

Ministry Staff — How can we serve You?

Sr. Pastor: Rev. Matthew Burns; matthew@psrc.org / Children Ministries: Kate Martinka; kate@psrc.org / Worship Leader: Steve Martinka; steve@psrc.org / Office/Finance: Sadie Perkins; churchoffice@psrc.org/finance@psrc.org

Shepherding Pastorates — Alphabetical by last name:

A-Br — Elder Sandy Wynja & Ruth Bandstra
Bs-Eo — Elder Eric Wierenga & Deacon Karyn Schneider
Ep-Hl — Elder Chuck McGrath & Deacon Jodie Woudenberg
Hm-Mc — Elder Sue Cooper & Deacon Tanya Anema
Md-S — Elder Dawn Lefrancois & Deacon Dexter Greene
T-Z — Elder Tony Brookhouse & Deacon Mike O'Rourke

PLEASANT ST. KIDS — We would love to help your children become devoted followers of Christ! Check in and get a name tag at the kids cart in the fellowship hall before service.

- **NURSERY** (babies-age 3) during the service for Bible stories, music, play, and more!
- **KIDSTREET** (age 4-2nd grade) dismissed before sermon for a Bible story, craft/activity, music, and more!
- **ECHO** (3rd-5th grade) dismissed after the sermon to reflect and get to know each other, lasting 10 minutes. We don't meet on the last Sunday of each month.
- All ages are welcome to stay in the service. There is space under the balcony and in the fellowship hall if you need to get the wiggles out.
- **FAMILY SUNDAY** All ages worship together when there is a 5th Sunday; there is no Nursery, KidStreet, or Echo.

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

THANK YOU — To all who joined us this past Tuesday for our annual congregation meeting. The 2024 budget was approved. We look forward to what God will do through our church in 2024! *Thank you for your continued prayers and support!*

CARE — COME ALONGSIDE OTHERS

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER — Our deepest condolences to Joy Briggs in the passing of her son, Tommy. (Joy's home address: 39B Timrod Dr, Worcester, MA 01603-1246). Pray for Carol Berthelette who sent out a December newsletter this past week.

GROW — CULTIVATE YOUR FAITH

INTERACTIVE FAMILY SERVICE & GATHERING — Next Sunday, December 24, at 9:30am. Join us for an interactive family service. After worship, we will celebrate with homemade cookies and treats—hope you can join us and celebrate the season with friends and festive fun!

CHRISTMAS EVE — Next Sunday, December 24, at 4pm. Invite your family and friends to join us for a candle-light service. A special offering will be received for the Deacons' Benevolent Fund.

THURSDAY MEN'S BIBLE STUDY — will reconvene on January 4 at 6:30am in the fellowship hall and **Coffee Break** will reconvene on Tuesday, January 9 at 9:30am.

SERVE — CONTRIBUTE YOUR TALENTS & RESOURCES

CHRISTMAS COOKIE EVENT — The Christmas season is a wonderful time to share your gifts with family, friends, neighbors, and guests. Help us make our **Christmas Eve Day Service** merry and bright with your gifts of baking. Please bring in some of your favorite Christmas cookies or treats and share some family traditions after the worship service. We hope you take this opportunity to showcase your culinary skills with others who appreciate the art of baking and celebrate the season, one cookie at a time!

CHURCH GIVING — The Council requests that members prayerfully consider their giving to the General Fund for these next 3 Sundays of the year. Thank You.

COFFEE BREAK CHILDCARE NEEDED — Are you available to care for pre-school children of Coffee Break ladies? Two people or a couple are needed from 9:30-11am. Please call Anna Bloem at 508.234.4902, if you can help.

REACH OUT — CONNECT WITH OUR COMMUNITY

THE FAIRWOODS BOARD — is looking for two volunteers to serve a three year term on the Board. We are specifically looking for someone who has a financial background to serve as Treasurer. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please reach out to Michael Bangma at michaelb302@gmail.com.

WELCOME

We're glad you joined us!

508.234.5268 +

Office Hours: 8am–4pm Mon-Fri

December 17, 2023 + 9:30am

"Advent Series: "Waiting for God"



Advent is the first season in the liturgical calendar, a lonely one, in which we wait in the darkness in expectant longing for the coming of Christ. But it is also a time of profound hope, for we have a joyous assurance that a baby will be born in Bethlehem with the power to "ransom captive Israel." Every week a new candle is lit in an advent wreath to symbolize the growing abundance of hope, joy, love, and peace, so that we have the confidence to sing the beautiful words, "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel!"

Prayer of preparation

*Holy God of Hope, give us ears to hear and hearts to trust the promises you offer to us in this season of Advent. As we worship together, we offer ourselves to you and we open ourselves to your abundant grace.
Amen.*

GATHER

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship — from Isaiah 40

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

We continue our Advent journey with a reminder.

Christ has come and Christ will come again!

In the desert, prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

And the glory of the Lord will be revealed.

And all mankind together will see it.

For Christ has come, Christ will come and even now Christ is here.

Let us proclaim the wonder of the God who came, is coming, and will always come!

People of God, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is full redemption.

For Christ has come, Christ will come again, even now Christ is here.

Silence

SONG: *Come O Redeemer, Come*

Candle Reading - LOVE

RENEWAL

Confession

Lord, God your salvation is nearer today than before.

Yet we confess that we are far from you. Gather us to yourself, come and find us lost in the dark.

SONG: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 1)*

Merciful God, always with us and soon returning, we confess that we do not know how to wait for your Advent. We struggle to see your presence among us now. We have forgotten how to hope in miracles.

Speak your promise of a coming Kingdom once more.

SONG: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 2)*

Almighty God, you who shaped out of nothing all that is, we confess that we strive all year for what you offer to us for free; we clamor to be important when what we crave is to be beloved.

Show us again the full hope of your salvation that we might come to you empty-handed.

SONG: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 3)*

Lord, God, you who sent John to be a voice crying startling news, forgive our unwillingness to say anything at all! Create in us clean hearts O God, and grant to us the wonder and obedience of Mary.

Make us ready for your return, O Lord. Amen.

SONG: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 4)*

Words of Assurance

The good news of the Advent season is forgiveness of sin and new life. "Comfort, comfort my people" says your God. "Your sins are pardoned. The penalty is paid."

Thanks be to God. Amen.

SONG: *O Little Town of Bethlehem (verse 5)*

COMMIT

Morning Offerings: Pleasant Street Ministries

SONG: *What Wondrous Love Is This*



Passing the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you!

KidStreet Dismissal

[Children age 4 through 2nd grade are dismissed]

WORD

Morning Prayers

Matthew 11: 1-15, 20, 25, 28 +

"Waiting for God – Repentance & Rest"

SEND

ECHO Dismissal

[Students in grades 3-5 are dismissed]

SONG: *This is Jesus*

Apostle's Creed

Benediction

SONG: *Angels from the Realms of Glory*

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, Jesus Christ!