest that come from fully trusting you. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

* Response 83

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Stuttgart

1 Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass staff for the voice part, and a grand staff (treble and bass) for the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the voice staff. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes that support the vocal melody.

* Sharing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

(We share peace with a nod or a bow, perhaps with hand on heart or folded hands, or with the ASL sign for peace. If worshipping from home, greet each other by sending a text, a wave or comment on Facebook or YouTube.)

Words of Welcome

Refrain



For you, O Lord, my soul in still-ness waits; tru-ly my hope is in you.



1 O Lord of Light, our on - ly hope of glo - ry,



your ra-diance shines in all who look to you; come, light the



hearts of all in dark and shad - ow.

*Newcomers please leave us your address and contact information on the
Visitor Card. These are available on a table at the entrance.
Place the Visitor Card in the offering plate.*

ENCOUNTER

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson: Matthew 24:36-44 (10:30 Only)

³⁶“But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so, too, will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken, and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake, therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Children’s Prayer and The Lord’s Prayer

Afterwards, during the 10:30 service, children ages 4-7 may go with Ms. Kathy Moore to Godly Play. Following worship, parents can pick up their children in rooms 110/113. The Nursery is also open and available for children under the age of 4.

Older children, grades 2-5, may go with Ms. Virginia Callegary to The Worship Bridge. They will return to the sanctuary later in the worship service.

(It is the church’s policy to not put images of children on the livestream.)

**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.**

Second Lesson: Romans 13:8-14

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone; the day is near. Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us walk decently as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in illicit sex and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

For the Word of God in Scripture,

For the Word of God among us,

For the Word of God within us,

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

The Night Is Far Gone

Kenneth Page

(after the sermon, we observe a time of silence and prayer)

RESPOND AND SERVE

* **Affirmation of Faith** *(together)*

We are an Advent people, a people of hope.

For us, Advent is a time of waiting, and so we wait. We wait for the coming of the One who is the fulfillment of God’s promise, the fulfillment of hope, the declaration that we have been redeemed. Even so, we are not a naïve people.

We know that the world in which we live will continue to be filled with pain and sorrow.

We know that hatred and violence will continue to exist.

We know that death and separation will continue to be a part of our lives.

But because we are an Advent people, we know that none of these things will win in the end.

The Holy One is coming, to make holy once again all that was, is and ever will be. And in our waiting and our hoping, we work and worship, pray and play, in all things hoping that peace, love and joy will reign in our lives and in our world, now and forever.

* **Hymn 377**

I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

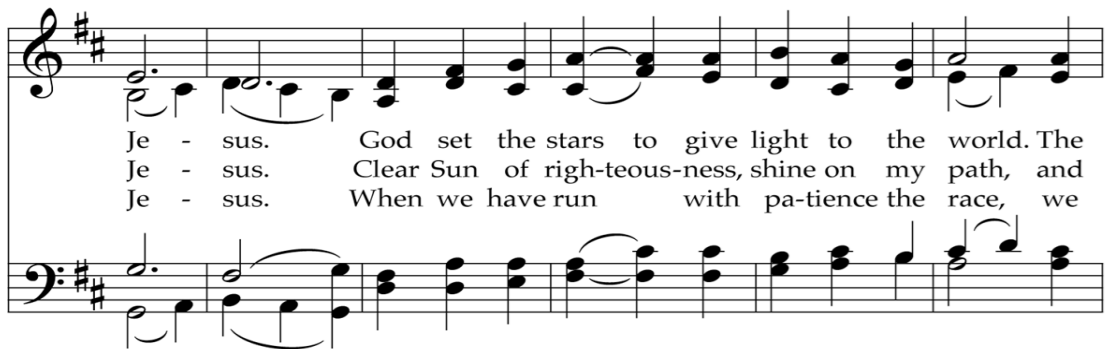
Houston

(see next page for hymn)

377 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

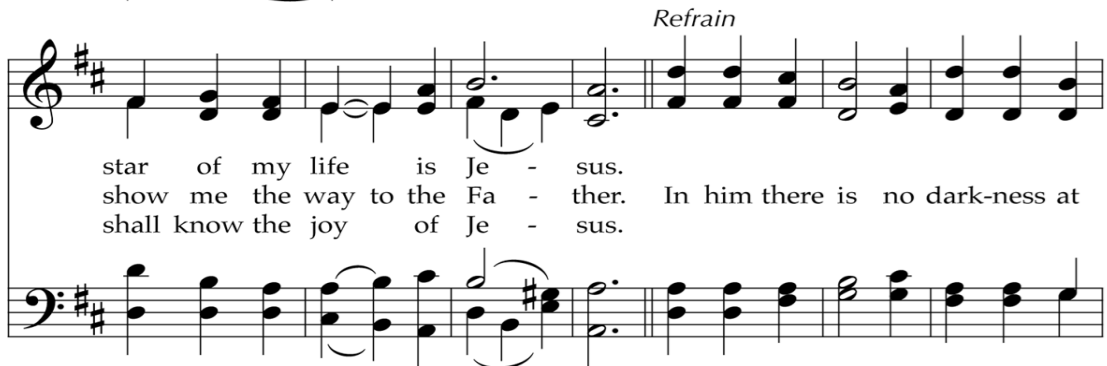


1 I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to fol - low
 2 I want to see the bright-ness of God. I want to look at
 3 I'm look-ing for the com - ing of Christ. I want to be with



Je - sus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The
 Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ-teous-ness, shine on my path, and
 Je - sus. When we have run with pa-tience the race, we

Refrain



star of my life is Je - sus.
 show me the way to the Fa - ther. In him there is no dark-ness at
 shall know the joy of Je - sus.



all. The night and the day are both a - like. The Lamb is the



light of the cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

The author-composer of this unrhymed hymn regards it as a meditation and prayer deeply rooted in many scriptures, most connected with the theme of light: Genesis 1:17; Psalm 139:12; Isaiah 60:19; Malachi 4:2; John 14:8; Ephesians 5:8; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 21:23.

Concerns and Remembrances

Prayers of Gratitude and Concern

Concluding Prayer *(together)*

Help us to keep in mind that the same Jesus who came to us on the first Christmas, and who promised to come back in your own appointed time, is also with us now, at all times, encouraging us as agents of his mercy and heralds of his justice, expecting us to be builders of bridges, peacemakers, in response to his love for us and for all your children.

We offer this prayer, with thanksgiving, in his powerful name. Amen.

The Offering

Offertory (8:30 am)	Now the Heavens Start to Whisper	<i>Alexander Johnson</i>
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Offertory Anthem (10:30 am)	Advent Joy The Handbell Choir	<i>Bryan Childers</i>
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* Doxology	Praise God for Gifts of Hope and Peace Text by Roger Lynn Praise God for gifts of hope and peace Praise God for gifts of joy and love Praise God for sending Christ to dwell On earth for us – Emmanuel. Amen	<i>Puer Nobis Nascitur</i>
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*** Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

SEND AND BLESS

This Week at First Presbyterian Church

* Hymn 97	Watchman, Tell Us of the Night <i>(see next page for hymn)</i>	<i>Aberystwyth</i>
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Watchman, Tell Us of the Night 97

*
 1 Watch-man, tell us of the night, what its signs of prom-ise are.
 2 Watch-man, tell us of the night; high-er yet that star as-cends.
 3 Watch-man, tell us of the night, for the morn-ing seems to dawn.

Trav-eler, what a won-drous sight: see that glo-ry-beam-ing star.
 Trav-eler, bless-ed-ness and light, peace and truth its course por-tends.
 Trav-eler, shad-ows take their flight; doubt and ter-ror are with-drawn.

Watch-man, does its beau-teous ray news of joy or hope fore-tell?
 Watch-man, will its beams a-lone gild the spot that gave them birth?
 Watch-man, you may go your way; has-ten to your qui-et home.

Trav-eler, yes; it brings the day, prom-ised day of Is-ra-el.
 Trav-eler, a-ges are its own; see, it bursts o'er all the earth.
 Trav-eler, we re-joice to-day, for Em-man-u-el has come!

**May be sung antiphonally.*

This unusual dialogue hymn alternates between the voice of a traveler and that of a watchman, setting up an exchange that creates parallels between the coming of dawn and the birth of Christ. The tune is named for a Welsh town whose name means "mouth of the bending river."

* **Benediction**

* **Response #80**

You Shall Go Out with Joy

The Trees of the Field

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace;

the moun-tains and the hills will break forth be -

fore you; there'll be shouts of joy, and all the

trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands.

And all the trees of the field will clap their hands;

the trees of the field will clap their hands;

the trees of the field will clap their hands

while you go out with joy.

*Clap hands.

Postlude

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Rowland Pritchard, arr. M. Hayes



WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We are grateful for your presence and invite you to participate in the worship, education, mission and common life of First Church.

During Today's Worship

If your infant or child needs care during the worship service, you may leave the Sanctuary and return as you wish. Child care for infants and children under four years old is available all morning. We have a texting system to alert you if you are needed while in the worship service. The ushers will be glad to help you.

Flash photography during worship is not permitted. Please, no food or drink in the Sanctuary.

If you are new to First Presbyterian Church

Communion is served on the first Sunday of each month.

Disabled persons entrance is through the Main Entrance in the rear of the building.

We invite you to become a member of First Presbyterian Church. Please speak with Pastor Ken or call the church office to set a time to meet.

Visitors: You may be wondering why we are worshipping cramped into a small hall. We had a fire in July of 2025 and the Sanctuary and our Fellowship Hall are being reconstructed. Our worship of God and service of God's people continue and we are delighted to have you join us.

Interested in the mission and activities of First Presbyterian Church?

Visit the church's website, www.firstpreshc.org for more info.

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The First Presbyterian Church

of Howard County

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Ministers: All members of the congregation

Kenneth Page, Interim Pastor
Virginia Callegary, Director of Christian Education
Dr. Margaret McGillivray, Director of Music Ministries
Megan Bondhus, Church Administrator
Pat Travers, Bookkeeper
Woodrow Collins, Church Sexton
Kathy Moore, Godly Play Coordinator
Marla Youkers, Nursery Coordinator
Sarah Reinhardt, Nursery Assistant

The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County is a congregation of the Presbytery of Baltimore in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

✦ We are an Earth Care Congregation ✦

✦ We are a Matthew 25 Congregation ✦

Inspirit Counseling Services at First Presbyterian Church

Meredith Barger 410-433-8861 x104 | John Michalczyk 410-433-8861 x115

