FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF BETHLEHEM

Traditional Worship Service
The First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2026

The Service for the Lord's Day

WE GATHER

PRELUDE Greensleeves — Richard Purvis

WELCOME AND COMMUNITY LIFE

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING — Norma Ferguson and Mark Ferguson

When the nights are long and the roads are hard,
we turn our eyes to the stars.
When the work is demanding and injustice unending,
we stand together, arm in arm.
When fear looms large and grief weighs heavy,
we cry out to God without holding back.
And when the dawn of tomorrow feels far away,
we gather together to light the candle of hope.
Like the stars above, may this light shine bright.
May it guide our path. May it inspire deeper hope.
Until God's promised day, may it be so. **Amen.**

*SUNG RESPONSE — #9
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (verse 1) — VENI EMMANUEL

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*GATHERING HYMN — #2
Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus — HYFRYDOL

WE CONFESS

CALL TO CONFESSON

*Please stand as you are able.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we have been known—to bite our tongues, to work through a broken heart, to don our favorite rose-colored glasses. We have been known—to look for the bright side, to sweep the pain under the rug, to choose ignorance for the benefit of bliss. We have been known to keep the hurt in our heart to ourselves. Forgive us for filtering our honesty. Forgive us for ignoring the power of lament. Forgive us for not turning to you first. Remind us that you are a God who listens and you are a God who restores. With open hearts, we pray. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Family of faith, whether you pray like the Psalmists—raw and unfiltered—or you can't remember the last time you were honest with God, God still loves you. God sees you. And God longs to be in relationship. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: **There is nothing we could do or say that will keep God's love at bay. We are seen, forgiven, and invited—into deeper honesty and deeper relationship. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

WE LISTEN

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE — Pamela Swank

Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-9

Leader: The word of the Lord;
People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON — Rev. Karen King

"How Long Until the Dawn?"

WE RESPOND

MOMENT FOR SILENT REFLECTION

Lament allows us to acknowledge, name and release the grief we hold individually and collectively. Lament enables us to move toward productive actions that can be beneficial and generative. what grief do you hold? What is your prayer of lament today? On the Paper provided, write your own prayer of lament.

*SERMON HYMN — #366

Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me — ST. CATHERINE

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe even on the longest nights—when our steps are unclear and fear takes hold—that the sun is still rising. We believe in that sunrise like we believe in God's promised day. So instead of giving in to the great unknown, we move, in spirit, toward that light. We summon our courage. We carry each other. We dance under the stars. We listen for the angels. And we believe the good news of the gospel, which says that God loves God's creation so fiercely that God took on flesh to be with us. This is the truth that sustains our journey. In this, we believe.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

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.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

OFFERING

Call to Give

Offertory O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is — Carl Schalk

Chancel Choir

*Doxology — #592

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow — OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*SENDING HYMN — #483

Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above — MIT FREUDEN ZART

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Postlude on "Forrest Green" — arr. Flor Peeters

Flowers are given by Susan Oechsle in loving memory of her parents,
Judith and Stanley Reed, and her son Jason Oechsle

All liturgy from *A Sanctified Art*

Restore Us, God

ST. LOUIS 8.6.8.6 D (“O Little Town of Bethlehem”)

Words: Anna Strickland (2026) Music: Lewis H. Redner (1868)

