



Third Sunday of Advent
Children's Christmas Pageant

9:30 a.m. | December 14, 2025

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Iowa City

Today's Worship Participants

Helen Bryce, Sara Penn, the Kasper Family,
and the Children of St. Andrew, *worship leaders*
Middle School Bells | Austen Wilson, *leader*
Matins handbell ensemble | Laura Kastens, *director*
Trombone Ensemble



After Worship Today

- **PreK-5th Grade:** *Children's Gathering Area*
- **Middle School:** *Middle School Classroom (#17)*
- **Learning Academy:** *Stories of Advent*, a storytelling workshop with Christina Charis-Donelson | The Hub



Flowers on the Chancel

- Today's flowers are given by Rosemary Plapp in celebration of Pastor Rob Martin's birthday and in prayers for Pastor Rob's continued healing.



Questions for Reflection

- What is something small that brings you joy? Why do you think God cares about that joy, too?
- When you meet someone new, what helps you slow down and see them the way God sees them?
- Where do you see light or hope shining in your life this week, even in a "desert" place that feels hard?
- When have you needed a second chance, and how did it feel to get one?



Finish the Race
Owe Nothing But Love

Hymns + Songs | Pages are listed for the printed bulletin

Numbers (#) are listed for music in the *Lift Up Your Hearts* (red) hymnal

Bold Print | Speak or sing together in unison.

✠ | Please rise in body or in spirit.



STEWARDSHIP 2026

ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



140 Gathering Place Lane, Iowa City, Iowa, 52246

319-338-7523 |

www.saintandrew.ccbchurch.com | bit.ly/SAPCYouTube



Third Sunday of Advent

Children's Christmas Pageant

9:30 a.m. | December 14, 2025

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church | Iowa City, Iowa

Welcome + Announcements

Prelude | *'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime*, arr. by Frances L. Callahan

Lighting of the Advent Candle

✠ **Gathering Hymn** | "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates," pg. 6

✠ **Prayer of Confession and Promise of Ever-Present Grace** | *adapted from a liturgy by Sara Speed*

In a series of experiments, Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov taught the world that it only takes a tenth of a second for us to form an impression of a stranger. In other words, it only takes a tenth of a second for us to look at someone's face and determine a stereotype about who they are.

With decisions happening that quickly,
it is not hard to imagine why we might need this moment of confession.

The prayer of confession is an opportunity to slow down.
We take that tenth of a second and give it room to breathe.
We reflect on the decisions that we've made this past week,
and we ask for God's mercy to be in all of them.

And without fail, God wiggles God's self into the cracks of our lives,
and we are made better for it.

So with that confidence, let us go to God in prayer:

**God of Mercy, a million times a day we have the opportunity to be gracious,
to assume the best in others,
to give the benefit of the doubt.**

**A million times a day we could choose the better way,
but so often we don't.**

Fear and greed kick in.

Assumptions and insecurities take the wheel.

Comparison and critique lead the charge.

**Forgive us for forgetting that we are descendants of Joseph.
Forgive us for forgetting that grace and mercy are in our blood.
Forgive us for forgetting that all belong to you.
Give us the courage to love even bigger than before,
and the wisdom to choose a better way.**

Time for Silent Confession

Family of Faith, hear this good news:
We who have chosen wrong, are given a second chance.
We who have lost our way, are welcomed into community.
We who feel alone, are seen, held, and known.
**This is the good news of the gospel.
No matter how many times we choose wrong or lose our way,
God continues to be a God of second chances, community, and love.
Thanks be to God!**

✠ **Musical Response** | “Glory Be to the Father”

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.***

✠ **Sharing of Christ’s Peace & Compassion**

And now, as a visible sign of what it means to live together
in the care and context of Christ’s community,
let us extend Christ’s peace and compassion to those around us!
The peace of Christ be with you all! **And also with you!**

Scripture Reading | Isaiah 35:1-10 (*The Voice*)

The word of the prophets for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

✠ **Hymn of Preparation** | “I Want to Walk as a Child in the Light,” pg. 7

Children’s Christmas Pageant

“The First Christmas” by Louis Egan

Offering Our Time, Treasure, and Talents

Connecting Hearts, Renewing Lives | Seasonal Giving Opportunities

Offertory | *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, arr. Barbara Kinyon



Give Online

✕ **Response to Our Offerings** | “In the Lord, I’ll Be Ever Thankful!”

In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful; in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God; do not be afraid. Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.

Prayers of the People & Lord’s Prayer | *adapted from Luke 11:2-4 & Matthew 6:13 (The Voice)*

Father in heaven, may your name be revered.
May your kingdom come.
May your will be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us the food we need for tomorrow.
Forgive us for our wrongs, as we forgive those who wrong us.
Lead us away from temptation, and save us from the evil one.
But let Your kingdom be ... and let it be powerful and glorious forever. Amen.

✕ **Sending Hymn** | “People Look East,” pg. 8

✕ **Benediction** | *adapted from a liturgy by Sarah Speed*

We believe in a God who offers second chances and does not hold grudges.

**We believe in a God who opens the door to new life
and leaves the porch light on for us when we get lost.**

We believe in a God who believes in us—

**believes that we can make a difference,
that we can choose grace over comparison,
love over hate, peace over war.**

And so we strive to live our lives in love.

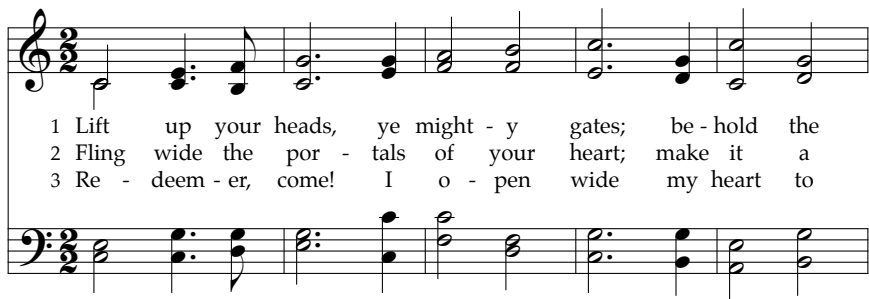
We strive to listen as Joseph listened, and to be the people that God calls us to be.

It’s all that easy, and it’s all that hard.

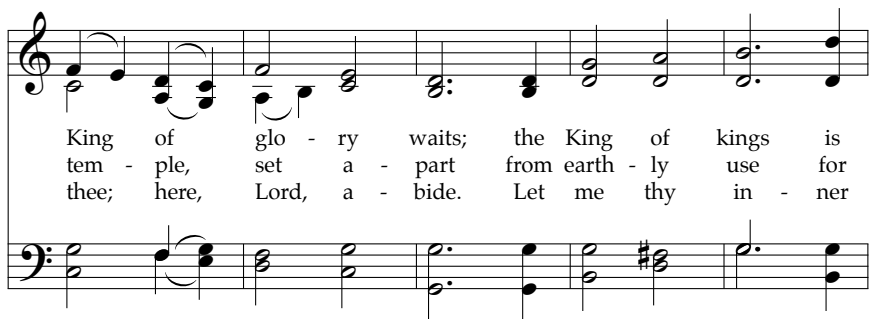
This we believe. Amen.

Postlude | *In the Bleak Midwinter*

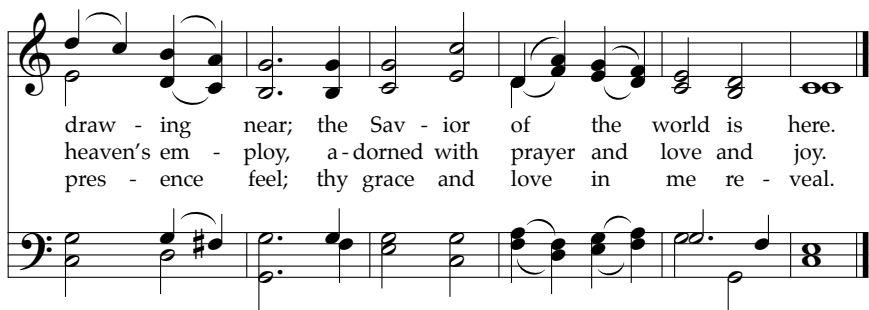
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates 93



1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates; be - hold the
 2 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; make it a
 3 Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide my heart to



King of glo - ry waits; the King of kings is
 tem - ple, set a - part from earth - ly use for
 thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me thy in - ner



draw - ing near; the Sav - ior of the world is here.
 heaven's em - ploy, a - dorned with prayer and love and joy.
 pres - ence feel; thy grace and love in me re - veal.

TEXT: Georg Weissel, 1642; trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855, 1863
 MUSIC: *Musica Sacra*, c. 1778

TRURO
 LM

730 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

Chord symbols are placed above the staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4.

1 I want to walk as a child of the light; I want to
 2 I want to see the bright-ness of God; I want to
 3 I'm look-ing for the com-ing of Christ; I want to

fol - low Je - sus. God set the stars to give
 look at Je - sus. Clear Sun of righ - teous - ness,
 be with Je - sus. When we have run with

light to the world; the star of my life is Je - sus.
 shine on my path, and show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 pa - tience the race, we shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain C F G C F C Am G
 In him there is no dark-ness at all; the night and the

Csus C Am G Dm Em
 day are both a - like. The Lamb is the light of the

D G C Em Dm G7 C
 cit - y of God; shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Chord symbols represent a simplified harmony.
 Words and Music (HOUSTON 10.7.10.8 refrain 9.9.11.7); Kathleen Thomerson (b. 1934) © 1970, 1975
 Celebration

105 People, Look East

1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more
 3 Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the
 4 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more
 5 An - gels, an-nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who

crown - ing of the year. Make your house fair as you are
 seed is plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to
 nest that must be filled. E - ven the hour when wings are
 light the bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y
 brings new life to earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley

Peo - ple, look
 a - ble; trim the hearth and set the ta - ble.
 nour - ish, that in course the flower may flour - ish.
 fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has cho - sen.
 weath - er, bright as sun and moon to - geth - er.
 hum - ming with the word, the Lord is com - ing.

east and sing to - day:
 Peo - ple, look east: Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 Love, the Bird, is on the way.
 Love, the Star, is on the way.
 Love, the Lord, is on the way.
 Peo - ple, look east: (Love is on the way.)

BESANCON
 8.7.9.8.8.7

TEXT: Eleanor Farjeon, 1928, alt.
 MUSIC: French folk melody; harm. Martin Shaw, 1928
 Text © 1960 David Higham Associates, Ltd.
 Music Harm. © 1928 Oxford University Press



Stories of Advent

Dec. 7 & 14, 2025 | The Hub
with Christina Charis-Donelson

a Learning Academy Class

SHUTTLEWORTH CHAMBER SERIES

HOLIDAY BRASS



2 p.m.
Dec. 14




SENIOR MOMENTS

10:30 A.M. | DEC. 16, 2025

A Christmas Jazz Adventure
with the Alone Tonight Quartet




St. Andrew Presbyterian December Food Market




COCOA & CAROLS

10:30 A.M. | SUNDAY DEC. 21
THE ATRIUM



bring some
cookies or a
favorite dessert

25 Live at Home

ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

tinyurl.com/sapc-25live



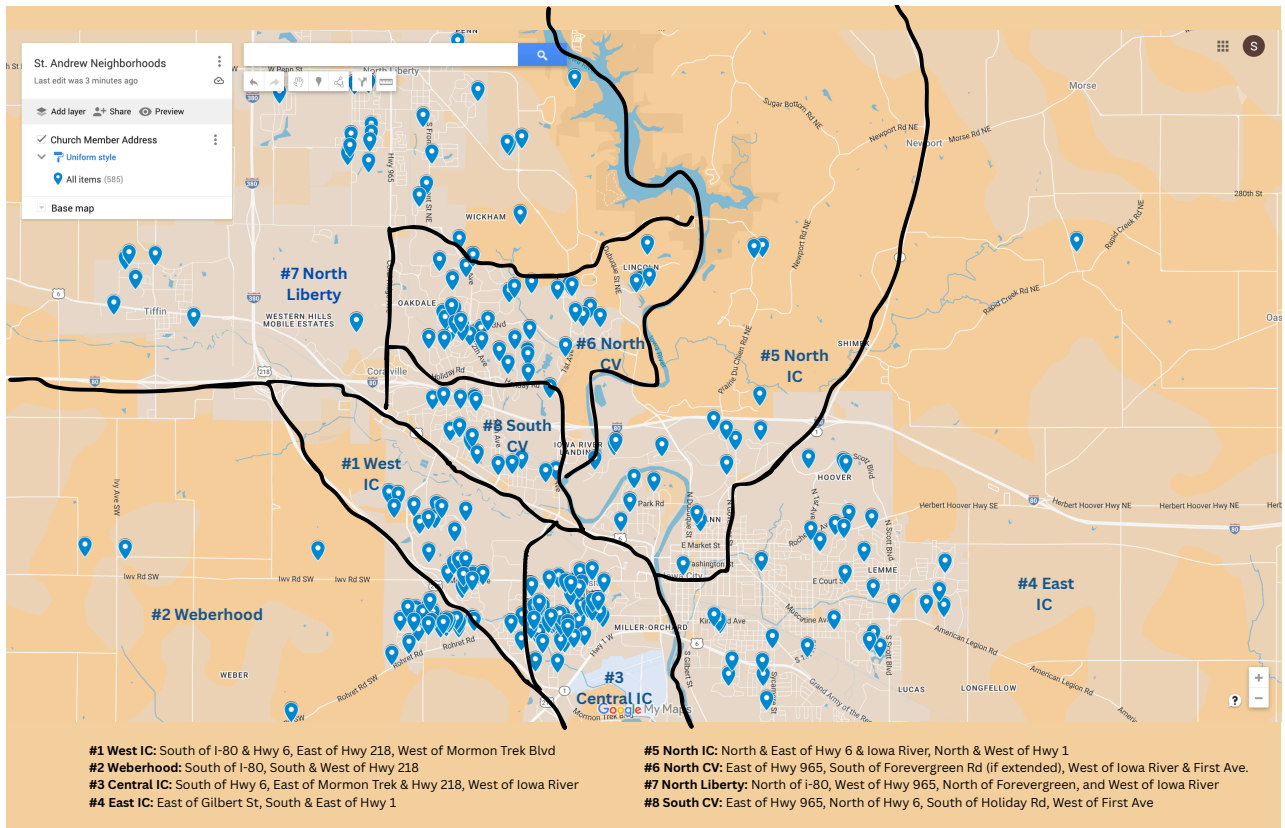
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5 p.m. | A Service for All Ages

7 p.m. | A Service with Choir & Organ

11 p.m. | A Service with Communion





Reviving Our Neighborhood Connections

Over the past few months, St. Andrew has been reviving our Neighborhood Ministry system—a simple, relational way to help us care for one another more intentionally. We’ve divided our congregation into eight geographic neighborhoods and assigned deacons to each area. In the weeks ahead, these deacons will be reaching out to say hello, check in about any ministry needs or points of celebration, and begin imagining future neighborhood gatherings.

You’ll find the neighborhood map above. Here are the deacons serving each area:

- **#1: West Iowa City** — Jim Halverson and Jamie Tanas
- **#2: Weberhood** — Jenni Stacy-Adams and Laurel Crusinberry
- **#3: Central Iowa City** — Rick Graf and Emmitt Schmidt-Rundell
- **#4: East Iowa City** — Cody Neddermeyer and Vern Dengler
- **#5: North Iowa City** — David Weitzel and Scott Hoffman
- **#6: North Coralville** — Mettie Thompulus and Allison Van Iddekinge
- **#7: North Liberty** — Kathy & David Duys and Jordan Barrett
- **#8: South Coralville** — Lynne Ginsberg and Cindy Seyfer

We’re grateful for these deacons and look forward to the fresh connections and shared care this ministry will nurture.

Questions about Worship?

- **Welcome!** We are happy to have you join us today. If you would like more information about St. Andrew, please email office@saintandrew-ic.org or fill out this short form: <https://tinyurl.com/sapc-guest>.
- Our worship services begin **in-person and online shortly before 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings**, followed by Sunday School and Adult Christian Education offerings from September to April and a variety of After Worship activities from May to August.
- **Nursery care** (up to age 2) is provided in the Lower Level throughout the morning. Programming for children (through Kindergarten age) begins in the Lower Level after the **Time for Young Disciples**.
- Unless otherwise designated, gifts given to the **weekly offering** support the church budget, including staff salaries, utilities, mission outreach, and all aspects of ministry.
- To log into the **St. Andrew Connect** system, either download the **St. Andrew App** through the **App Store/Google Play** or visit <https://saintandrew.ccbchurch.com>.
- There are wheelchairs available for use as needed in the lower level entrance foyer and by the coat racks near the upper level entrance.
- There is an AED near the Coffee Kitchen should a medical emergency arise.
- Permission to livestream the music in this service is from CCLI (#617801) and One License (A-711114).

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Children's Christmas Pageant Today | • Food Market Jan. 28 |
| • Orchestra Iowa Brass Concert Today | • Women's Retreat Jan. 31 |
| • Food Market Dec. 17 | • At the Table Feb. 5 |
| • Celebration of Life: Pat Dustin Wood Dec. 19 | • St. Olaf Band Concert Feb. 6 |
| • Cocoa and Carols Dec. 21 | • Congregational Meeting Feb. 8 |
| • Christmas Eve 5, 7, & 11 p.m., Dec. 24 | • Chili Cookoff & Souper Bowl Lunch Feb. 8 |
| • Bingo & Games Jan. 2, 2026 | • Ash Wednesday Feb. 18 |
| • At the Table Jan. 8 | • Presbytery Leadership Meeting Feb. 24 |
| • Sunday School Resumes Jan. 11 | • Food Market Feb. 25 |
| • Next Steps Jan. 18 | • At the Table March 5 |

We can choose a better way



THE COURAGEOUS CHOICE

by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Matthew 1:18-25 | Silk painting with digital drawing and collage

When Joseph learns that his engagement has turned into a scandal, he decides to dismiss Mary quietly. While this choice may seem like a compassionate one, it's also a passive choice, one with little cost to Joseph but great consequences for Mary. As an unmarried mother, she and her child would be incredibly vulnerable, shunned by society, perhaps cut off from family support and resources. This choice means Joseph's reputation remains unharmed while pregnant Mary will live on with mounting shame and threats cast upon her.

While Joseph is thinking about all of this, perhaps deliberating about how he will delicately manage the social perceptions of this unexpected turn in his life, an angel comes to him in his dreams. What I find most interesting is that the angel doesn't command Joseph; instead he simply says, "Don't be afraid." He essentially says: "Don't be afraid of the social stigma. Don't be afraid to become a parent through adoption. Don't be afraid to experience a love greater than you have ever known. Don't be afraid to make the courageous choice, the one that will not only change your life, but the lives of Mary and Jesus and so many generations who will come after you."

In this image, I've captured Joseph in the liminal space where his dreams will soon shape his reality. He rests his head on a folded blanket, which represents the woven tapestry of his ancestors who also made difficult choices for good. Gold interconnecting lines, like the roots and branches of a family tree, envelop him, symbolizing the beautiful web of regeneration that will come from his courage.

As we reflect on the Christmas story through Joseph's experience, may we, too, have the courage to choose a better way.
—Lisle Gwynn Garrity



Jesus, the Light of the World,
brings hope.

Together, we can bring hope to others
by receiving the Christmas Joy Offering.



CHRISTMAS JOY
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 21