



First United

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1917 Fifth Avenue, Troy, NY 12180
Unitedprestroy.org † (518)272-2771

DECEMBER 21, 2025

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

GATHERING MUSIC

Two Variations on Adeste Fideles

Moderato Johann Gustav Eduard Stehle (1839-1915)
Pastorale David Schelat (b. 1955)

Lullaby on the German carol O Jesulein süß ("O Jesus So Sweet")
Samuel Scheidt (1650) setting, Rebecca Groom te Velde (b. 1952)

Reflection on the 16th cent. English lullaby Coventry Carol
arr. Philip M. Young (b. 1937)
In Remembrance of the Children Slaughtered in Gaza

"Come Now, O Prince of Peace" (O-so-so)
Geonyoung Lee (b. 1947) setting, Roberta Rowland-Raybold (b. 1938)

WELCOME & FRAMING

*GATHERING WORDS

Here in worship, we pray together,
we stand together,
we sing together, we listen together.
Here in worship, we are not alone.
So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry,
We remember: we are not alone.
Let us worship our with-us God.

*HYMN

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

***Come now, O Prince of Peace; make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.***

***Come now, O God of love; make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.***

***Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.
Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.***

Come, hope of unity; make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus; reconcile all people.

LIGHTING THE LOVE CANDLE

In a world full of fear, where do you see love?

We see love all around us.

We see love when people hold open the door.

We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call after a long day.

We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional acts of empathy.

We see love all around us.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, love is all around us.

Today we light the candle of love as a reminder of this good news.

May this light help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here.

Love is world-changing. Love is shining bright. We only have to look for it.

Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen.

RESPONDING TO JOY

#137- *He Came Down*

He came down that we may have hope;

He came down that we may have hope;

He came down that we may have hope;

Hallelujah forevermore!

CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

When you were afraid, did we stay by your side?

Did we offer a hand, or did we leave you alone?

When you were afraid, did we choose solidarity?

Did we see your fear, or did we only see our own?

Friends, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too.

So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

Now we must ask—when you were afraid, did we stay by your side?

Did we offer our hands, or did we leave you alone?

When you were afraid, did we choose solidarity?

Did we see your fear? Or did we only see ours?

Friends, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too.

So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

We accept your grace and would love to start again.

ALL: May it be so, with God's help. Alleluia, amen.

Silence is kept for Prayer and Reflection.

*RESPONSE TO GRACE

#76- *Do Not Be Afraid* (Refrain)

Do not be afraid, for I am with you.

Chosen and beloved, you are my own.

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you:

By your name I called you for my own.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 41:5-10
Matthew 1:18-25

SERMON

“Afraid, but Never Alone”

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We have seen the valley. We have seen a sky without stars.
We have seen the longest night, and still we believe.
We believe in a with-us God. We believe in the hope of tomorrow.
We believe that good news is louder than fear. We believe this good news is for all people.
So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles,
even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.
We will reach for each other. We will look for God in our midst.
We will sing songs of joy. We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born.
We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love.
So still, we believe. Amen.**

*SERMON RESPONSE

“We’re Not Alone” (tune: *Adeste Fidelis*)

***Fear all around you tells you you’re alone,
urging you to build walls and isolate.
I know your fear because I feel it, too.***

Refrain:

***When fear grows deep inside us, remember what unites us.
No, nothing can divide us and we’re not alone!***

***Give me your hand to hold when you feel frightened.
We can uphold each other in our fear.
Person by person, we’ll find strength together.***

***When people live in fear for their safety,
let us put privilege on the line for them,
Stand with our siblings in solidarity.***

***Forward we march together toward God’s kindom,
building a bigger table, not taller walls.
Working together, nothing is impossible!***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PASTORAL PRAYER

MOMENT FOR MISSION

Christmas Joy Offering

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

*An offering plate will be passed during the service,
or you may give online through Tithe.ly: <https://tithe.ly/give?c=1309305>
Please note where you would like your gift to be directed (general fund, deacons, etc.)*

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

#607- *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

***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

God of love, bless these gifts and make them signs of Your presence in the world. May they bring comfort to the hurting, strength to the weary, and light to those who walk in fear. Teach us to love as You love—freely, fully, and forever. Amen.

COMMUNION

INVITATION

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

SANCTUS

#559- *Holy, Holy, Holy*

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!***

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

#560- *Christ Has Died, Christ is Risen*

Christ Has Died; Christ Is Risen; Christ will come again.

INVOCATION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and
the glory, forever. Amen.**

AMEN

#561- *Amen*

Amen, Amen, Amen.

SHARING IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*HYMN

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

***Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.***

***We are pilgrims on a journey; we're together on the road.
We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.***

***I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.***

***I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.***

***When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.***

***Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.***

*BENEDICTION

SENDING MUSIC

“In Dulci Jubilo” (trad. German)

arr. Marianne Kim (b. 1972)



Pastor: Rev. Marranda Major (marranda@unitedprestroy.org)

Guest Organist: David A. Vredenburg – Eastern NY Chapter,
American Guild of Organists (AGO)

Onscreen Visuals: Charlotte Albertin, Martha Juenger,
and Jim Parmelee

Audiovisual Production: Martha Juenger and Don Drew

Liturgy adapted from materials by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

Session

Class of 2026

Dan Rogers
Peggy Smith Savchik
Vacant

Class of 2027

Jim Parmelee
Sue Steele
Marilynn O'Dell

Class of 2028

Alan Chandler
Kodzo Dzikunu
Bruce Reed

Diaconate

Class of 2026

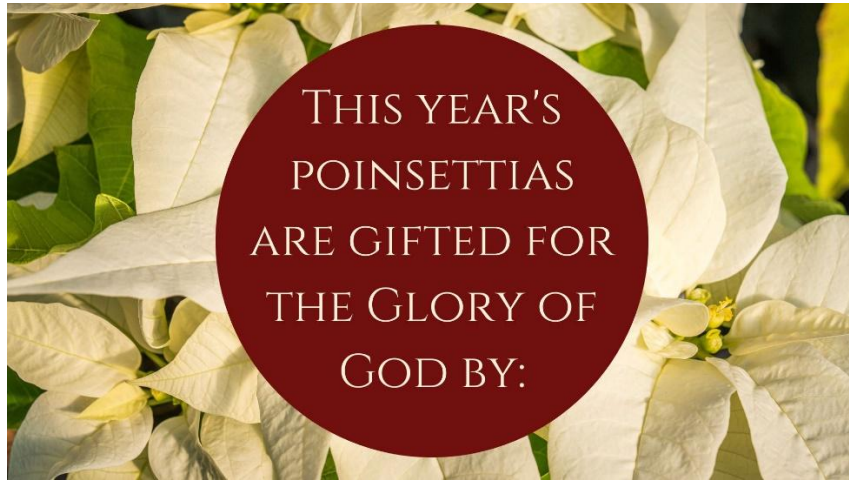
Peg Drew
Martha Juenger
Pat Rudebush

Class of 2027

Debbie Brown
Miriam Parmelee
Brenda Westbrook

Class of 2028

Diane Chandler
Olga Green
Noel Hains



Sue Steele: In memory of loved ones, and in celebration of Lorelei Dalakos.

In memory of Licorice, and in honor of Ezra and Tangelo.

Rev. Marranda Major and Allison Dilyard.

Nguyen-McDowell Family: In memory of Thanh Huu Nguyen and Danica Adjemovich.

Jim and Miriam Parmelee: In celebration of the Green Team, and to celebrate being part of a caring community.

Dan and Laura Rogers: In celebration of our First United Community of Faith.

Sue Connolly: In memory of loved ones.

Martha Juenger: In celebration of the ministries and missions of First United.

Eugenie Wolou: For my Father.

David and Noel Hains: In memory of loved ones.

Bruce Reed.

Alan and Diane Chandler: In celebration of our grandchildren Daniel, Maddie, Cecilia & Violette.

Debbie Brown.

Don and Peggy Drew: In celebration of our 6 grandchildren, and in memory of Don's Parents and Peggy's Mother.

Pauline and Fred Miller: In memory of Clarice Miller, Evelyn Kamen, and Carol Brantley.