



## First Presbyterian Church of Redwood Falls

December 24, 2020 ~ 5 pm ~ Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Ministers: The members of the congregation

**Pastor: Rev. Scott Prouty**

Our Vision Statement of the First Presbyterian Church of Redwood Falls is: God's timeless love transforms each of us to joyously continue the ministry of Jesus Christ in our community and in our world.

### Assemble in God's Name

**Prelude:** Karen Speros

#### **The Call to Worship and the Lighting of the Christ Candle**

**Reader 1:** Emmanuel, God with us, a promise kept, a child. By definition, a baby is dependent on adults for everything—food, shelter, protection, and love. A baby is unable to use logic and reason. It needs constant attention. But the baby Jesus—this Child created the world. This Child existed before anything or anyone. This Child was God. Imagine: He's the creator of the world and suddenly He feels cold and hungry. Imagine: becoming human was not a twist of fate, or a punishment from a higher being it was a choice. God chose to give up everything—to become nothing.

**Reader 2:** This Child was a King. A King in a dirty stable, wrapped in rags—but a King with a plan.

**Reader 1:** This Child would bring hope. Not just a wish, but the confidence that God would defeat Satan, that good would win over evil.

**Reader 2:** This Child would bring peace, even in the midst of great suffering and trials—a peace that assures His followers that He is in control even when it feels like nobody is.

**Reader 1:** This Child would bring love—a love that would never be taken away, a love that is beyond our understanding.

**Reader 2:** And this Child would bring joy, for He would deliver us.

*(Light the Christ Candle)*

**Hymn #134**

#### ***"Joy to the World"***

*1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

#### **Prayer of Invocation**

Beloved in Christ, at this Christmastide let it be our care and delight to hear again the message of the angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the babe lying in a manger. Therefore, let us read and mark in holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious redemption brought us by this holy Child. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all God's people; for unity within the church Jesus came to build, and especially in this, our own community. And because this would rejoice Christ's heart, let us remember, in Jesus' name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed; the sick and those that mourn, the lonely and the unloved, the aged and the little children; and all those who do not know the Lord Jesus yet. Lastly, let us remember before God all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no person can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom in the Lord Jesus we are one forevermore. These prayers and praises we humbly offer up to the throne of heaven, in the words which Christ himself hath taught us: Our Father, which art in heaven . . .

## The Nine Lessons and Carols

**First Lesson:** “God announces in the Garden of Eden that the seed the of woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” **Genesis 3:8-15**

<sup>8</sup> Late in the afternoon a breeze began to blow, and the man and woman heard the Lord God walking in the garden. They were frightened and hid behind some trees. <sup>9</sup> The Lord called out to the man and asked, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup> The man answered, “I was naked, and when I heard you walking through the garden, I was frightened and hid!” <sup>11</sup> “How did you know you were naked?” God asked. “Did you eat any fruit from that tree in the middle of the garden?” <sup>12</sup> “It was the woman you put here with me,” the man said. “She gave me some of the fruit, and I ate it.” <sup>13</sup> The Lord God then asked the woman, “What have you done?” “The snake tricked me,” she answered. “And I ate some of that fruit.” <sup>14</sup> So the Lord God said to the snake: “Because of what you have done, you will be the only animal to suffer this curse—For as long as you live, you will crawl on your stomach and eat dirt. <sup>15</sup> You and this woman will hate each other; your descendants and hers will always be enemies. One of hers will strike you on the head, and you will strike him on the heel.”

**Carol: #82** **“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”**

**1** Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee. Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art; dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

**Second Lesson:** “God promises to faithful Abraham that in his seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.” **Genesis 22:15-18**

<sup>15</sup> The Lord’s angel called out from heaven a second time: <sup>16</sup> You were willing to offer the Lord your only son, and so he makes you this solemn promise, <sup>17</sup> “I will bless you and give you such a large family, that someday your descendants will be more numerous than the stars in the sky or the grains of sand along the beach. They will defeat their enemies and take over the cities where their enemies live. <sup>18</sup> You have obeyed me, and so you and your descendants will be a blessing to all nations on earth.”

**Carol: #88** **“O Come, O Come, Immanuel”**

**1** O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

**Refrain:** Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

**Third Lesson:** “Christ’s birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.” **Isaiah 9:2,6-7**

<sup>2</sup> Those who walked in the dark have seen a bright light. And it shines upon everyone who lives in the land of darkest shadows. <sup>6</sup> A child has been born for us. We have been given a son who will be our ruler. His names will be Wonderful Advisor and Mighty God, Eternal Father and Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> His power will never end; peace will last forever. He will rule David’s kingdom and make it grow strong. He will always rule with honesty and justice. The Lord All-Powerful will make certain that all of this is done.

**Carol: #129** **“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”**

**1** Lo, how a rose e’er blooming from tender stem hath sprung, of Jesse’s lineage coming, by faithful prophets sung. It came, a floweret bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

**Fourth Lesson:** “The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.” **Isaiah 11:1-9**

**11** Like a branch that sprouts from a stump, someone from David’s family<sup>[a]</sup> will someday be king. <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the Lord will be with him to give him understanding, wisdom, and insight. He will be powerful, and he will know and honor the Lord. <sup>3</sup> His greatest joy will be to obey the Lord. This king won’t judge by appearances or listen to rumors. <sup>4</sup> The poor and the needy will be treated with fairness and with justice. His word will be law everywhere in the land, and criminals will be put to death. <sup>5</sup> Honesty and fairness will be his royal robes. <sup>6</sup> Leopards will lie down with young goats, and wolves will rest with lambs. Calves and lions will eat together and be cared for by little children. <sup>7</sup> Cows and bears will share the same pasture; their young will rest side by

side. Lions and oxen will both eat straw. <sup>8</sup> Little children will play near snake holes. They will stick their hands into dens of poisonous snakes and never be hurt. <sup>9</sup> Nothing harmful will take place on the Lord's holy mountain. Just as water fills the sea, the land will be filled with people who know and honor the Lord.

**Carol: #121** **"O Little Town of Bethlehem"**

**1** O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

**Fifth Lesson: "The angel Gabriel salutes the virgin Mary." Luke 1:26–38**

<sup>26</sup> One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee <sup>27</sup> with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. <sup>28</sup> The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. <sup>30</sup> Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, <sup>31</sup> and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. <sup>33</sup> He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end." <sup>34</sup> Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!" <sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. <sup>37</sup> Nothing is impossible for God!"

<sup>38</sup> Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." And the angel left her.

**Carol: #145** **"What Child is This"**

**1** What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

**Sixth Lesson: "Matthew tells of the birth of Jesus." Matthew 1:18–23**

<sup>18</sup> This is how Jesus Christ was born. A young woman named Mary was engaged to Joseph from King David's family. But before they were married, she learned that she was going to have a baby by God's Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph was a good man<sup>[a]</sup> and did not want to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. So he decided to quietly call off the wedding. <sup>20</sup> While Joseph was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, the baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. <sup>21</sup> Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus,<sup>[b]</sup> because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> So the Lord's promise came true, just as the prophet had said, <sup>23</sup> "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

**Carol: #117** **"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night"**

**1** While shepherds watched their flocks by night, all seated on the ground, the angel of the Lord came down, and glory shone around.

**Seventh Lesson: "The shepherds go to the manger." Luke 2:8–16**

<sup>8</sup> That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. <sup>9</sup> All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. <sup>11</sup> This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said: <sup>14</sup> "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God." <sup>15</sup> After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." <sup>16</sup> They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

Carol: #119

**“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”**

**1** Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!” Joyful, all ye nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies; with the angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

**Refrain:** Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”

**Eighth Lesson:** “The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.” **Matthew 2:1–11**

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men<sup>[a]</sup> from the east came to Jerusalem <sup>2</sup> and said, “Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east<sup>[b]</sup> and have come to worship him.” <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them, “Where will the Messiah be born?” <sup>5</sup> They told him, “He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, <sup>6</sup> ‘Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.’” <sup>7</sup> Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. <sup>8</sup> He told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.” <sup>9</sup> The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> They were thrilled and excited to see the star. <sup>11</sup> When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh<sup>[c]</sup> and gave them to him.

Carol: #151

**“We Three Kings of Orient Are”**

**1** We three kings of Orient are; bearing gifts we traverse afar, field and fountain, moor and mountain, following yonder star.

**Refrain:** O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

**Ninth Lesson:** “John unfolds the great mystery of the incarnation.” **John 1:1–14**

In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God. <sup>2</sup> From the very beginning the Word was with God. <sup>3</sup> And with this Word, God created all things. Nothing was made without the Word. Everything that was created <sup>4</sup> received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone. <sup>5</sup> The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>6</sup> God sent a man named John, <sup>7</sup> who came to tell about the light and to lead all people to have faith. <sup>8</sup> John wasn’t that light. He came only to tell about the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word. <sup>11</sup> He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him. <sup>12</sup> Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him. So he gave them the right to be the children of God. <sup>13</sup> They were not God’s children by nature or because of any human desires. God himself was the one who made them his children. <sup>14</sup> The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us.

Carol: #133

**“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**

**1** O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant; O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem! Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!

**Refrain:** O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!

## Give Thanks to God

### Invitation to Offering

From the Fullness of God, we have all received grace upon grace.

We greatly appreciate your support of the church. Please consider giving your tithes or offering to God on our church website or by sending a check to PO Box 444, Redwood Falls, MN.

### Offertory Prayer

Holy One, as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, we seek to honor You with these monetary gifts. We know that everything in this world is a gift from You, O God, so we humbly return a generous portion of these gifts to You. We pray that these gifts may help this church to change people's lives and to spread Your message of salvation. In the name of the Babe lying in the manger, we pray. Amen.

### Invitation to the Lord's Table

A child is born for us in Bethlehem, wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger; and He will be our Shepherd, feeding His flock in the strength of the Lord.

### Great Thanksgiving

*The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

*It is truly right and our greatest joy to give thanks and praise, O Holy God, Creator and Ruler of the Universe.*

*You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in Your image and called us to love and serve You. When we were unfaithful and turned from Your ways, You did not forsake us, Your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and sent prophets to call us back to Your way. In the fullness of time You sent Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior.*

*In him, Your Word, dwelling with You from all eternity, became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and we beheld Your glory, Immanuel!*

*Therefore, we praise You, joining our voices with the celestial choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing the glory of Your name:*

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*

*You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.*

*Born in humility, He came to rule overall. Helpless as an infant, He showed the power of Your love. Poor in things of the world, He brought the wealth of Your grace. Rejected by many, He welcomed all who sought Him. In His dying and rising, You gave birth to Your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.*

*On the night before He met with death, Jesus came to the table with those He loved. He took bread and praised You, God of all creation. He broke the bread among His disciples and said, "Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body, given for you.*

*When the supper was ended, He took a cup of wine and gave thanks to You, God of creation. He passed the cup among His disciples and said: Take this all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of the new covenant sealed in my blood for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.*

*Remembering Your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from creation this bread and wine and joyfully celebrate this dying and rising as we await the day of coming. With thanksgiving we offer our very selves to You to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to service.*

*Christ is the great of life. When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the saving death of our risen Lord until He comes in glory.*

*Gracious God, pour out Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these Your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and cup we bless may be communion of the body and blood of Christ.*

*By Your Spirit make us one with Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.*

*God, we pray for an end to this pandemic, we pray for healing for the political divide in our nation, we pray for all who are need.*

*Empower us by Your Spirit, O God, to be Christ's presence in the world even as Jesus was God-with-us. Give us courage to speak the truth, to seek his justice, and to love with his love. Keep us faithful in Your service until Christ comes in final victory and we shall feast with all Your saints in the joy of Your eternal realm.*

*Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are Yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Go in God's Name**  
**Candle Lighting Ritual**

**Hymn #122**

***"Silent Night"***

**1** *Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright 'round yon virgin mother and child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

**2** *Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight; glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia: Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born!"*

**3** *Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.*

**4** *Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light; with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King: Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.*

**Benediction**

**Postlude**

**Visits/Worship...** If you would like an in-person, over the phone, or zoom visit with Pastor Scott, please contact him at 627-5486. If you would be interested in attending one of the in-person worship services, please contact Pastor Scott.

**Our Sunday morning service is on our local channels...**

Nuvera (Channel 3), Media-Com (Channel 8): Mondays at 10 am, Wednesdays at 7 pm!

**Pray for The Following:**

Pray for the unchurched and lonely.

Pray for people living in our communities, the disenfranchised and people in other countries.

Pray for those who are having financial or marital difficulties.

Pray for those grieving the loss of a loved one.

Pray for those seeking employment.

Pray for our leaders at the city, county, state and national level and all military personnel.

Pray for those in need of food, medicine and shelter.

Pray for our church leaders and teachers.

Pray for our local, national, world political leaders.

**Members of our Church Family in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living or Other Facilities:**

Millie Bunting, Jeanette Kotval, Bob & Bunny Nolting, Ardis Alexander, Bob Brown

**All Those Fighting Cancer:** Rick Kramer, Alexis Martin, Sharon King, Kathy Tiffany (Glen Tiffany's wife/Donna Potter's sister-in-law), Mark Grommesch (Gerry & Deb Hess's son-in-law)

**Pray for all those fighting other diseases:**

Shellie Mammen (lupus), Corrine Gertsema (multiple sclerosis), Tripp Meyers (epilepsy)

**If you know of something/someone to add to the Prayer List, please contact the church office.**