

First Presbyterian Church, Elk Rapids
Sunday, December 19, 2021
9 AM Contemporary Service

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Prelude – ***“I Believe”***

Welcome and Crossing the Threshold

Rev. Jim Porter

Worship Songs – ***“God With Us”***
“Advent Hymn”

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Vergote Family

Reader 1: Today we light four candles- the first Candle is called HOPE and it is a reminder that God's promises are true.

Reader 2: The second candle is called LOVE, because of God’s great love for us, revealed in Jesus.

Reader 1: The third candle is called JOY, because of God’s loving presence in our lives.

Reader 2: The fourth candle is called PEACE, the offer of God’s gentle, loving peace for our lives.

Reader 1: We seek God's peace in this time of stress. Jesus said: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.”

Reader 2: Come, all is ready. Let the light of these candles, called HOPE, LOVE, JOY, and PEACE, bring brightness to our hearts and lives.

[The first, second, third, and fourth Advent Candles are lighted]

Message to the Children

Wayne Potter

Scripture Reading – Luke 1:5-25

Sermon “Pregnant with the Holy Spirit”

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Song – ***“In the Stillness”***

Pastoral Prayer & 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.

Presentation of Offering and Connection Cards

Closing Song – ***“King of Kings”***

Charge and Blessing

Leader: In the coming week what does God call us to do?

People: **We are called to: Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;
deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;
and demonstrate Christ's way of love in service to the world.**

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Gary & Jan Burns; and our snack volunteer: Jan Burns.

First Presbyterian Church, Elk Rapids Sunday, December 19, 2021 11 AM Traditional Service

Order of Worship

Carol Singing

Welcome and Crossing the Threshold

Rev. Jim Porter

Ringing of the Historic Church Bell

Prelude – *"I Believe"* by Miller

I believe in the light, I believe in the light
That has come, that has come, and is coming.

I believe in the light, I believe in the light
That has come, that has come, and is coming.

Opening Prayer

Betty Tezak

**All: Holy One,
we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of peace on earth.
Even in the midst of fear,
of challenge, of struggle—
even when we aren't sure that
goodwill among us can be found,
ignite the flame of peace within us,
that we might glow with its brilliance
from the inside out.**

Prelude Reprise – *"I Believe"*

I believe in the light,
I believe in the light,
that has come... that has come...
and is coming.

Call to Worship

Betty Tezak

Leader: Let all who love God rejoice.

**People: Let all who thirst for justice
draw water from the well of God's salvation.**

Leader: Let all who long for Christ sing for joy.

**People: Let all who hunger for righteousness
return home to the living God.**

Leader: Let all who seek the Spirit shout aloud.

**People: Let all who yearn for mercy
fall on their knees before the throne of grace.**

All: Come! Let us worship the living God!

Opening Hymn 82 – *“O Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”*

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Betsy & Jimmy Argo

Reader 1: Today we light four candles- the first Candle is called HOPE and it is a reminder that God's promises are true.

Reader 2: The second candle is called LOVE, because of God's great love for us, revealed in Jesus.

Reader 1: The third candle is called JOY, because of God's loving presence in our lives.

Reader 2: The fourth candle is called PEACE, the offer of God's gentle, loving peace for our lives.

Reader 1: We seek God's peace in this time of stress. Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."

Reader 2: Come, all is ready. Let the light of these candles, called HOPE, LOVE, JOY, and PEACE, bring brightness to our hearts and lives.

[The first, second, third, and fourth Advent Candles are lighted]

Anthem – *“Every Valley”* by Johnson

Scripture Reading – Luke 1:5-25

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Pregnant with the Holy Spirit”

Rev. Jim Porter

Responsive Hymn 109 – *“Blest Be the God of Israel”*

Pastoral Prayer & 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.

Presentation of Offering and Connection Cards

Closing Hymn 119 – *“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”*

Charge and Blessing

Leader: In the coming week what does God call us to do?

People: We are called to: Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him; deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him; and demonstrate Christ's way of love in service to the world.

Benediction

Benediction Response – *“Let There Be Peace On Earth”*

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our usher: Janeen Noecker; and our snack volunteer: Phyllis Staley.

Thank you for your generous giving during this challenging time! Your gifts support all of the work and ministries of the church, as we continue to do the work of Christ in the world today. You can mail your pledges to the church at: First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids, 404 Spruce Street, Elk Rapids, MI 49629, give through online giving at www.erfpc.org (click on the Giving tab at the top right), or set up a one time or recurring donation by contacting our Financial Manager, Kim McCann, at finmanager@erfpc.org. Again, we thank everyone for their continued support of the ministries and mission of the church!

Nursery – Qualified caregivers welcome infants and children during the service.

Carol Singing Before Traditional Service at 10:50AM

Do you love to sing carols? Beginning Sunday, November 28 we will sing carols throughout Advent at 10:50 a.m. in the sanctuary before the traditional service. Everyone is welcome.

Christmas Eve Services at 5PM & 7PM

Join us on Christmas Eve, December 24 at 5:00 p.m. for a Contemporary Family Service or 7:00 p.m. for a Traditional Service in person or online. Candle lighting will be included in both services and nursery will be available. Invite your friends and family and celebrate Christmas Eve with us!

Christmas Eve 7PM Service – Need Volunteer to Bring in the Christ Child

We still have an opening for a volunteer to bring in the Christ child at the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service. If you would like to help, please sign up at the Activity Center.

Last Day to Reserve Memorial Plants – Sign Up Today!

Christmas is a time to honor loved ones with an \$10.00 donation for a poinsettia plant to decorate the church sanctuary. The names of those you wish to remember will be in the Christmas Eve bulletin. To reserve your poinsettia, fill out the form at the Activity Center and return it with your donation to the box by Sunday, December 19.

One Service at 11AM on Sunday, December 26

Join us on the day after Christmas, Sunday, December 26 for one service at 11:00 a.m., in person and online.

Are you struggling with addiction & recovery this holiday season?

Ken Kleyn is offering a small group for those struggling with addiction and recovery who would like some support, especially during this holiday season. If you are interested, please contact Ken at 231-649-0559. All contacts are highly confidential.

Kingdom Kids & Youth Group – Between Services at 10:20AM at the Lighthouse

As we move toward the close of 2021, we're celebrating 43 smiling faces on our Bible Verse Memory train. WAY TO GROW, KIDS!

Our Bible Books train is also exciting to celebrate with 23 people learning "The Books of Moses" to meet our family challenge. Our "Books of History" challenge has just begun, with three children from our Pre K-1st grade class already hopping on board. WAY TO KNOW, FAMILIES!

If you have children through the 5th grade or youth, make plans now to bring them to Sunday School and Youth Group each Sunday between services at the Lighthouse. Children and youth can begin gathering at 10:00 a.m. with Sunday School beginning at 10:20 a.m. The church library is also available for parents to grab a cup of coffee and relax during the Sunday School hour. Please contact Wayne Potter at 517-416-2813 with questions.

Family Camp – February 4-6 at Pleasant Valley Bible Camp

Please join us for Family Camp. We will be holding our first ever winter family camp February 4-6, at Pleasant Valley Bible Camp. The address is 3606 Wilson Rd #9261, East Jordan, MI 49727. The cost is \$85 per person and the cost includes; food, lodging and on-site activities. The camp is 18 minutes from Shanty Creek and there will be free time for families to ski on Saturday. This will be a time of spiritual renewal for your family and fellowship with other members of our church community. On site activities include; swimming, sledding, ice fishing, and cross-country skiing. Please sign up at the Activity Center or contact Wayne Potter at 517-416-2813 if you are interested.

THESE DAYS devotional booklets for January through March 2022 have arrived and are on the Welcome table in the narthex. Stop and pick up your copy today!

2021 Annual Reports Due Friday, January 7

Ministry Teams and Group Chairpersons, now is the time to begin putting together your Annual Report, covering the activities of your group or ministry team for 2021. Please try to keep your report to one page, put it in a Word document, and email it to the office (info@erfpc.org) by 9 a.m. Friday, January 7, 2022. If you have any questions, please contact Ellen Merillat at the church office (231-264-8167).

Breakfast Club Cooks Needed

Wednesday morning Breakfast Club for our youth has started again and we need cooks. If you are available to help on a Wednesday morning at 6:00 a.m., please contact Wayne Potter at 517-416-2813.

Community Cash is back! Save your Village Market receipts dated between September 1, 2021 and May 30, 2022 and turn them in one of three ways: In the box labeled "Community Cash" in the left corner of the brown box outside the cupboard entrance (on Chippewa Street), place them in the Community Cupboard mail slot (lower left corner near the elevator) or mail them to Elk Rapids Community Cupboard, PO Box 572, Elk Rapids, MI 49629. Thank you for your continuous support.

Join the Contemporary Worship Team! Do you sing or play an instrument? Do you have a heart for the Lord? Do you want to be more involved in the contemporary service? If you answered yes to all of these questions, then consider joining the contemporary worship team! We are especially needing pianists and guitarists but everyone who is interested in joining should reach out. If you are interested in joining the worship team, please contact Rachel Stratton at rachstratton1@gmail.com.

Volunteers for Coffee Hour Snacks Needed

There is a sign up in the narthex for volunteers to bring in baked goods or snacks for our coffee hours each Sunday. If you would like to bake or bring in a snack, please mark it down on the sign up list. Please have your snack here by 8:30 a.m. for the Contemporary Service and 10:00 a.m. for the Traditional Service. Thank you for volunteering!

Continuing COVID Response – First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids

A Message from Pastor Jim

As you may know, Munson Healthcare has reported that COVID cases are on the rise in our local area and has raised their COVID response to level Red, the highest possible level of response. (You may click here for the full article from Munson: <https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/services/community-health/covid19/pandemic-status>.)

According to this article, Munson Healthcare is recommending that you:

- Get your COVID-19 vaccination at your earliest opportunity
- Wear a mask in public indoor and crowded outdoor spaces
- Practice proper hand hygiene
- Avoid large gatherings when possible
- Continue your regular screening and preventive care schedule

With this in mind and with the input of the COVID Task Force, we are highly recommending once again that everyone, regardless of their vaccination status, wear a mask when attending church. This is for the sake of your own health, as well as the sake of others, especially for the elderly and those who are most vulnerable to the COVID virus. And as always, if you are not feeling well or may have been exposed to the virus, please stay at home and not gather with others in public.

Worship services will continue to be offered online for those who are uncomfortable or unable to come church. You can access all services on Facebook or by going to our church website: www.erfpc.org.

Your understanding and cooperation at this time are greatly appreciated.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Jim

Covid Guidelines

We're pleased to announce the following guidelines:

- Allow the choir/praise band to return to full numbers.
- Continue to use the prepackaged cups/wafers for Communion through October.
- Continue to leave bulletins on the lectern through October.
- Allow coffee/snacks to be served in doors beginning in July.
- Allow food to be served in the Fellowship Hall for events/meetings beginning June 26.
- Reopen the Lighthouse for use by the church and community.
- Continue to keep the offertory boxes in the narthex through October.
- Continue to highly recommend masks for those adults who are not vaccinated and for children over the age of 2.

Philippians 2:2-4 says: *"Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of full accord and one mind... In humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."*

We are grateful to be a part of such a loving and caring congregation! Thank you for your cooperation as we journey through this together! Keep the faith!

In Christ's Love, The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Elk Rapids