

SERVICE OF WATCH NIGHT VIGIL & OWLAH

FOR DEC. 31, 2023

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE Handbells: *Still, Still, Still* TRADITIONAL CAROL
arr. Douglas E. Wagner

INTROIT 84 *Creator of the Stars of Night* CONDITOR ALME
SIDERUM

Gathering Around The Light

***ENTRANCE OF THE LIGHT** *from Revelation 1:8*

One: Light and peace in Jesus Christ!

All: Thanks be to God!

One: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

All: Alleluia!

***HYMN 108** *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*(vrs.1) DIIVINUM MYSTERUM

Listening To the Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION OF GOD’S WORD

FIRST LESSON *The Sign of the Covenant* GENESIS 17:1-5

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you and will make you exceedingly numerous.” ³Then Abram fell on his face, and God said to him, ⁴“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

HYMN 123 *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* (vrs.1) CAROL

SECOND LESSON *The Tribes Renew the Covenant* JOSHUA 24:1-8, 14-15

¹Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel, and they presented themselves before God. ²And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. ³Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac, ⁴and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. ⁵Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with what I did in its midst, and afterward I brought you out. ⁶When I brought your ancestors out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued your ancestors with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. ⁷When they cried out to the Lord, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians and made the sea come upon them and cover them, and your eyes saw what I did to Egypt. Afterward you lived in the wilderness a long time. ⁸Then I brought you to the land of the Amorites, who lived on the other side of the Jordan; they fought with you, and I handed them over to you, and you took possession of their land, and I destroyed them before you.

**for portions marked with an asterisk, you’re invited to rise in body or spirit*

¹⁴“Now, therefore, revere the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the LORD. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living, but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

HYMN 143 *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*(vrs.1) REGENT SQUARE

THIRD LESSON *God’s Eternity and Human Frailty* PSALM 90

¹ Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. ²Before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

³You turn us back to dust and say, “Turn back, you mortals.” ⁴For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past or like a watch in the night.

⁵You sweep them away; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; ⁶in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

⁷For we are consumed by your anger; by your wrath we are overwhelmed.

⁸You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

⁹For all our days pass away under your wrath; our years come to an end like a sigh. ¹⁰The days of our life are seventy years or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

¹¹Who considers the power of your anger? Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you. ¹²So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

¹³Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants! ¹⁴Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. ¹⁵Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us and as many years as we have seen evil. ¹⁶Let your work be manifest to your servants and your glorious power to their children. ¹⁷Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and prosper for us the work of our hands—O prosper the work of our hands!

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

HYMN 687 *Our God, Our Help in Ages Past* (vrs.1) ST. ANNE

FOURTH LESSON *God Challenges Israel* MICAH 6:1-4, 6-8

¹Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice. ²Hear, you mountains, the case of the Lord, and you enduring foundations of the earth, for the Lord has a case against his people, and he will contend with Israel. ³“O my people, what have I done to you? In what have I wearied you? Answer me! ⁴For I brought you up from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

⁶“With what shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

⁷Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

HYMN 144 *In the Bleak Midwinter* (vrs.4) CRANHAM

FIFTH LESSON *The Promise of the Lord’s Coming* 2 PETER 3:8-13

⁸But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be destroyed with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and destroyed and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

HYMN 377 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*(vrs.1) HOUSTON

SIXTH LESSON *The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids* MATTHEW 25:1-13

¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other young women came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

SEVENTH LESSON *The River of Life* REVELATION 22:1-5

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; ⁴they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

MEDITATION IN SILENCE

HYMN 611 *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee* (vrs.1) HYMN TO JOY

Responding to the Word

GIVING BACK TO GOD'S KINGDOM

With thankful hearts, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

OFFERTORY

OWLAH BURNT OFFERING

During this time of quiet reflection, we invite you to fill out the confession card included in your bulletin.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

from Ps. 85:2

**Almighty and most merciful God,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much
the devices and desires of our own hearts.
We have offended against thy holy laws.
We have left undone
those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done
those things which we ought not to have done.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us.
Spare thou those, O God, who confess their faults.
Restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared in Christ Jesus our Lord.
And grant, O most merciful God, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life;
to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.**

PRESENTATION OF OFFERING

As the music plays, come to the table and place your confession card in the Owlah basket, touch the basket, and pray for pardon and release from sins.

*BURNING OF THE OFFERING

Please follow the basket bearer to the portico for the conclusion of the service.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*TOLLING OF THE BELL

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT

*HYMN 134

Joy to the World (vrs.1)

ANTIOCH

God Sends Us Forth

*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

from Jude 24-25

*BLESSING

from 2 Corinthians 13:14

*PASSING THE PEACE

Scripture verses taken from the New Revised Standard Updated Edition

PLEASE JOIN US IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL FOR WARM REFRESHMENTS!

Visiting today? Welcome!

Please tell us a little about yourself!
You can scan this QR code with your
smartphone to fill out our online form.
We would love to get to know you better!



This Week

TODAY! after service - Refreshments in the Fellowship Hall
Tue., Jan. 2 @ 5:00pm - Christian Education Meeting
Wed., Jan. 3 @ 6:30pm - Choir Practice
Thur., Jan. 4 @ 4:00pm - Worship Meeting
Thur., Jan. 4 @ 5:45pm - Centering Prayer
Fri., Jan. 5 @ 7:30am - Men's Breakfast

Blessing Box Attendant

This Week.....Suzanne Kidd
Next Week.....

Assisting In Worship Today

Ministers.....Every Member
Liturgist.....Paula Burlew
Ushers.....John & Lynn Cain
Audio.....Josh Jones
Video.....Jon Burlew
Coffee Plus.....Laura Wright
Director of Music.....Theresa Jean Kibby
Piano & Organ.....Debby McDonald
Preacher.....Rev. Chris Basil

Deacons:

Paula Burlew	Eileen Stockham	Carol Prater
Cindy Fountain	Mary Beth Waller	Sue Guffey
Marshall Judy	Marci Randall	

Elders:

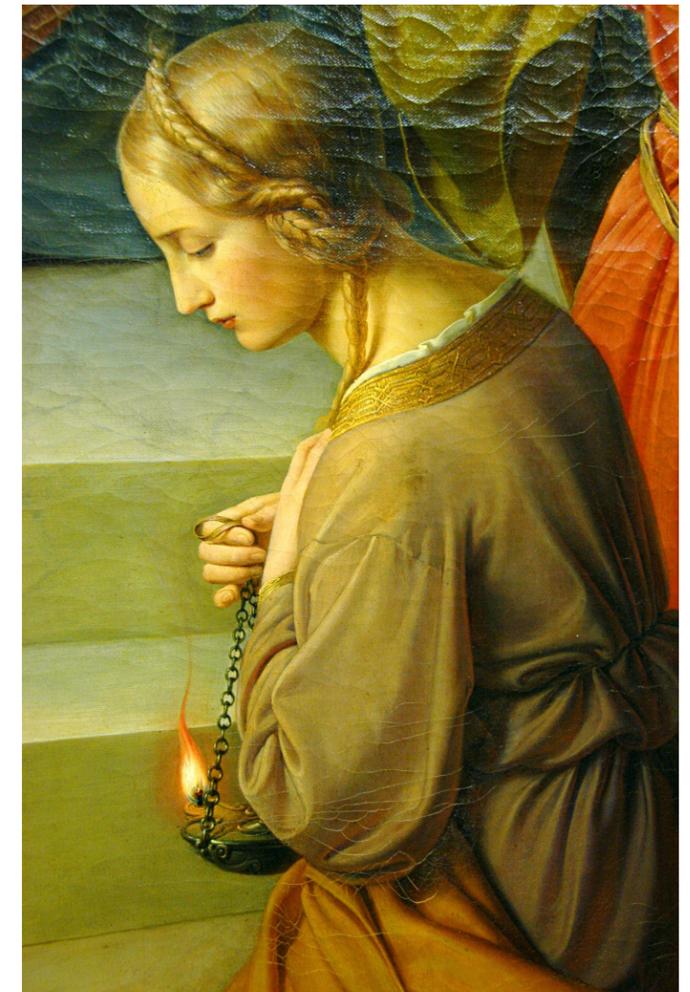
<i>Class of 2023</i>	<i>Class of 2024</i>	<i>Class of 2025</i>
Forrest Brock	Charles Leveridge	
Kimberly King	Zack Vaught	Sharon Mandt
Chris Phillips	John Wright	Perry Waller

All Rights Reserved – Copyrighted reprints are made under OneLicense.net A-719430

First Presbyterian Church

December 31st, 2023

First Sunday of Christmas



Schadow, Friedrich Wilhelm von, 1789-1862. Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, detail, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54277> [retrieved December 13, 2023]. Original source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schadow,FW-Die_klugen_und_t%C3%B6richten_Jungfrauen-2.JPG.

People of God, Welcome Home!

May Christ's peace and presence fill your heart as you worship this day, and may you go forth with the light and love of God shining within you.

We welcome you to worship, and ask that any electronic devices be placed on silent so that all may hear what God has to say.