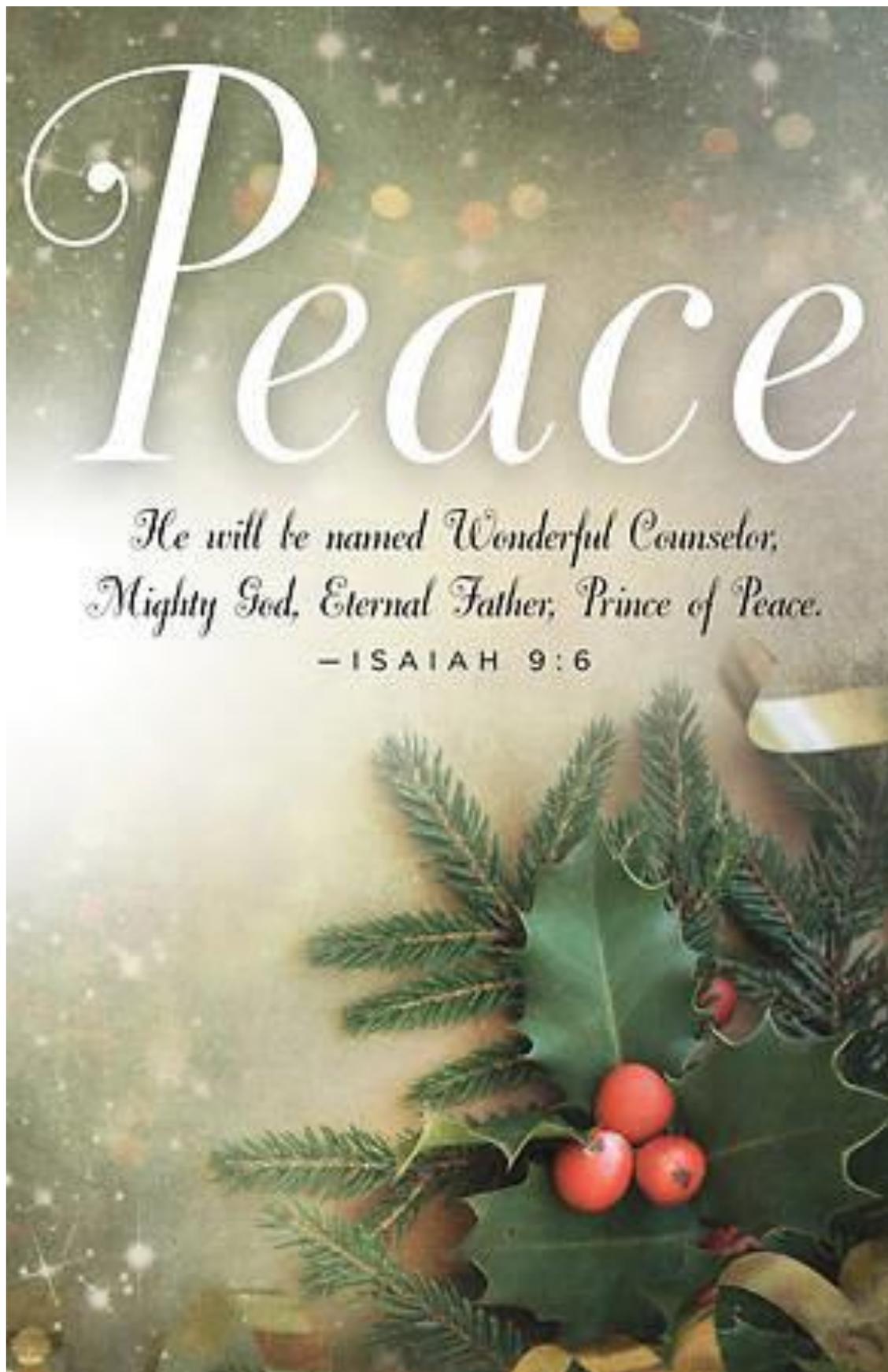


Peace

*He will be named Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.*

—ISAIAH 9:6



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 join in speaking or singing **items in bold.**)*

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY BEFORE GOD

PRELUDE

Improvisation

K. Frieese

*Let us join together in preparing our hearts for
worship as we receive God's gift of peace.*

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND UNISON OPENING PRAYER

Emil and Maryann Backstrom

Gracious and loving God, grant us your eternal peace as we continue to prepare for the coming of our Messiah. May divisions in our hearts and lives be resolved in ways that honor your presence among us. Let peace reign in our homes and throughout our world as we seek to walk in the way of our Christ. Help us to welcome your gift of peace in our lives as we are reminded that you alone are the giver of true and lasting peace. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Savior, amen.

INTROIT

The People Are Gathered Together

J. N. Beck

CALL TO WORSHIP

Among the poor, among the proud, among the persecuted,
and among the privileged;

As the hope of all creation, our Christ is coming to make all things new!

That the kingdom may come, the world may believe,
and the hidden may be seen;

As the Prince of Peace, our Christ is coming to make all things new!

With a gentle touch, an angry word, a clear conscience, and with burning love;

As the true and everlasting joy, our Christ is coming to make all things new!

Within us, behind us, before us; in this place and all places;
for this time and all time;

**As forgiving love without limits, our Christ
is coming to make all things new!**

Rejoicing for this season of listening and preparing,
let us worship our God together.

*HYMN 98

To a Maid Whose Name Was Mary

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we hear your call to repent and seek your forgiveness, but we struggle to respond faithfully. A voice tells us to turn around, but we prefer to go our own way. You seek to purify us in the furnace of your love, but we consistently hide from your searching hand. Our failures lead us in other directions ... away from you and farther from your gift of eternal life. You lead us into your peaceful presence, but we choose to follow our selfish desires and instead wander blindly into the darkness of chaos, confusion, and unrest.

Loving God, deliver us and redeem us. Fill us with your peace that passes all understanding and focus our hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits on seeking your way. Give us peace for our journey and inspire us to anticipate your glorious return with the peace of knowing we are your children. Gather us in from our wandering ways and lead us to the eternal rest you prepare for all who follow you. We pray in the name of the great Prince of Peace ... Jesus, our Savior ...

(Please continue in silent prayer of confession.)

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

HYMN 551 (Kyrie Eleison)

Lord, Have Mercy

***Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy upon us.***

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 give us peace.

To God we are ever thankful. Amen.

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE (*Sung Twice*)

There's A Song

There's a song of peace in my heart; peace is a gift from Jesus. There's a song of peace in my heart; peace is a gift from God. Al-le-lu-ia! Peace in my heart is singing praises. Al-le-lu-ia! Peace 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 Listen for God's Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 11:1-10, Old Testament p. 640 / P. 784

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

People Look East
Sanctuary Choir

S. Caracciolo

TIME WITH OUR YOUNG DISCIPLES

Congregational Invitation: (sung)

**This, this is where children belong,
welcomed as part of the worshipping throng.
Water, God's Word, bread and cup, prayer, and song:
This is where children belong.**

(Church school is available for children preschool through 6th grade.)

SECOND LESSON

Luke 2:1-7, New Testament p. 58 / P. 71

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

“Making Room”

*HYMN 86

The People Who Walked in Darkness

We Respond in Word and Deed

***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

Candles of Advent
Sanctuary Choir

D. Besig

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (Hymn 606)

Doxology

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

SHARING OF OUR JOYS AND CONCERNS

The congregation is invited to share our prayer requests with one another.

*If you would like to share a prayer request, please raise your hand
and the Pastor will invite you to share your need for prayer.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

OFFERING OF OUR TIME AND TALENT

***HYMN 87**

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

Sung to the tune of "Edelweiss"

**Come, O Lord, be with us. Fill us with joy and thanksgiving.
May our hearts, flow with peace. Come with your love and surround us.
Friendship and love, may they bloom and grow, bloom and grow forever.
Bless us now. Bless our friends. Bless all people forever.**

***POSTLUDE**

Toccata and Fugue in F

D. Buxtehude

THIS MORNING'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Matthew T. Means, Pastor
Trustee James Thatcher, Lector
Ken Friese, Director of Music
Dan Degnan, Usher Captain
Roger Ketcham and Bill Roe, Ushers

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR A NEW WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY ...

“SERVICE OF COMFORT AND HOPE”

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18TH @ 7:30 PM

Is Christmas a time when you remember friends, family, or loved ones who have gone before?

Do you long for a hopeful way to honor the memory of those who are no longer with us?

Are you tired of hearing about all the "bad news" in this world and need a place of quiet rest to be filled with the peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit as you prepare for the coming Christ?

Would you like to join with your church family in giving thanks for the gift of faith and life God has given us through the time we share with our loved ones?

Then come and join us on ... **MONDAY, DECEMBER 18TH @ 7:30 PM** in the Parish Hall ... as we remember ... give thanks ... and join together in rejoicing for the gifts of faith and life! We will gather in the week leading up to Christmas to seek God’s comfort, be inspired by the hope of Jesus Christ, allow space to name our grief, and remember our dear loved ones.

IN OUR PRAYERS:

New to the prayer list this week:

Joan Lobasso

Rick Ambrosio and Wendy (Friends of the Worledge Family)

Continue to pray for those who remain on our prayer list:

Asenath Fuchs, William Gray (Dorothy Mandrakos’ father), Dave and Else Haddock, Ken Peterson, Cynde and Robert Raynor (Brett Raynor's parents), Rebecca Raynor (Brett Raynor's sister), Angelica Richter, James Schubauer, Gerry Schult, Laura Jane Tiberia (Joan Lobasso’s Daughter), and Grace Youngquist.

Names on our prayer list will remain for a month.

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

Isaiah 11:1-10

Old Testament, p.640 / P.784

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;

⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Luke 2:1-7

New Testament, p.58 / P.71

¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered.

⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**