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*Gospel Centered*  
CHRIST EXALTING

*The Lord's Day*  
December 22, 2024

**Covenant's Mission Statement**

*"To build a faithful community of joyful disciples."*

**Covenant's Values**

Covenant is **biblical** by affirming the Bible as the authoritative Word of God,  
**connectional** by affiliating with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA),  
**confessional** by adhering to the Westminster Standards,  
**missional** by seeking to spread the Gospel worldwide, and  
**relational** by encouraging the church family to build community.

*The Fourth Sunday in Advent*  
Love

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;  
for his steadfast love endures forever!*

Psalm 118:1

*The Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols*

Prelude

**During the prelude selection, prepare for worship  
by reflecting on Psalm 118:1 printed above.**

Life of the Church and Explanation of the Service

Call to worship

1 John 4:8b-10

*[8b] because God is love. [9] In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. [10] In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Opening Carol

*“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”*

Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
ye who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:

**refrain:** *Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn King.*

Shepherds in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with man is now residing, yonder shines the infant light:

**refrain**

Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations; ye have seen His natal star:

**refrain**

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Today's Advent Readers are Matt and Michelle Jorgenson  
and Claudia, Ellie, and Roger

Responsive Reading

Reader: The Lord our God is with us and is mighty to save us.

**Congregation: God will take great delight in us and will quiet us in love.  
God will rejoice over us with singing.**

Advent Scripture Reading

Colossians 1:15-23

*[15] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*

*[16] For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things were created through him and for him.*

*[17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

*[18] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

*[19] For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,*

*[20] and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

*[21] And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,*

*[22] he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,*

*[23] if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Prayer

The Carol

*“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”*

Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending, in His temple shall appear:

**refrain:** *Come and worship, come and worship,  
worship Christ, the newborn King.*

All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son;  
evermore your voices raising to th'eternal Three in One:

**refrain**

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Corporate Profession of Faith

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets; and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Offertory and Collection of Tithes and Offerings

*The Gift of Love”*

Choir

Though I may speak with bravest fire,  
and have the gift to all inspire,  
and have not love; my words are vain,  
as sounding brass and hopeless gain.  
Though I may give all I possess,  
and striving so my love profess,  
but not be giv'n by love within,  
the profit soon turns strangely thin.  
Come, spirit, come, our hearts control.  
Our spirits long to be made whole,  
let inward love guide every deed.  
By this we worship and are freed. Amen.

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Prayer of Thanksgiving and Presentation of the Offering

Andrew Kinzler, Deacon

*[1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" [2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" [4] But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. [8] And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. [9] But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" [10] And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." [11] He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" [12] The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." [13] Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." [14] The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. [15] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*

#### Corporate Confession of Sin

Almighty and most merciful Father,  
we have erred and strayed from Your ways like lost sheep.  
We have followed too much the devices and desires  
of our own hearts. We have offended against Your holy laws.  
We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;  
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;  
and there is no health in us.  
O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.  
Spare those, O God, who confess their faults.  
Restore those who are penitent; according to Your promises  
declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
And grant, O merciful Father, for His sake;  
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous,  
and sober life; to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

#### Individual Prayer of Confession (Silent Prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Romans 5:8

*[8] but God shows his love for us in that while  
we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”*

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;  
with th'angelic host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

**refrain:** *Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King."*

Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th'incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

**refrain**

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings, ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.

**refrain**

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**The Second Lesson:** The Prophet foretells of the coming Messiah.  
Isaiah 7:10-14; 9:2, 6-7

Josh Sanford, Ruling Elder

*[7:10] Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz:*

*[11] “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.”*

*[12] But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.”*

*[13] And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?*

*[14] Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

*[9:2] The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.*

*[6] For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*[7] Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

*“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”*

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

**refrain:** *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, O come, thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,  
in ancient times didst give the law in cloud and majesty and awe.

**refrain**

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell Thy people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.

**refrain**

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high and cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

**refrain**

O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

**refrain**

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*[2] But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

*[3] Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.*

*[4] And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.*

*[5] And he shall be their peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men.*

The Carol

*“O Little Town of Bethlehem”*

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie;  
above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wond’ring love.  
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv’n!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heav’n.  
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

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*[26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." [34] And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" [35] And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy - the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." [38] And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

*“Good Christian Men, Rejoice”*

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;  
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
earth and heav'n before Him bow, and He is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;  
now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He hath opened heaven's door, and man is blessed evermore.  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian men, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain His everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

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**The Fifth Lesson:** The Virgin Mary responds to the words of the angel in worship and humility.

Luke 1:46-56

Dan Butkowski, Ruling Elder

*[46] And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,  
[47] and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
[48] for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all  
generations will call me blessed;  
[49] for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.  
[50] And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.  
[51] He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts  
of their hearts; [52] he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted  
those of humble estate;  
[53] he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.  
[54] He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,  
[55] as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”  
[56] And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.*

*“All Praise to Thee, Eternal Lord”*

All praise to Thee, Eternal Lord, clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;  
choosing a manger for Thy throne, while worlds on worlds are Thine alone.

Once did the skies before Thee bow; a virgin's arms contain Thee now:  
angels who did in Thee rejoice now listen for Thine infant voice.

A little child, Thou art our guest, that weary ones in Thee may rest;  
forlorn and lowly is Thy birth, that we may rise to heav'n from earth.

Thou comest in the darksome night to make us children of the light,  
to make us, in the realms divine, like Thine own angels round Thee shine.

All this for us Thy love hath done; by this to Thee our love is won:  
for this we tune our cheerful lays, and shout our thanks in ceaseless praise.

*[1:18] Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. [19] And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. [20] But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." [22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: [23] "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). [24] When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, [25] but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

*[2:1] In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. [2] This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. [3] And all went to be registered, each to his own town. [4] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, [5] to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. [6] And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. [7] And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

The Carol

*"O Come, All Ye Faithful"*

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold Him born the King of angels;

**refrain:** *O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*

God of God, Light of Light;  
lo, He abhors not the Virgin's womb:  
very God, begotten, not created;

**refrain**

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;  
glory to God in the highest;

**refrain**

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning:  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, late in flesh appearing;

**refrain**

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*[8] And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. [9] And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. [10] And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." [13] And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, [14] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" [15] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." [16] And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.*



Once in royal David’s city stood a lowly cattle shed,  
 where a mother laid her baby in a manger for His bed:  
 Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all,  
 and His shelter was a stable, and His cradle was a stall:  
 with the poor, and mean, and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And, through all His wondrous childhood, He would honor and obey,  
 love and watch the lowly maiden in whose gentle arms He lay:  
 Christian children all must be mild, obedient, good as He.

And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own redeeming love;  
 for that Child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav’n above,  
 and He leads His children on to the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,  
 we shall see Him, but in heaven, set at God’s right hand on high;  
 when like stars His children crowned all in white shall wait around.

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**The Eighth Lesson:** The Wise Men are led by the star to Jesus.  
 Matthew 2:1-11

William Fennell, Ruling Elder

*[1] Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, [2] saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” [3] When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; [4] and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. [5] They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: [6] “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” [7] Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. [8] And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” [9] After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. [10] When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. [11] And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.*

God rest you merry, gentlemen, let nothing you dismay,  
 remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas day.  
 to save us all from Satan’s pow’r when we were gone astray;

**refrain:** *O tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy,  
 O tidings of comfort and joy.*

From God our heav’nly Father, a blessed angel came;  
 and unto certain shepherds brought tidings of the same:  
 how that in Bethlehem was born the Son of God by name.

**refrain**

“Fear not, then,” said the angel, “Let nothing you affright;  
 this day is born a Savior of a pure virgin bright,  
 to free all those who trust in Him from Satan’s pow’r and might.”

**refrain**

The shepherds at those tidings rejoiced much in mind,  
 and left their flocks a-feeding, in tempest, storm, and wind:  
 and went to Bethlehem straight-way, the Son of God to find.

**refrain**

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- [1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
[2] He was in the beginning with God.  
[3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.  
[4] In him was life, and the life was the light of men.  
[5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.  
[6] There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.  
[7] He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through Him.  
[8] He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.  
[9] The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.  
[10] He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.  
[11] He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.  
[12] But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,  
[13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.  
[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only  
Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Message

*“Thanksgiving for God’s Covenant of Love in Christ”  
Psalm 118*

Pastor Reed

The Concluding Carol

*“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

Scriptural Benediction

Postlude

## **MEMBERS OF SESSION**

### **RULING ELDERS**

**Class of 2024**  
Mr. Jim Lewis  
Mr. Josh Sanford  
Dr. Brandon Walser

**Class of 2025**  
Mr. J. C. Baker (sabbatical)  
Mr. Dan Butkowski  
Dr. Bob Tramel

**Class of 2026**  
Mr. William Fennell  
Mr. Jeff Nissen  
Mr. Bill Scholl

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Rev. Derek W. Coyle, Associate Pastor

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Dr. Ken Knecht  
Mr. Kurt Smith

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Dr. Jonathan Goodwin  
Mr. Jason Guenther

**Class of 2026**  
Mr. Andrew Kinzler  
Mr. Mike Lieblich  
Dr. David Matlock

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Rev. Justin Hilliard, Assistant Pastor (Pinnacle Classical Academy)  
Mr. Ben Russ, Bookkeeper  
Mrs. Peggy Washburn, Administrative Assistant

### **MUSICIANS/VOCALISTS**

Mrs. Roanna Wilson, Choir Director  
Mr. David Beurman, Violinist  
Mr. Jake Hilburn, Guitarist

Mrs. Valerie Hilliard, Vocalist  
Mrs. Katie Hughes, Pianist

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Peter & Jenny Boling, Mexico  
Dan & Nancy Butkowski, Little Rock  
Scott & Kathy Craig, Mexico  
Frank & Daisy Du, Little Rock  
Roger & Laura Dye, South Carolina  
Jamie & Jacki Gildard, France

Rob & Jenny Ilderton, England  
Darlene Johnson, Japan  
Tom & Karen Mirabella, Japan  
Pete Mitchell, France  
Jim Wroughton, Peru (retired)  
Will & Martha, International  
Wes & Kim, Undisclosed

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