

December 31, 2023

First Sunday of Christmas

CALL TO WORSHIP

We have gathered in this place to worship,

because Jesus invites us to come!

We come as we are, with our faith and our doubts,
with our successes and our failures,

because Jesus invites us to come!

We come with what we have, bringing with us the events
and experiences of this past week,

because Jesus invites us to come.

GATHERING MUSIC

HYMN 377 *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

PRAYER

OPENING MUSIC

SEEKING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(from Presbyterian Outlook – Philip K. Gladden)

Gracious and loving God, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we look back and recognize the many ways we have fallen short of your glory: missed opportunities to share your love; times when we were silent when we could have spoken up for what was right; indifference to your claim on our whole lives through Jesus Christ; and a lack of gratitude for your amazing grace by which you save us and call us to be your people. Lord, forgive us. As we look ahead to a new year, free us from thinking we can save ourselves. Help us to follow where you lead. Show us how to be your children and your heirs, forgiven and freed to live for our God and for one another in love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Silent prayers)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

RESPONSE

HYMN 84

Creator of the Stars of Night

CHILDREN'S CONVERSATION

***HYMN 127**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 11: 28-30

SERMON

"Things We Carry"

Rev. Scott Lawson & Laura Roberson Hadas

ANTHEM

"Come Unto Him"

from Messiah by G.F. Handel

Sarah Downey, soloist

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

Offering boxes are available at the back of the sanctuary.

Gifts may also be made online at starmountpres.org.

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Lord God, grant us your gracious, guiding presence as we prepare to enter a new year. As we join Christians of every time who have awaited Jesus' return, lead us into this new time, confident that your promises will be fulfilled. Spirit of Truth, call us to repentance at the beginning of this new year. Forgive us for past unfaithfulness, silence in the face of injustice and inaction amid suffering. Move us from a desire to hoard our wealth and material possessions toward faithful stewardship. Help us to share your gifts with those who cry out for daily bread.

Prince of Peace, healer and reconciler, heal the divisions in your Church and among the peoples of the world. As you prayed that we should all be one, give us new visions to enable that unity. Be with us on our journey, and with those siblings who surround us in the great cloud of witnesses. God of all ages, release us from fear. Lead us forward, even as you have led your Church forward from an empty cross and tomb through 20 centuries. Be our companion as we walk unexplored paths into an unknown future. Open us to new possibilities. Renew our hope. Grant us faith to move ahead. Show us the burdens we can lay at your feet. Be our companion until Jesus comes again.

(Adapted from Bass Mitchell)

***HYMN (on screen)**

Faith Begins by Letting Go

BENEDICTION

***Please stand in body or spirit**

Announcements

Thank you for joining us for worship this Sunday! We hope you will find it to be an uplifting and meaningful experience. If you are a **guest or visitor**, we invite you to stop by our information desk in the Narthex (entry space). We have a gift for you as well as some information about our wonderful community of faith. If you feel comfortable sharing your contact information, we invite you to also fill out a visitor card.

Families with young children are invited to stop by the children's corner in the Narthex. Here you can check in your children for nursery care and staff can direct you to our downstairs classrooms. There are also worship/activity bags available.

The **church office** will be **closed tomorrow**.

Starmount Connects- check out the Starmount Connects board in the Narthex for a special event on Sat. Jan. 20 to raise funds for Out of the Garden. This singer/songwriter event features members and friends of Starmount!

Year-end contributions will be accepted **thru December 31**, by mail if postmarked by the 31st, or place it in the Offering Box today.

Have you made your 2024 pledge? If not, you can easily submit a pledge by using the link in your weekly email. You can also submit a pledge card, available in the narthex, or call the church office and ask for Lynne.

2024 Offering Envelopes - Please stop by the Welcome Desk in the Narthex to pick up 2024 Offering Envelopes. Envelopes are not named or numbered. You have the option to pick up envelopes for weekly or monthly donations.

A big **thank you** to the congregation for your contributions to the THP Christmas Stocking and Angel Tree projects. These items/gifts will bring much cheer to these families. I am very grateful for each and every one of you! Debbie Pace

Just Lunch – Join us January 21 following worship for lunch at K&W Cafeteria. Visitors are welcome as our guests. Children are welcome as well!

Plastics Recycling Update – We are nearly to our goal of 500 pounds of plastic that will be upcycled rather than tossed out. Way to go! Just a couple of reminders: if it has a symbol like this  or it's crinkly, it **CANNOT** be recycled. We will be collecting through the end of January. Keep in mind that the plastic mailers that online retailers use and the air pillows that come in the boxes from online retailers **CAN** be recycled.

Homework Helpers meets weekly on Thursday from 4-5:30pm. We need transportation, snack and dinner providers, and homework helpers to work with students. Contact Laura (laura@starmountpres.org) for more information!

Thank you to all the Starmount members who have come to the church during the week to support our office staff. We are extremely grateful for all of you! Thank you, Cynthia Knust, for organizing the volunteers!

Do you have a prayer concern or celebration to share? Please feel free to add it to the prayer wall in the narthex or you can email or call Anne in the church office at anne@starmountpres.org, (336) 299-8131 ext. 110

Starmount Presbyterian Church
starmountpres.org
(336) 299-8131

Starmount Presbyterian Church Program Staff

Rev. Dr. Charlie Lee, Pastor

Rev. Scott Lawson, Parish Associate

Sarah Downey, Director of Music

Michael Parker, Pianist/Organist

Cindy Lee, Director of Children's Ministries

Laura Roberson Hadas, Director of Youth & Refugee Ministries



**Welcome to Sunday Worship
December 31, 2023 · 10:00 a.m.**