



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

December 20, 2023

10:00 am
Sunday Worship
Firstprescf.org



Fourth Sunday in Advent - December 24

THOSE WHO DREAM...ARE NOT ALONE

Scripture: Luke 1:26-45

Did it feel like a dream when the angel approached?

“Greetings, favored one!”

Did her mind spin as she pondered the impossibility of it all?

“You will bear a son . . . and he will be great.”

Did she lose her balance when she realized the gravity of her call?

“The child will be holy . . . the Son of God.”

Did her legs get weak after the words left her lips?

“Here I am . . . let it be.”

In the quiet that followed, did she question everything?

Did she realize what this would mean—for her family, for Joseph,

for her future? Did she realize she would be perceived as impure, as a threat to patriarchy, power, and proprietary? Did fear cloak her, like a garment pulled too tight?

And so, in a haze, she runs away—seeking refuge in the hill country, retreating to family who would keep her safe and help her make sense of her world turned upside down.

As soon as she falls into Elizabeth’s arms, Elizabeth knows and feels it to be true.

Yes, I feel it too.

We are pregnant with promise. We carry this together. This is not a dream deferred.

It is a dream confirmed, a dream shared. A dream that will birth joy.

In this image, Mary and Elizabeth’s bodies are tenderly intertwined. Halos, like crescent moons, encircle each of them and their wombs, signaling the cosmic change they bring forth.



Art: A Dream Confirmed

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 1:26-45 | Digital painting

Prayer of Preparation

O Great Dreamer,

You love us with an everlasting love and show us the way to justice and peace. In Jesus Christ you have reconciled the whole world to you and claimed us as your own. Teach us to live in love so that all may know you. In the name of God the original dreamer, Jesus the dream come true, and the Holy Spirit who enables us to be those who dream. Amen.

Church Birthdays

Dec. 22-Jewell Hays,
31-Jenny Connolly

For Your Prayers...

Dick Smith

Recordings of Sunday’s worship service is on CFU cable channel 18, 6:00 pm every Thursday!

Pledge Cards

It is not too late to return your Estimate of Giving Pledge Card for 2024.

Holiday Worship

Sunday, December 24
Christmas Eve Services
and New Year’s Eve:

see page 2.

Sign up anytime online:

Worship Leader Sign Up:

[Sign Up: Worship Leaders](#)

Or sign up in the narthex!

Thanks for serving last week:

Worship Leader: Margaret Clark

Computer Operator: Scott Connolly

Videographer: Gary Clark

Fellowship: Gary & Margaret Clark

Office Help: Jeverna Mulligan, Jane Seeley

Christmas Joy Offering

The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us who have pointed us to God. 50% of your gifts assists current and retired church workers with critical financial need. The other 50% goes to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

Adopt-a-Family Thank You

A huge thanks to everyone who donated to our Adopt-A-Family program. We had a great response from the members of our church willing to help those in need.

The staff at Lowell Elementary is always blown away with our kindness and generosity.

With much gratitude,

Julie Rokes, Jan Thedens, and Sue Weinberg

Financial Giving Deadline!

Financial giving for 2023 must be received by 3:30 pm on **Thursday, December 28** for it to show on your 2023 giving statement for tax purposes.

Allow 5 business days for online donations!!

Upcoming schedule

Sunday, December 17

10:00 am Casual worship, dining room

— No Shine Session

4:00 pm Christmas Eve Worship, sanctuary

Mon & Tue, December 25 & 26

— Office closed

Thursday, December 28

3:30 pm Financial Giving Deadline for 2023

Friday, December 29

Noon Office Closes

Christmas Eve & New Year's Eve Worship Services

Christmas Eve Morning: Worship will be in the dining room at 10:00 am with a carol sing, coffee and cinnamon rolls.

Christmas Eve: candlelight worship service Sunday, December 24, **4:00 pm** in the sanctuary with the Mennonites. The nursery will be closed, but a family-friendly space will be in the chapel. The service will also be live streamed on Facebook.



New Year's Eve: Worship will be 10:00 am in the din-

Poinsettia Arrangement Sponsors

Thank you to those who sponsored our poinsettia arrangement for this year's Christmas Eve service.

In memory of...

Betty Thedens from Kevin & Jan Thedens

Mom & Dad from Nancy Hoppe

Richard Lynch from his family

Donald & Dorothy Lantz and Robert & Alice Leeper from Kay & Neal Leeper

Dennis Reimer, Mel & Vi Reimer, Jo Ann Reimer Butler from Jan Reimer

Friends and family gone before from Dot Clausen

Ben from Dot Clausen and family

John & Eunice Mitchell from the Clausen & Seeley families

A.J. from Jim, Jane, Adam & Miranda

My parents & grandparents, Lee & Betty Klingenberg & Lawrence & Helen Cranston from Patti Humpal

Bob Beach, Dr. B.J. Beach, Thorvald & Gladys Nelson from Holly Beach

In memory of Wayne Clark and George & Ruth Hart and *in honor of* Vera Clark

in honor of ...

Don & Mary Lou Friar from Jean Boller

Our church family from Rhonda & Brad Braley

Welcome Corp: Helping a Refugee Family

A small group of seven from the Mennonite church plus Rhonda Braley have been meeting once a week on Wednesday evenings in sponsoring a refugee family to live in Cedar Valley area

We are working through the **Welcome Corps**, a new government program that empowers everyday Americans to come together to privately sponsor refugees. Sponsoring together with friends, coworkers, congregation members—anyone in our community—makes the work easier and can be deeply rewarding for everyone involved.

The Welcome Corps provides a **private sponsor group** (PSG) with access to tools and resources as well as ongoing guidance from resettlement experts throughout the sponsorship period.

We have watched training videos

We have attended an online training session.

We have applied for background checks.

We have drafted ideas and listed resources for each of the 8 categories, such as housing, transportation, employment, medical care, education, language acquisition, documents, meeting the family at the airport

We have been assigned a guide from a resettlement agency, **Alight**. We have talked with him, over zoom, and have directed questions to him.

We have a realtor, **Dahoni Jones**, who is volunteering her knowledge and time in order to help us secure a rental property when the time comes.

The Mennonites have informed their congregation and have accepted monetary donations; some are collecting household items.

The Mission Committee is keeping informed of the project's progress.

The application will be completed and submitted by the end of December.

We are told it will take 3 - 4 weeks to get approved and to get assigned a family.

After the initial assignment, we are told it could take one to three months for the family to arrive.

Money: We are required to raise **\$2,425 per person** - we are asking for a family of 4-5

Donations so far: \$6,289

Total Goal (\$2425*5) = **\$12,125**

Goal for Application = **\$7,275**

Here is your chance to participate in our efforts to sponsor an immigrant refugee family in the Cedar Valley. A group of 7 individuals from Cedar Falls Mennonite Church and First Presbyterian Church are preparing to sponsor an immigrant refugee family. We are working through the [Welcome Corps](#) training materials and expect to submit an application to sponsor a family by the end of December.

One aspect of sponsoring a family is to provide financial support for the first 90 days that this family lives in our community. The Welcome Corps plan calls for us to raise at least **\$2,425** per person for this support and we have set a goal of raising a total of at least **\$12,125** to support a family of 4-5.

If you would like to help in this effort, please make a donation to First Presbyterian Church with the note "Newcomer Support" in the memo line, or you may donate online to our church's PayPal account.

You may donate directly to the project: <https://gofund.me/1357f705>

If our efforts do not reach hosting a family, all funds in this account will be donated to LIRS (Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service).

Other in-kind donations will be gladly accepted and those needs will be communicated as they arise.

Questions may be directed to Rhonda Braley.