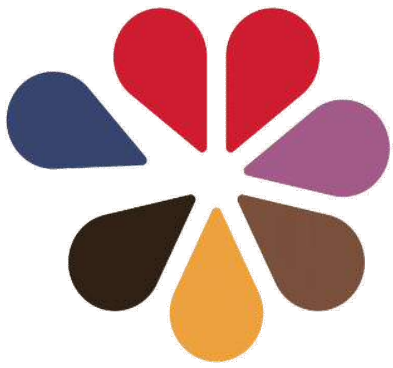




DOWNTOWN

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We Live Into Jesus' Inclusive Call to Love Every Person, Care for Creation, and Work for God's Justice.



Third Sunday of Advent

*If you have a joy or concern you would like to have lifted in prayer today, please complete a **Prayer Request Card**, including the name of the person (and pronunciation) or event, and additional information you'd like to share. Prayer Requests Cards will be collected during the **hymn following the sermon**.*

Arr. Mark Hayes for piano, four hands

Susan Richane

Text: Claire Cloninger

One: Today we light the Gaudete candle — the candle of Joy — not because life is simple, but because the Holy draws near in ways the world cannot predict.

Many: We rejoice as an act of courage. We rejoice as an act of resistance.
We rejoice because joy is a flame the darkness cannot name.

*Prayer of Invocation

One: Let us open our hearts now to the Presence moving in
and through this very hour...

Many: Holy One, Joy-Bringer, Light-Bearer— Enter this moment as You
have entered every generation that dared to hope. Tune our ears to the
notes of grace hidden beneath the noise of our days. Make us attentive
to the stirring that whispers, “Something new is rising.” Gather our
scattered selves into Your steadying love, that in word, song, silence,
and mystery we may glimpse the world. You are still beginning. Amen.

*Hymn

The Bethlehem in Our Hearts

BRING A TORCH

(Sing once before the Advent candle lighting and once afterwards.

Music may be found on page 7.)

Lighting of The Third Advent Candle

One: This week we relight the candles of Hope and Love and light the
candle of Joy.

Many: Joy rises like laughter we didn't plan. As we wait for the birth of
the Light, we discover that joy is born not from perfection but from what
is real and alive.

One: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my
Savior.” — Luke 1:46-47

Many: Spirit of Joy, sing through our lives. Let your melody find us
open and unafraid. Amen.

Installation and Ordination of Officers

Time With Young Disciples

Robin Sheikh

Prayer for Transformation

One: Holy Spirit of Joy and Justice... We pause before You now —
not to confess our failures, but to realign our wandering hearts with

the deeper truth of who we are and who we are becoming. Where we have shrunk our lives to what feels safe,

Many: Reset us toward courage.

One: Where cynicism has claimed too much space,

Many: Reset us toward wonder.

One: Where we have forgotten the quiet ember of joy within,

Many: Breathe on it again.

Words of Grace

One: Friends in Christ, hear the good news that ancient prophets and new poets echo still:

Many: The Holy meets us not in perfection ... but in possibility.

Not in certainty ... but in openness.

Not in having it all resolved ... but in choosing to turn again toward the Light that finds us.

One: Thanks be to God. We are being made new. Again and again.

Many: Amen.

First Reading Matthew 11:2-14 (*Responsive*)

One: John, meanwhile, had been locked up in prison. When he got wind of what Jesus was doing, he sent his own disciples to ask,

Many: "Are you the One we've been expecting, or are we still waiting?"

One: Jesus told them, "Go back and tell John what's going on:

Many: The blind see, The lame walk, Lepers are cleansed, The deaf hear, The dead are raised, The wretched of the earth learn that God is on their side.

One: "Is this what you were expecting? Then count yourselves most blessed!"

When John's disciples left to report, Jesus started talking to the crowd about John.

"What did you expect when you went out to see him in the wild? A weekend camper? Hardly. What then? A sheik in silk pajamas? Not in the wilderness, not by a long shot. What then? A prophet? That's right, a prophet! Probably the best prophet you'll ever hear. He is the prophet that Malachi announced when he wrote, 'I'm sending my prophet ahead of you, to make the road smooth for you.' "Let me tell you what's going on here: No one in history surpasses John the Baptizer; but in the kin-dom he prepared you for, the lowliest person is ahead of him.

Many: For a long time now people have tried to force themselves into God's kingdom. But if you read the books of the Prophets and God's Law closely, you will see them culminate in John, teaming up with him in preparing the way for the Messiah of the kin-dom. Looked at in this way, John is the 'Elijah' you've all been expecting to arrive and introduce the Messiah.

Music for Reflection

Thou Shalt Know Him

Mark Sirett

*"Thou shalt know him when he comes, not by any din of drums,
nor his manners, nor his airs, nor by any thing he wears.
Thou shalt know him when he comes, not by crown or by gown,
but his coming known shall be, by the holy harmony
which his coming makes in thee.
Thou shalt know him when he comes. Amen."*

Text: Anonymous

Second Reading

Luke 1:46-55 (Mary's Song)

Sermon

What do You Want?

Rev. Deb Swift

*Hymn

Who Would Think that What Was Needed
(Music may be found on page 8.)

WHITE ROSETTES

Joys and Concerns

Prayers for Healing and Justice

† Prayer of Jesus

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Spirit 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 Spirit, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Music

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day

John Gardner

*"Tomorrow shall be my dancing day: I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play, to call my true love to my dance:
Ref: Sing O my love, O my love, my love, my love;*

*This have I done for my true love.
Then was I born of a virgin pure, of her I took fleshly substance;
Thus was I knit to man's nature, to call my true love to my dance: Ref.
In a manger laid and wrapped I was, so very poor this was my chance,
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass, to call my true love to my dance: Ref.
Then afterwards baptized I was; the Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My maker's voice heard from above, to call my true love to my dance: Ref."*

Text: Traditional

***Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Let songs rise up from earth below;
Let stars and galaxies enthrone;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One! Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication *(Responsive)*

One: Joy-Giver, take these gifts —coins, commitments, time, imagination—
and weave them into the work of justice, mercy, and renewal.
Many: May what we offer today become music in someone's wilderness,
light in someone's night, and courage in someone's doubt. Use us, too —
our voices, our choices, our hope — as instruments of Your Joy in the
world, we ask. Amen.

***Hymn**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus
(Music may be found on page 10.)

STUTTGART

***Benediction**

Postlude

Fum, Fum, Fum

Traditional Catalan

Arr. Mark Hayes for piano, four hands

***Passing of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be always with you.

And also with you.

Let us extend the Peace of Christ to one another.

The Bethlehem in Our Hearts

(Recorded in Bb) $\flat$



Wait - ing here while the world is in dark - ness.



Wait-ing here for the birth of the Light.



Can - dle glow and an gel voi - ces



sing of the One to be born in - side us.



Love. Love. Fol-low the song of the Ho - ly Star to the



Beth - le - hem in our hearts.

Words: Deborah Fae Swift
Traditional French Melody
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138 Who Would Think That What Was Needed

1 Who would think that what was need - ed to trans -
 2 Shep - herds watch and wise men won - der; mon - archs
 3 Cen - tu - ries of skill and sci - ence span the

form and save the earth might not be a
 scorn and an - gels sing; such a place as
 past from which we move, yet ex - pe - rience

plan or ar - my, proud in pur - pose, proved in
 none would reck - on hosts a ho - ly help - less
 ques - tions wheth - er, with such prog - ress, we im -

worth? Who would think, de - spite de - ri - sion, that a
 thing. Sta - ble beasts and by - passed strang - ers watch a
 prove. While the hu - man lot we pon - der, lest our

Hindsight is nearly always clearer than foresight, and with gentle good humor this Christmas hymn points out how great was the gap between human expectation and God's actual way of providing a means of salvation for us. God's ways continually exceed our claims to comprehend them.

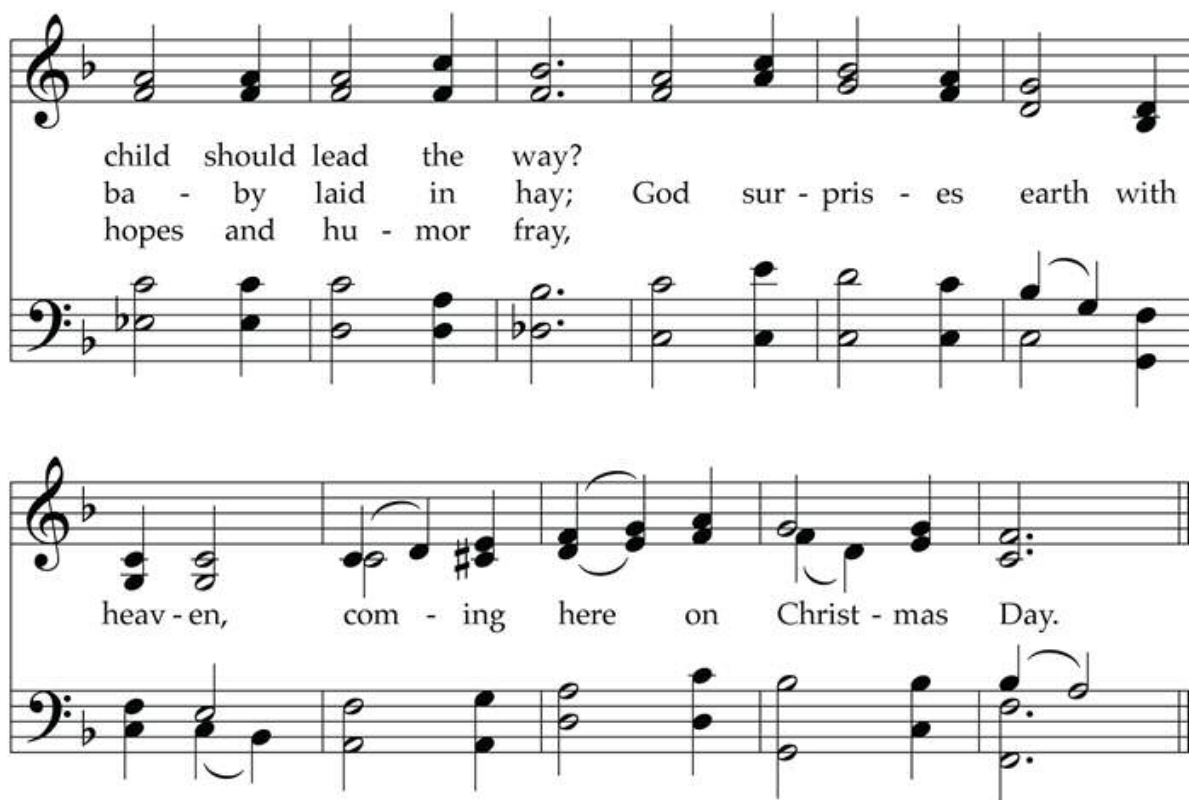
TEXT: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1987

MUSIC: John L. Bell, 2005

Text and Music © 1987, 2005 WGRC, Iona Community (admin. GIA Publications, Inc.)

WHITE ROSETTES

8.7.8.7.D



Thank you to...

Worship Leader: Rev. Deb Swift

Liturgist: Susan Richane

Chancel Choir Members

Soprano: Cecelia Allchin, Morgan Cox, Isa Apodaca, Nicole Knickerbocker,
Lindsey Puc, Joan Sussman

Alto: Alyssa Koh, Leah Rosenman

Tenor: Olivia Anderson, Jason Cloen, Shawn Cox, Mark Darling

Bass: Rob Brown, John DeHORITY, Elijah Gebers,
Alan Jones, Stephen Lloyd, Sumner Tessier

Live Stream Team: Don Fairman, David McDowell, Jim Parks, Sally Allison

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Next Sunday is Lessons and Carols.

83 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;
3 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

With its opening "Come," this hymn sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

TEXT: Charles Wesley, 1744

MUSIC: Witt's *Psalmody Sacra*, 1715, alt.

STUTTGART

8.7.8.7



We live into Jesus' inclusive call to love all people,
care for creation, and work for God's Justice.

Welcome Visitors!

Nursery Care is available for young children beginning in the library and moving to C-23 on the second floor. Parents are welcome to come up with their kids if they would like.

Sunday School Children not in nursery care will be invited forward during the "Time with Our Youth" and then will follow their teacher to the Sunday School room.

You may place your offering in the offering plates as they are passed. If you would like to donate online, you can use the QR code to the right to make your contribution to the church.



† **We seek** to use diverse images and liberating language about divine presence in our services of worship. Please feel free to adapt the words in hymns and prayers as needed so that they express your faith.

This is a Hearing Loop equipped sanctuary – please switch your hearing aid to the "T" (telephone) position.

*** An asterisk indicates** "please rise in body or spirit."

We hope you will join us after worship for conversations and refreshments! Cookies and drinks are available in the front of the sanctuary.

Joys and Concerns – If you have a joy or concern that you would like to lift in prayer today, please complete a Prayer Request card (available by the worship bulletins) naming the person (s), situation or event, and any other information that you would like to be shared. The requests will be collected during the hymn following the sermon and provided to the Deacons.

The Downtown Church Staff

Cheryl Bittle, Weekend Receptionist
Jason Cloen, Associate Musician
Eileen Dietsch, Director of Operations
Alan Jones, Associate Musician
David Mear, Business Manager
Moses Nhial, Maintenance
Baker Mohammed, Bookkeeper
Penelope Paredes,
Nursery Coordinator

Robin Sheikh, Office Administrator &
Sunday School Teacher
Ebony Smalls, Evening Receptionist
Michael Stagles, Maintenance Lead
Joseph Taylor, Maintenance Supervisor
Ed Verna, Maintenance
Lee S. Wright, D.M.A.,
Director of Music Ministry

Parish Leaders

Mary Rees and Pat Tweet - Clerks of Session
Cindy Hamilton, Jacque Hancock - co-Moderators of Deacons

Session

The Rev. Val Fowler,
Moderator
Nancy Brown
John DeHority

Lea Kone
Bob Richane
Sally Allison
Sam King

Jim Vesper
Pat Tweet
Mary Rees

Deacons

Bob Carlisle
Andrea Folan
Helen Ganotis
Cindy Hamilton

Jacque Hancock
Elizabeth Katz
Stephen Lloyd
Grania Marcus
Sandy Morales

Becky Parks
Susan Richane
Kelley Sheils
Marilyn Terpening

121 N. Fitzhugh Street, Rochester, NY 14614

Telephone: (585) 325-4000

email: office@DowntownPresbyterian.org

www.DowntownPresbyterian.org



Service of Ordination and Installation of Officers

Clerk: I invite the people that have been elected to serve as Elders and Deacons to come forward as your names are read. Elected to serve as an elder: Jason Cloen. Elected to serve as deacons: Carol Samuel, Gie Oey, and Jacque Hancock.

Moderator:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 13:13

the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all. And also with you.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ Gal, 3:27;

have clothed yourselves with Christ. Eph. 4:4

There is one body and one Spirit,

just as we were called to the one hope of our calling.

Please answer these constitutional questions from the PC(USA):

a. Do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit? **I do.**

b. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you? **I do.**

c. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? **I do, and I will.**

Questions continued on back 

d. Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions? **I will.**

e. Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit? **I will.**

f. Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world? **I will.**

g. Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church? **I do.**

h. Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love? **I will.**

(For ruling elder) Will you be a faithful ruling elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? **I will.**

(For deacon) Will you be a faithful deacon, teaching charity, urging concern, and directing the people's help to the friendless and those in need, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? **I will.**

Clerk:

Questions for the congregation:

a. Do we, the members of the church, accept Jason, Carol and Gie, as ruling elders and deacons, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ? **We do.**

b. Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church? **We do.**

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Sunday Forums - December 2025

Caring for Creation
Christmas with Less Consumerism

**Dec. 14 “One World Goods: Supporting
Artisans from Around the World”**



Presenters: Pat Massa and others, One World Goods

When you buy gifts for your loved ones this year, shop at One World Goods rather than shopping online. Save the planet from packaging waste and energy consumption by taking a short trip to Pittsford Plaza, and purchasing hand-crafted items made by artisans who use natural and repurposed materials to support their families and communities. If possible you can then hand-deliver them. Our presenter will bring many beautiful items and tell us how they were made, and how their sale benefits the creators and their communities.

**Dec. 21 “Five Years of Advent Celebration
on Zoom: DUPC's Psalms+ Study Group”**

Presenters: Panel of Group Members, In Person & Online

The Psalms+ Study Group, sometimes affectionately referred to as “Psalm Psisters+,” is a weekly Zoom meeting that was born during the Pandemic. Five years later the group is closing in on Psalm 150, having taken time out during Lent and Advent each year to explore the art, music, poetry, and scripture for those seasons. The group will present a PowerPoint describing the themes chosen for each year's Advent, and favorite images and music pieces shared by members. Panelists will reflect on how this unique companionship anchored them through the COVID years as well as holiday drama.



Sundays, 9:45 AM ~ The Shaw Room



The Reverend Deb Swift is a retired member of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley and currently serving as the Executive Director and spiritual coordinator of Firebird Spirit, Inc. – a non-profit headquartered in Rochester that is dedicated to exploring new forms of ministry. Firebird's YouTube Channel (@firebirdspiritHOPE) provides weekly progressive and inter-faith worship services, prayers, music and more as part of their global Community of Hope. At present it has more than 250,000 views since it began a year ago. More than 50% of its viewers live outside the U.S. You can learn more by visiting www.FirebirdSpirit.org.



Coming up at Downtown United Presbyterian Church

Sunday, December 14

- 9:45AM Sunday Forum, Hybrid
- 10:00AM Choir Warm-up
- 10:45AM Nursery
- 11:00AM Worship - Rev. Deb Swift
- 11:15AM Sunday School
- 12:00PM Refreshments, Sanctuary

Tuesday, December 16

- 10:30AM Psalms+ Bible Study

Wednesday, December 17

- 4:30PM Sunday Forum Mtg, Zoom
- 7:00PM Choir Practice

Thursday, December 18

- 10:00AM Personnel Mtg, Hybrid

Friday, December 19

- 12:00PM 3rd Friday Book Group, Zoom

Sunday, December 21

- 9:45AM Sunday Forum, Hybrid
- 10:00AM Choir Warm-up
- 11:00AM Worship - Lessons & Carols
- 12:00PM Refreshments, Sanctuary
- 7:00PM Sophia Circle, Zoom