



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN OF FULTON, MO

MATTHEW 25 CHURCH

Established 1875 - 718 Court Street, Fulton, Missouri - www.fpcfulton.org - 573-642-5541

Digital Newsletter Vol. 7, #51 - 12/19/25 - 12/25/25!



WE ARE A MATTHEW 25
CHURCH!

Building Our Faith.... Through These Waters!

Worship & Reflection This Week!

In-Person Worship At 10:30 am in the Sanctuary!

Livestream on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@fpcfulton>

Sunday, December 21, 2025: The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Liturgical Color: Purple

Advent Wreath Lighting: Ruth & Audrey Wittenburg

Special Presentations: The Christmas Cantata by the FPC Chancel Choir

Usher Captain: Tim Baysinger

Greeter: Lori Covey

Acolyte: Elliot Davis

Live Stream/Sound: Shirley Dixon & Graham McCaulley

Slide Management: Ramona Dobson

Liturgist: Patrice Zap

Worship Leader: Rev. Carol Pierson with The FPC Chancel Choir



From the Hymnal This Week

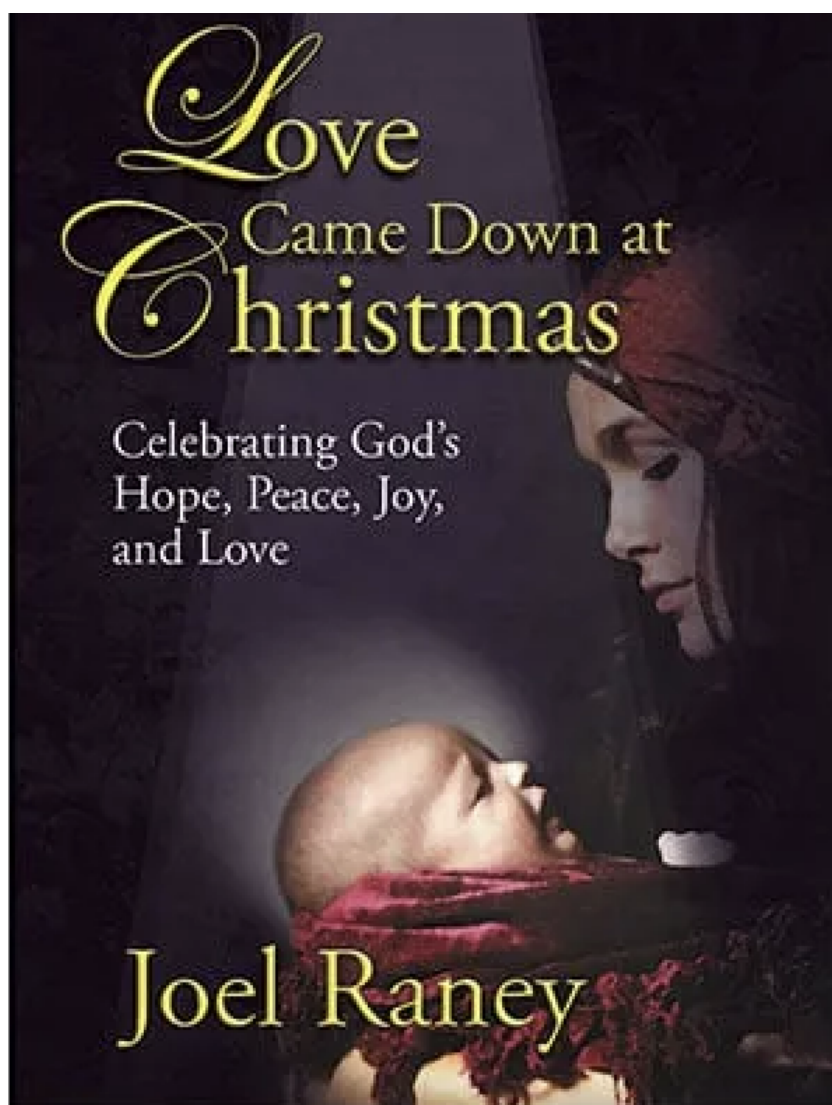
Advent Wreath Lighting Hymn--#85, verses 1-4 "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

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***Additional Scripture Readings for Sunday, December 21, 2025***

***The Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A).***

- First Reading - Isaiah 7:10-16
- Psalm -Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- Second Reading -Romans 1:1-7
- Gospel - Matthew 1:18-25



**Christmas Cantata – Love Came Down at Christmas**

**Sunday, December 21 | 10:30 a.m. Worship Service**

On **Sunday, December 21**, the First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir will offer a special Christmas cantata during the **10:30 a.m. worship service**, inviting the congregation to experience the Nativity story through music, scripture, and reflection. Under the direction of **Director & Organist Kelley Head**, the choir will present **Joel Raney's *Love Came Down at Christmas***—a moving musical proclamation of the heart of the Christmas message.

This beloved composition is rooted in the central Christian truth that **God's love was made flesh and came to earth in the form of the baby Jesus**. Inspired by Christina Rossetti's 19th-century poem *Love Came Down at Christmas*, first published in 1885, Raney weaves timeless words throughout the work, setting them to an original tune while echoing lines of the poem across the larger musical narrative. The result is a rich reflection on the incarnation—God's love made visible, tangible, and personal.

In its full cantata form, *Love Came Down at Christmas* is shaped around the four traditional Advent themes of **hope, peace, joy, and love**, telling the Christmas story through a thoughtful blend of original melodies, familiar carols such as "*Angels We Have Heard on High*" and "*Away in a Manger*," and scriptural narration drawn primarily from the Gospel of Luke.

This musical offering is shared as an act of worship and a gift to the congregation—an opportunity to slow down in the midst of the season and listen anew to the story that stands at the center of our faith. All are warmly invited to join us for this meaningful service as we celebrate the truth that **love came down at Christmas**.

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## Draw Near: A Devotional Lighting the Advent Path with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love

Each day of Advent, this devotional written by Teri McDowell Ott and published by Presbyterian Outlook offers a gentle invitation to draw near — to Scripture, to stillness, and to the heart of God. Following the traditional Advent themes, you'll light the way week by week with hope, peace, joy and love, preparing not just for Christmas, but for Christ's presence among us.

Alongside daily reflections, this journey is enriched by artwork from children — tender, honest interpretations of sacred texts that remind us what it means to receive the kingdom like a child. Their drawings offer not just illustration, but illumination — echoing the wonder and welcome of the season.

To download a printable copy of Week 4, December 15 through December 25, go to:

<https://bit.ly/4qmSy1C>

To download a printable copy of the full devotion booklet, go to:

<https://bit.ly/4iqynwR>

ARTWORK BY

**CORINNE "COCO" WILSON**

11 YEARS OLD

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA



### Week 4: Sunday, December 21, 2025

**We are not alone**

#### **MATTHEW 1:23**

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,' which means, 'God is with us.'"

Love shows up — not with all the answers, or with easy fixes, but with presence. That's the kind of love we meet in Advent. Not distant. Not clinical. Not observing from afar. It's a love that is with us. In the pain. In the joy. In the questions. In the blood, sweat and tears of being human.

Emmanuel. **God with us.**

Advent love is the staggering love of the incarnation. God doesn't send instructions. God comes in human flesh to live our life and grieve our grief. God knows what it feels like to be tired, to be anxious, to be left behind and left out. God's love is not abstract. It is love that breathes, walks, weeps. A love that stays.

As a pastor, I once sat in a hospital room beside a man who had lost the ability to speak after a head injury. I talked to him for a while, filling the silence until I ran out of words. I considered leaving

— even started gathering my things — but then he reached out, grabbed the arm of my chair and gently pulled me closer. He couldn't say it, but he didn't have to. He wanted me to stay. So I did. We sat together in silence, holding hands, praying prayers we never spoke aloud.

When life collapses, what people remember most isn't what you said. It's that you were there.

Advent reminds us that we are not alone. Not in our suffering. Not in our celebrations. Not in our ordinary Sunday afternoons. God is not just for us or above us. God is with us.

#### **FOR REFLECTION:**

When have you experienced someone's presence as a form of love? How might you offer someone else your presence this week as that kind of love?

#### **PRAYER:**

*Emmanuel, thank you for the kind of love that shows up: not with platitudes, but with presence. Help us feel your nearness today, and help us mirror your love by showing up for others, too. Amen.*

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## ***Foundations on Sunday Morning...***

### **Adult Sunday School at 9:30 am in the FPC Library!**

The Adult Sunday School Class will meet for the last time in December on Sunday, December 21st at 9:30 am in the FPC Library.

**Adult Sunday School will resume on Sunday, January 11, 2026!**



### **Children's Sunday School Presents Foundations in Practice!**

Our Young Disciples will be in the Sanctuary with adults during the rest of the Advent and Christmas season during the Sunday Worship Services at 10:30 am. **The regular children's Sunday School schedule will resume on Sunday, January 11, 2026.**

### **Confirmation Class for Students in Grades 5-9 Has Begun. Next Class is This Sunday!**

This year we have enough children who are in grades 5-9 to present a formal Confirmation Class. Whitney McCaulley has agreed to be our leader for this 16-week series using the Theoacademy Confirmation curriculum.

**The Confirmation Class will meet after worship on Sunday, December 21**

**before taking a break for the holidays.**

**The next Confirmation Class will be on Sunday, January 18, 2026.**



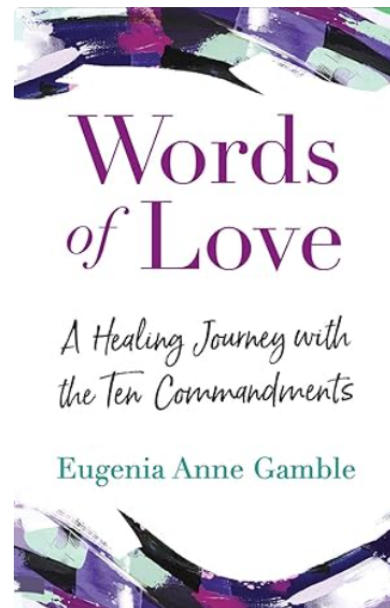
## ***Foundations on Wednesdays....***

### **Dwelling in the Word!**

The Wednesday morning Bible study group will be on break from December 24 - January 14.

When the class returns on January 21, we will begin a ten-week study called "Words of Love: A Healing Journey with the Ten Commandments" by Rev. Dr. Eugenia Gamble

**All are Welcome to Join in the Discussion!**



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## The Rock - A Christian Education Experience for Middle & High School Students!

The Rock is a safe, inclusive space for youth in the Fulton area to explore the Christian faith. We meet at 715 Nichols St. every Sunday evening 6:00-7:30 pm during the school year. All are invited! Here is an important announcement from your team at The Rock.

- **Parking** - Please be aware that the parking lot across the street from the Rock building will no longer be accessible for any reason. The old Methodist Church building has been purchased, and the buyer has made it clear that we should not use their lot for any reason. Please use the parking on the side of the Rock building or the Baptist Church lots.

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## *The FPC Advent Seasons Schedule of Worship Services!*

[Click Here to Download a Copy of the Full Advent Brochures!](#)

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## Notice of Congregational Meeting - Sunday, December 21, 2025!

### Called Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 21st:

Session has called a Congregational meeting on Sunday, December 21st following the worship service. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary at 11:30 pm. The purpose of the meeting is to grant Rev. Carol Pierson's request for congregational approval of her 2026 housing allowance of \$20,000 before January 1, 2026.

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## Bring Your Family to the FPC Christmas Eve Candlelight Service!

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### Christmas Joy Offerings Are Now Being Accepted!

In Isaiah 40, the prophet asks those listening to do a very simple task with major implications: prepare the way. Isaiah is not asking those listening to prepare the way for themselves; rather, our call is to prepare the way for the very real presence of God. Every year the Christmas Joy Offering prepares the way to bring hope through leadership development, education and critical financial assistance. Offerings will be accepted now through December 24th. Please pick up an envelope in the Sanctuary on Sunday!

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### Alternative Christmas Gifts

#### Alternative Christmas Gifts of Christmases Past

Give a lasting gift! Suggested donations \$5.00, \$10.00 or your choice!

Take an ornament and card that explains the project.

This year we draw from many years of Alternative Christmas ornaments. In previous years we have supported the Roma by supplying bread and butter fees so that marginalized children could attend school. Other ornaments helped provide uniforms for children in Rwanda while paying their mothers to make these uniforms. More recently we have provided a variety of things through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog, including farm animals, honeybees, and moringa seeds. This year we will again be utilizing the Presbyterian Giving Catalog towards food baskets for refugees.

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### FILLING THE LITTLE RED WAGON ....

Each Sunday our Young Disciples collect food in the little red wagon for donation to the SERVE, Inc. food pantry.

During the winter season, there is a special need for **high protein donations** such as canned or pouched meats and fish (like tuna, salmon, and chicken), peanut butter and other nut butters, and canned or dried beans and lentils. Other excellent options are nuts and seeds, canned stews or chili, and shelf-stable powdered or shelf-stable milk alternatives.

If you choose to make a **monetary donation** instead, just make a check out to FPC with the words "SERVE Food Pantry" in the memo line. You can hand it to one of the young disciples as they



collect food or drop it in the collection plate in the Narthex or at the Lobby door of the Sanctuary.

**LET'S FILL THE WAGON EACH WEEK!**



## Moser's Receipts & Best Choice Labels: Winning Combo for Building Fund!

*Your Dedication is Showing!*

***FPC has just received an \$80 check for the Building Fund !  
Saving your Moser's Discount Food receipts and the labels from  
Best Choice food items has resulted in adding an other \$80 for the  
Building Fund this month .***

***Let's do it again in December!***

Please bring the whole receipt tape to church and place them in the collection can located in the lobby

In addition, Best Choice labels are also being collected for the Best Choice Label Project. BUT, to redeem your collections for \$\$, we must have the whole UPC code on the label. Take a look at the samples here for reference.

**Every label or register tape you turn in adds up!**

**Thanks for bringing YOURS to church on Sunday!**



## An Advent Devotion from the Creation Care Perspective - Download Your Copy Here!

The 2025 Advent Daily Devotional is Here! New Daily Advent Devotions based on the Revised Common Lectionary texts from Creation Care Perspectives. We hope the devotions will inspire more people help care for God's creation in these challenging times. PEC has partnered with [Red Presbiteriana Para el Cuidado de la Creación](#) as a collaboration with both English and Spanish Advent Devotionals to share. Both translations are available on

the PEC website: <https://presbyearthcare.org/devotional-and-worship-aids/> to view or download your copy.

## What is an Earth Care Congregation?

The First Presbyterian Church is a certified Earth Care Congregation by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Presbyterian Hunger Program. The Earth Care Congregation certification is designed to recognize churches that make the commitment to take seriously God's charge to "till and keep" the garden.

Earth Care Congregations exist as strong community partners in their own areas as well as models for Presbyterian congregations across the country. One of the goals of this program is to inspire churches to care for God's earth in a holistic way, through integrating earth care into all

A close-up, vertical photograph showing a person, likely a religious figure, wearing a red robe and a white head covering. The person is holding a golden object, possibly a religious artifact, in their hands. The background is dark and out of focus.

## And, One Just for the Joy of Telling the Story!

**Arllys Kremer: 573-864-6120 or [congregationalcare@fpcfulton.org](mailto:congregationalcare@fpcfulton.org)**



The Fulton Caregiver Support Group meets monthly on the third Tuesday from 11:00 am until noon at the First Presbyterian Church, 718 Court Street. Caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias are welcome to share concerns with each other, learn about the disease and support one another. Find comfort and reassurance about feelings of guilt, frustration, and fear. Learn more about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias

and make new friends. You are not alone in this journey.

Join us at our next meeting on January 20, 2026

In the meantime, use this link to check out an article on

3 Things to Do While Visiting Aging Parents for the Holidays

<https://bit.ly/487jLir>

Facilitators are: Rhonda Cundiff 573-826-1050 and Lois Long 573-642-3691

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### **Wearing Your Nametag = Wearing Your Welcome!**

At **First Presbyterian Church of Fulton**, we believe in creating a space where everyone feels known, seen, and loved. One small way to do that? **Wearing your nametag!**

💬 It helps visitors feel more at ease.

👉 It fosters connection and conversation.

♥ It reminds us we're all part of God's family—by name!

So this Sunday, grab your nametag and help make our church a little warmer, one name at a time. See you at 10:30 a.m.!

**#FPCFulton #NameByName #ChurchFamily #Matthew25Church #WelcomeOneAnother #FPCMo**

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### **Giving & Contact Information-Pastor's Office Hours!**

#### **Notice of Pastor Vacation!**

***Rev. Pierson will be out of the office December 28 through January 3. The church office will be closed during this time. Please contact one of the Elders listed below for emergency assistance.***

#### **The Church Office May Be Contacted in the Following Ways...**

Street Address: 718 Court St, Fulton, MO, United States, Missouri

USPS Address: PO Box 6037, Fulton, MO, 65251

Telephone: +1 573-642-5541

E-mail: [communications@fultonpresbyterian.org](mailto:communications@fultonpresbyterian.org)

Instagram: [fpc\\_fulton](https://www.instagram.com/fpc_fulton)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@FPCFulton>

Website: [fpcfulton.org](http://fpcfulton.org)

#### **Rev. Carol Pierson's Regular Office Hours Are:**

*Monday - Thursday 9:00 am to Noon*

***Contact Pastor Carol by phone at: 573- 273-8738 (if no answer, please leave call-back information)***

***Contact Pastor Carol by e-mail at: [pastorcarol@fultonpresbyterian.org](mailto:pastorcarol@fultonpresbyterian.org)***

***Please Join Us for Worship Each Sunday Morning at 10:30 am.***

**COVID-19 Safety Protocols by the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Fulton.**

*The wearing of masks when entering the church building is optional. All other COVID-19 Safety Protocols remain in place. This includes the observance of social distance, using disposable Communion elements, and no contact collection of the offering. Our church COVID-19 Safety Protocols extend to all church activities.*

### How Can I Give?

Checks for pledges and offerings, and documents are normally hand-delivered on Sunday mornings by dropping them in the collection plate located at each door of the Sanctuary. Otherwise, if you are unavailable to attend church, any of these items can be mailed to:

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**P.O. Box 6037, Fulton, MO 65251**

**If you prefer online giving, use our new GIVE+ Online giving system through the website or the GIVE+ Mobile app.**

### How to Contact Our Committees!

Our committees Gmail accounts that can be used to email them suggestions, concerns, and thanks. The addresses are:

- Session Clerk, Elder Ramona Dobson, "[clerk@fpcfulton.org](mailto:clerk@fpcfulton.org)"
- Administration Committee, Elder Graham McCaulley, "[administration@fpcfulton.org](mailto:administration@fpcfulton.org)"
- Christian Education Committee, Elder Mary Van Orden, "[communications@fpcfulton.org](mailto:communications@fpcfulton.org)"
- Mission Committee, Elder Tim Wilkerson, "[mission@fpcfulton.org](mailto:mission@fpcfulton.org)"
- Congregational Care Committee, Elder Arlys Kremer, "[pastoralcare@fpcfulton.org](mailto:pastoralcare@fpcfulton.org)"
- Property Committee, Elder Shaun Speers, "[property@fpcfulton.org](mailto:property@fpcfulton.org)"
- Worship Committee, Elder Shirley Dixon, "[worship@fpcfulton.org](mailto:worship@fpcfulton.org)"
- Communications, Elder Mary Van Orden, "[communications@fpcfulton.org](mailto:communications@fpcfulton.org)"



### Welcome to Our Church!

*First Presbyterian Church is located at 718 Court Street in historic downtown Fulton, Missouri. Worship services are held each Sunday morning. For more information, go to: [www.fpcfulton.org](http://www.fpcfulton.org) or find us on Facebook or on Twitter @FPCFulton.*

*Subscribe to our YouTube channel:*

[youtube.com/@fpcfulton](https://www.youtube.com/@fpcfulton)

Email: [communications@fpcfulton.org](mailto:communications@fpcfulton.org)

Website: [fpcfulton.org](http://fpcfulton.org)

Location: [718 Court Street, Fulton, MO, USA](#)

Phone: [573-642-5541](tel:573-642-5541)

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**Mary Van Orden**

Mary is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

