

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF RIVER FOREST PRESENTS



The
GIFT
for **ALL**
CHRISTMAS CONCERT

**Presented by the First Pres Choir
and Bloom String Quartet**

Jane Holstein, Director Josh Ring, Associate

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025

4:00 PM

*Freewill Offering | www.firstpresrf.org
Wheelchair & Hearing Accessible*



THE GIFT FOR ALL CONCERT PROGRAM

WELCOME

Rev. Donna Marsh

PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear Desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.**

OF THE FATHER'S LOVE BEGOTTEN

Trevor Manor

Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, He is Alpha and Omega,
He the Source, the Ending He, of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!

O that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace, by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race; and the Babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heav'n adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing; pow'rs, dominions,
bow before him and extol our God and King; let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring; evermore and evermore! *Plainsong, 10th century*

SUSSEX CAROL

Elaine Hagenberg

On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring;
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should men on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
when from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty.

When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place.
Angels and men with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.

All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night.
"Glory to God in highest heaven, now and forever more," Amen! *English Carol*

GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN

Molly Ijames

God rest ye 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,
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,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

"Fear not," then said the angel, "let nothing you afright,
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,
O tidings of comfort and joy.

Now to the Lord sing praises, all you within this place,
and with true love and brotherhood each other now embrace;
this sacred time of Christmas tide all others now deface;
O tidings of comfort and joy. *English Carol*

COMMENTARY

RING IN THE GOOD NEWS

Joel Raney

Ring in the news of the Christmas story. Ring in the news of a baby's glory.
Ring in the news of a mother's joy. Ring in the news, ring in the good news!

Ring in the news of a shepherd boy. Ring in the news of a tiny baby's birth.
Ring in the news of peace on earth. Ring in the news of the Christmas story. Ring in the good news!

Ring in the news of a bright new star. Ring in the news, spread it near and far.
Ring in the news of a heav'nly sign. Ring in the news of a Love divine.

Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King: peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!" Go, tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere!
Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.

Ring in the news of a newborn King. Glory to God, let the heavens ring.
Ring in the news with joyful singing. Set the bells of heaven ringing.

I WONDER AS I WANDER

Kyle Pederson

I wonder as I wander out under the sky how Jesus the Savior had come for to die;
for poor orn'ry people like you and like I; I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

How I, a mere mortal, may look up in awe as Bethlehem's star beckons me through the dawn;
it shines on the manger, the Prince of all peace and bids me to wonder, "Is this gift for me?"
Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

The gift in the manger is given for all, the strong and heroic, the lost and the small.
Christ bids to our stone hearts, "come soften and give," and offers his own heart so others may live.

I wonder as I wander out under the sky, how the light of the heavens is born in this child.
The universe dances with glory and grace and I gaze in the manger, and see love's face.
Emmanuel, Emmanuel.

John Jacob Niles

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS *from LUX: The Dawn from on High*

Dan Forrest

*Gloria in excelsis Deo.
Et in terra pax.*

Glory to God in the highest.
And on earth peace. *Luke 2:14*

CANDLELIGHT CAROL

John Rutter

How do you capture the wind on the water? How do you count all the stars in the sky?
How can you measure the love of a mother, or how can you write down a baby's first cry?

Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing, the Christ child is born.

Shepherds and wise men will kneel and adore him, Seraphim round him their vigil will keep;
Nations proclaim him their Lord and their Savior, but Mary will hold him and sing him to sleep.

Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Gloria, gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing, the Christ child is born.

Find him at Bethlehem laid in a manger: Christ our Redeemer asleep in the hay.
Godhead incarnate and hope of salvation: a child with his mother that first Christmas Day.

Candlelight, angel light, firelight and starglow shine on his cradle till breaking of dawn.
Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo! Angels are singing, the Christ child is born.

FREEWILL OFFERING

*donations also by Zelle® at
donations@firstpresrf.org*

Go, Tell It on the Mountain
In the Bleak Midwinter
Bloom String Quartet

*Gwyneth Walker
Paul Thompson*

CAROL

The First Noel

**The first Noel, the angel did say, was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

**They looked up and saw a star shining in the east, beyond them far;
and to the earth it gave great light, and so it continued both day and night.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

**Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord,
who hath made heaven and earth of naught, and with his blood mankind hath bought.
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, born is the King of Israel.**

WHAT SWEETER MUSIC

John Rutter

What sweeter music can we bring than a carol, for to sing the birth of this our heav'nly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string! Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
and give the honor to this day that sees December turned to May.

Why does the chilling winter's morn smile, like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like a meadow newly shorn thus on the sudden?
Come and see the cause, why things thus fragrant be:

'Tis he is born, whose quick'ning birth gives life and luster, public mirth,
to heaven and the underearth.

We see him come, and know him ours, who, with his sunshine and his show'rs,
turns the patient ground to flow'rs.

The darling of the world is come, and fit it is, we find a room to welcome him.
The nobler part of all the house here, is the heart, which we will give him, and bequeath this holly,
and this ivy wreath, to do him honor; who's our King, and Lord of all this reveling.

What sweeter music can we bring than a carol, for to sing the birth of this our heav'nly King,
the birth of this our heavenly King.

Robert Herrick

THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

Joel Raney

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold.
Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world.

"Peace on the earth goodwill to all, from heav'n's all gracious King!"

The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Above these sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,
and all the world can hear the song that now the angels sing.

"Peace on the earth goodwill to all, from heav'n's all gracious King!"

The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

Edmund H. Sears

A CELTIC SILENT NIGHT

Joel Raney

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light,
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Joseph Mohr

WONDERFUL PEACE

Gustav Nordqvist

Peace, peace, wonderful peace,
Peace to the world is given;
Hushed are the angels, so still in the night,
Then in the east shone a heavenly light.
Join in the chorus, his praises sing!

"Glory to God, to the newly born King!"

Peace, peace, wonderful peace,
Peace to the world is given.

Peace, peace, bearer of peace,
All of good will receive him.
Holiest of nights, O most wondrous of days,
Shepherds and kings lift their voices in praise.
Join in the chorus, his praises sing!

"Glory to God, to the newly born King!"

Peace, peace, wonderful peace,
Peace to the world is given.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF RIVER FOREST CHOIR
Dr. Jane Holstein, Director
Dr. Josh Ring, Associate

Soprano

Lynne Hurdle
Laura Juliano
Jessica McAdam
Victoria Rahmanovic
Cheryl Rotundo
Beth Siegel
Annika Tenhor

Alto

Mary Ann Cooper
Debbie Detterman
Jessica Hwang
Ruth Johnson
June Oliver
Jill Panovich
Kristen Schumacher

Tenor

Lin Hancock
Rick Hibbert
Bret Juliano
James Kiel
Josh Siegel
David Weck

Bass

Douglas Colber
James Hunt
Gregg Johnson
Mark Jurewicz
James Richards
Ryan Schumacher

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Bloom String Quartet

Kelly Jozwiak, violin
Stephanie Young, violin
Erin Rafferty, viola
Molly Rife, cello

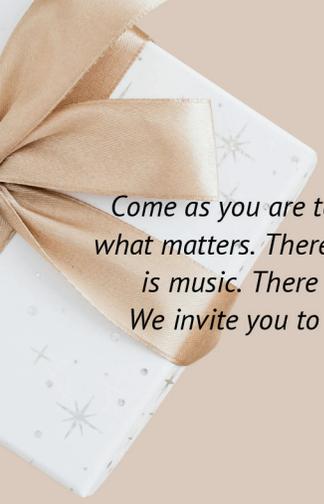
Kristin Diaz, flute
Tricia Wzalo, oboe
Mackenzie Bufis, percussion
Laura Juliano, handbells
Paul Detterman, organ
Josh Ring, piano

COMMENTATOR

Rev. Donna Marsh



MERRY CHRISTMAS!



PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

Come as you are to First Pres River Forest! We may look like any church on the outside, but what you will find inside is what matters. There is laughter and noise. There are children. There are teenagers. There are adults. There is mess. There is music. There is beauty. There is mission work. There are Bible studies. There are celebrations. There is worship. We invite you to come and see what we mean. Feel the vibrancy. Feel the sincerity. Feel the love of Christ. In all the different things we do, we have one singular focus on the main thing: it's Jesus!



CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

WORSHIP SERVICES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

3:00 PM* 8:00 PM* 11:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church of River Forest is wheelchair and hearing accessible.

*Also livestreamed at firstpresrf.org

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF RIVER FOREST

Education for All Ages Adult Education	9:00 am Sundays in the Maxwell Room or online
Parent Oasis	9:00 am Sundays in the Primary Room
Sunday Kids Club	9:00 am Sundays in the Kids Clubhouse
Middle School Classes	9:00 am Sundays in the Middle School Room
Sunday Worship	10:15 am Sundays, in person or livestream
High School Classes	11:30 am Sundays in the High School Room
Youth Groups	Sunday evenings
Summer Bible Camp	Registration opens mid-February for July camp
Lenten Soup Suppers	Wednesday evenings, beginning February 25
Holy Week & Easter Sunday Worship	March 29 through April 5

WELCOME TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF RIVER FOREST

First Pres is a community dedicated to growing as apprentices of Jesus Christ to reflect God's love. We are happy to have you with us today and invite you to fill out one of the welcome cards in the pews.

