

### **Scripture Reading**

Isaiah 7:10-16 (Pew Bible Page #636 )

Matthew 1:18-25 (Pew Bible Page #1)

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God. And we all say:

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Helen Thompson

**Anthem** *O Come Emanuel*

Mary McDonald

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Sermon** "Faith, Love, and a Little Magic"

Pastor Ken

**Prayers of the People** (Sharing of Joys and Concerns)

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 and ever. Amen

**\*Closing Hymn** #4 "Still, Still, Still"

**\*Charge and Benediction**

**Choral Benediction** *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Grant Us Peace)

**Postlude** *Fantasy*

Jeannine Yeager

Belinda Vair Accompanist/Choir Director

Thank you to the A.F.P. & S. Committee  
for providing us with today's Coffee Hour

**First Presbyterian Church of Johnstown, NY – YouTube link:**



**Website Address: [www.johnstownpresbyterian.org](http://www.johnstownpresbyterian.org)**



**December 21, 2025      Fourth Sunday of Advent      10:30am**

**WELCOME: TO JOHNSTOWN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. WELCOME TO  
ALL JOINING US HERE AND ON YOUTUBE. PLEASE REMEMBER TO SHARE THE  
SERVICE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY. WE WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT YOU  
ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE HERE.      LAURA RUEHLE**

**Mission of the Month**      Christmas Joy

**Prelude**      *O Come, O Come, Emanuel*/Coventry Carol arr. by Lavawan Riley  
Belinda Vair Accompanist/Choir Director

**Lighting of the Advent Candles**

The Candle of Love– David Hayes & Oakley Cole  
Followed by Choral Introit – “*An Advent Carol*”

### Call To Worship

Pastor Ken

**Leader:** Friends, as we draw close to Christmas, what are we waiting for now?

**People:** We are waiting for love — love that shows up when we are unsure, love that meets us in the ordinary and the unexpected.

**Leader:** The prophet speaks of a sign, a promise from God, given not to the confident, but to the fearful.

**People:** We listen for God’s love, a love that does not abandon us, a love that comes to be *with us*.

**Leader:** In Matthew’s gospel, we hear of Joseph — a man faced with a hard choice, who listens, trusts, and acts in love.

**People:** We give thanks for a love that is patient and courageous, a love that chooses faithfulness over fear.

**Leader:** Today we light the candle of love, remembering that God’s love takes on flesh and name.

**People:** Emmanuel — God with us — love born into our world, love strong enough to change us.

**Leader:** Come, let us worship the God who comes near.

**All:** We come to worship, ready to receive and to share the love that has first been given to us.

(PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR IN SPIRIT)

**\*Opening Hymn #8 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates”**

### Call to Confession

Pastor Ken

Friends, Advent reminds us that God comes to us in love—not because we have everything figured out, but because we often do not. We admit we sometimes resist this love, hesitating to trust and letting fear or self-protection guide us.

When love calls for courage or compassion, we may turn away. Yet, God meets us with mercy, promising to be with us even now. Trusting in that grace, let us confess together and open our hearts to the love that heals and restores.

### Unison Prayer of Confession

**All:** Loving God, we confess that we do not always trust your promises.

When love asks us to be brave, we hesitate. When love calls us to welcome the unexpected, we resist.

We admit that fear too often guides our decisions, and convenience shapes our compassion. We turn inward instead of toward our neighbors, and we close our hearts when you call us to open them.

Forgive us, O God. Remind us that you are with us — in uncertainty, in change, and in hope.

Restore us by your grace, so that we may receive your love anew and share that love freely with the world. Amen.

Leader: Let us take a moment for silent confession and personal reflection.

### Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Hear the good news! The love of God does not hesitate or hold back. In Jesus Christ, God comes to be *with us*, not to condemn us, but to save us. The promises spoken by the prophets are fulfilled, and grace is given before we even ask. In Christ, we are forgiven, made new, and invited to begin again. Friends, believe this good news: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and loved.

**ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

### \*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.**

### Prayer for Illumination

Leader: God of promise and presence, as we turn to your Word, draw near to us. Quiet our anxious thoughts and open our hearts, that we might hear not just ancient words, but your living voice speaking love and truth today.

By your Spirit, give us insight to understand, courage to trust, and grace to respond with faith. May your Word reveal Emmanuel—

God with us—and shape us to live in love. **Amen.**



**Christmas Poinsettia's to the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of:**

**Mary Jo Argotsinger**  
*Her Family*

**Walt and Sandy Lane**  
*Loved Ones*

**Kristi Minor & Jason Mylott**  
*Their Dad – Thomas Mylott*

**Linda Snell**  
*Ron Snell*

**Barbara H. Taylor**  
*Dr. & Mrs. William F. Heseck*

**Barbara H. Taylor**  
*Her Sister – Christine H. Higgins*  
*You will be missed!*



**Christmas Poinsettia's to the Glory of God and in Loving Honor of:**

**Kristi Miner and Jason Mylott**  
*Her Parents Fred I. and Patricia Maderic*  
*Lynn Mylott*



*A special thank you to Sandy Lane, Barbara Taylor and Donna VanAernam for being responsible for the Poinsettia's beautifying the Sanctuary.*