

Advent IV
LOVE
December 19, 2021

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

The Prelude

Song of the Angels

Anna Laura Page

WE APPROACH OUR GOD

The Welcome and Greeting

*The Call to Worship

Leader 1: What are you waiting for?

Leader 2: God first LOVED us!

People: We LOVE because God first LOVED us.

Leader 1: Lord, You are forgiving and good, abounding in LOVE to all who call to You.

Leader 2: We respond with LOVE. A new commandment I give you: LOVE one another.

As I have LOVED you, so you must LOVE one another.

People: LOVE is patient, LOVE is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

LOVE does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.

Leader 1: Love comes with Jesus' birth.

Leader 2: For God so LOVED the world that He gave His one and only Son.

Leader 1: What are you waiting for?

*The Carol

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Phillips Brooks, Lewis H. Redner

The Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1: Advent is a time of waiting. We wait in hope. *(The first candle is lit.)*

Reader 2: We wait in peace. *(The second candle is lit.)*

Reader 3: We wait in joy. *(The third candle is lit.)*

Reader 1: As we wait, we are filled with love: love for God, love for others, and yes, love for ourselves.

Reader 2: We love because God first loved us.

Reader 1: God loved you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into this world to save you.

Nothing can satisfy our longing except God's love.

Reader 2: Today, we light the candle of love. As we wait, let us be people of love. *(The fourth candle is lit.)*

*The Advent Song

Come, Messiah King

Randy Vader

The Christmas Story Continues

Were You There on That Christmas Night?

Were You There on That Christmas Night?

Glory to the Newborn King!

Natalie Sleeth, arr. Lloyd Larson

Lloyd Larson

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

The Prayer for Illumination

The Scripture Lessons

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.

Micah 5:2-5a, Luke 1:39-56

The Message

“God With Us”

The Prayer of Thanksgiving, Intercession and the Lord's Prayer

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GOODNESS

The Offering of Our Tithes and Gifts

The Offertory Prayer

The Offertory

Noël Nouvelet

French traditional, arr. Catherine McMichael

The News of the Church Alive

*The Closing Song

Adore with O Come, All Ye Faithful

Graham Kendrick, Martin Chalk
John Francis Wade

*The Benediction

*The Postlude

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Felix Mendelssohn, arr. Chris Rice

*All who are able, please stand

Worship Leaders: Preaching –Pastor Bud Pratt; Liturgists – The Diekman Family; Narrators – Kathy Geurink, Doris Kuipers; Organist – Beth Sweers; Strings – Marilyn Brannen, Barb VanderHeide, Karl Kepler, Kevin Sweers; Bells of Joy; Chancel Choir; Praise team

Please follow our church social media pages:

Instagram: frcgrandville

Facebook: First Reformed Church

Stewardship Update:

December 12 Collection Plate	\$ 28,922.00
Online Giving:	<u>\$ 4,247.00</u>
Total Offering:	\$ 33,169.00

Thanksgiving offering as of 12/1 \$ 15,012.00 (\$20,000 goal)

Average weekly offering needed to make 2021 budget	\$ 16,975.00
2021 Annual budget	\$882,740.00

Text to Give - 616-208-4301

Budget Update as of October 31, 2021

Offerings received	\$643,496.00
Expenses paid	- <u>\$647,083.00</u>
	(\$ - 3,587.00)

TODAY'S HAPPENINGS

No Sunday school programming today preschool through 5th grade. Nursery will be provided.

Middle School (6th - 8th grades) & **High School** (9th - 12th grades) meets in the Youth Lounge following worship. Donuts provided.

Middle School youth group meets on Sundays from 4:00pm - 5:30pm in the Youth gym.

High School youth group meets on Sundays from 6:30pm - 8:00pm in the Youth gym. White elephant gift exchange. Please bring a wrapped gift under \$5.

TODAY, December 19 will be the last Bible study and Youth group of 2021. They will resume January 9.

YOUTH HAPPENINGS

High School Winter Retreat – Spring Hill – January 14-16. Cost is \$155. Email Jeff if you are interested - jeffw@firstgrandville.org

Jr. High Winter Retreat – TimberWolf Lake – January 28 – 30. Cost is \$165. Email Jeff if you are interested - jeffw@firstgrandville.org

Youth Mission Trip fundraisers:

- **Pop can drive** - There will be a labeled trash can in the Youth Lounge all year for you to drop off your empty cans.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES We will celebrate the Nativity of our Lord on Christmas Eve at **4:30 PM** for a family friendly casual worship as well as a more formal service at **11:00 PM**. Please join us as we welcome the Newborn King!

OTHER HAPPENINGS

Anna Circle – meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month from 9:30am – 11:00am in the upstairs small adult ed room. We are studying the book *Winning the War in Your Mind*.

Esther Circle – meets the 1st Tuesday of the month at 9:30am in the upstairs adult ed room. We are studying the Twenty Third Psalm.

Greeting cards – If you send cards to people within our church family using the mailslots please consider placing cost of postage in the box marked on side of mailboxes. This is a project of the Esther Circle for The Other Way.

Men's Bible Study meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 2:30 PM. We meet at Marge's Donut Den, 1751 28th St., Wyoming, MI. Our leaders are David Bast and Mark Davis. All are welcome!

FOCUS will be done meeting until January 5, 2022.

The **Voices of Victory** male gospel music quartet will present a concert on December 31 from 8:00-11:00pm. The concert will be held here at church. You are invited to come and go as you please any time throughout the night. We will be joined from 8:45 – 9:30pm by the Hope Heralds, a GR area men's chorus. A free will offering will be taken for Georgetown Harmony Homes. Coffee and cookies will be provided. To God be the glory!

WAYS OF GIVING

The Thanksgiving offering receipts currently total \$15,000 (out of a goal of \$20,000). This account remains open until the end of the year. Recipients are listed below:

1. Youth Mission Trip Fund
2. Adult Mission Trip Fund
3. Missionary Special Needs
4. Haiti Earthquake relief
5. Pregnancy Resource Center
6. Ryan Neinhuis—Kalamazoo YL
7. Jake Bajema—West Michigan YL
8. Jordan and Ashley Matthews—WMU/CRU
9. 70x7 Prison ministry

As part of a past Thanksgiving offering, Children's Hope Chest received money to put toward electricity in Pueblo Modelo, Guatemala. This week we received an update on how that electricity became especially important during the pandemic. Whitney Scholten reports, "RCA Global Mission and Children's HopeChest are thrilled to share a story of great hope and futures, because of YOU..."

With Christ at the center of all they do, Pueblo Modelo, Guatemala is living up to their name "Model Village" by **setting a new academic standard across the country**. With pandemic closing education systems for two school years now, the children have suffered greatly. In just 4 months this CarePoint has piloted a tutoring program with **incredible success metrics in attention levels, time on task, academic standards and improved nutrition**. This summer second grade students were testing lower than a Pre-K standard. Testing at the mid-point of the program displayed improvement in 94% of students, bringing many back to their appropriate levels. Parents are eager for the opportunity to engage with this transformative program. The initial funds for this pilot program in this RCA-HopeChest partner community came from a series of RCA churches taking up belief in the cause. **Churches like you!** Now this program is expanding to six more sites across the nation, using Pueblo Modelo as the high standard tutoring program to replicate."

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH PRAYERS & CONCERNS

For prayer updates during the week, please call the **Prayer Line** – 534-0113

We extend prayers of healing & comfort for:

- **Ben Smitley**, recovering from surgery for a torn meniscus.
- **Don Ferris**, recovering from back surgery.
- **Sarah Farney**, recovering from surgery for subglottic stenosis.
- **Reid Dykstra**, recovering from knee surgery.
- **Ted Wierenga**, at home recovering following falls and a severely broken elbow.
- **Misty Holwerda**, Bob & Barb Holwerda's daughter, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and has begun chemo.
- **Chuck Duimstra and his family**, as he faces ongoing and declining health issues.
- **Gerardo & Lila VacaGuzman**, doing volunteer work in Peru and Bolivia for a month.
- Pray for anyone affected in any way by **the Corona virus**.
- **Continued prayers for: Lois Morehouse, Orlene Porte, Glenn Zwart, Kay Mekkes, Roy DeJonge, Don Alderink, Karin Dykstra, Curt Stoel, Erica Obi**

We extend Christian sympathy to:

- **The family & friends of Rick Bolhouse**, who passed away December 10. Funeral arrangements will be made through Cook Funeral Home.

Please keep all our military troops in your prayers, especially:

- **Dustin Lambries, Jeremy Stegehuis, Jeff Shuck & Tony Shuck** (Betty Isenga's grandsons), **Edward Peter Tolhurst** (Pat Bird's nephew), **Ben Westrick**

Please keep in your hearts and minds:

- **Our Family at Home members** – Eloise Anderson, Judy Baartman, Crystal Baum, Norma Boss, Dorothy Cook, Helen Dertien, Karin Dykstra, Arlene Jacobitz, Ev Lindhout, Pat Marcusse, Kay Mekkes, Bob & Lois Morehouse, Janet Pofahl, Evelyn Watson, Mary Zomerlei
December FAH birthdays: 12/15 - Lois Morehouse, Rivertown Ridge, Unit 108, 3555 Copper River Ave., Wyoming 49418

In case of an emergency and no one is at church you may call Pastors Bud Pratt - 708-302-5645,
Matt Cook - 616-893-4189 or consistory vice president Bob Stelma - 616-822-3859, or any of the other elders.

THANK YOU...

... BJ Veneklasen's family wishes to thank our church family for the many, many prayers, the cards, the food and the flowers. You Prayer Warriors have a very special place in our hearts. **Wayne D. Veneklasen**