



First Presbyterian Church
of Elk Rapids

404 Spruce Street, Elk Rapids, Michigan 49629
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Rev. Jim Porter, Senior Pastor
Rev. Sandra Murray, Parish Associate
Cheryl Knight, Director of Music Ministries
Melanie Stoll, Contemporary Worship Leader
Wayne Potter, Director of Youth and Family Life Ministries

December 8, 2019

MEDITATION TO PREPARE OUR HEARTS
AND MINDS FOR WORSHIP

*We come to praise you, O Lord, and
to think again about your love for
the world as revealed in your gift of
our Lord Jesus Christ. Open our
spiritual eyes that we may see, and
understand as best we can, the fuller
meaning of the coming of the Savior
for us all. In his name. Amen.*

Our Mission

Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;
Deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;
Demonstrate Christ's way of love in service to the world.


A Stephen Ministry Congregation

Traditional Worship — 9:00 AM

* Signifies the congregation may stand as able. | Please silence all electronic devices.

Welcome to worship at First Presbyterian Church!

If you do not have a church home in the area, we invite you to make our church yours. Please sign the Friendship Pad and pass it to your neighbor so you can get acquainted.

 We encourage you to take a moment to check in on Facebook.

PREPARING

THE PRELUDE — “*We Are His Gold*” by Martin

WELCOME

*GREETING EACH OTHER IN CHRISTIAN LOVE

RINGING OF THE HISTORIC CHURCH BELL AND
LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP Doug White

Leader: Come, open your hearts.

People: Light the candles,

Leader: Sing the carols,

People: Rest in the prayers.

Leader: Come, open your lives

People: To the Light of the World,

Leader: To the songs of blessings,

People: To the prayers of healing.

Leader: Watch, listen, feel.

People: God is coming.

Leader: God is here.

All: Rejoice!

*OPENING HYMN 88 — *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (followed by silent confessions) Doug White

All: Let loose your joy, O God. Let it rise to the surface and shake us out of preoccupation with lists and tasks. Forgive us our heavy-hearted approach to your season of joy and light. Do not let our long lists and calendar of events overwhelm the wonder of your Son's birth.

Let loose your joy, O God. Let us see the smiles of the children. Let us know the joy of giving to those in need. Let us feel the embrace of your love in the carols sung and stories told.

Let loose your joy, O God, some sparkling light into our world of darkness and strife. Let us be people of joy. In Jesus' name. Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE – *Kyrie*

**Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us;
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Doug White

Leader: The transforming love and power of God seen in the unexpected surprise of Christmas is available to us today. In the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God!

*GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without
end. Amen. Amen.**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

John & LeRue Werner

Reader 1: We light one candle to remind us of the prophets, the second for John the Baptist, who called people to change their way of living to prepare for the coming of Christ.

Reader 2: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. (John 1:5-7)

All: Disturbing God, we thank you for the witness of John the Baptist. Help us to be open to the changing power of your love, and to be true witnesses to the power of Jesus in our lives. Amen.

*HYMN OF RESPONSE 89 – *For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits* (vs. 2)

ANTHEM – *“Waiting and Longing”*

by Larson

PROCLAIMING

SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 11:1-10 (pg. 640 OT) & Matthew 3:1-12 (pg. 2 NT)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“God Meets Us Even in the Dark”

Rev. Jim Porter

RESPONDING

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE 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.

OFFERTORY – *“Songs of Promise”*

by Martin

*DOXOLOGY

**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 DEDICATION¹

All: We give you thanks and praise, O God, that you have built us up in faith and bound us together in love. By your grace, may all that we do show the glory of your name and serve the good of your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*CONCLUDING HYMN 641—*When in Our Music God Is Glorified* (vs. 1, 3, 5)

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

Leader: In the coming week what does God call us to do?

People: We are called to: Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him; deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him; and demonstrate Christ's way of love in service to the world.

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE – *“Let There Be Peace On Earth”*

THE POSTLUDE – *“Carols of the Manger”*

by Martin

WORSHIP CONCLUDES—SERVICE BEGINS!

Thank you Doug White for playing clarinet today.

¹ Long, Kim. Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1: Advent Through Pentecost (p. 1-3). Westminster John Knox Press.

WORSHIP NOTES

Welcome friends. If you are a guest, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad at the end of each pew, and include a phone number or email address so we can acknowledge your visit today. We hope your worship experience is meaningful and uplifting. Meet new friends at “Fellowship Hour” in the narthex before and after worship. Also, be sure to pick up a “Welcome” folder from our guest table also located in the narthex.

Child care. Qualified caregivers welcome infants and children through 5 years old.



We have an induction hearing loop system for hearing aid users. Please switch hearing aids to “T” or see the sound technician for help.

Large print bulletins and hymn sheets available from an usher.

Thank you. Special thanks to our greeter: Don Reynolds; ushers: Sandy & Don Davids, Diane & Tom Thompson; and fellowship hour: Fellowship Team.

Prayer requests: Don & Sandy Davids’ granddaughter Alexa, Karyl Mangus’ granddaughter Jessica, Donald Kinloch, Olivia Lein, Suzanna Lein, Mike Cameron, Caleigh Gordon (Former Eagle Village resident), Nash Nichols (Tom & Diane Thompson’s grandson), Denise Elmi’s son Josh, Len Sheldon, Roger Gehrt, Mary Sawyer’s friend Mac, Caroline Dixon, Edson Murray, Bruce Hulwick, Carolyn Cross (Sandy Davids’ mother), Lou Sanford, and First Presbyterian Church of Petoskey.

Florida Snowbirds Lunch - Saturday, February 8

If you are in Florida in February, plan to attend the “First Presbyterian South” lunch on February 8 at 12 noon at Captain’s Table Restaurant, Fisherman’s Village, Punta Gorda, FL. To reserve your spot, contact Connie Claar at 231-883-9408 or connieclaar@torchlake.com by January 31.

Elk Rapids School Snow Days - If Elk Rapids Schools have a snow day, the office will not open until 12 noon or may not open at all (depending on the weather). If you have a meeting scheduled, we encourage you to call the church or the person heading up the meeting before you venture out.

This Week's Activities

Sun. 12/8

- 9 a.m. Traditional Service
- 10 a.m. Adult Class/SS/Youth
- 11 a.m. Contemporary Service
- 4 p.m. Cantata Practice

Mon. 12/9

- 1 p.m. Worship MT

Tues. 12/10

- 10 a.m. Bible Girls
- 5:30 p.m. Advent Dinner
- 7 p.m. Concert in Sanctuary

Wed. 12/11

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast Club @ LH
- 9 a.m. Bulletin Items Due
- 4:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 6:30 p.m. Praise Team Practice

Thurs. 12/12

Fri. 12/13

- 8:30 a.m. Community Cupboard

Next Week's Activities

Sun. 12/15

- 9 a.m. Traditional Service
- 10 a.m. Adult Class/SS/Youth
- 11 a.m. Contemporary Service
- 2 p.m. "Jesus of Nazareth" Movie in Fellowship Hall
- 4 p.m. Cantata Practice

Mon. 12/16

Tues. 12/17

- 10 a.m. Bible Girls

Wed. 12/18

- 6:30 a.m. Breakfast Club @ LH
- 9 a.m. Bulletin Items Due
- 4:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 6:30 p.m. Praise Team Practice

Thurs. 12/19

Fri. 12/20

- Youth Movie Night @ LH

Sat. 12/21

- 4 p.m. Christmas Cantata

What's Happening

Special Gift - As you leave the Sanctuary today, please accept a "Famous Bible Verses" coffee mug. The Adult Education Ministry Team intends it to be a continual, visual reminder to express gratitude to God for the multitude of blessings he heaps upon us everyday, with the greatest blessing of all being the gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Take time regularly to say, "Thank you, Lord!"

Advent Class - "All I want for Christmas" is continuing through Sunday, December 22, in the Fellowship Hall, 10:10 to 11 a.m. Our focus is on the amazing, life-changing gifts Christmas has for each of us! You are welcome to attend any or all of the classes even if you haven't registered.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Candles - If your family or group has an interest in lighting the Advent Candle at one of our three Christmas Eve services, please let us know on sign-up sheet at the Activity Center.

Christmas Wreaths Available from Youth Group—Today

Contact Wayne Potter if you would like to purchase a Christmas wreath from the youth group this year. Wreaths are \$25 each and will be available on Sunday mornings until they are gone.

Advent Catered Dinner - Tuesday, December 10

Tickets are on sale on Sundays now for our Advent Dinner catered by Chef Jonathon Heeke on Tuesday, December 10. Appetizers begin at 5:30 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. Cost is \$10/person, \$25/family. At 7:00 p.m. there will be a concert by area young people, including a special appearance by Travis Hall. Don't miss this special evening!

Memorial Plants - Christmas is a time to honor loved ones with an \$10.00 donation for a poinsettia plant to decorate the church sanctuary. The names of those you wish to remember will be in the Christmas Eve bulletin. To reserve your poinsettia, fill out the form at the Activity Center and return it with your donation to the box by Sunday, December 15.

Save the Date: Sunday, December 15, 2-4 PM

The Adult Education Ministry Team will show Part I of Franco Zeffirelli's masterwork, "Jesus of Nazareth" on Sunday, December 15 from 2-4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. An all-star cast, including Anne Bancroft, Ernest Borgnine, James Earl Jones, Christopher Plummer and Sir Laurence Olivier, delivers a powerful adaptation of the Nativity. Don't miss it!

Christmas Cantata - Saturday, December 21 at 4:00 PM

The Elk Lake Community Choir will present their annual Christmas Cantata on Saturday, December 21, at 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

THESE DAYS devotional booklets for January through March 2020 have arrived and are on the Welcome table in the narthex.

2019 Annual Reports Due Friday, January 10 - Now is the time to begin putting together your Annual Report, covering the activities of your group or ministry team for 2019. Please try to keep your report to one page, put it in a Word document, and email it to the office (info@erfpc.org) by 9 a.m. Friday, January 10, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact Ellen Merillat (264-8167).



Outdoor Nativity Scene Needed for Corner of Spruce & First

We are looking for an outdoor nativity scene to illuminate the corner of Spruce & First. If you have one you are willing to donate, please contact Anne Conrad at 231-492-5129.

One Morning Worship Service on December 29 at 10:00 AM

You are invited to our one morning worship service on Sunday, December 29 at 10:00 a.m. Wayne Potter will preach. Please join us for this special service.

The Community Cupboard needs your receipts from Village Market for the Community Cash program. Thanks to those who are already participating. Let's all help our Community Cupboard by bringing in our receipts!

Presbytery Point Camp's Summer 2020 Schedule is posted! Check it out on www.presbyterypoint.org to get your camper's registered online! All registrations sent in prior to February 14 will receive a special surprise this upcoming summer!

Contemporary Worship Service – 11:00 AM

Please silence all electronic devices.

Welcome to worship at First Presbyterian Church!

If you do not have a church home in the Elk Rapids area, we invite you to make our church yours. We are an open congregation and we welcome you. Please sign the Friendship Pad and pass it to your neighbor so you have an opportunity to get acquainted.



We encourage you to take a moment to check in on Facebook.

Fellowship & Refreshments in Narthex

ADORE

GREETING

WORSHIP SONGS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Chad, Shannah & Ben Vergote

Reader 1: We light one candle to remind us of the prophets, the second for John the Baptist, who called people to change their way of living to prepare for the coming of Christ.

Reader 2: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. God sent his messenger, a man named John, who came to tell people about the light, so that all should hear the message and believe. (John 1:5-7)

All: Disturbing God, we thank you for the witness of John the Baptist. Help us to be open to the changing power of your love, and to be true witnesses to the power of Jesus in our lives. Amen.

SONG OF RESPONSE – *Wait for the Lord*

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Wayne Potter

LEARN

SCRIPTURE READING – Isaiah 11:1-10 & Matthew 3:1-12

MESSAGE: “God Meets Us Even in the Dark”

Rev. Jim Porter

NEXT STEPS

REFLECTING ON GOD’S WORD

OUR RESPONSE: GIVING, CHILDREN’S & PRAYER STATIONS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER

SENDING

CLOSING SONG

VISION

BENEDICTION

WORSHIP CONCLUDES—SERVICE BEGINS!

Thank you. Special thanks to our volunteers from last week - Lorraine Berak & Sophie McDonald ushered.

Nursery is in the lower level. Infants and children through 5 years old can be dropped off and picked up by parents or a responsible adult.

Worship through your gifts: You may offer a gift during the ‘Next Steps’ portion of the service. A box is located in the front of the church for your offering.