

Old First Presbyterian Church



Fourth Sunday of Advent December 22, 2024

Worship Through Praising God

Easy-to-use earphones to assist with hearing are available from the ushers.

Please fill out a guest card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate or give it to an usher.

Silence is requested as we prepare our hearts for worship.

** At the asterisk, please rise in body or spirit.*

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Prelude | Sussex Carol | Dale Wood (1934-2003) |
| | Carol Rhapsody | Richard Purvis (1913-1994) |
| Advent Wreath | | The Pekelnicky Family |
| Leader | In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?
Where do we start? | |
| People | Let us begin with tenderness.
Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.
Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.
Let us begin with love. | |
| Leader | Yes, let us start with love.
Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. | |
| People | May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.
May the truth in these lights help us begin again. | |
| Leader | May it be so! Amen. | |

Four candles on the Advent wreath are lit.

**Welcome and
Church Life**

Introit Christ is Born! Glory to God! No. 4
Bethlehem, longing for peace for all who are heavy laden!
Bethlehem, longing for peace, be of good cheer, peace is coming!
Glory to God in the highest!

John Dallas (born 1954)

***Call to Worship**

Betty Voris

Leader In this weary world,
People we sing of joy.
Leader In this fragile world,
People we lift each other up.
Leader In this beautiful world,
People we look for God.
Leader In this tender world,
People we hold onto hope.
Leader This is the invitation of faith.
So in this time of worship,
may we sing, lift up, look for,
and hold onto our with-us God.
People With hope in our hearts, amen!

***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...
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy...
- 3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found...
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love...

Prayer of
Confession and
Assurance

Betty Voris

People

Holy God, you paint pictures of what could be,
but we declare those visions impossible.
You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,
but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.
You dream of a more just day,
but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.
Forgive us for losing sight of hope.
Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

Leader

We pray silently for the times we have not been hope to others and
for the times we have not received the hope that comes from your love.

Silence

People

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.
Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
and to not be afraid of either.
With gratitude, we pray. Amen.

*Assurance of
Forgiveness

Leader

No matter what you hold onto
and no matter what you let slip through your hands,
God is holding onto you.

People

That good news will never change.

Leader

So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:
Today is a new day.
Today, we have reason to hope.
Today, we are forgiven.

People

**And the same will be true tomorrow.
Thanks be to God for a love like that!**

*Response

VENITE ADOREMUS: *For tune, see refrain of Hymn 116.*

Venite adoremus Dominum. *Come, let us adore the Lord.*

Venite adoremus Dominum! *Come, let us adore the Lord!*

Offering

Ushers will now receive the offering. You may also make your offering electronically using the QR-code at the right.



Anthem

Mary's Magnificat

Andrew Carter (born 1939)

Softly a light is stealing,
Sweetly a maiden sings,
Ever wakeful, ever wistful,
Watching faithfully, thankfully, tenderly her King of kings.

My soul doth magnify, the LORD:
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Mary her song to Jesus
Softly, serenely sings:
“I will love you, I will serve you,
May my lullaby glorify, magnify my King of kings.”

Lullaby.

***Doxology**

PUER NOBIS: *For tune, see Hymn 152.*

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

**Time with
Our Children**

***The Peace**

Leader Peace be with you.
People **And also with you.**

Worship Through Hearing God's Word

**Prayers of
the People**

Bill Feister

Prayer George Becker and Christo Bresnahan, Michael and Nina Berg, Lisa
Partners Bigley, Courtney Blake, Chris and Cindy Burt, Carol Carter, Mary Carter

**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.**

Scripture Matt 1:18-25 (page 1)
Luke 1:46-55 (pages 53-54)

Leader The Word of God in scripture.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Pastor Henderson

Affirmation of Faith We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,
 who fills our nights with stars,
 who follows winter with spring,
 who dwells with and among us.
 We believe that this God has dreams for creation,
 dreams of justice like a mighty stream
 and of swords that will be beaten into plowshares.
 Therefore, we push cynicism aside.
 We risk vulnerability.
 We hold onto hope, and we declare:
 “My soul magnifies the Lord,
 my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

Worship Through Responding to God’s Word

***Hymn 115** **Away in a Manger**

1 **Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
 the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

2 **The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
 but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
 I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
 and stay be my side until morning is night.**

3 **Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
 close by me forever and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
 and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.**

***Charge and
 Benediction**

Choir

Traditional Cameroon Song

He comes down that we may have love;
 he comes down that we may have love;
 he comes down that we may have love;
 hallelujah forevermore.

Postlude

God Rest You Merry

Alfred Fedak (born 1953)

*You may depart or stay to listen to the postlude as you wish.
 However, do please join us in the fellowship hall downstairs for coffee hour.*

Old First Presbyterian Church

Sharing God's Love, Welcome, and Justice
On our Corner, in Our City, and in the World

www.oldfirst.org • 415-776-5552

Find Us on Meta/Facebook and YouTube



On the Cover: Quilt Square



The quilt squares on the bulletin cover are called “birds in the air.” Sometimes when we take a risk, hope takes flight. At times it may feel like you’re falling, but you’ll find that in God’s embrace, you are flying. Color in the quilt square above. How many triangles and squares do you see?

Today's Liturgy and Hymn: A Sanctified Art

Today's liturgical texts are adapted from prayers by the Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. The opening hymn text is by Anna Strickland, commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Devotionals, Advent Calendars

It's not too late to start a new habit: Devotional booklets for Advent and Christmas are still available in the narthex – as are Advent Calendars to color for children and the young at heart.

Today's Coffee Hour

Tom Culp has given today's coffee hour in memory of Frank and Mary Culp.

Christmas Joy Special Offering, Today

Today Old First will receive the Christmas Joy Special Offering. Simply use the envelope included in this bulletin. If you write a check, make it payable to “Old First Presbyterian Church” and write “Christmas Joy” on the memo line.

You can also make your Joy Gift offering by using Old First's donations page (<https://new.oldfirst.org/donations/>) or by reading the QR-code on today's insert.

Longest Night, This Evening, December 22

A previous week's theme “We Can't Go Alone” reminded us that we need each other. Acknowledging that this season can be a mix of joy and sadness you are invited to participate in a service for the Longest Night with our friends at Calvary Presbyterian Church.

THE (UN)EXILED LIGHT: A Service for The Longest Night (Solstice)

Tonight, December 22 at 5:00 pm

Calvary Presbyterian Church, 2515 Fillmore Street

When the sun sets tonight, the winter solstice, the light will begin to come out of exile. We will gather for our annual service of music, poetry, stillness and candlelight prayer. Email Miland, cellist, will be our special guest. If you like to sing, you are invited to preview the service music in the chapel beginning at 4:00 pm. A fireside reception will follow the service.

Christmas Eve at Old First, Tuesday, December 24

6:30 pm Choral Prelude

7:00 pm Worship with Candlelight

Christmas Eve Party at the Tabers, December 24

Steve and Sarah Taber will host their annual Christmas Eve potluck dinner for members and friends of Old First Presbyterian Church from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at 1170 Green Street above Hyde Street. You are invited and, if you have a few family members in town, bring them too.

The Tabers will provide ham, turkey, scalloped potatoes, hot mulled cider, and Steve’s persimmon pudding! Guests are invited to bring appetizers, side dishes, deserts and/or beverages to share. Please let Sarah or Steve know if you can come and what you can bring: Sarah@sstaber.com or Steve@sstaber.com

4th Saturday Community Dinner, December 28

A wonderful way to say thank you to God is to join us for the 4th Saturday Community Dinner with our neighbors and friends. The next dinner falls on December 28, the fourth day of Christmas. Can you help serve the meal and feast with our guests at the dinner? Volunteers are welcomed from 4:30 pm on. Let us know you can help; E-mail: 4thsaturdaydinners@oldfirst.org

Cookies for Coffee Hour, December 29

Please bring your leftover Christmas goodies to share at coffee hour on Sunday, December 29. Cookies, bars, and candies are all welcome and great for sharing

Interfaith Concert for World Central Kitchen, January 25

Mark you calendars for an interfaith concert at Old First to benefit World Central Kitchen: Saturday, January 25, 3:00 pm. While the concert is free, it is a fundraiser for the World Central Kitchen, which brings good food to hungry people all over the world, especially the dangerous, war-torn parts of the world. Invite your family, friends and neighbors! For more information about World Central Kitchen, visit <https://www.wck.org/>.

Pledging for 2025

Have you sent in your pledge card for 2025? If not, you can find a pledge card in the pew racks or pick one up in the narthex. Your pledge helps Old First plan our ministry “On our Corner, in Our City, and in the World” in the coming year.

This Week at Old First

- Sunday December 22: Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- After Worship Coffee Hour
- 4:00 pm O1C: Kitka “Wintersongs – Supra: A Seasonal Feast of Song”
- 7:15 pm AA Friendly Circle, Fellowship Hall
- Tuesday December 24: Christmas Eve**
- 6:30 pm Choral Prelude
- 7:00 pm Worship with Candlelight
- Wednesday December 25: Christmas Day**
- Church Office Closed
- Thursday December 26: Second Day of Christmas**
- Church Office Closed
- Saturday December 28**
- 5:15 pm 4th Saturday Community Meal, Fellowship Hall
- Sunday December 29: First Sunday after Christmas**
- 9:30 am Choir Rehearsal
- 11:00 am Worship with Hymn-Sing
- After Worship Coffee Hour
- 7:15 pm AA Friendly Circle, Fellowship Hall