

Large Print Bulletins, Large Print Hymnals and Hearing Devices are available.
Please ask an usher.

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 31, 2023

11:00 A.M.

The Congregation will speak aloud the bold print in responsive readings.
* Please rise in body or spirit.

GATHERING

*Worship begins with God. God takes the initiative and calls the Church into being.
In the name of Christ, we heed God's call and gather as the community of faith.*

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME

*Please provide us a record of your attendance. Take the red friendship
pad, sign your name, and pass it down the pew and back, noting the names of those
worshipping with you. We encourage our guests to share your information that we might be
aware of your presence with us.*

PRELUDE

What Child Is This

arr. R. Purvis

* CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)

I surely rejoice in the Lord;
my heart is joyful because of my God,
because he has clothed me with victory,
wrapped me in a robe of righteousness
like a bridegroom in a priestly crown,
like a bride adorned in jewelry.
As the earth puts out its growth, and as a garden grows its seeds,
so the LORD God will grow righteousness
and praise before all the nations.
We cannot keep silent - let us worship God! (*Isaiah 61:10-11*)

* LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

We light the Christ candle as a sign that Christ has come.
As God with us, as a light to the nations, as a promise fulfilled.
(*The Christ candle is lit.*)
The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts;
Let the word of Christ live fully in you.

* HYMN NO. 147

The First Nowell

THE FIRST NOWELL

CALL TO CONFESSION (RESPONSIVE)

Almighty God, you wonderfully created all the world and more.
And yet when sin shrouded our path,
You more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature.
In your mercy, let us share the divine life of Christ
who came to share our humanity and destroy the power of sin.
Let us pray together.

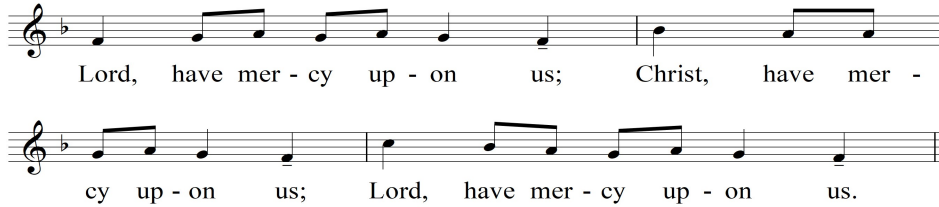
PRAYER OF CONFESSION (RESPONSIVE)

God of grace and truth,
in Jesus Christ you came among us
as light shining in the darkness.
We confess that we have not always welcomed the light,
or trusted the good news to be good.
We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst,
expecting little, and hoping for less.
We have not seen our neighbor as ourselves.
We have overlooked the needs of your children.

**Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope,
so that we may receive the fullness of your grace,
and so strengthened by your Spirit,
use our hands as your own,
and live in the truth of Christ the Lord.**

(Silent confession)

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE



Lord, have mer - cy up - on us; Christ, have mer -
cy up - on us; Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (RESPONSIVE)

The coming of Christ's light into the world
has brightened weary hearts with peace.
Let us proclaim the birth of Jesus Christ and the truth he brings:
In Christ we are forgiven! In Christ we are set free!

*** PASSING OF THE PEACE (RESPONSIVE)**

The peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you.
Let us stand and greet one another with the sign of Christ's peace.

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

Gathered in God's name, we now open ourselves to God's life-giving Word.

TIME FOR THE CHILDREN

Elizabeth Cahoon

OLD TESTAMENT READING (RESPONSIVE)

PSALM 148

Shout praises to the Lord! Shout the Lord's praises in the highest heavens.
All of you angels, and all who serve him above,
come and offer praise.
Sun and moon, and all of you bright stars,
come and offer praise.
Highest heavens, and the water above the highest heavens,
come and offer praise.
Let all things praise the name of the Lord,
because they were created at his command.
He made them to last forever, and nothing can change what he has done.
All creatures on earth, you obey his commands,
so come praise the Lord!
Sea monsters and the deep sea, fire and hail, snow and frost,
and every stormy wind,
come praise the Lord!
All mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars,
every wild and tame animal, all reptiles and birds,
come praise the Lord!
Every king and every ruler, all nations on earth,
every man and every woman, young people and old,
come praise the Lord! All creation, come praise the name of the Lord!

ANTHEM

We Three Kings
SPC Small Ensemble

J.H. Hopkins

GOSPEL READING

MATTHEW 2:1-14

NT, P. 2

SERMON

Knowing Enough to be Dangerous Rev. Marie Mainard-O'Connell

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

The proclamation of God’s Word invites responses of faith.

* **HYMN NO. 145** *What Child is This* GREENSLEEVES

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

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY *New Year Carol* arr. H. Oxley

* **DOXOLOGY** OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.**

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

SENDING

The God who calls us together in worship now sends us out in service.

* **INVITATION TO DISCIPLESHIP**

* **HYMN NO. 152** *What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright* PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

* **BENEDICTION**

* **CHORAL BENEDICTION** *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* J. Rutter

* **POSTLUDE** *Toccatà in G major* T. Dubois

TODAY’S WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Marie Mainard-O’Connell

Elizabeth Cahoon, Director of Young and Young Adult Ministries

Rev. Alisa Secrest

Jón Stevenson, Conductor

Adam Savacool, Organist

Clint Brockway, Interpreter

Liturgist: Sandra Rogers

Ushers: Sandra Rogers, Diane Karlson, Melissa Hendricks,

J. Dyke, Garry Mertins, Johanna Lewis

Please notify the church office of hospitalizations,
joys and concerns. For a full listing of prayer
concerns, please call the Care and Concern line at
(501) 227-6117

STATEMENT OF WELCOME AND INCLUSIVENESS

As one part of the church of Jesus Christ, we are inspired and guided by Christ’s vision of God’s realm—one that includes all who seek to love God and neighbor.

Second Presbyterian Church welcomes all people.

As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we invite those who respond in trust and obedience to God’s grace in Jesus Christ to become part of the membership and ministry of the church.

We would be pleased to have you join us in our journey of faith, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, economic or family status, ethnic background, mental or physical abilities.

A WEATHER REMINDER: Weekday church events are canceled and the church office is closed if the Little Rock Public Schools are canceled or dismissed due to weather.

OFFERINGS TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES OF SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: Your generosity is a meaningful expression of your faith in God and your commitment to Christ's work in the world. Contributions can be made to the 2023 Annual Budget, Memorial Gifts and the Birthday Fund. You may support the ministries of our church by placing your offering in the offering plate, through online giving at secondpreslr.org/giving or mailing a check to the church office, **600 Pleasant Valley Drive, Little Rock, Arkansas 72227.**



2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES AVAILABLE: Those wishing to use weekly-dated envelopes may pick them up from one of the tables inside the Sanctuary doors.

STEWARDSHIP 2024 UPDATE



Prior to launching the *Joining Christ on the Mountain* Stewardship campaign, the team and I decided not to create a numerical goal as we weren't exactly sure what the needs of the church would be (plus I didn't want to aim too low!). We are excited to announce that we are well on our way to increasing our 2023 pledging numbers and would like to increase it more. Last year we had a total of 419 giving units pledge \$2,175,000 and this year we are aiming to increase both. So far, our pledging units are increasing, and we are aiming to raise \$2,500,000. That seems like a big leap, but we are God's people, and our God believes in taking big steps!

Thank you to those who've pledged and for those who haven't, would you consider making a pledge to Second Presbyterian Church? You can do so online or by filling out an Estimate of Giving Card in the sanctuary or main office. And, just as importantly, would you pray for Second Pres. and all the faithful members and friends as well as the ministries inside and outside our church walls as we seek to be God's people today, tomorrow, and in 2024. To make your 2024 Estimate of Giving, complete the Estimate of Giving card located in the pews, go to the church website or use the QR code.



DID YOU MISS ONE OF THE SERMONS? If so, you can watch past worship services on the church website at secondpreslr.org. To receive a copy of a sermon either by e-mail or regular mail, contact Karin Howze, karinhowze@secondpreslr.org or (501) 227-0000. Printed copies are available in the narthex and the church office.

MIRIAM PROJECT TRAINING: On January 7, following the 11:00 a.m. service and our church-wide lunch, the Children and Family Ministry will host a Miriam Project Training. The Miriam Project is the name of our protection policy to keep children and vulnerable persons in our congregation safe. We would love to have all of our Sunday School teachers, WACKY volunteers, Stephen Ministers, and those who work with our Afghan refugee families participate. If you have done Miriam Project training before, this will be a great refresher as you volunteer your time to serve our church. Please reach out to Maggie Kirchner, (501) 352-3245, or Leslie McCormack, (870) 391-6790, if you have any questions.

OUTREACH TREES FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON: Many thanks to all of you who helped to make the season brighter for our partner organizations in the community. Our Outreach trees in the narthex (main lobby of the sanctuary) were decorated with ornaments listing donation requests that will help our community members in need. This year we chose to support Women and Children First, Youth Home, and our Afghan Welcome Project. It is not too late to turn in your contribution. Please return any remaining donations to the church office with your ornament attached, and contact Lindy Vogado (lindyvogado@secondpreslr.org) with any questions or for more information.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

600 PLEASANT VALLEY DRIVE
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72227

OFFICE: (501) 227-0000

FAX: (501) 227-6513

CARE & CONCERN LINE: (501) 227-6117

WWW.SECONDPRESLR.ORG

JANUARY PREACHING SERIES

Claiming Our Identity: How Christ's 'I Am' Statements Form Us

What shapes your life? Was it a person, a place, or maybe an experience? How was God involved? What is shaping your life now? These are big questions we'll be exploring at Second Presbyterian Church in our initial 2024 Preaching and Worship Series in January and early February. Using the 'I Am' statements from the Gospel of John, we'll discover how Christ's proclamations help form our identities and make who God has called us to be. If you are asking the big questions about who you are and who God is, this series is for you. Join us at Second each Sunday in the new year at 8:30 or 11:00 a.m. for worship and Sunday School at 9:50 a.m.

January 7: "I Am the Light of the World: Christ's Light Lights our Path"

John 8:12 (*Epiphany Sunday*)

January 14: "I am the Bread of Life: Being Fed by Christ"

John 6:35 (*Baptism of the Lord Sunday*)

January 21: "I Am the Gate and the Shepherd: Will You Trust Christ?"

John 10:7 and 11

January 28: "I Am the Resurrection: Salvation Through Faith"

John 11:25 (*Kirkin' of the Tartans*)

SECOND HALL SUNDAY SCHOOL RESUMES IN JANUARY

GOD'S WORLD IN SELECTED POEMS BY EMILY DICKINSON: Join us **January 7** and **14** for a delightful review of the enlightening works of Emily Dickinson, led by former Hendrix professor Chuck Chappell. No pre-reading required, but bring a cup of coffee to muse on the meaning and craft of one of America's most important poets, as her work continues to resonate and illuminate today.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW: On **January 21** and **28** we welcome UALR professor and Cotham lecturer Rebecca Glazier to speak insight into the history and ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, more details to come.

ONGOING ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES SUNDAY MORNINGS, 9:50 A.M.

*Sunday School classes will not meet
December 31.*

The *Seeking More Light* class meets in room 67. We are discussing Lost & Found: Reflections on Grief, Gratitude, and Happiness by Kathryn Schulz. The *Bible Study Class* on Zoom and in the Library at 9:30 a.m. remains focused on studying The Fall Uniform Series on "God's Law is Love" and moves through key passages of Luke, John, Romans, Galatians, Acts and First Corinthians to explore how Love Completes, Faith Triumphs and Christ Frees. Curriculum available digitally or printed free of charge. *Spiritual Nourishment* is reading Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers by Anne Lamott. Join them at 9:30 a.m. in the Heritage Room or online Sundays. Newcomers always welcome as we slowly digest these wise, funny words from one of our favorite modern writers. *The Connections Class* meets in Room 62-63.

RECEPTION FOR MARY IBIS: Please join us on **January 14**, following the 11:00 a.m. service, in Second Hall, to celebrate Mary Ibis, her family, and her twenty-two years of service to Second Presbyterian Church. We are very appreciative of all the hard work that Mary has done for us over the last twenty two years and she will be missed. Mary has played an integral role in the life of our church and she will be difficult to replace, as we begin the process of looking for our next member of the Music Ministry team. I would personally like to wish Mary the best of success in all future endeavors as a music educator for the LRSD board of education. Come join us January 14 and celebrate Mary and her music ministry here at Second Presbyterian Church.

TUESDAY MEN'S GROUP MINISTRY: Each Tuesday at 7:00 a.m., men gather in Second Hall and on Zoom for encouragement, support, and Bible study. Free donuts and coffee! Men of all ages are invited to visit or join. Contact Vic Fleming (judgevic@gmail.com) or Vernon Markham (vmarkh3@gmail.com) for further details.

THERE'S ROOM AT THE TABLE! We've had such great feedback from recent all-church meals that we'd like to start offering ways for our larger church family to share meals together on a regular basis! Beginning **January 7**, the Belonging Ministry will be hosting a church-wide lunch after the 11:00 a.m. worship service on the first Sunday of every month. We will gather at the Lord's Table during worship and then gather round our Great Hall tables to enjoy a delicious meal together. Our lunch for January 7 will catered by Moe's Southwest Grill. The cost will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. Please make a reservation using the QR code or by calling the church office. For more information, contact Lindy Vogado (lindyvogado@secondpreslr.org).



CHEESES WITH JESUS: We are a dynamic community, bridging the gap between 'young adulthood' and retirement with grace and zeal. Our doors swing wide to welcome newcomers seeking spiritual enlightenment and treasured long-time members alike. We start our meetings with a time of fellowship and libations/food followed by study. Meeting in a member's home, we transcend the ordinary, embarking on a journey of connection and spiritual growth. We meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. We will start the new year with a new study: [Six Themes in the Bible Everyone Should Know](#) by Barry A. Ensign-George and Eva Stimson. CWJ will meet on Wednesday, **January 10** at 4009 Ridge Road in NLR, 72219. This is also a housewarming for Diane, proud new homeowner. Members are encouraged to bring a little something for the house. During our gathering time we will tackle Chapter 1 of [Six Themes of the Bible Everyone Should Know](#). Contact Catherine Allsbury or Justin Villines if you want to join us: villinesjustin@gmail.com. ALL are welcome.

CARE AND CONCERN LINE: To learn of joys and concerns during the week, please call our Care and Concern Line (501) 227-6117. Unless noted as confidential, the joys and concerns you share with us are collected into a report which is recorded onto this voice mail message Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Join us in praying for the joys and needs of our congregation and community. To report joys and concerns or to get more involved in Pastoral Care, contact the office.



**CELEBRATING 31 YEARS OF
STEPHEN MINISTRY AT
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN!**



commissioned May, 1992

If you or someone you know is hurting and you would like more information about receiving Stephen Ministry care, please contact any of our Stephen Leaders.

Kay Combs 501-517-5007

Cathy Crass 501-951-5890

Laurie Stueart 501-658-7966

Jana Villemez 501-517-1474

JoAnn McQuade, Grief Care

Rev. Alisa Secrest 501-227-0000

**STEPHEN MINISTRY
GIVING COMFORT, LIFTING SPIRITS**

USHER/GREETER VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS APPRECIATED: Those who serve as ushers and greeters for our worship service are providing a ministry of hospitality for members and visitors to our church. Along with providing an important leadership role for worship, those who serve as ushers and greeters are also afforded a wonderful opportunity to meet and work alongside other members of the congregation. You may contact the following deacons who serve as usher captains to volunteer as ushers or greeters.

JANUARY WORSHIP USHER CAPTAINS

8:30 A.M.

(1/7) Dan Voth
(1/14) Matthew Smith
(1/21) Dan Voth
(1/28) Matthew Smith

11:00 A.M.

(1/7) Galen Wenger
(1/14) Emma Ryall
(1/21 and 1/28) Galen Wenger

CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve
Worship 11:00

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

New Year's Day
Church Office Closed

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

Men's Group Bible Study 7:00
Staff Meeting 9:00
Stewardship Leadership Team 12:00
Pastoral Care Ministry 5:00
Adult Education Ministry 5:30
Property Ministry 5:30
Outreach Ministry 7:00
Youth Ministry 7:00

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

Adult Choir 6:30
Youth Basketball Practice 6:45

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

Young Adult Bible Study 7:00

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

Rancifer Wedding 2:00

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

Worship 8:30, 11:00
Sunday School 9:50
Family Ministry Lunch 12:00
Miriam Project Training 12:00
Young Adult Lunch 12:00
Basketball 4:20
Middle School SPY 5:30
SPY Dinner 6:30
High School SPY 7:00

* Denotes announcement in bulletin