



In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!

December 8, 2024
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Second Sunday of Advent

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, please silence your cell phone.

Greeting Psalm 118:24
This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Prelude Reprise Paul Manz

Words of Welcome

Moment for Mission *Children and Youth Ministry* Hannah Knight

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Congregational Response VENI EMMANUEL
O come, Desire of nations, bind all people in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's
peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Call to Worship
Underneath life's expanding shadows,
We call out "Pave the way for our God!"
On the dusty roads of life's wilderness
We call out "Pave the way for our God!"
As we near the top of mountains, rejoicing under the sunlight,
We call out "Pave the way for our God!"

***Hymn 10** *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* WINCHESTER NEW

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**
We confess to you and to our siblings in Christ that we have made
decisions which have caused harm to you and our neighbors. We
have put our selfish desires ahead of the needs of others. We have
sought comfort in worldly things and forgotten you. For these
and for all the ways in which we have fallen short, forgive us.
Lead us back into a right relationship with you, our neighbors,
and all of creation.

***Silent Prayer**
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

**Those who are able may stand.*

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad, making note of new and old friends, check in on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram (firstpresathensga).

The lighting of the Advent wreath will be done by James and Courtney Dantzler at 8:45 a.m. and by Anne Marie Miller at 11:00 a.m.

In the ancient world, people lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. We watch and wait for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry shows how once-unconnected parts can work together. The text about John the Baptist was written in Latin in the 18th century and translated into English in the 19th century. Similarly, the 17th-century melody was adapted to its present form in the 19th century.

At "The Peace," worshipers are invited to greet each other by saying, "The peace of Christ be with you," and responding, "And also with you."

After the Passing of the Peace at the 11:00 a.m. service, children, ages Pre-K - 2nd Grade, are invited to Children's Church held in the Children's Ministry Suite on the first floor.

*11:00 Lay Reader:
Patrick Sheridan*

The anthem text was adapted from Revelation 22 by the composer's wife, Ruth. They wrote the piece at home while their young son John was in the hospital with double pneumonia and not expected to live. He did survive and grew up to be a Lutheran pastor.

Prepare the Way, based on Isaiah 40 and Psalm 24, has been in use in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. The tune is even older and may be derived from a German folktune.

Scholars debate whether this powerfully poetic text is an early Christian hymn which Paul is quoting or his own composition. It is one of the best-known and most influential passages in the Pauline corpus.

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Congregational Response**

Hymn 3, stanza 1

**Comfort, comfort you my people, tell of peace, thus says our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.**

***The Peace**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination PUER NOBIS NASCITUR
**Come, thou Redeemer of the earth, and manifest thy virgin birth.
Let every age adoring fall: such birth befits the God of all.**

First Lesson

Luke 3:1-6, page 936

11:00 Anthem *E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come* Paul Manz

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord Almighty God,
who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all yet that dwell therein,
rejoice on earth ye saints below,
for Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!
E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and knight shall be no more;
they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!

Second Lesson

Malachi 3:1-4, page 874

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Refinery

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 13**

Prepare the Way

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

***Affirmation of Faith**

Philippians 2:5-11

**Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form, he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.**

**Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name
that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and
under the earth, and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

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, (cont.)**

but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Improvisation on *People, Look East* John Coble

*Doxology Hymn 592
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

*Hymn 12 *People, Look East* BESANÇON

*Charge and Benediction

*Congregational Response VENI EMMANUEL, refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Postlude *Carol of the Advent* Rebecca Groom Te Velde

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You may mail your check, set up an automatic gift through your bank, or donate online using this QR code or at firstpresathens.org/giving. Thank you for your generosity.

People, Look East was written to provide and Advent text for an existing carol. The tune is named for the city in eastern France where it originated. The text expresses cosmic implications of Christ's coming by addressing each stanza to a part of creation.

A special word of welcome to our guests: thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Please fill out the Fellowship Pad so that we may be in touch. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

Nursery Play for children 4 years old and younger is available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., are located in our Children's Playroom area next to the Children's Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

Children, Pre K – 2nd Grade, are invited to Children's Church during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Children's Church will be held downstairs in the Children's Ministry Suite. We will depart for Children's Church following the Passing of the Peace. To pick up your child after the service, please go to the church courtyard entrance of the Children's Ministry Suite.

Poinsettia Dedication

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Monday, December 16**. Each dedication is \$10. You may fill out the form and pay online (please click on the link posted in the church website under FPC News & Updates for more instructions), mail it with a check to the church office, or contact the church at 706-543-4338 or frontdesk@firstpresathens.org with your dedications. Each dedication will be listed in the December 22 worship service bulletin.

In Memory of

In Honor of

Given by

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*

The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor*

Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

Lay Reader

11:00 a.m. Patrick Sheridan

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Carl Bergmann

11:00 a.m. Jimbo LaBoon III (head),
Emily LaBoon, Ethelyn Simpson

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

DECEMBER FLOWER TEAM

Susan Ferguson (chair), Susan Barrett,
Susan Banister, Patty Brantley, Greta Covington,
Shannon Ferguson, Wanda Neislar, Page Pate,
Jennifer Poole, Jennifer Trapnell, Isabelle Wallace

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Aiden Dowling

FLOWERS

The poinsettias are given to the glory of God.

TO AID IN WORSHIP

If you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium and at 10:00 a.m. is on Facebook and YouTube.

Available in the Narthex or from an usher:

- **Personal hearing receivers** usable anywhere in the sanctuary
- **Large-print** hymnals, Bibles, bulletins, and hymnsheets
- **Sermons** from the previous six weeks

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer requests can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, by the Prayer Request link on our church website (firstpresathens.org) or on the prayer cards in the Fellowship Pads.

Season of Wonder@First - Outreach and Volunteering Opportunities

Holiday Benevolence Market – hosted by Covenant Presbyterian Church (1065 Gaines School Road, Athens, GA. 30605), choose meaningful and symbolic gifts on the shopping lists of 30+ non-profit mission partners. Date: **Today, December 8**, noon-3:00 p.m.

Ringling for the Salvation Army – We are in need of volunteers to ring the bell at Walmart on Epps Bridge on **Saturday, December 14**. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up at the table in the Atrium.

Holiday Meals on Wheels – help cover the cost of one or more meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year's Day by making a financial contribution* **by December 31**. If you are interested in delivering meals, please contact John Turner at johnlovickturner@yahoo.com.

* For financial contributions make your check to First Presbyterian Church and note cause in memo line, or give online at FirstPresAthens.org/giving and select appropriate fund in drop-down menu.

Joy to the World! Christmas Tea at FPC Thursday, December 12, 2:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the annual Christmas Tea hosted by the Congregational Care Commission on **Thursday, December 12**, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. It will feature The Mellows leading Christmas songs and a message by Dr. Ryan Baer. Please RSVP to the church office at (706) 543-4338 **by Monday, December 9**. Need a ride? Please contact Madeline Van Dyck at madelinevandyck@gmail.com.

Festival of Lessons & Carols Sunday, December 15, 11:00 a.m.

Join us for A Festival of Lessons and Carols on **Sunday, December 15**, at 11:00 a.m., led by the choirs of First Presbyterian Church with guest instrumentalists. The service will include music by Dale Adelman, Michael Bedford, Dan Forrest, and Donald Pearson.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 8 - Second Sunday of Advent

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Fellowship Hall
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Fellowship Refreshments
- 12:00 p.m. Holiday Benevolence Market, Covenant Presbyterian Church
- 12:15 p.m. Young Adult Sunday Brunch
- 4:45 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:45 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:45 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Christmas Caroling, Presbyterian Village of Athens

Monday, December 9

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Room 205

Tuesday, December 10

- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Parlor
- 5:00 p.m. Administration Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room

Wednesday, December 11

- 9:15 a.m. Circle 7, Presbyterian Village
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, December 12

- 10:45 a.m. Weekday School Pre-K Christmas Program, Sanctuary
- 11:30 a.m. Weekday School Pre-K Reception, Atrium
- 2:00 p.m. "Joy to the World!" Christmas Tea at FPC, Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 15 - Third Sunday of Advent, Festival of Lessons and Carols

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Festival of Lessons and Carols
- 9:45 a.m. Intergenerational Sunday School Christmas Social, Fellowship Hall
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Fellowship Refreshments
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

Intergenerational Sunday School Christmas Social

Sunday, December 15, 9:45 a.m.

Join us next Sunday as children, youth, and adult Sunday school classes gather in Fellowship Hall for a churchwide Christmas social. All are welcome!

Service of the Longest Night

Thursday, December 19, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for the Service of the Longest Night. The service takes its name from the fact that in the Northern Hemisphere in December, there are more hours of darkness than light, and this service acknowledges that many in our community do not find this to be "the most wonderful time of the year." We will pray with and for those in our community who may be hurting and grieving, while remembering that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

A very special invitation to join us on Christmas Eve:

Tuesday, December 24

Family Service, 4:00 p.m.

Candlelight Services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m. (prelude will begin 30 minutes before)

Please bring a box of diapers (infant or adult) to benefit the Athens Area Diaper Bank.

We will receive an offering to support Jubilee Partners.

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOR CHILDREN

Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries:
Hannah Knight
Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

Nursery Play, 8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Children's Playroom • Infants – 4 Year Olds
Little ones are invited to Nursery Play during worship and Sunday school. Children will enjoy playtime, Bible stories, and a light snack with church friends.

Godly Play, 9:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.
Children's Ministry Suite • Pre-K – 5th Grade
Children are invited to Godly Play during the Sunday School hour. Godly Play is an innovative way of teaching and learning that helps children “discover” who God is rather than being “told” who God is. The structure and routine of Godly Play offer children a safe and nurturing space to explore, connect, wonder, and worship God.

Children and Worship, 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
All children are welcome to remain in worship with their families every Sunday. Children's bulletins, Bibles, and books are available at the children's tables located in the Narthex and on both sides of the choir loft.

Children's Church, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Children, Pre-K – 2nd Grade are invited to Children's Church after the passing of The Peace. We will continue worshipping together in the Children's Ministry Suite by listening to God's Word, praying to God, and responding through art and worship.
***No Children's Church on the first Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday. All children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on this special Sunday to take part in worship and Communion with family.**

SUNDAYS FOR YOUTH

Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries:
Hannah Knight
The PIT (basement level) • 6th – 12th Grade

Sunday School (9:45 a.m.) - offered for both middle and high school

Both middle and high school groups will be using the Living the Word curriculum, that closely follows the narrative lectionary that guides our worship each week. Middle and high schoolers will be split into separate rooms in the PIT for a time of study, discussion, and response.

Youth Group (5:30-7 p.m.)

Sunday night youth group is a safe space for youth to come as they are! We will begin with dinner together in the fellowship hall (please volunteer to provide a meal at tinyurl.com/FPCYouthDinner2024). At 6:00, both middle and high school groups will move down to the PIT where there will be games, Bible study, creative response time, and lots of laughs as we spend an intentional hour together. The theme for this year is “In Every Season,” rooted in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. We will spend time diving into what it looks like to trust & see God in every season, and learning to be okay with asking questions about our faith.

For any questions, please contact Hannah at hannah@firstpresathens.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45-10:40 a.m.

IN PERSON

Bible Basics • Moses Waddel Room
Bible Basics is a new intergenerational adult class designed to improve basic Bible knowledge and familiarity. This year, we are “walking through the Bible” – Genesis to Revelation – in an effort to lay a solid foundation for future Bible study. The class is appropriate for all experience levels from “Biblical neophytes” to those looking for a refresher.
Contacts: David Dantzler (jdaviddantzler@gmail.com) and Elaine Johnson (elaine@firstpresathens.org)

Builders • Room 301
This class is a space for all parents of children and youth to gather and share in the complexity of family life. Our time together will offer a blend of fellowship, parenting support, Bible study, and service.
Contacts: Dr. Ryan Baer (ryan@firstpresathens.org) or Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard (whitney@firstpresathens.org)

HYBRID (in person and over Zoom)

Del Dunn Sunday School Class • Room 308
An in-depth study and discussion of scripture, offering a collegial environment and welcoming all who seek to enrich their understanding of the Bible and its application to our daily lives.
Coordinator: Susan Landrum (slandrum@uga.edu)
Zoom ID: 380 330 5940, PW: 245449

New Voices • Room 310
The New Voices class is a discussion based class that is currently studying the parables of Jesus. This study is based on the book *Parables from the Backside*, by J. Ellsworth Kallas. All are invited to come study God's holy word with us!
Led by: Lewis Hudgins (lewisahudgins@gmail.com)
Zoom ID: 674 533 8902

Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class
Bride's Room, Tinsley Stern
The class features open and honest discussion in a nonjudgmental atmosphere about various aspects of Christianity. This year, the class will continue with their study and discussion of *Understanding the Old Testament*, led by Robert Miller, professor at Catholic University.
Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com), Jim Scanlon (jjtscanlon@yahoo.com)
Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

10

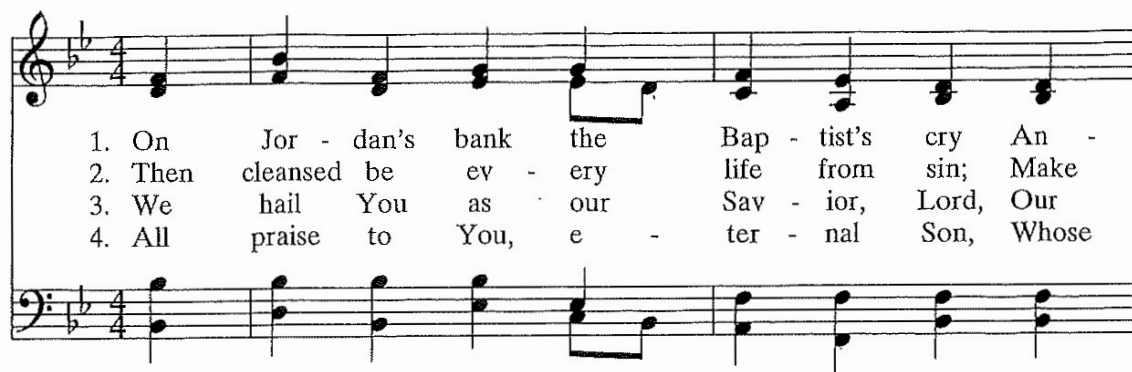
WINCHESTER NEW LM

Charles Coffin, 1736

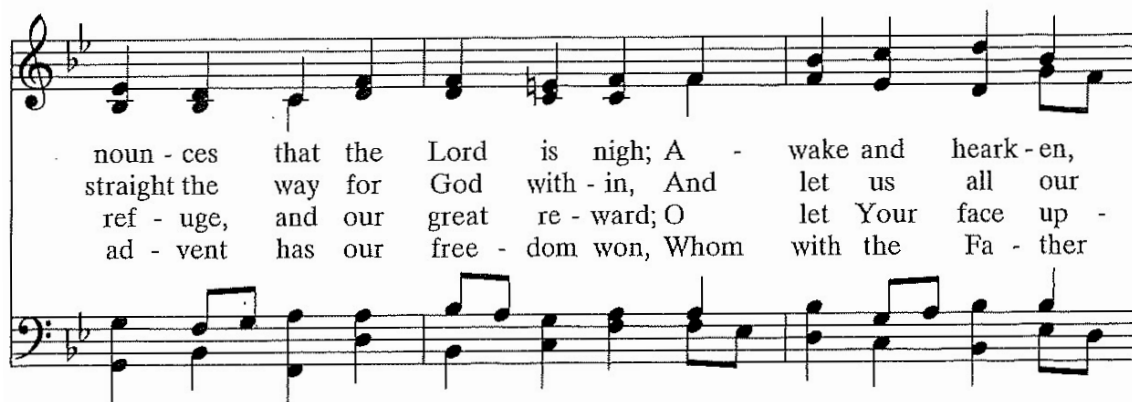
Trans. John Chandler, 1837; alt.

Musikalisches Handbuch, 1690

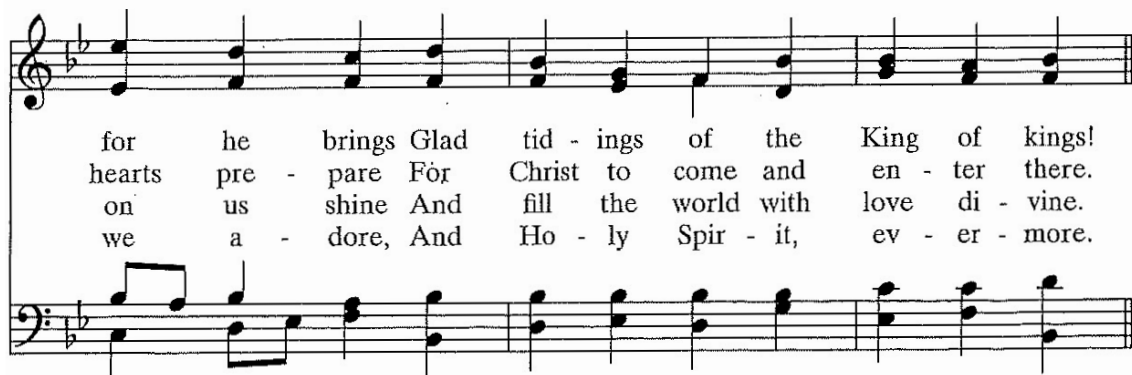
Harm. William Henry Monk, 1847; alt.



1. On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry An -
 2. Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; Make
 3. We hail You as our Sav - ior, Lord, Our
 4. All praise to You, e - ter - nal Son, Whose



noun - ces that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and heark - en,
 straight the way for God with - in, And let us all our
 ref - uge, and our great re - ward; O let Your face up -
 ad - vent has our free - dom won, Whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.
 on us shine And fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, And Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Prepare the Way

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN 7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain

Frans Mikael Franzen (1771–1847)

Adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980; alt. 1989

Then Svenska Psalmboken, 1697

Arr. American Lutheran Hymnal, 1930



1. Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, Your Christ is draw - ing near!
2. Christ brings God's rule, O Zi - on; He comes from heaven a - bove.
3. Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; Your Sav - ior's rule em - brace.



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley A lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, And jus - tice, truth, and love.
 And tid - ings of sal - va - tion Pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, Fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, For grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, Their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.



Refrain



O blest is Christ that came In God's most ho - ly name.



People, Look East

12

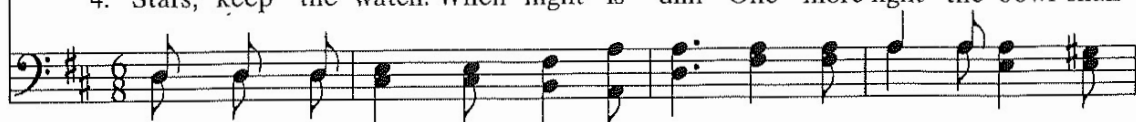
Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965)
As in *Oxford Book of Carols*, 1964

BESANÇON 8.7.9.8.8.7

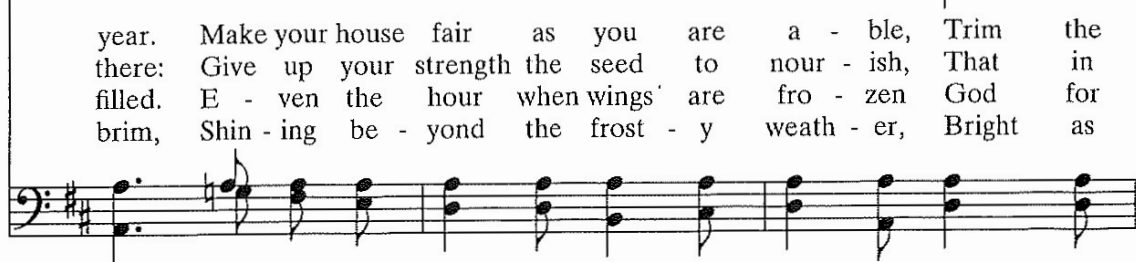
French folk melody
Harm. Martin Shaw (1875–1958)



1. Peo - ple, look east. The time is near Of the crown-ing of the
2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, One more seed is plant-ed
3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build, Guard the nest that must be
4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim One more light the bowl shall



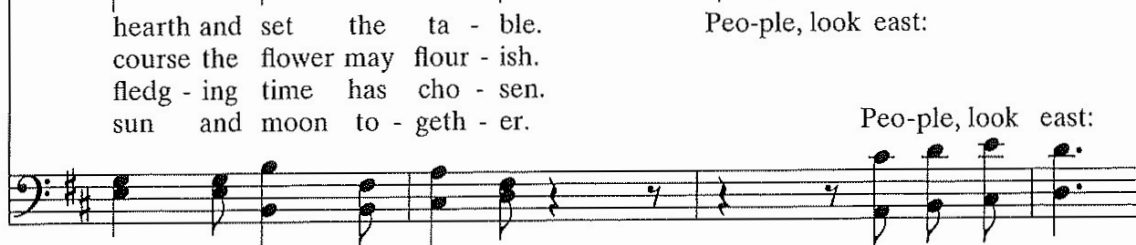
year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, Trim the
there: Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, That in
filled. E - ven the hour when wings' are fro - zen God for
brim, Shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, Bright as

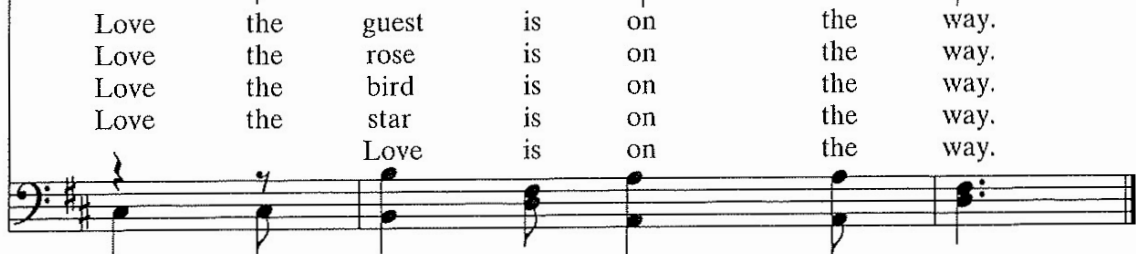
Peo-ple, look east and sing to - day:



hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo-ple, look east:
course the flower may flour - ish.
fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo-ple, look east:




Love the guest is on the way.
Love the rose is on the way.
Love the bird is on the way.
Love the star is on the way.
Love is on the way.



5. Angels, announce with shouts of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming

With the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Pat Waldrip, Clerk of Session

CLASS OF 2025

Shannon Brooks
Phyllis Crowell
Denise Horton
Paul Lee
Sharon Neff
Bruce Middendorf
Randy Riner
Chuck Toney

CLASS OF 2026

Lindsay Griffeth
Dan Nadenicek
Karen Phillips
Ethelyn Simpson
Jeffrey Trapnell
Pat Tritt
John Turner
Pat Waldrip

CLASS OF 2027

Susan Baldwin
Bill Bushnell
Amy Cowsert
Matt Crim
Jay Holloway
Tom Lane
Joan Pinson
Paige Simmons

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor* (whitney@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Hannah Knight, *Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries* (hannah@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Office Administrator* (lbell@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Director of Communications* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Joli Winstanley, *Receptionist* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotteposs@gmail.com)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*