

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor John Knoester
December 8, 2024 ♦ 10:30 A.M. Worship Service

***Please stand in body or in spirit.**

"O come, my soul, sing praise to God your Maker,"

Prelude

Welcome

* Sung Call to Worship: LUYH #672 v. 1-3

"O Come, My Soul, Sing Praise to God"

1. O come, my soul, sing praise to God your Maker,
and all within me, praise his holy name.
Sing praise to God, forget not all his mercies;
his pardoning grace and saving love proclaim.

Refrain

*Praise him, you angels,
wondrous in might;
praise him, you servants who in his will delight.*

2. Good is the Lord and full of kind compassion,
most slow to anger, plenteous in love.
Rich is his grace to all who humbly seek him,
boundless and endless as the heavens above.

Refrain

3. His love is like a father's to his children,
tender and kind to all who fear his name;
for well he knows our weakness and our frailty;
he knows that we are dust, he knows our frame.

Refrain

Words: *Psalter*, 1912, alt., P.D.

* Opening Prayer

* Call to Worship: (Based on Isaiah 40:3 and Romans 5)

Leader: *A voice cries, "In the wilderness
prepare the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert a highway
for our God."*

**People: We are preparing our hearts for the God
of love to come into the world.**

Leader: God's love flows into our lives
through the gift of the Christ child.

**People: The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with love.**

Leader: God calls us out of the exile of sin
with the good news of restoration.
God has built a highway through the wilderness.
Immanuel has come into our lives and we know
that God has the power to overcome sin
and death.

**People: God has come into our lives,
turning our hearts towards God.
In Jesus, we have received the ultimate gift
of love.**

* Opening Hymn of Praise: LUYH #59 v. 1-3

"Comfort, Comfort Now My People"

1. Comfort, comfort now my people;
speak of peace: so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourning under sorrow's load.
Cry out to Jerusalem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cover
and her warfare now is over.

2. For the herald's voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling all to true repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet him
and the hills bow down to greet him.

3. Then make straight what long was crooked;
make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
as befits his holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token
that God's word is never broken.

ISAIAH 40:1-5: Words: Isaiah 40:1-5; vers. Johannes G. Olearius, 1671; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1863, alt., P.D.; Music: Louis Bourgeois (ca. 1510-1561), 1551; harm. Johann Crüger (1592-1662), 1658, P.D.

* God's Greeting

* We Greet Each Other

*(During the mutual greeting those lighting the Advent candle
are invited to make their way forward and to the balcony)*

"And all within me, praise his holy name."

Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Hymn of Response: LUYH #78 v. 1,2,4,5

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

1. 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.

2. O that birth forever blessed,
when a virgin, blest with 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.

4. Let the heights of heaven adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing:
powers, dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.

5. Christ, to you, with God the Father
and the Spirit, there shall be
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
and the shout of jubilee: honor, glory,
and dominion and eternal victory
evermore and evermore. Amen.

Words: Marcus Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-413); tr. Composite, P.D.
CCLI #678905

Offering: General Fund

Offertory: *"Mary's Song (Mary's Psalm) – John Alexander Wilson*
(Following the offertory video the children are invited forward
for the Children's Message)

Children's Message – Mrs. Marjo Rouw
(Following the children's message children ages 3-3rd grade are invited
to make their way to Children in Worship in the Fellowship Hall)

* Song of Preparation: *"Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord"*

Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord.
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord.
And He shall lift you up,
higher and higher,
and He shall lift you up.

Words: I Peter 5:6; Music by Bob Hudson; © 1978 and this arr. © 1983
Maranatha! Music, All rights reserved. International Copyright Secured.
CCLI #678905

"Sing praise to God, forget not all his mercies;"

Scripture Readings: Luke 1:39-56 and Romans 5:12-21

Prayer of Illumination

Message: "**The Gift of Love**"

Time of Prayer

"His pardoning grace and saving love proclaim."

* Hymn of Application: LUYH #69 v. 1-4

"My Soul Cries Out With a Joyful Shout"

1. My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain

*My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn!*

2. Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.
Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

Refrain

3. From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, every mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

Refrain

4. Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.

Refrain

Luke 1:45-55: Words: Rory Cooney (b. 1952), based on the *Magnificat*,
© 1990 GIA Publications, Inc.; Music: Irish traditional; arr. Rory Cooney
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* Advent Acclamation:

Leader: May Jesus Christ be praised!
May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
May the mountains yield prosperity
for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

People: **For he defends the cause of the poor
of the people and gives deliverance to the needy.**

Leader: May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon,
throughout all generations.
May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.

In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.
May he have dominion from sea to sea.
May all kings fall down before him,
all nations give him service.

People: **For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.**

Leader: From oppression and violence
he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.
May his name endure forever,
his fame continue as long as the sun.
May all nations be blessed in him.

People: **May Jesus Christ be praised!**
—based on Psalm 72, NRSV

* God's Blessing:

* Parting Praise: LUYH #351 v. 1-4 *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee with thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Words: Charles Wesley, 1747, P.D.; Music: Rowland H. Prichard, 1831, P.D.

Postlude

Welcome! We invite all of you to praise God with hearts and hands and voices. Let us be mindful of the wonders God has given us. Come rejoice in God and together sing praises to His name. Reach out in warmth to all who have gathered in the house of the Lord. After joining us in worship, join us in the fellowship hall next to the sanctuary for a cup of coffee or juice and continued fellowship.

Tech Team	Today December 8	Next Sunday December 15
Sound:	Henry VZ	Mardy S.
Projection:	France B.	Tim H.
Video:	Tim H.	France B.
Offering:	General Fund	General Fund

First CRC Bulletin Announcements

December 8, 2024

The deadline for announcements this next week is Thursday, 9:00 A.M.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

This Week's Deep Q's with PB & J:

What do you pray for your neighbors?

Angel Tree: Today after the service you will have the opportunity to pick up an Angel Tree tag in the Fellowship Hall. Please sign your name on the sheet by the name of the child on the Angel Tree tag that you chose. Each child receives a gift valued at around \$30-35. After purchasing your gift, please wrap and put the Angel Tree sticker on the outside of the gift. Please bring your gift back to the Fellowship Hall and place it on the table by December 15th. The open house where the families come to pick up their gifts will be on Monday, December 16th. Thank you for your generosity and for blessing the children in our community! Any questions? Please reach out to Catherine Vander Kooy 360-982-8429.



Calling all bakers!

The Fellowship Committee would like to host cookies after the Candlelight Service. If you are willing to bake cookies, please sign up on the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall.

The **Men's Breakfast Bible Study** will meet on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 am at IHOP.

Worship Service YouTube Links:

PM November 27, 2024: N/A

AM December 1, 2024: <https://youtu.be/tfKQ3TQn02g>

First CRC offers the option to give *your offerings online, donations*. For information on this and other ways to give please check the "Give" page on the church's website: https://firstcrcmv.com/?page_id=1509

Foster Kids Winter Clothes Drive: Community & Family Services, a local foster care agency, is currently doing a winter clothes drive for foster children ages 0-18. Any donations of new, or gently used, coats, pajamas, hoodies, socks, and sweatpants are greatly appreciated. They can especially use items for kids that are 10 years to even adult sizes. Donations will be accepted through Friday, December 13 and can be placed on the wood table underneath the south windows next to the kitchen in the fellowship hall. Thanks in advance for your willingness to donate!

There is **CHOIR PRACTICE** this morning after church.

2024 Advent Series – The Gifts of Christmas

Dear Friends,

During the season of Advent we often recall the *'already'* and *'not yet'* tension of our faith. Yes, Christ's kingdom has *'already'* come, but it has *'not yet'* come in its fullness. Often the focus during Advent is on the *'not yet'* as we look forward to Christ's return. However, this year we are going to focus more on the *'already'* and the practical implications of Jesus' incarnation. We plan to do so by pairing specific texts from the book of Romans with some of the familiar narratives around Jesus' birth. We will also focus specifically on the *'gifts'* of hope, love, joy, and peace. May God bless us throughout our study during this special time of the year.

In His Grace, -Pastor John and Pastor Brad

1. Dec. 1 – *"The Gift of Hope"* (Luke 1:5-25, Romans 4:16-25)
2. Dec. 8 – *"The Gift of Love"* (Luke 1:39-56, Romans 5:12-21)
3. Dec. 15 – *"The Gift of Joy"* (Luke 2:8-20, Romans 6:1-14)
4. Dec. 22 AM – *"The Gift of Peace"* (Luke 2:8-14, Romans 5:1-11)
5. Dec. 22 PM – *"The Gift of Jesus"* (Romans 6:23, Romans 8:31-39)
6. Dec. 25 – *"The Result of the Gifts"* (Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20, Romans 6:15-23)

NOTICE:

There is a new Nursery Schedule in your boxes!

Save These Dates!

1. **Candlelight Service** - Sunday, Dec. 22 at 6:30 PM
2. **Christmas Day Service** - Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10 AM (Note earlier time)
3. **Post High School Pizza Night:** Thursday, Dec. 26 at 6pm and Coconut Kenny's. Please RSVP to Pastor John (jknoes0812@gmail.com) or to Beth at (secretary@firstccmv.com)
4. **Movie Night at Church** - Friday, Jan. 24 (Title of movie yet to be determined!)

CALENDAR:

Greeters/Coffee Hosts: December 8

Wayne & Rhea D., John & Dena K.

Next week: December 15: Greg & Beth B., Eric & Theresa VK

Worship Team: December 8: Greg & Beth B., Isaac D., Nellie VDH

Next Week: December 15: Kevin & Glenda K., Kayla & Ella VH

Nursery: December 8: Catherine & Noah VK

Next Week: December 15: Catherine & Noah VK

Children in Worship: December 8: Jodi VP, Kayla VH

Next Week: December 15: Jenny VV & Lauren V

This Week:

Sunday: December 8

Sunday School 9:30 am

Worship Service: 10:30 am

Youth Group

Wednesday: December 11 Cadets at 7:00 pm

Friday: December 13 1:00 pm: Memorial Service for Marion Ekkelkamp

Friday: December 13 at 7 pm: Sonshine Singers Christmas Concert

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, December 22 at 6:30 pm: Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 25 at 10:00 am: Christmas Day Service

Thursday, December 26, 6 pm: Post-High School Pizza Night at Coconut Kenny's in Burlington

Friday, January 24: Movie Night at Church

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

You are invited to The Sonshine Singers Christmas Concert here at First CRC on Friday, December 13 At 7:00pm. Please join them for a night of joy-filled song as we gather to celebrate the Christmas season!

CRC COMMUNICATIONS:

A Unique Mission Trip for Teenagers - Join a group of teenagers from multiple countries on a trip across three Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala) to learn more about these countries' histories and learn how local ministry leaders are working to meet the needs of communities in difficult realities. This is a great opportunity to grow in your faith and understanding of mission! Learn more and apply online at www.resonateglobalmission.org/encounter

Kids Corner: Advent Week 2: The Servant - Check out this week's kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. This week, read the story of Mary in Luke 1:26-45. God had an important role for Mary. She responded, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." Whatever God has for us to do, let our reply be the same as Mary's. No matter how young or old we are, God will give us everything we need to be a faithful servant. Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net, like the Bible Story Podcast The Birth of Jesus.

Groundwork: Jesus: Our Mighty God - The prophet Isaiah next calls the coming Messiah "Mighty God." Join Groundwork as we explore Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 10:21, Acts 1:6-8, and Revelation 5:6,11-14 to discover what this title communicates to us about Jesus. Together, we'll discuss how his presence as a helpless baby displays the awesomeness of God's power and gives us hope as we anticipate his return. Listen now at GroundworkOnline.com and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly emails for future episodes.

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - “Rejoice, Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.” This refrain from the beloved Advent hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” calls us to rejoice—not because of our immediate circumstances but because of the promises we have in Jesus Christ. Ponder a few things that cause you to rejoice. Offer them up to God in gratitude. Brought to you by Thrive: crcna.org/Thrive



People to be remembered with prayers, cards, letters & words of encouragement. Email the office at secretary@firstcrcmv.com or call the church office at (336-2405) by 9:00 am Thursday of each week with your prayer items.

CONTINUING REQUESTS:

Marion Ekkelkamp's Memorial Service is Friday, Dec. 13 at 1:00pm.

Joan DeVries' surgery went well and she is now waiting for biopsy results. We thank God for a successful surgery! Please pray for good answers from the doctor.

Please continue to pray for **John Velasquez**, who was recently diagnosed with a serious lung disease. He is currently on oxygen full-time and is currently waiting to get into therapy for greater improvement. Please pray that he can get into therapy soon and that it will be effective!

Please continue to pray for those who have lost loved ones recently.

SHUT INS: **Nell Annema** at Birchview Memory Care in Sedro-Woolley; **Shirley Boonstra** at Country Meadow Village in Sedro-Woolley, **Marjean DeGroot** at Mountain Glen in Mount Vernon; **Martha Haarsma** at home in Mount Vernon, **Mary Koopmans** at Where the Heart is in Burlington; **Clarence Vander Griend** at Home Place in Burlington; **Sally Reehoorn** at Creekside in Burlington.

OTHER REQUESTS: (CRC Communications)

Sunday December 1 - *Resonate Global Mission: Advent begins*

As we enter this season of Advent, let us give thanks that Jesus came to live incarnationally among us. Please pray for Resonate missionaries, church planters, and campus ministers who aim to live incarnationally in the communities they serve throughout the world. Ask God to guide them as they share the good news of Jesus, our Prince of Peace.

Monday December 2 - *Thrive: Advent*

Please pray for your congregation's worship leaders and planners. Advent is an exceptionally busy time of preparing to celebrate Christmas in worship. May God fill these leaders and planners with energy, joy in their work, and plenty of rest.

Tuesday December 3 - *Communications: Giving Tuesday*

Please pray for the financial health of the CRCNA's denominational ministries that help to support local churches in their work of ministry. May the funds raised on this day help the church to be a light across North America.

Wednesday December 4 - *ReFrame Ministries: Japan*

Pray for Yuki, who reached out to ReFrame's partners in Japan to share that he recently began praying again and entrusting his life to God. Yuki asks for prayers for peace of mind, strength, and daily joy in God's presence. Pray that Yuki feels God's guidance each day, growing in faith and confidence.

Thursday December 5 - *Resonate: Mexico*

As a nurse serving in end-of-life care in Mexico, Resonate missionary Barbarita Lee has a lot of opportunities to share the light of Christ with her patients. Please pray for the Holy Spirit's wisdom and guidance in her gentle work caring for patients who are terminally ill.

Friday December 6 - *World Renew: Mozambique*

People in Mozambique have experienced chaos and unrest following the country's presidential election in October. Please pray for stability and lasting peace in Mozambique as the country grapples with this crisis. Ask God with us for protection for our staff and partners in Mozambique as well as in other areas experiencing violence and conflict.

Saturday December 7 - *ThereforeGo Ministries: SERVE*

Give thanks with us for all that God is doing in students' lives through SERVE. We praise him for all who have already registered for SERVE 2025 as well as for those yet to sign up. May the Lord prepare their hearts and minds to engage with our theme for the summer: "Broken and Beautiful."