



*"An inclusive community, celebrating God's unconditional love  
through engaging worship and faithful service"*



December 18, 2022

4th Sunday in Advent

*"What Will Love Make Possible?"*

New Member Sunday



## The Love of God Gathers Us

### **Gathering Music**

*We greet those around us or sit quietly  
as we settle into sacred time and space*

### **Ringling of the Bell**

### **Prelude & Candle Lighting**

Mary Had a Baby *Trad. Spiritual arr M. Hayes*  
Zoey & Eddy Graf, acolytes

*A flame represents the light of Christ among us*

### **Words of Welcome**

Pastor Clare Gromoll

**\*\*\*Opening Hymn** “All Earth is Waiting / Toda la Tierra” NCH #121  
*Vs. 1 (Spanish) - cantor sings / Vs. 1-2 (English) - all sing*

Claire Bjork, cantor

### **\*\*\*Advent Candle Lighting**

Zoey & Eddy Graf  
Mary Maren Bjork, liturgist

Advent is a season of waiting and watching for God’s presence with us. Today we light the first candle of HOPE, the second candle of PEACE, the third candle of JOY and the fourth candle of LOVE. As we seek to fulfill our congregation’s purpose; we wonder, long for, and expect the new life that God is bringing forth among us.

**We welcome this new life that embraces all beings with hope,  
peace, joy, and love!**

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*Let’s welcome one another!*

*Name tags are found in the Narthex (just inside the front doors)*

*Welcome forms in pews: request a prayer or name tag, update contact info, etc.*

## \*\*\*Advent Candle Song “In the Darkness, Light a Light”

German carol  
words by Judith Melander

In the dark - ness, light a light; Ad - vent can - dle, warm and bright; Fire of love in  
6  
dark of night. Em - man - u - el! We wait for you, O Je - sus.

### Acknowledging Our Humanness and God’s Grace

#### Prayer of Longing (*unison*)

O God, we give thanks as we welcome new members among us today. We thank you for their life stories, their faith journeys, their diversity of gifts. May we be zealous in our willingness to listen and Learn, open to new perspectives. Help us to provide a nurturing environment for one another. Guide us to take time for one another as we continue to develop a shared faith and a common history. Bless us, O God, as we worship together and seek to be your partners in ministry. Amen.

*prayerful silence*

**Musical Interlude** ...as our own longings quietly emerge

#### Assurance of Grace

#### \*\*\*Passing the Peace

*We share a sign of peace with those gathered now (in-person, virtually)  
We extend the peace later by phone call, email, text message*

**Pastor:** The peace of Christ be with you! **All:** And also with you!

\*\*\*Sitting or standing

## Choral Anthem

"Come, Emmanuel!"

*by Pepper Choplin*

Ready, waiting, God is with us.  
Ready, waiting for Emmanuel.  
God is with us, come, Emmanuel.  
Yearning, sighing for Emmanuel.  
Praying, crying, "Emmanuel".  
Come, Emmanuel! O come and with us dwell.  
For unto you a Child is born, to you a Son is given.  
Though He arrives through human birth,  
He comes with full divinity.  
For unto you a Child is born, to you a Son is given.  
No other one has come before,  
born of earth, born of heav'n,  
born of earth and heav'n.  
Come, Emmanuel. O come and with us dwell.  
Come, Emmanuel!  
O come and with us dwell.  
Come, Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.  
Ready, waiting, come, Emmanuel.  
Come, Emmanuel, come and with us dwell,  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel, Emmanuel. Come!

## A Time With Children

**Sung Invitation**     *We sing as our children come forward*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*In fall 2022, we gave a first annual gift to Walker|West in St. Paul, MN as a reparations payment for our use of this African American spiritual.  
"Walker|West creates a music learning community rooted in the African-American cultural experience, where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, explore, and grow through music."*

**Singing "Happy Birthday"**

*..Happy birthday dear **Michael** (Favilla), **Peter** (Favilla) & **Milan** (Horak)*

**Wondering Together**

**Blessing One Another**     *Seated, we open our arms to the children*

Children : God be with you                      **All: And also with you**

**Sung Affirmation**     *We sing as children follow leaders or return to families*

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,  
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*We welcome the sounds and movements of children who stay in worship*

*Lisa (Childcare Provider) also cares for infants and toddlers*

*9:15 - 10:45 in the Nursery downstairs*

*If needing space to move around, families are welcome to use the Narthex (entry area) or Meditation Room (off front left exit from Sanctuary)*

## Proclaiming God's Love

### Scriptures

Psalm 146: 5-10 ~ NRSV  
(responsively)

Happy are those whose help is the God of Israel, whose hope is in God,  
**who made heaven and Earth, the sea and all that is in it!**

God, you keep faith forever: you secure justice for the oppressed;  
you give food to the hungry; you set captives free;  
**you give sight to the blind; you raise up those who were bowed down;**  
**you love those who do justice;**

you protect strangers; you sustain orphans and the bereaved—  
but you thwart the way of the corrupt.

**God will reign forever—your God, Zion!—through all generations.**  
**Alleluia!**

Matthew 1: 18-25 ~ NRSV

This is how the birth of Jesus came about.

When Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, and upright person unwilling to disgrace her, decided to divorce her quietly.

This was Joseph's intention when suddenly the angel of God appeared in a dream and said, "Joseph, heir to the House of David, don't be afraid to wed Mary; it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived this child. She is to have a son, and you are to name him Jesus—'Salvation'—because he will save the people from their sins."

All this happened to fulfill what God said through the prophet:

“The virgin will be with child and give birth,  
And the child will be named Immanuel”

—a name that means “God is with us.”

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of God had directed, and they went ahead with the marriage. He did not have intercourse with her until she had given birth; she had a son, and they named him Jesus.

**Morning Message** “What Will Love Make Possible?”

### Responding To God’s Love

**\*\*\*Prayer Song** “God, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary”

*All verses*

*Sing! Song and Praise #187*

♩=60

D/A Em/A D A

1. God pre - pare me to be a sanc - tu - ar - y, — pure and  
- pow'r me to be a wit - ness for you, — act - ing

G Em7 D/A A A7

ho - ly, tried and true; — with thanks -  
bold - ly, in your name; — seek - ing

D A

-giv - ing, I'll be a liv - ing — sanc - tu -  
jus - tice, where there is hurt - ing — off - ring

G Em7 A7 D D/A Em/A D

- ar - y for — you. 2. God em -  
hope where there is — pain.

## **Prayers of the People**

*When sharing a joy or concern for yourself, another, or a part of the world; please project your voice to be heard. We'll add your prayer to our Prayer Corner.*

**One:** God, in your love

**All:** Hear our prayer

## **Prayer of Jesus** (*unison*)

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,  
Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all,  
Loving God, in whom is heaven:  
the hallowing of your name echo through the universe!  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!  
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come  
on Earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us.  
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.  
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.  
Amen.**

### **Prayer Cards**

If you voice a prayer for a loved one during Prayers of the People, we welcome you to start a card for us to sign during fellowship.  
(*prayer cards on the Information Table in the Fellowship Hall*)



## Invitation to the Offering

*Greeters pass offering plates at this time*

*We support our church financially as we have means to do so*

*Welcome Forms also go in the offering plate (prayer request, updates, etc.)*

*We can also mail in a check or give electronically by scanning the QR code*

## Offertory

“Peace Carol”

*B. Beers*

*Lori Mildon, flute*

*Our children return to participate in the rite of membership*



## \*\*\*Offertory Response “In the Bleak Midwinter”

**What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
but what can I offer: all my heart.**

## \*\*\*Prayer of Dedication (*unison*)

**Creative and generous God, from whom new possibilities spring, make a way for us where there has been no way. We give thanks as you quench the drought of our spirits with the living water of your boundless love. Free us to offer our whole selves in return, participating fully in your newness of life. Amen.**

## Rite of Membership: A Covenant of Mutual Support

### Words of Invitation

### Sharing by Candidates for Membership

*Frank Cole*  
*Heather Kennedy-Bordeaux*

### Questions of the Candidates

Do you seek to continue your journey of faith, following the ways of God as lived out and revealed in Jesus the Christ, knowing you have the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the love and support of this community?

Do you promise, with the grace given you, to covenant with these people—the congregation of People’s Congregational Church—by worshipping together and supporting our mission with your presence, talent, and financial support?

Do you promise to open your heart and mind in love to all these siblings in Christian faith, knowing that together we may do more than alone?

**\*\*\*Covenanting Together** (*responsively*)

Rolf Dittmann, *Moderator*

We gladly welcome you into this Christian community. Enfolding you with our love and committing ourselves to your care, we seek to be partners in ministry with you.

**In the power of God’s Spirit, let us mutually encourage each other to trust God and strengthen one another to serve others, that Christ’s church may — in all things — stand faithful.**

**\*\*\*Presentation of Membership Certificates & Gifts**

## Going Forth to Share God's Love

**\*\*\*Closing Hymn** “All Earth is Waiting / Toda la Tierra” NCH #121  
*Vs. 1 (Spanish) - cantor sings / Vs. 1-2 (English) - all sing*

**\*\*\*Benediction**

**\*\*\*Sung Response** ..as we form a spacious circle  
around the perimeter of the Sanctuary

Irish Blessing  
*Sung twice*

May the road rise to meet you  
May the wind be at your back  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
The rain fall soft upon your fields  
And until we meet again  
Till we meet again  
May God hold you in the palm of God's hand

*We carry the light of Christ with us in all times and space*

**\*\*\*Postlude** “My Soul Proclaims with Wonder” Moyer

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**All are welcome to gather downstairs after worship**

*10:30 am Fellowship*

*11:00 am Faith Conversations:*

**Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity**



## Frank Cole

Frank is a retired elementary school principal. His passions are music and rail roading. He is looking forward to *growing in faith* with People's Church.

## Heather Kennedy-Bordeaux

Heather is an Attorney Developer at Thomson Reuters. Previously she was in private practice doing divorce and criminal defense. Prior to that worked in non-profits working with primarily women and indigent clients.

She is passionate about gardening, reading, anything involving animals and music.

*The church has been incredibly welcoming and allows for a variety of faith interpretations, which is something I have been looking for, for a long time. I expect that People's Church will enhance my life through fellowship with the community and provide an outlet for working to improve the lives of others.*



## PRAYER CORNER

*Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:*

*For persons known to us...*

\*For **Jere Fetter**, continuing to struggle with upper leg pain and mobility. His next procedure is at Mayo in February. We pray for relief from pain.

\*For **Dale Shaller** who recently received a pacemaker after a heart event and testing. With Dale, we give thanks for his access to amazing healthcare and for the care and support of family and friends.

\*For **Kyle, Kelsey and baby Lily**. Kyle is Nat Graf's co-worker. Kelsey recently went into labor to give birth at full term. Baby Lily tragically died in utero. May they be surrounded by love during this acutely painful time and as they grieve in the time ahead.

\*For Carol Dusbabek and her family as they grieve the recent death of Carol's father, **Kenneth Schutt**, at the age of 100. May Kenneth rest in deep peace and may mourners be surrounded by love. See our "Mid-Week News" for his obituary.

\*For our friend **Josh**, son of Loura Corless (Sam Gromoll's caregiver) as Josh continues in the hospital battling depression.

\*We celebrate birthdays of: **Michael Favilla, Peter Favilla & Milan Horak** (All on the 17th)!

*And in the wider community...*

\*For all of our neighbors who are without stable housing. May we learn how to become strong allies along side them.

\*During this winter holiday season, may we hold greater awareness for all who are lonely, grieving, and managing mental health challenges.



## **Eyeglasses and hearing aids recycling**

Many of you might have noticed the Lions Club donation box in the Fellowship Hall. Since 1925, Lions International has been a champion in helping combat vision impairment and blindness. With this same conviction, Lions have also been a force in providing medical care and education to help prevent hearing loss.

### **Eyeglasses**

Donate used glasses of any age, brand or model (this includes "cheaters").

### **Hearing aids**

Donate used glasses of any age, brand or model.



## **Annual Report**

### **Annual Reports Due**

It's that time of year! Kimberly compiles many reports into an Annual Report packet for the congregation to review just ahead of our January 29th Annual Meeting. Chair/point person of each committee or team below, please send Kimberly your FINAL report (as a .docx or within an email, no PDFs)

**by Jan. 13th.**

Pastor  
Treasurer / Finance Committee  
Pastoral Relations Committee  
Personnel Committee  
Adult Faith Formation Team  
Building & Grounds Team  
Children's Ministry Team  
Justice & Outreach Team  
Spiritual Life Team  
Tech Team  
Welcome Team  
Nominating Team  
May Festival Team  
Harvest Festival Team  
Antiracism Collective

*Thank you in advance for getting your reports to Kimberly swiftly!*

**Hudson**  
Star-Observer

**Pastor Clare had a turn to publish a piece!**

**Pastor's viewpoint: We accompany each other, appreciate community contributions.**

*Clare Gromoll, People's Congregational Church  
Published on Dec 11, 2022*

To read the article, see the "Mid-Week News"

**Volunteers needed for the upcoming Christmas Season.**

12-21 (Solstice) | One reader, two greeters, child/youth greeter, acolyte, fellowship hosts.

12-24 (Christmas Eve, 4 pm) | Two readers, two greeters.

12-24 (Christmas Eve, 9 pm) | One reader, two greeters, child/youth greeter

12-25 (Sunday) One reader

**Please let Kimberly know, asap if you can help.**

## Solstice, Christmas Eve, Christmas Morning

### Light in the Darkness: A Contemplative Christmas Solstice Service

Dec. 21, 7 pm | Light refreshments follow

*Acknowledging both difficult & nurturing darkness,  
we honor what is and what may be... God with us in both.*

*candlelight, readings, prayers, music*

**Early Christmas Eve | 4 pm**  
*carols, candlelight, readings, special music*

**Late Christmas Eve | 9 pm**  
*carols, candlelight, readings, choral music*

**Christmas Morning | 9:30 am**  
*joyful carols & readings, light refreshments follow*

**People's Congregational Church | 309 N 3rd St. Bayport**  
651-439-5667 | [office@peoplescongregational.org](mailto:office@peoplescongregational.org)

**Kimberly (Communications Coordinator) works primarily remotely**

Kimberly will work remotely: **Dec. 20-22 & 27-29**

She will next be at church: **Jan. 3-5**

You can reach her every week (T, W, Th 9 am - 4 pm) at 651-439-5667  
and at [office@peoplescongregational.org](mailto:office@peoplescongregational.org)

Need access to the church building? Want to visit with Pastor Clare or  
Kimberly in person?

**Please call (or email) ahead of time to avoid missing us.**


Pastor Clare is on call at all times: 651-600-6409

**Due to recent upticks in RSV, Covid 19 and flu hospitalizations and in line with MN CDC, People's Church encourages mask wearing and social distancing during indoor gatherings. Masks are optional, not required. Please stay home if you are experiencing symptoms of RSV, Covid 19 or flu. Thank you for caring for self and others.**

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist), Michael Bjork (Choir Director), PCC Choir, Claire Bjork (cantor), Lori Mildon (flute), Zoey & Eddy Graf (acolytes), Rolf Dittmann (Moderator), Sharon Binger & Cheri Schwartz (greeters), Mary Maren Bjork (liturgist), Kathy & Bob Iverson (fellowship) Carol Dusbabek & Claire Spilseth (Children's Activity), Paul, Bob & Mark (tech), Jackie Savage (Sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider)



**People's Congregational Church**

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