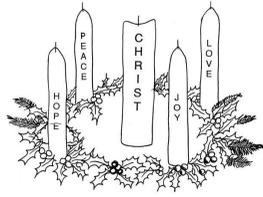


## FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Sunday, December 28, 2025

Theme: God on the Move



**“Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt.” Matthew 2:14**

### *GATHERING*

*Prelude:*

“Carol of the Bells”

Lyndell Leatherman

Call to Worship

Leader: Beloved, we have waited, watched, and witnessed the coming of the Christ child. As we gather today on the other side of Christmas, we might be tempted to ask, “What now?”

**People: We continue to wait and watch for the day that all the earth awaits.**

Leader: In this season of Christmas, we remember that though Christ has come among us, the good news of freedom for captives, flourishing for the poor, and power returned to the disempowered does not reign in so many places.

**People: We continue to wait and watch for the day that all the earth awaits.**

Leader: With Mary and Joseph, we listen for God to show us how to remain faithful when the way forward is unclear, when the way forward is challenging.

**People: And when normal expectations fail to unfold, when all is uncertain and troubling, when the powers that be bring harm.**

Leader: We continue to wait and watch for the day that all the earth awaits as we gather for worship today.

**People: May God bind us together in love, empowering us to live as followers of the Christ child, declaring good news wherever we go.**

Leader: And so, we wait, watch, and work for the day that all the earth awaits. Thanks be to God! AMEN

\*Hymn: #132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

\*Prayer of the Day and Confession

**Gracious God, we pray to you for all people as well as ourselves. We would like to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God's love into this world. We would like to be those who cared for God in infant vulnerability; who tickled and cuddled and**

comforted the growing child, that he might know love and safety.

And yet, merciful God, we must recognize all the times we are more like Herod. Whenever we, in our actions or in our inactions, find our own need for control more compelling than the needs of others for health and safety. Whenever we cling to the security of our privilege, rather than advocating for the rights of the oppressed. Whenever we are complicit in the harming of innocents for the sake of profit, or power, or because we fear to know, and to change, the injustices of this world.

Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another, and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives as true disciples in your name, without counting the cost. In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way, we pray. AMEN

Hymn: #104 “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

Assurance of Pardon

God's light is present in this world. Present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness. Present in the star, in all that guides us to love. God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it. God's grace is in the world, and our missteps will not overcome it. We are loved, we are forgiven. Alleluia! AMEN

### *PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD*

Scripture: Romans 1:1-7 and Matthew 2:13-23

Sermon: “God at Work in the Worst”

Hymn: #108 “Of the Father's Love Begotten”

### *RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD*

Offering of Tithes and Gifts

Hymn: #144 “In the Bleak Midwinter” (vs. 4)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Steadfast God of refuge and promise, even when the world makes no room, even when fear seems stronger than hope, you are with us. In the flight to Egypt, in the cries of grief, in the fragile beginnings of new life, you make a way. Receive our gifts in all the ways we give them, O God, as signs of our willingness to make room for your kingdom among us. Use what we bring—not just our treasure, but our time, our voices, our compassion—to heal what is broken, to protect the vulnerable, and to embody your saving love. In the name of Jesus, our Light in the shadows. AMEN**

Announcements and Sharing Joys and Concerns

Prayers of the People

\*Hymn: #134 “Joy to the World”

\*Charge and Benediction.

Leader: Family of Christ, go now into the world in the blessing and power of the Triune God to resist the misuse of power in our world, to point to the signs of good news all around us.

**People: We go in witness for all that is good and right, to live into the light, and to work for the flourishing of all people, AMEN**

Silent Prayer (*be seated*)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. In the name of Christ. AMEN

*Postlude:*

“Hark the Herald Angels Sing”

Robert Thygeron

(Please remain seated)

The End of Worship  
The Beginning of Service

\*Those who wish may stand

Rev. James Shuler, Interim Pastor  
Mrs. Dianne Yuninger, Organist/Choir Director

**Prayers of the Congregation**

**The Prayer Person this week is: Gwen Hess**

December is the month that we collect our yearly **Christmas Joy offering**. There are envelopes in the pews that you may use for giving. Today is the last Sunday for this offering. Please give as you feel you can.

# Leacock Presbyterian Church

*First met in Leacock Township in 1724, recognized by the Synod in  
1740, moved to Paradise in 1840.*



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