



**December 21, 2025**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
***When You're Afraid, Give Me Your Hand***

**PRELUDE (A Time for Quiet Meditation)**

*O Come, Little Children*

*Dale Wood*

**WORDS OF WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Love**

*Nancy & Don Sullivan*

One: In a world full of fear, where do we see the presence of love?

**All: We see love in a warm embrace, in a phone call after a long day, in random deeds of kindness and intentional acts of empathy. We see love all around us.**

One: Even in a fearful world, love is all around us. Today, we light the candle of love as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that love is here, love is world-changing, love is shining bright.

*Light the fourth candle*



**All: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**CONGREGATION SINGS**

*We're Not Alone*  
*(refrain)*

*Adeste Fideles*

***When fear grows deep inside us, remember what unites us. No, nothing can divide us; we're not alone.***

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**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Here in worship, we stand and sing together;

**All: We listen and pray together.**

One: Here in worship, we are not alone. So when life gives you reason to fear, to grieve, or to worry,

**All: Remember this moment; and that we are not alone.**

**\*GATHERING SONG #133** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*  
*(verse 1)*

*Adeste Fideles*

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

\*Please stand as you are able.

*(verse 2)*

***True God from true God, Light from light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes; very God, begotten, not created! O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!***

*(verse 3)*

***Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation; sing, all ye citizens of heaven above! Glory to God, all glory in the highest! O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!***

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

One: None of us are perfect; we all make mistakes. Fortunately, God offers grace, and we can too. So let us receive God's mercy as a gift:

### **UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Ever-present God, every day we are given choices: to be a friend, to be an ally, to extend a welcoming hand. Some days we choose wisely, but other times, we get it wrong. We fail to choose solidarity, we overlook others who are fearful, we withhold offering our hearts and our hands. God, forgive us. Help us to realize that, while we all make mistakes, thankfully, you offer us grace.**

*(Time of Silence)*

### **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

One: God's mercy is a gift and so we accept God's forgiveness and begin again.

**All: Thanks be to God. Amen.**

**\*SONG OF RESPONSE #447**    *We Are Forgiven*

*We Are Forgiven*

***We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.***

***We are forgiven. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.***

### **\*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

One: In Christ we discover a peace that surpasses all human understanding.

Let us share that same peace with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And, also, with you.**

### **UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**God-with-us, we have come here today in hopes of drawing closer to you. So as your Word is read, help us to feel your presence in our midst. Speak to us that we might reach out our hand and our hearts with hope, we pray. Amen.**

### **FIRST SCRIPTURE READING**    *Isaiah 41:5-10*

The coastlands have seen and are afraid, the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come. <sup>6</sup> Each one helps the other, saying to one another, 'Take courage!' <sup>7</sup> The artisan encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, 'It is good'; and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be

*\*Please stand as you are able.*

moved. <sup>8</sup> But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; <sup>9</sup> you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, 'You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off'; <sup>10</sup> do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

## CHORAL ANTHEM

*The Christmas Gift*

*McDonald*

## SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

*Matthew 1:18-25*

<sup>18</sup> 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 with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

## THE MESSAGE

*"Give Me Your Hand"*

*Rev. Dr. John Wahl*

## TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION – Lectio Divina

*We're Not Alone*

*Adeste Fideles*

*(verse 4)*

***Forward we march together toward God's kin-dom. Building a bigger table, not taller walls. Working together, nothing is impossible. When fear grows deep inside us, remember what unites us. No, nothing can divide us; we're not alone.***

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## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

### CALL TO OFFERING

*We take this time to reflect and recognize all contributions of time, talent, and treasure. A basket is available for making monetary donations.*

### OFFERTORY

*The Shepherd of the Flock*

*Gilbert M. Martin*

**\*DOXOLOGY #314**

*Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness*

*Christ, Be Our Light*

*(verse 4)*

***Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth,  
many are cold. Make us your building, sheltering others, walls  
made of living stone. Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your  
church gathered today.***

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**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**\*SENDING SONG (Known Unknowns)**

*When Joseph Was Bridegroom*

*Mueller*

*(verse 1)*

***When Joseph was bridegroom and Mary the bride, the date of their  
wedding was his to decide, for Mary was pregnant and Joseph beguiled,  
till Gabriel convinced him to parent God's child.***

*(verse 2)*

***So, Joseph consented to take second place and save his beloved from  
certain disgrace; informed by what Mary proclaimed in her song, he kept  
faith though fearing that much might go wrong.***

*(verse 3)*

***In touch with an angel, inspired by a dream, aware that things  
sometimes are more than they seem, confronted by God in sound, silence,  
and sight, all Joseph desired was to do what was right.***

*(verse 4)*

***O God, who called Joseph to father your son, and see, as a tradesman,  
your will being done, teach us when reluctant to stay on your side, like  
Joseph, to dither, then dream, and decide.***

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**\*CHORAL BENEDICTION**

*Celtic Advent Carol*

*Angerman*

**\*FINAL BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

*Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying*

*Thomas Chesterton*

\*Please stand as you are able.

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Knitting For Others**



**The group will not be meeting in December.**

## Alternative Gift Giving

THE ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS  
THAT KEEP ON GIVING



If you are considering giving alternative gifts, there are some brochures on the Mission bulletin board in the hallway. Heifer, Habitat for Humanity, and Presbyterian Gift Catalogs are there for you to look at. You can copy down their website or phone number, if you are interested. Mission Commission

## CFPCC Food Bank Needs

Please consider donating the following items to help stock the shelves at Chagrin Falls Park Community Center:



**Canned sweet potatoes, canned turkey gravy, Stove Top stuffing mix, cooking oil, mayo, butter, celery, white potatoes, onions, eggs, cranberry sauce, sweet relish, a turkey, green beans, corn, corned bread mix, broth, cream mushroom, elbow macaroni, pie (no pumpkin please\*), anything seasonal (no pumpkin please\*), or anything you would like to donate.**

CFPCC is receiving donations at your car. Someone will come out and retrieve donations. You can, also, leave them in the blue donation bin in the Narthex.

\*The CFPCC community does not use pumpkin as part of their autumn / holiday meals.

## Longest Night Service

During the Advent Season, we will be crafting worship and devotions around the theme: *Insisting on Hope*. We look to God to provide comfort and hope in the midst of our fears.

But the Christmas Season can be a difficult time, especially for those experiencing the pain of loss. Therefore, we invite any and all to join us for a brief, informal Longest Night Service, held on the night of the solstice – **today at 5:00 p.m.** There will be time and space for silence and singing, candle lighting and prayers; inviting hope into even the difficult parts of our lives.

## Mission Thank you



Dear Congregation, the Mission Commission would like to thank you for your very generous support of the \$5 for Feet, Fingers, and Fares outreach. Many hats, gloves, socks, and cash for bus fares were delivered this Sunday the 21st to North Church. Your generosity goes a long way in helping keep people warm this winter. Gifts from the Angel Tree were given to the Geauga County Job and Family Services in support of children and teens. They were overwhelmed with your generosity. Thank you, In Christ, Mission Commission

## Notice from Treasurer's Office

If you would like to have your 2025 pledges credited to 2025, please turn them into the offering basket no later than Sunday, December 28.

## Offering Envelopes for 2026

For those that receive offering envelopes, please retain the current box you have for 2026. If at any time you are in need of more envelopes, please contact the office. If you do not receive envelopes and would like to, please contact the church office.

## Donations – Credit Card or Zelle

**Credit card** donations are available on-line at the Valley Presbyterian website below:

<http://valleypresbychurch.org>

Look for “Give Now” button. Can only be used for donations.

Can not pay for holiday flowers, VBS, books, etc. at this link.

Use the following QR Code to donate via **Zelle**:



### **VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**[www.valleypresbychurch.org](http://www.valleypresbychurch.org)**

**VPC Guest Wifi Password: VPC12345**

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