

The Session and members of First Presbyterian Church Fargo extend a sincere welcome to you. We are grateful for your presence today!

We welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, disability, gender or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services and to serve as an officer of the church.

Everyone is invited for coffee and fellowship in the Gathering Space after worship.

We recycle! If you are not taking your bulletin, please drop it in the blue bin at the door as you leave.

✦ Please rise in body or spirit.

November 30, 2025
First Sunday Advent

We Gather in Christ

PRELUDE

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night
Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Thanks to God

arr. Sander/Pechtl

Elliot Sander, organ, Matthew Pechtl, piano

OPENING WORDS

"Desire"
 by David Hewitt

Bigwood Family

✦ HYMN 82

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
 from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
 Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
 dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
 born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
 By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
 by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.*

❖ **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey

Merciful God, our desires are often tangled and we do not always seek the strand that brings life. We cling to what is comfortable. We resist the change that you call holy. We choose fear when you invite trust. We hold back our hearts when you invite us to dream. Forgive us. Renew our desires so they reflect your love for the world. Lead us toward the fullness of life in Christ. Amen.

❖ **RESPONSE 88** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1)*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

❖ **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The Word

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25, pp. 877

Whirl Story Bible, pg. 174

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Desire

The Rev. Sarah M Bigwood

❖ **HYMN 144** *In the Bleak Midwinter*

We dedicate this beloved hymn in honor of The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey's retirement at the end of 2025. This hymn has touched her heart throughout her ministry.

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there;
cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
but his mother only, in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
if I were a wise man, I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

BEHOLD! THE LEGACY: *Honoring Pastor Mary's Ministry*

Sacrament of Baptism

PRESENTATION OF THE CHILD

*Mary Mae and Margaret Bonita Martens;
children of Amy Jo (Olauson) and James William Martens;
grandchildren of Maryjane (Marsden) Martens and William Phillip Martens,
and Donna Mae (Jangula) Hagel and LeRoy Erling Olauson*

✧ RENUNCIATIONS

✧ PROFESSION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed

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 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.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

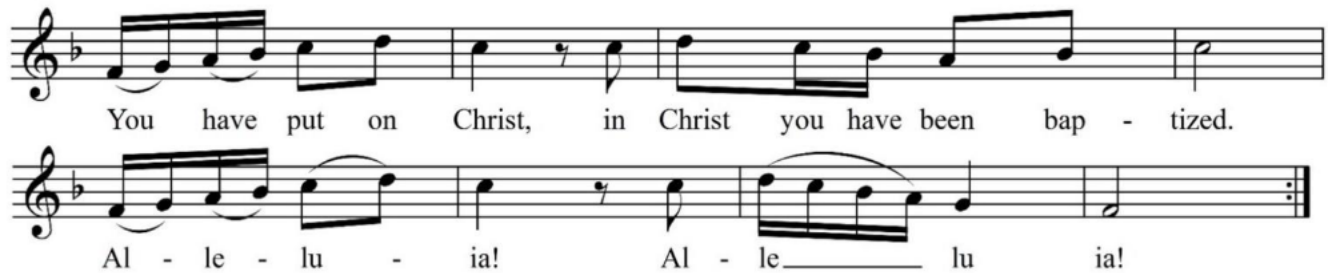
BAPTISM

WELCOME

Elder to Congregation: ...Let us welcome the newly baptized.

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you into Christ's church to share with us in his ministry, for we are all one in Christ.

BAPTISMAL RESPONSE 491 *You Have Put On Christ*



Responding to the Word



FESTIVAL OF TREES

Ginger Deitz

Use the QR code to access the secure giving portal on our website!

OFFERTORY *Canticle of the Turning*

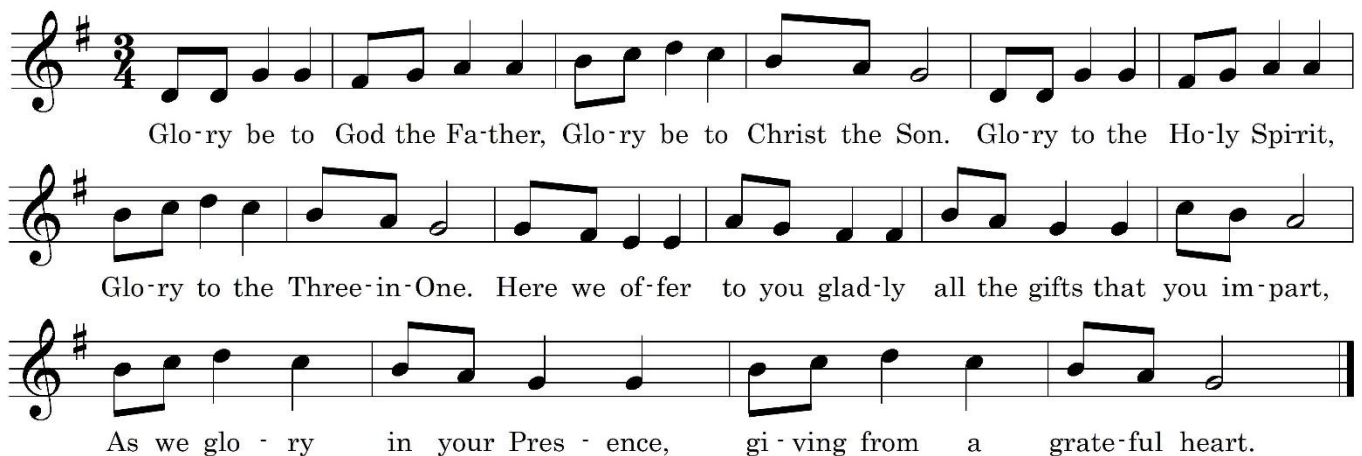
arr. J. Ferguson

Sanctuary Choir; Bryan Poyzer, director; Elliot Sander, organ

We dedicate this beloved song in honor of The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey's retirement at the end of 2025. This hymn has touched her heart throughout her ministry.

❖ RESPONSE

Christmas Doxology



❖ PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bearing the Word into the World

❖ HYMN 104

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

O Lord, how shall I meet you, how welcome you aright?

Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight!

O kindle, Lord most holy, a lamp within my breast,

to do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation; love brought you down to me;
your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling, that led you to embrace
in love, all loves excelling, our lost and fallen race.

You come, O Lord, with gladness, in mercy and goodwill,
to bring an end to sadness and bid our fears be still.
In patient expectation we live for that great day
when your renewed creation your glory shall display.

❖ **BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne arr. Sander/Pechtl
Elliot Sander, piano; Matthew Pechtl, organ

*Thank you to Thomas & Fred Hudson on livestream and soundboard, and our
Welcome Team: Deb Dawson, Wayne Sander, Steve & Karen Wonderlich, Dave
Baumgardner, Robby and Katie Bigwood, Ginger Deitz, and Gayla McGoldrick for
taking such good care of us this morning.*

*A special thank you to our musicians: Elliot Sander, Matthew Pechtl, and the
Sanctuary Choir directed by Bryan Poyzer.*



Retirement Party for Pastor Mary: First Presbyterian Church of Fargo invites you to join us for a luncheon celebrating Pastor Mary as she retires after 33 years of faithful service. The luncheon will take place on Sunday, December 7th, following worship in the Social Hall. No RSVP needed! Questions? Contact Casey in the church at clemier@firstpresfargo.org. The festivities continue through December 28, 2025. Even if you cannot attend the lunch, come any Sunday to congratulate Mary.

Other Upcoming Opportunities to Celebrate

- Dec. 14, 10:30 a.m. - Celebrating Mary's teaching
- Dec. 21, 10:30 a.m. - Celebrating Mary's leadership

Men's Bible Study: The men's Bible study continues its exploration of the Book of Ecclesiastes with Lesson 3 on December 9th at 6:45 am in the Jennie Roberts Room. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, October through May. Coffee and breakfast pastries are served. Intended to help men understand what the Bible says in relation to what is expected of a Christian man, the study guide for Ecclesiastes can be obtained online, or you can request a copy from Bruce Maylath at ring4linguist@yahoo.com. No advance preparation is required for each month's study.

PW Bible Study Leaders: On December 10 Pastor Mary Holtey will lead a discussion on Lesson 4 of this year's Bible Study, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*.

PW Circles: The morning PW Circles will meet Dec. 16 in the Jennie Roberts Room at 9:30am, and the afternoon Circle will meet at 1:00pm. All women of the church are invited to attend. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Barbi Kessel.

PW Christmas Tea: PW's Christmas Tea program will take place on Dec. 2nd at 1:00pm, where the Fargo Moorhead Area's Music Club Noteables will perform in the Sanctuary and treats will be served afterwards in the Jennie Roberts Room. All are invited!

2025 Year End Giving: Please have all contributions intended for the 2025 giving year turned in to the church office by Monday, January 5th. The church office will be open from 9:00am—4:00pm that day. You can also use the drop box by the office door if you arrive after office hours. Any contributions received after the 5th will be recorded on 2026's giving record. If you would like to know the balance of your 2025 pledge, please email Jan Lundgren at jlundgren@firstpresfargo.org

Covenant of Prayer: Sara Schenck and family at the loss of Brad Schenck, Jan Harrison and daughter Lisa Johnson, recovering from surgeries; David Hoffman, recovering from back surgery; Penny Andrist, immunotherapy; Beatrice Janaka's husband, James

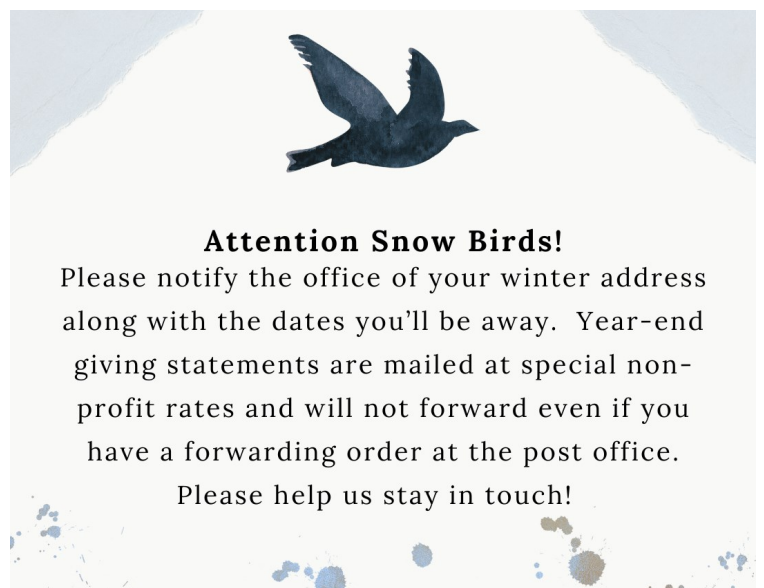
Red Kettle Campaign: The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign is off to an early start. If you are able to take a turn at participating this year, please stop at the table in the Gathering Space to sign up, or call Ginger Deitz! All sites are indoors again this year. Proceeds go to support the Salvation Army's feeding programs.

\$21,338 to Great Plains Food Bank: The Mission Committee sends great thanks to all who contributed in November in response to the special appeal for funds for the Great Plains Food Bank. Together, the Fargo and Baker-Downer congregations raised more than triple the amount that the Mission Committee set as a matching challenge from its Emerging Needs budget.

With \$16,338 in individual donations and \$5,000 from Mission's Emerging Needs match, First Presbyterian has sent a total of \$21,338 to the food bank, for distribution to food pantries across all of North Dakota's counties, plus Clay County in Minnesota.

The needs continue, and donations through the church will still be accepted and relayed to the food bank. Donations by check should be designated on the memo line with the word "Food"; gifts can be made online at www.firstpresfargo.org/give, and make sure to select the "Great Plains Food Bank" fund.

Christmas Joy Offering: The Christmas Joy Offering helps support retired church workers and families who are now in financial crisis, and emerging church leaders like students in schools and colleges equipping communities of color to bring their gifts of service to the world. Envelopes may be found in the West entryway, the Narthex and pew racks, or simply write "Christmas Joy" on the memo of your check. Or, you may choose to give online through the giving portal found on the church website, selecting Special Offerings as the fund.



Hearing devices are available, please ask an usher for assistance.

Nursery: Staff will be present **beginning at 9:15** for infants-3 years, in the nursery complex on the 1st floor.

Activity Bags for Children: Fun-filled tote bags are located at both doors.

Restrooms: Restrooms are located in the Gathering Space and on the lower level.

Prayer Request Cards: Cards are in pew racks for your use. Prayers will be committed to God along with the other offerings and also lifted up in prayer by the staff.

Peace Candles: The candle burning on the chancel symbolizes peace. We ask guests to take a candle back to your church as a gift from us. Peace candles can be found at the Welcome Center, near the west doors.

Wi-Fi: Wi-Fi is available throughout the church. (password: community650)

FPC Officers

Session: Curt Brickman, Kathryn Byrd, Deb Dawson, Tom Dawson, Colleen Ford-Dunker, Jody Hudson, Kurt Kooyer, Dick Laraway, Bruce Maylath, Brian McClure, Jim McEvers, Sharon Secor, Paula Thomas (clerk), Jeff Wilkens, and Steve Wonderlich. **Deacons:** Paula Christensen, Toby Christensen, Dianne Connelly, Steve Dawson, Brenda Deckard, Sydney Goddard, David Hoffman, Gayla McGoldrick, Wayne Sander, Candy Shultz, Virginia Stern, Kathleen Thomas, Kevin Thomas, Debbie Tight, and Amy Wilkens.

Church Treasurer: Sherri Stern.

Church Staff

The Rev. Sarah M. Bigwood: *Head of Staff, Pastor*

The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey: *Associate Pastor*

The Rev. Daniel Billings: *Parish Associate*

The Rev. Cathie Bishop: *Parish Associate*

Rusty Bender: *Director of Church Life*

Bryan Poyzer: *Adult Choir Director*

Elliot Sander: *Interim Organist*

Carrie Lawrence: *Sunday School Coordinator*

Jan Lundgren: *Business Manager*

Casey LeMier: *Communications & Admin Assistant*

Rick Fiebiger: *Facilities Manager*

Drew Brovold: *Custodian*

**Staff emails are: (first initial and last name of person)
@firstpresfargo.org**

Reminder: Use the QR code found in the bulletin to access the secure giving portal on our website. Also, like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram!

For Your Information

November 23, 2025 Attendance: 319

277 in person

42 households livestreamed

Contribution information will be available 12/7



Church Information

Office Hours:

M-TH, 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Phone: 701-293-6311

www.firstpresfargo.org

650 2nd Ave. N.

Fargo, ND 58102

L: Live Stream Option, H: Hybrid, Z: Zoom
Times shown in *italics* indicate am.

Sunday, November 30

11:30 Fellowship

Monday, December 1

No Church Events

Tuesday, December 2

12:15 Support & Endowment Meeting (H)

5:30 Mission Committee Meeting

5:30 EduCon Committee Meeting

5:30 Worship Committee Meeting (H)

5:30 Personnel Committee Meeting (H)

6:30 Stewardship Committee Meeting (H)

Wednesday, December 3

5:00 Wednesday Activities Meal

5:30 St. Andrew's Brass

5:30 Genesis Ringers

6:15 Children & Youth Choirs

6:30 Westminster Bells

7:00 Youth Group

7:30 Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 4

12:15 Centering Prayer

6:30 Taizé Evening Prayer

Friday, December 5

No Church Events

Saturday, December 6

No Church Events

Sunday, December 7

9:15 Sunday School

10:30 Worship Service & Communion (L)

11:30 Luncheon Celebrating Pastor Mary!

5:30 Confirmation Session IV

Poinsettia Orders available now: We encourage you to purchase poinsettias to decorate our Sanctuary for the Christmas season! More information can be found on the order forms, which are available at the Welcome Desk, or by contacting Casey LeMier in the office. Orders and payment should be delivered to the office **no later than noon on December 15th.**

Festival of Trees: The Mission Committee has set up their Christmas Trees in the foyer, sponsoring a variety of outreach needs in our community and across the globe. Keep an eye out for more information in coming bulletins and the December Messenger, as well as in the offering messages during Sunday worship this Advent.