

To our Visitors

We welcome you and hope our worship enables you to draw near to God through Christ Jesus; may you feel welcome among us. Please sign our guest book in the Narthex, and we welcome you for join us for snacks.

Pray always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

In Need of Prayer

Rosie, Linda’s daughter, deep grieving
Brenda, for health
Ed, for mobility, back pain
Nancy, health and sustaining grace
Maureen, dear friend of Lisa
Kay, continued faith, poor prognosis
Pray for caregivers of those who are ill
College students, for continuing faith
Jennet family, illness and deaths
Linda S, breathing concerns
Janet Evans, confusion (in AZ)
Marie, employment and comfort
Donna’s family, Dan, recent heart surgery.
Jen: healing of ankle, father’s chemo, friend in Israel
Family of Enrique, grief
Sue Rojek, complications after eye surg.
Jean, friend of Cheri, breast cancer.
Mary, friend of Karen, back surgery, lives alone
Homeless for shelter

In Need of Prayer

Bunny Rector, recent fall with injuries, weakness
Bryan, nephew of Terras family, cancer diagnosis
Lisa, Pastor’s niece, newly discovered cancer
Glad, for strength and sustaining grace
Benita , continued prayer for improved blood counts
Sean’s aunt & uncle, heavy caregiving
Debbie, Pam’s friend, improved, more chemo
Judy V. and family in Florida
Lance, brother-in-law of Isles family
Sue, sister-in-law of Isles family
Pastor Scott McKee, serious cancer
Willy, 76, needs Jesus
Krystal’s friend, Lolita, with esophageal cancer
Lisa L’s father, John, in hospital with congestive heart failure
Our Military: Andrew, son of Craig M, deployed to Qatar.
Bev’s friend, Alice, son died by suicide.

General Fund giving this week: \$6,496
Total giving to date in Dec.: \$13, 089

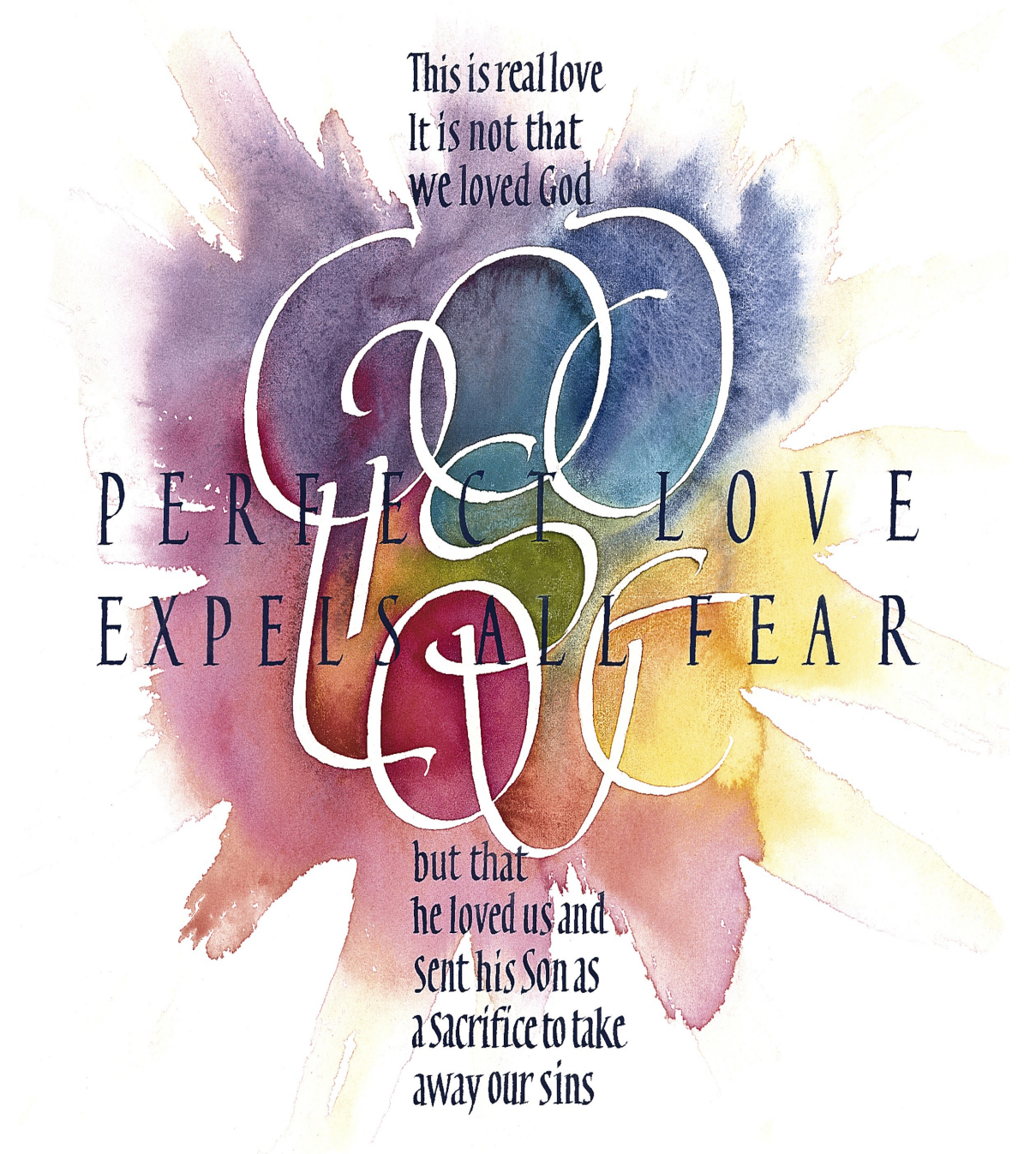
For tax purposes, last date Dec. 31.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to Linda Johnson and family in the recent death of her mother in Florida.

We also pray for the Hartigs in the death of Renate’s mother in Germany.

Heidelberg Catechism Q.5: Can you live up to all this perfectly?

A. No. I have a natural tendency to hate God and my neighbor.



This is real love
It is not that
we loved God

PERFECT LOVE
EXPELS ALL FEAR

but that
he loved us and
sent his Son as
a sacrifice to take
away our sins



CHRIST
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WELCOME TO WORSHIP

DECEMBER 17, 2023
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gathering Song: Away in a Manger (bulletin page 7)

† Call to Worship (Psalm 28:6-9 ESV)

Pastor: Blessed be the Lord! For he has heard my pleas for mercy.

People: The Lord is my strength and my shield: in him my heart trusts, and I am helped.

Pastor: My heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

People: The Lord is the strength of his people; he is the saving refuge of his anointed.

Unison: O, save your people and bless your heritage! Be their shepherd and carry them forever!

† Hymn: Good Christian Men, Rejoice (page 8)

† Invocation and the Lord's Prayer

Lighting of the Third Advent Candle
The Angels' Candle
Louis and Elaine Clay

† Standing as you are able

Christmas Eve Day

This year, Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. Instead of having two services that day, we will meet together to celebrate the birth of our Savior at our normal Sunday morning time, 10:30 A.M. The service will include communion and the candle-light circle and singing of Silent Night as is our custom. Please encourage your families to come with you and participate in this glorious celebration of Christ's birth.

Angel Tree Gifts

We rejoice that we were able to fulfill our commitment to the Angel Tree families to which we were assigned. A big thank you to every one who contributed. Gifts will be delivered today.

If you missed out, gifts can still be arranged for others by on-line giving. Ask Brenda or Cherie Boone for instructions.

Thank you to Brenda and Cherie and many others who help to make this a success

Poinsetta orders are closed. We have exceeded our order with the florist.

First Scripture Reading

Reader Today: Cathie Cheslak

Matthew 24:36-50 Responsive

³⁶ "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷ As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

³⁸ **For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; ³⁹ and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.**

⁴² "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. ⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

⁴⁵ **"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns.**

⁴⁷ Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' ⁴⁹ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. ⁵⁰ The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Responsive

¹ Paul, Silas, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

² Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ **We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. ⁴ Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.**

⁵ All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. >>>>

⁷ This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

† Hymn: How Great Our Joy!

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Away in a Manger

Elisabeth and Yuta Sugano

† Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Second Scripture Readings

2 Peter 3:1-18 Responsive

¹ Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ² I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

³ **Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires.** ⁴ They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since

How Great Our Joy!

Good Christian Men, Rejoice

⁵ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. ⁶ By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. ⁷ By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

¹⁷ Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 Responsive

¹ Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

>>>>>

⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.

Away in a Manger

¹¹ **Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.**

Sermon: Watching for Jesus

Dr. James N. McGuire

Pastoral Prayer

† **Hymn: See Amid the Winter's Snow** (page 10)

Responsive Litany (Romans 8:31-34)

Pastor: What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

People: He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Pastor: Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

Unison: Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Benediction

Welcome, Announcements, and Prayers

Dr. James N. McGuire, Pastor

Yuta Sugano, Musician