

**Our Service of Worship for December 26, 20210**

# *The First Sunday After Christmas*

**Westwood First Presbyterian Church**

**Cincinnati, OH**



## **Welcome and Announcements**

**Prelude:** *“The First Noel”*—arr. John Innes

## **Call to Worship**

## **Lighting the Christ Candle and Opening Prayer**

**Hymn:** *“Angels We Have Heard on High”*

## **A Time of Confession**

## **Prayer for Illumination**

**First Scripture Reading:** *Colossians 3:12-17*

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Gospel Reading:** *Luke 2:41-52*

Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”

He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business?” But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

**Special Music:** “*Joy to the World*”—Erin Olakanmi and Heather MacPhail, piano

### **The Pastoral Prayer and 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.

**Hymn:** “*Go Tell It On the Mountain*”

### **Charge and Benediction**

**Postlude:** “*Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*”—arr. Henry Kihlken



Lisa Allgood, General Presbyter, Presbytery of Cincinnati  
*Guest Worship Leader*

Heather MacPhail  
*Organist/Director of Music Ministries*

Jason Dennison  
*Videographer/Director of Technology*



## NEW YEARS REFLECTION

Every January, millions of people begin their year with New Year's resolutions. Losing weight, getting organized, exercising more, eating healthier, and managing finances better are some of the most common resolutions. But what about making spiritual New Year's resolutions? We make commitments and tell our friends and family on January 1st, only to give it all up by January 3rd. But as humans, our struggle for consistency goes way beyond resolutions. Making commitments we can't keep runs all through society, back to Biblical times.

Our plans may or may not be God's plans. If we want to be successful with any New Year's resolution, we must seek God's will. By his strength we might lose weight, eat better, or become better stewards of our finances. What does God want for our lives? When he convicts, he also equips us to follow through with the plan. When we know we are following God's plan, then we have more strength to stick to it, allowing him to work well beyond our normal January 3<sup>rd</sup> quitting date.

*For this reason, my brothers and sisters, be patient as you wait for the return of the Lord. Look! The farmer knows how to wait patiently for the land to produce vegetables and fruits. He cannot harvest a freshly planted seed. Instead, he waits for the early and the late showers to nourish the soil. You need this same kind of patience, so in the meantime, strengthen your resolve because the Lord will be coming soon. (James 5:7-8, The Voice)*

The farmer waits patiently for the Lord to bring the growth, but it doesn't mean he sits on his porch doing nothing. The farmer works hard work, watering and weeding, repairing equipment, and completing all of the daily chores. When a farmer does what a farmer is supposed to do, God is able to do the things that only he can do. It's not easy being patient.

Would the Lord be honored if our bodies (the temple of the Holy Spirit) were in better shape? Would he be blessed if our financial affairs were in order? Is it possible that he will use us mightily if we serve in a ministry, or shared our faith? The answer to each of these questions is the same. Certainly the Lord can be in these things. However, committing to lose weight does not mean sitting on the couch with a bag of chips watching the Biggest Loser. Like the farmer, we must do what we need to do, so that God can do what only he can do to produce results in our lives. But why is it that we only make resolutions about weight, exercise, and money?

God would be honored if we made spiritual resolutions. Read the Bible, get involved in ministry at church, share our faith with friends, make a step of faith that is so big that only God can make it happen. Resolve to represent him no matter what the cost.

~ <https://www.faithgateway.com/spiritual-new-year-resolutions/#.YcN9S2jMJAg>

*Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year*