

~Gathering the Family of God~

~Hearing God's Word~

The Peal of the Church Bell**Prelude***Oh, Bless the Lord, My Soul*

Healey Willan

Welcome and Call to Worship

One: The peace of Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

One: How shall we prepare this house for the birth of Jesus?

All: With branches of cedar, the tree of excellence and strength.

One: How shall we prepare this house for the eternal Christ?

All: With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever green.

One: How shall we prepare this house for the prophet of Galilee?

All: With wreaths of holly and ivy, telling of his passion, death, and resurrection.

One: How shall we prepare our hearts for this revelation of God?

All: By hearing again the words of the prophets and the promises of God.**For in the story of Jesus we see the transforming power of God****We are reminded anew of God's vision of wholeness, justice, and peace****for all of creation. Thanks be to God.*****Hymn***O Lord, How Shall We Meet You*

#104

***Call to Confession**

With expectant hearts let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Confession of Sin (unison)*Merciful God, we confess our distraction. We keep busy schedules; we rush about. Captivated by technology, seduced by consumer goods, we do not remain alert to your presence in our lives. Awaken us so we do not miss how near you are. Be gracious toward us until we are gathered into your embrace.*****Silent Confession*****Assurance of Forgiveness**

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

***Gloria Patri**

581

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.**

Tune: Gloria Patri, Henry W. Greatorex, 1851, Public Domain

Prayer for Illumination

Light of the world, enter the darkness of our understanding that we may see you more clearly, know your will, and follow in your way. Amen.

The Meaning of the Service and Significance of the Colors**Response:***Prepare the Way, O Zion (verse 1)*

#106

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!**Let every hill and valley a level way appear.****Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in ancient story.****O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.****The Legend of the Poinsettia****Response:***Prepare the Way, O Zion (verse 2)*

#106

He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.**His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love.****Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.****O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.****The Prophet Declares a Child will be Born**

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7

Response:*Prepare the Way, O Zion (verse 1)*

#106

Fling wide the gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace,**And tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.****All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.****O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.****God Will Send a Light to the Nations**

Isaiah 60:2-3

All: We give thanks for the light of Christ, shining in the lives of all God's people. With the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, we watch and wait for the coming of Christ who will bring light and peace to all the world. As we prepare for this Advent season, we open all the dark places in our lives and memories to the healing light of Christ. Show us the creative power of hope. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you, that we may walk in the light of Christ. Amen.**Instrumental Anthem**

Jonathan Patterson, Keyboard

Nativity scene**The Mystery of the Incarnation**

John 1:1-5, 9-14

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* Hymn

In the Bleak Midwinter

#144

***Blessing of the Christmas Tree**

All: Loving God, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, whose path of justice and love lights a path for all who follow him. May this tree, arrayed in splendor, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and 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.

~Responding to God's Word~

Invitation to Give

In gratitude for the immeasurable gift of Jesus Christ, let us bring our tithes and offerings to God.

Giving of our Tithes and Offerings & Friendship Pad

Please take a moment to sign your name and contact information in the pew pad.

Offertory

O Perfect Life of Love

Thomas Canning

***Doxology**

*Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
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: Amen.*

#606

*** Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

Holy God, use us, and these gifts, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and honor your presence in all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*** Closing Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

#611

***Charge and Benediction**

***Postlude**

Jesus, Lead Thou On

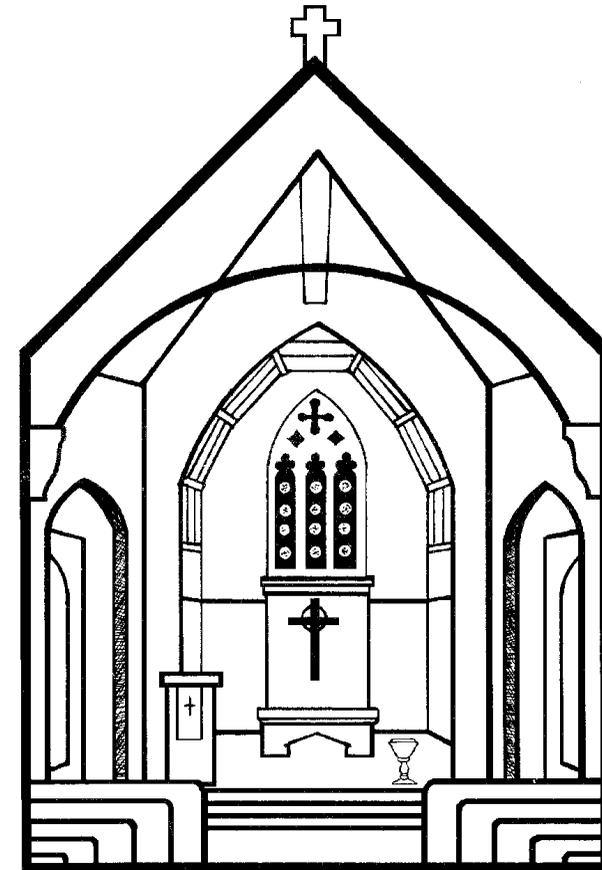
J.S. Bach

*Please stand, if you are able.

Electronic aid for the hearing impaired is available from the usher.

First Presbyterian Church

235 Broadway, Cape Girardeau, Missouri



Hanging of the Greens

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