

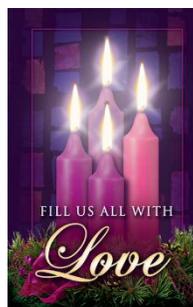


Welcome and Announcements Elder Allen Pease

Prelude Amanda Biggs and Benjamin Watkins

Call to Worship

Souheil Haddad, liturgist



Lighting of the Advent Wreath ♦ **Elder Allen Pease & Oliver Ruth** ♦ **The Candle of Joy**

Elder: This morning we light the third candle of Advent...the candle of Joy.

Liturgist: Life with our Eternal Creator fills each moment with wonder and surprise. May we be watchful as we await the coming of Christ. May we not be found sleeping but awake and rejoicing in the newness of life God is sending. Come, Lord Jesus, come. Let us pray.

People: **Stir up joy within Your people, Lord God. Open our ears to your Word through your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath ♦ **Elder Souheil Haddad** ♦ **The Candle of Love**

Liturgist: This morning, we light the fourth candle of Advent...the candle of Love.

As Christmas trees are lighted, as people rush to shop and send cards, as Christmas songs are heard everywhere, let us keep close to God, that the One whose coming we celebrate – Jesus Christ – may be honored in all we do.

We are your people. Shine forth Your love through us, that Christ may be seen.

Let us pray...

People: **Stir up your love, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from all that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Call to Worship [Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7]

Elder Souheil Haddad

Liturgist: The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

People: **FOR US a child is born, FOR US a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.**

Liturgist: And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

People: **FOR US a child is born, FOR US a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.**

Liturgist: He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and holding It with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

People: **FOR US a child is born, FOR US a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.**

Liturgist: Come, let us worship with joy!

Time of Confession ♦ Liturgist Haddad and the People

Mentors--a reflection on the nativity characters, by Martha FrizLanger.

Liturgist: In the birth narratives of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the main characters teach us new ways of living, new ways of loving. Let us open our hearts to these mentors as we long to become more like Jesus. Let us pray:

O Gabriel, obedient one, did you know...

did you know the exploding creativity incarnate in the Message you delivered?

How it would bring frightening awe-filled salvation?

People: O, that I could be like you and obediently deliver the Message.

Liturgist: O Mary, open one,

did you know...

did you know the humble power

demonstrated in the Christ you birthed?

How He would bring upside-down converting life?

People: O, that I could be like you and openly birth the Christ.

Liturgist: O Joseph, righteous one,

did you know...

did you know the covering provision

necessary for the Innocent you sheltered?

How it would bring you dangerous wondrous changes?

People: O, that I could be like you and righteously shelter the Innocent.

Liturgist: O Shepherds, believing ones,

did you know...

did you know the shocking praise

required for the Savior you sang?

How it would bring you alienated outcast joy?

People: O, that I could be like you and believably sing the Savior.

Liturgist: O Sages, wise ones,

did you know...

did you know the radical searching

expended for the King you sought?

How it would bring you violent passionate worship?

People: O, that I could be like you and wisely seek the King.

Liturgist: Heavenly Father, Son and Holy Spirit, loving one,

did you know...

did you know the extravagant pouring out

demanding for the Impoverished you embraced?

How we would bring you sacrificial constant abandon?

People: O, that I could be like you and lovingly embrace the Impoverished.

[time of silent reflection]

The Promise of God's Love for Us (Roman's 8: 1-2, 31-35, 38-39) Liturgist and the People

Liturgist: Hear the promise of God's love and presence for you: There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 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? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. 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. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

People: No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sung Response [Chorus of "What Child is This?"]

*This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing
Hail, hail for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.*

**Gloria Patri #579*



Passing of the Peace

Liturgist: God sends this message of joy to all people, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, the Lord of all. The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also, with you.**

Liturgist: Let us share Christ's peace with one another

Music for Meditation Amanda Biggs
Scriptures About God's Love ♦ Liturgist

Sermon: *For Us* ♦ a poetic sermon by Rev. Dr. Martha FrizLanger

***Sermon Hymn:** *To a Maid Engaged to Joseph* #19

Affirmation of Faith – The Nicene Creed – led by Reverend FrizLanger

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; through him all things were made.

FOR US and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

FOR US he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer – Elder Donn Root

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.

Call for the Offering

Offertory Amanda Biggs

PC(USA) Christmas Joy Offering will also be received

**Doxology #592*

Prayer of Dedication Rev. FrizLanger

*Closing Hymn: *In the Bleak Midwinter* #36

Charge and Benediction Reverend Dr. Martha FrizLanger

Postlude Benjamin Watkins, piano

*Please stand if you are able

UPC Prayer List - Email requests to: upcbloomington@gmail.com

Our congregation as we close 2025 and look forward to 2026 in the service of our Lord

Kevin Jones Roby Lorimer Virginia McCartney Kathleen Olds Anita Steverson

His Eyes Mission in Honduras led by Valerie and Felipe Co,by

Nyaka Global in Uganda led by Jackson Kaguri

The food pantries of Monroe County as they struggle with increased demand

The people of Georgia, Nigeria, Middle East and Ukraine

Military Service Members – Righteous God, you rule the nations. Guard brave men and women who risk themselves in battle for their country. Give them compassion for enemies who also fight for patriotic causes. Keep our sons and daughters from hate that hardens, or from scorekeeping with human lives. Though they must be at war, let them live for peace, as eager for agreement as for victory. Encourage them as they encourage on another, and never let hard duty separate them from loyalty to your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For Those in the Military” The Book of Common Worship, pg 818, #65

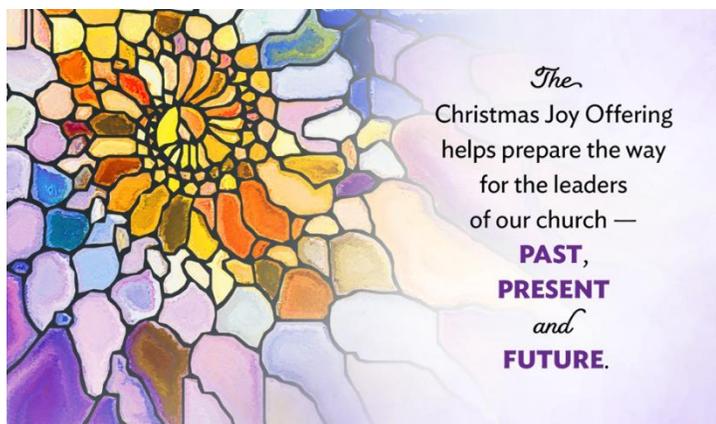
Church Leaders: Annual Reports Due

The UPC 2026 Annual Report covering 2025 is being assembled for presentation at the UPC Annual Meeting on February 22, 2026, immediately after morning worship. Email your report to upcbloomington@gmail.com no later than Friday, January 30, 2026. Please use Times New Roman as your font. See Stephanie Worden if you have questions.



Elder Souheil Haddad invites you immediately after the service to the annual Haddad Christmas Lunch & Party. Lunch is hot and ready to go on the lower level of the Church. All are welcome.

Christmas Joy Offering ♦ Prepare the Way – Isaiah 40



When we give to the Christmas Joy Offering we prepare the way for church leaders and students of color at Presbyterian related schools. Of the offering, 50% smooths the path for church workers and clergy in times of need and 50% prepares students of color to learn and grow at Presbyterian schools. The PC(USA) Christmas Joy Offering will be received at UPC today and and our service of

Hymns & Carols (12/28).



Thank You 2025 Poinsettia Display Sponsors



Jo Barnett, Fadi & Aline Haddad, Jim Haverstock, Michelle Heitink, Sue Lorimer
Souheil & Alejandra Haddad – in loving memory of Bob Hammel and Souheil’s
parents & in joy for Ale’s parents & granddaughters Yasmina and Evileen

Troy & Nancy Hill – in joy for their son Andy Hill

Lance & Karen Like – in loving memory of their parents

Allen Pease – in loving memory of Bob Hammel and Allen’s parents- Rose, Robert & Ray

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