

Love

NOTHING
CAN SEPARATE US
FROM HIS LOVE

ROMANS 8:38-39



Welcome to Our Celebration of Worship!

*To all who live joyfully and long to share their excitement ...
to all who mourn and need comfort ... to all who are
weary and need rest ... to all who are homeless and
desire sheltering love ... to all who pray or are in
need of prayer ... to all who sin and need a Savior ...
to all who recognize Christ in their midst and hunger
to share God's love with all the world ... Old First
Presbyterian Church opens wide its doors and
in the name of Jesus Christ, says ... **WELCOME!***

**Those who are able, please stand in body or spirit.*

*(The congregation is invited to speak or sing **items in bold.**)*

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY BEFORE GOD

PRELUDE

Improvisation

K. Friese

Use the prelude as a time to silently prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND UNISON OPENING PRAYER

Eternal God, show us how to love with your heart every day of our lives. As we anticipate the birth of our Christ, grant that your love may allow us to become lights burning brightly in the darkness of our world. Prepare us for the joy and gladness of your coming, and fill our hearts with the love only you may give. Overflow our lives with the love of your precious name; this season and always. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Christ, the eternal light of unconditional love, shining brightly in our hearts and lives, amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come from a world of distraction, weariness, confusion, and darkness ...

Into Christ's world of strength, hope, light, and love!

We come seeking proof of God's incredible gifts of love, grace, and forgiveness ...

Into the presence of the Christ child, sent to reveal God's eternal love for us!

We come from a world of distrust and hate that longs

to be renewed and redeemed ...

**Into Christ's world of mercy; a world where all are
forgiven, loved, and set free!**

We gather to worship the Lord, our God, with hearts overflowing with joyful praise.

Celebrating the presence of God's love among us,

let us worship our God together.

*HYMN 105

People, Look East (verses 1, 3, and 5)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we welcome your gift of the Christ child; yet we remain mindful of how we have failed to receive the fullness of your gift. Your everlasting mercy and grace point us to the eternal truth of your love; yet we struggle daily to join in songs of glory, praise, and adoration. We easily become distracted and confused; so focused on things that matter little, that we overlook your good news of great love that should matter more to us than anything else.

Loving God, remind us that in the birth of our Savior and through his loving mercy, we are forgiven and free. Speak to us again your life-changing promise that our lives may indeed be abundant in hope, peace, joy, and love; not because of *who* we are, but because of what you have *given* us in your Son. Place a spirit of love within us, filling us with the desire to welcome your love and the courage to share your love with others, each day of our lives. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Christ, whose life, death, and resurrection reveal your unconditional love for us all ...

(Please continue in silent prayer of confession.)

Together, let all of God's people say ... **amen.**

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Leader: God acts with justice and mercy.

In everlasting love, God redeems us and sets us free.

People: God forgives us ... frees us ... and gives us peace.

To God we are ever thankful. Amen.

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE (*Sung Twice*)

There's A Song

There's a song of love in my heart; love is a gift from Jesus. There's a song of love in my heart; love is a gift from God. Al-le-lu-ia! Love in my heart is singing praises. Al-le-lu-ia! Love is a gift from God.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us greet one another with signs of Christ's peace.

We Respond in Word and Deed

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Madeline Robbie Pizaro

Meaning and Institution

Vows

Affirmation of Faith

"A Brief Statement of Faith" (See Below)

Prayer for Blessing

The Baptism

Welcome and Presentation of Gifts

As we welcome Madeline following her baptism, be prepared to join in singing the first and last verses of Hymn 488, "I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry."

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

(A Brief Statement of Faith – Presbyterian Church U.S.A.)

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept
ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together
with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

**The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life
in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims
us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup
of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.**

**In a broken and fearful world, the Spirit gives us courage to pray without
ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples
long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.**

**In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ
in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch
for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”**

INVITATION TO RECEIVE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

RECEIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come
Sanctuary Choir

P. Manz

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (Hymn 606)

Doxology

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We Experience God's Word Together

ANNUAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Please make your way to the Parish Hall for today's special presentation of the Christmas story, as told by the children and youth of our church family!

As we share today's telling of the Christmas story through the gifts, skills, and talents of our young disciples, may each one of us receive the unconditional love of God with hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits prepared to hear this good news of great joy, allow God's love to fill our hearts, and go out sharing God's love with a world in great need.

We rejoice in the example of our young disciples and offer a special "thank you" to all of our families for choosing Old First to share in their spiritual growth and a very special "thank you" to Kayte Camarata for providing leadership over today's pageant.

Today's Christmas pageant includes the singing of the following songs ...

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Away in a Manger

Angels We Have Heard on High

Silent Night, Holy Night!

We Three Kings of Orient Are

O Holy Night

Joy to the World

INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

*HYMN 106

Prepare the Way, O Zion

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Thank you for worshipping with us and being part of our family of faith!

If you are a first-time guest or returning visitor, please allow us to extend a special welcome and invitation to join us in the Parish Hall following worship for light refreshments and a chance to learn more about Old First Church.

Please use this opportunity to be greeted by our members and be introduced to our Pastor, Matthew Means, as we celebrate the joys of life shared together.

THIS MORNING'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Matthew T. Means, Pastor

Doug Terc, Lector

Ken Friese, Director of Music

Dan Degnan, Usher Captain

IN OUR PRAYERS:

New to the prayer list:

Charles and Susan Worledge – health and travel concerns

Please continue to pray for those who remain on our prayer list:

Holly Baptista, Richard Bedell, Kevin Behrens, Tom and JoAnn Bosch, Bob Esser, Dave and Else Haddock, David and Sandy Lange, Joan and Pat Lobasso, Peg Weigers, Carole Witkowski

Names on our prayer list will remain for approximately one month.

If you would like to add a prayer request, please contact Pastor Means.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Invitation ...

Join us on **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24th** for two special services of worship, each proclaiming the birth of Jesus, our Savior!

5:30 pm (Kids' & Youth Choirs)
with special music beginning at 5:00 pm

11:00 pm (Sanctuary Choir)
with special music beginning at 10:30 pm



Old First Presbyterian Church

125 Main Street

Huntington, NY 11743

(631) 427-2101

Rev. Matthew T. Means, Pastor