

**Erwin Presbyterian Church**

Fourth Sunday of Advent \* December 24, 2023 \* 11:00 a.m.

105 N. Elm Ave., Erwin, TN 37650 \* 423-743-3431\* erwinpresbyterianchurch.com

**Prelude** *Gesu Bambino or The Infant Jesus* arr. Pietro A. Yon

Ethan Thomas, organist

**Welcome and Announcements** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Introit** *Gentle Mary Laid Her Child* Red Hymnbook #167

**\* Light the Advent Candle and Call to Worship** Scott and Alison Shults (Family)

Leader: Watch and wait for Christ’s coming! Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

**All: Amen. Come Lord, Jesus!**

Leader: We light this candle in hope. *(Light the first candle: purple candle)*.

 We light this candle for peace. *(Light the second candle: purple Candle).*

 We light this candle in Joy. *(Light the third candle: pink candle).*

 We light this candle with love. *(Light the fourth candle: purple candle)*.

Leader: Out of love for the people of God, the Lord speaks through the prophet Isaiah 7:10-14:

**10**Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, **11**“Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.” **12**But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.” **13**Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? **14**Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

**\*Hymn**  *Angels from the Realms of Glory* Red Hymnbook, #168

**Call to Confession** Denise Rose

Leader: We have all sinned, not one of us is clean; but there is mercy for those who call on the name of the Lord. Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sins.

**Prayer of Confession** Denise Rose

**All: God of the future, you are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule. We confess that we have not expected your kingdom, for we live causal lives, ignoring your promised judgment. We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth, and refuse your justice and peace. In your mercy, forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your way, and to seek things that will endure when Christ comes to judge the world.**

 (*Please take a moment of silent confession)*

**Assurance of Pardon (Isaiah 12:4-5)** Denise Rose

Leader: Every valley is lifted up; every mountain made low. Now the glory of the Lord is revealed, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**\*Gloria Patri**  Red Hymnbook, #546

**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**.

**\*The Peace** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

Pastor: Jesus said, “My peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.” May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor: Please take a moment to greet one another and share the peace of Christ.

**First Scripture Reading-Numbers 6:22-27** Denise Rose

**22**The Lord said to Moses, **23**“Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

**24**“‘“The Lord bless you
    and keep you;
**25**the Lord make his face shine on you
    and be gracious to you;
**26**the Lord turn his face toward you
    and give you peace.”’

**27**“So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**

**Anthem** *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day* Green Hymnbook, #267

**Prayer for Illumination** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Second Scripture Reading- Luke 2:8-20** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**8**And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9**An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10**But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11**Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12**This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

**13**Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,**14**“Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

**15**When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

**16**So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. **17**When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, **18**and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **19**But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. **20**The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**

**Sermon** *The Birth of Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes (II): The Shepherds’ Visit*

 The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Introduction**

**First, Historical Background**

**Second, The Proclamation**

**Third, The Shepherd’s Response**

**Conclusion**

**\*Declaration of Faith (The Apostles’ Creed)** Denise Rose

Leader: Let’s declare our faith.

**All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Prayer of the People** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Ends with *The Lord’s Prayer***

**All: 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**

***Invitation to the Offering*** Denise Rose

Leader: Let us magnify the Lord, rejoicing in the one who scatters the proud, lifts up the lowly, and fills the hungry with good things. Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

(*may the ushers move forward and collect the offering*)

***Offertory Music*** *The Snow Lay on the Ground*

***\*Doxology*** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*Red Hymnbook, #544

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God all creatures here below;**

**Praise God above, ye heavenly host;**

**Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

**\**Prayer of Dedication*** Denise Rose

Leader: O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, even as you use us, to

accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, the Head of the church and the Lord of our lives.

**All: Amen.**

**\*Hymn** *Go Tell It on the Mountain* Green Hymnbook, #258

**\*Benediction** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Benediction Response**  *Emmanuel*

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel,**

**His name is Called Emmanuel.**

**God with us, revealed in us,**

**His name is called Emmanuel**

**Postlude** *Joy to the World* arr. Lani Smith

Ethan Thomas, organist

**Notes:**

***\*****Responses with an asterisk indicate standing. Please stand as you are able.*

**Sources for Worship Liturgy:** The liturgy is based on the *Book of Common Worship*.

**Welcome Visitors**: Welcome! If you are visiting please fill out one of the green visitor’s cards from the pew and put it in the offering plate. We are glad you are here! Hope to see you again soon!

**Announcements**

**New Members' Class** (Sunday, January 7 and 21 at 12-2 p.m.): Erwin Presbyterian Church will hold a new members' class to discuss the essential elements of our faith and church membership. If you are interested in becoming a member at EP Church, please contact Rev. Marcos.

**Congregational Meeting** (Sunday, January 14):Following service.

**Directory Update ─** We will be working to update all contact information for our church members and attendees. Please review the contact list in the narthex and submit any changes. December 31 is the deadline for changes.

**Food Collection ─** The food item for January is boxed potatoes.

**Elders of the Month** ─ Betty Stevens and Mary Beth Longcrier.

**Christmas** ─ (Monday, December 25): Our office will be closed.

**Contact Information**

**Pastor**: Rev. Dr. Ramy N. Marcos **Administrative Assistant**: Jackie Andrews

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**Office hours** **M-Th, Sun:** Out of the Office. **Tu-Th:** 9 a.m. **-** 2 p.m.