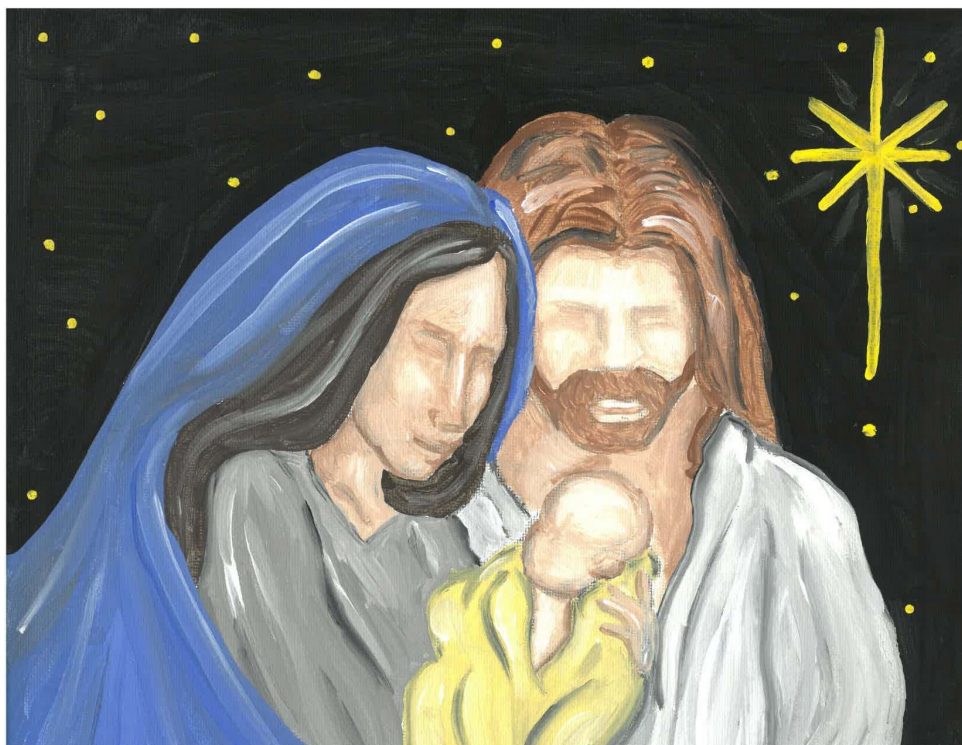


# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASHLAND

Home-Led Christmas Eve Service



December 24, 2020

320 CHURCH STREET, ASHLAND, OH 44805  
(419) 289-6205  
[ashlandfpc.org](http://ashlandfpc.org)

— Greetings this joyous Christmas season! —

We miss the multi-varied opportunities to worship and fellowship as we celebrate the incarnation of Jesus our Lord. With so many of us isolated in 2020, we decided to offer a short home-led worship experience in addition to our Christmas Eve worship service.

Liturgy means “work of the people.” Therefore we have formatted this short worship time for one person to read, or as an outline to inspire creativity. Doing just the sections in **blue should take about 15 minutes**. Using the entire liturgy will take about 45 minutes.

You will note suggestions for each section at the end of the booklet. There are suggestions for little children, teenagers, young adults, and older adults. Think of these suggestions as options on a buffet—don’t try to do all of them or the experience won’t be so wonderful. Spend some time before Christmas Eve reviewing the booklet to consider how you will conduct your home led worship experience. You may feel free to ignore the suggestions and read/sing the liturgy as printed. When our hearts sincerely worship, God is pleased.

We have included numbered liturgy cards that can be cut and distributed to each person present. They can be read by each person at the appropriate time. This is a nice way to include others, whether in person or through Skype or Zoom. To access our Christmas Eve playlist, please log onto YouTube and search for “FPC Ashland.”

We pray you encounter Jesus in life-giving ways this Christmas season.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Lewis  
Lead Transition Pastor

FPC Worship Planning Team  
*Sallie Hooker, JoAnne Kash, Alan Pepsny*

*Cover art by Susie Schwartz*

— Preparation for Worship —

God of hope, who brought love into this world, be the love that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought peace into this world, be the peace that dwells between us.

God of hope, who brought joy into this world, be the joy that dwells between us.

God of hope, the rock we stand upon, be the center, the focus of our lives always, and particularly in this Advent time.

— Call to Worship —

One: Let us go, in heart and mind, to see what has come to pass.  
Let us go with the shepherds:

**All: Let us go find the Savior!**

One: Let us go with the wise ones:

**All: Let us go find God's promise, born for us!**

One: Let us go with the poor and the humble:

**All: Let us go to find our King, born in a lowly manger.**

One: Let us go with all the world, with all the peoples of the nations.

Come, let us worship;

Come, let us adore him;

**All: Christ the Lord!**

— Lighting of the Advent Wreath —

We light this candle in hope.

*Light 1st candle.*

We light this candle for peace.

*Light 2nd candle.*

We light this candle in joy.

*Light 3rd candle (pink).*

We light this candle in love.

*Light 4th candle.*

Now our redemption draws near!

*Light center candle (white).*

Our Scripture reading is from Isaiah 9:2–3 and 6–7.

### Isaiah 9:2–3

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.  
You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

### Isaiah 9:6–7

For a child has been born for us,  
a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Let us pray.

*Loving God, we thank you for your mystery of the Incarnation—Emmanuel, God with us. Help us receive the Light of Christ in our hearts and share it generously and joyfully in our families and communities. We ask this in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

— Opening Prayer —

Let us pray together.

*O wondrous God of the stars, we come tonight with breathless wonder to see the babe who will change our lives. We hear the names “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” and “Prince of Peace,” and we are in awe. We thank you that you have touched the earth this night with your unconditional love. Touch us; touch our hearts and minds and souls. May we never tire of this story. May we never take it for granted. Ignite our imaginations to grasp the extent of this wonderful love. In Jesus’ most precious name, Amen.*

## **Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem**

*Christmas Eve Playlist—Song #1*

O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous Gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell:  
Oh, come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel!

— Introduction to the Scriptures —

**One:** Over two thousand years ago, a weary world awaited its promised Savior. At the appointed time, a governor's order sent the Messiah's parents from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Imagine, a decree of the Roman Empire becomes the means to fulfill God's prophecies. Timeless stories, timeless truths, timeless love:

**All: Our Messiah has come! Christ is here!**

**One:** Let us now hear the wonderful story of our Messiah's birth.

**Read** Luke 2:1–20; Matthew 1:18–25; 2:1–12

This is the word of God. **Thanks be to God!**

**Song: Mary Did You Know?**  
*Christmas Eve Playlist—Song #2*

Mary, did you know  
that your Baby Boy would one day walk on water?  
Mary, did you know  
that your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?  
Did you know  
that your Baby Boy has come to make you new?  
This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know  
that your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?  
Mary, did you know  
that your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?  
Did you know  
that your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?  
When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?

Mary, did you know...

The blind will see.  
The deaf will hear.  
The dead will live again.  
The lame will leap.  
The dumb will speak  
The praises of The Lamb.

Mary, did you know  
that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?  
Mary, did you know  
that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?  
Did you know  
that your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?  
The sleeping Child you're holding is the Great, I Am.



***A Song Was Heard at Christmas***

Timothy Dudley-Smith

A song was heard at Christmas  
To wake the midnight sky.  
A Savior's birth, and peace on earth  
And praise to God on high.  
The angels sing at Christmas  
With all the hosts above,  
And still we sing the newborn King,  
His glory and His love.

**Hymn: Away in a Manger**

*Christmas Eve Playlist—Song #3*

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

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 by my cradle until morning is nigh.

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 take us to heaven, to live with thee there. (x2)

***Christmas Lights***

Marie Irish

Bright Christmas stars shine on high,  
Golden stars in the wintery sky;  
Christmas candles in windows bright,  
Sends greeting into the night.  
While in our hearts the Christmas flame,  
Glow with a love like His who came;  
The infant Christ of lowly birth,  
To bring good will and peace to earth.  
Unto us a child is born,  
Unto us a child is given.  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace.  
Glory to God in the Highest.

## **Hymn: Hark the Herald Angels Sing**

*Christmas Eve Playlist—Song #4*

Hark the herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem”  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Son of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings  
Ris’n with healing in His wings  
Mild He lays His glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

— Blessing —

The joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the perseverance of the Magi,  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,  
the peace of the Christ child,  
be ours this Christmas.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be upon us and remain with us always. Amen.



**Hymn: Silent Night**

*Christmas Eve Playlist—Song #5*

Silent night, Holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin, mother and child  
Holy infant, so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, Holy night  
Shepherds quake, at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven above  
Heavenly, hosts sing Hallelujah.  
Christ the Savior is born,  
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, Holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

*Repeat verse 1*

**Hymn: Joy to the World**

*Christmas Eve Playlist—Song #6*

Joy to the world! The Lord is come.  
Let earth receive her King  
Let every heart  
Prepare Him room  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and nature sing  
And heaven and heaven and nature  
sing

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns  
Let men their songs employ  
While field and floods  
Rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat the sounding joy  
Repeat, Repeat, the sounding joy

He rules the world with truth and  
grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love;  
And wonders of His love;  
And wonders, and wonders of His  
love.

## — Suggestions for Each Section —

### GENERAL

- Review all the suggestions and decide how you want to proceed. Don't feel the need to use suggestions from each section. A few well-chosen options that fit your group can be very meaningful.
- Feel free to incorporate your own ideas or ideas from other members of the family.
- The verses of each song are printed in the liturgy booklet. The verses listed are the ones that are sung on the YouTube videos that have been selected. Feel free to look in a hymnal and add additional verses. Invite family musicians to play. Play the song on Spotify as accompaniment or use the playlist on FPC's YouTube channel (search for "FPC Ashland").
- Decide if you will use the liturgy cards. Cut the cards. Designate who will coordinate the whole service. Review the cards and consider the reading level of each person before handing them out. Some people might want to see their part ahead of time.

### PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

- Ask each person ahead of time to think about one thing they love about someone else who will be in the service. Give a time at the end of the Preparation for Worship reading to share what they love about another person. As the leader, be prepared to share something you love about each person to ensure something affirming is said about everyone.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

- If you are using this as a responsive reading, make copies of this card for everyone. Designate a leader and have everyone read in unison the bold sections.
- Each of the group lines has an exclamation mark! Encourage people to say it loud and with expression.
- If you have small children consider replacing each response line with the words **"Let us go find the Savior!"** They can easily memorize this and say at the appropriate time.

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

- Set up a candle ahead of time that someone in the family can light when the Advent Prayer is read.
- Locate or make a simple Advent Wreath. Set it up ahead of time. Decide who will read the message and who will light the candles. The order of lighting and the meaning of each candle is written in the service.

## OPENING PRAYER

### HYMN

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCRIPTURES

- When reading the passages, choose a good reader who is comfortable reading out loud.
- You may choose a less familiar version of the Bible to read from. If you have little children you can use a children's Bible. The Message can be used for a fresh read.
- You might like to use the first two minutes of this YouTube dramatic reading for the Luke 2:1–20 passage (listen ahead of time). To access this video, click onto *Playlist Song #7* or search for "Luke 2 NIV Dramatized Audio Bible" on YouTube.

### SONG

*Mary Did You Know*

- Read the song aloud as a poem or sing along with the video.

## POEMS

- Choose your best reader to emphasize each reading as a poem.
- Choose readers who aren't as comfortable reading aloud and ask them together to read the poems, alternating each line.

**HYMN**      *Away In A Manger*

**HYMN**      *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

## BLESSING

- If you have children or artistic individuals, ask them ahead of time to draw or color a picture from this section (angels, shepherds, Magi, the Nativity) and present it during the reading of the blessing.

**HYMN**      *Silent Night*

**HYMN**      *Joy to the World*

## ABOUT US

First Presbyterian Church is a community of disciples transforming lives in Jesus' name. Together we are working to cultivate community, preach, teach, and heal in the powerful name of Jesus Christ.

## WORSHIP TIMES

<b>Saturdays, 3 pm</b>	Chinese Church Worship	<i>Fellowship Hall</i>
<b>Sundays, 10 am</b>	Sunday In-Person Worship	<i>Sanctuary</i>
	Live Stream Worship	<i>live.ashlandfpc.org</i>

## ACCESSIBILITY

Our building is equipped with both an elevator and lift to help people move between floors. Hearing devices and wheelchairs are also available.

## VISIT US ONLINE

*ashlandfpc.org*

**Facebook:** FPC Ashland

## STAFF

<b>Lead Transition Pastor</b>	Dr. Matthew Lewis <i>mlewis@ashlandfpc.org</i>
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## MINISTERS

Members