

What Can I Give Him?  
Text: Christina Rosetti (1830-1894) | Music: Gustav Holst (1874-1934)  
Arranger: Mark Schweizer (1956-2019)

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

Our God, heav’n cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
Heav’n and earth shall flee away, when he comes to reign,  
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed;  
The Lord God incarnate, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd,  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him,  
give him my heart.  
What I can I give him, give him my heart.

**About the Anthem:**  
Victorian poet Christina Rosetti wrote this poem in 1872, originally called “Christmas Carol,” at the request of an American magazine, *Scribner’s Monthly*. Rosetti was born to Italian parents in Lonon. Her father, Gabriele Rosetti, was Professor of Italian at Oxford; her mother, Frances Polidori, was a governess and a devout Anglican parishioner. One brother, Dante Gabriel Rosetti, was a famous painter. Christina began writing poems at age twelve, self-printing them on her grandfather’s printing press. She was a prolific writer and was considered for the title of Poet Laureate near the end of her life. Historians suspect Rosetti was not chosen for the title because of her poor health due to Grave’s disease and cancer.

Today’s anthem text is often considered unusual because it is completely metrically irregular. The only metrical similarity between verses occurs in the final line of each stanza; each final line contains nine syllables. This presented a challenge for composers to write a tune suitable for all five of Rosetti’s stanzas. Gustav Holst was certainly up to the challenge; you may remember Holst from his symphonic suites such as *The Planets*. He wrote this tune, CRANHAM, especially for Rosetti’s text. The tune is named after Holst’s birthplace, and it first appeared as “In the Bleak Midwinter” in *The English Hymnal 1906*. Mark Schweizer’s arrangement of this anthem paints a picture of falling snow by using rhythmic syncopation and broken chords.

While we now understand that Jesus was born in a different climate and season, Rosetti’s lyrics remind me that there is a coldness of heart in our fallen sin nature. We Christians must contend with the winter of the human soul, no matter the climate in which we reside. This text is also a call to stewardship during the Advent and Christmas seasons. The greatest gift we can give back to Christ is the gift of our very selves – our time, talents, and devotion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS		
Today	Please greet your neighbors and pass the Fellowship Pad	
Tuesday December 16	Handbells 5:00pm	Ladies Dinner 6pm
Wednesday December 17	Wednesday Night Dinner 6pm	
Thursday December 18	Thursday Bible Study 10:30am	Choir 4:30pm
Saturday December 20	Sat. Lunch Ministry 11:30am	

We will have breakfast for supper, a fruit salad, a delicious dessert, and tea/coffee for our Wednesday night dinner. Team 1 is in charge. Please use the reservation form in the bulletin or call the office by noon Wednesday if you plan to attend. Our program will be a Christmas Carol sing-a-long service.

We will collect two offerings December 14th & 21st.  
**Endowing People** – David Baker’s Financial Literacy Class for young people covers financial planning, budgeting, home buying, and investing will resume in January 2026. We aim to secure a \$3,000 grant from the Presbytery and hope to match this amount with your contributions. The **JOY Offering** is a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930's. Gifts of over one million dollars in 2024 were distributed to support needy retired Presbyterian church workers or their spouses for assisted living, in-home care, or long-term care. Both offerings help us celebrate and thank God for his perfect gift to us – his precious son, Jesus. Mark your check Joy fund or Endowing People and put in offering plate or drop off at the office.

Christmas Caroling Sunday December 21 at 2pm–meet at church, Sutherlin entrance, we will go caroling to our friends & neighbors.

Everyone is invited to our Candlelight Christmas Eve service with Lessons and Carols which will be at 5:30pm.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS: The office will be open until 11am on Christmas eve. Closed on Christmas Day. The Church office will be closed December 29th—December 31st. The staff wishes the entire congregation of First a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

SERVING TODAY	
Minister of Discipleship	Jackson Weller
Music Director	Ashley Stanley-Robey
Sound	C. B. Strange
Video	Alex Walthall
Liturgist	Becky Meadema
Greeter	Gail Jones
Side door/Offering	David Clark

**List of Session members**  
Class of 2025: David Clark, Sam Meadema, Eddie Blount, Jackie Rochford  
Class of 2026: Barry Cutright, Gail Jones, Kim Wimer, Ava Barrett  
Class of 2027: Barbara Wilkins, Joan Reynolds, Pat Pinckney, Kent Shelton  
Trustees: Bob Newnam, Ray Beale, Gary Wimer

BUDGET UPDATE		
<b>November</b>	<b>1-31</b>	<b>FY 2025</b>
<b>Contributions</b>	<b>\$24,218.23</b>	<b>\$385,178.72</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>\$24,272.72</b>	<b>\$382,959.03</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>(-\$54.49)</b>	<b>\$ 2,219.69</b>

If you enter the hospital, your church will have no way of knowing unless you notify us. Please let us know of your hospital stay so that we may respond with pastoral care.

[A Warm Welcome](#)  
We would love to have you join our church family. If you are moved to do so by the Lord, please talk to one of the elders or our pastor.

THE COLUMNS  
OF THE  
First Presbyterian Church  
Danville, Virginia  
December 14, 2025  
Third Sunday of Advent



Welcome

This church opens wide its doors and offers welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Celebrating 198 Years of Knowing Christ  
and Making Him Known

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937 Main Street, Danville, VA 24541-1809—434-792-7822  
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Website: http://www.fpcdanville.com

# A Service for the Worship of God

## GATHER TO GLORIFY GOD

*Please greet your neighbors and pass the Fellowship Pad to them.*

### CHIMING OF THE HOUR

### WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

Yiddish song, arr. W. Wold

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE "Joy" the Zagol family

Leader: Last Sunday we lit the Candle of Peace. We light it, and the candle of Hope as we remember that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfill all of God’s promises and bring us everlasting peace and joy. [The Candles of Hope & Peace are lit.] Today we light the third candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that a special child would be born to her she was filled with joy. She sang a song that began with the words: “My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world gave joy to those who had none before. He healed them and gave them hope and peace when they believed in him. From hope and peace grows joy. We light the Candle of Joy to remind us that when Jesus is born in us we have joy and that through him there will be everlasting joy on earth. [The Joy Candle is lit.] Joy is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle we celebrate the joy we find in Jesus Christ. **Let us pray: Thank you, God, for the joy you give us. We ask that as we wait for all your promises to come true and for Christ to come again, that you would remain present with us. Help us today and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your joy with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

### RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (Isaiah 35:1-2; Matthew 11:4-5)

Leader: What if joy were to break out unrestrained in our world? What would we notice?

**People: The wilderness and dry land would be glad; the desert rejoice and blossom.**

Leader: The blind would see and the lame would walk. Lepers would be cleansed, and the deaf would hear.

**People: The dead would rise and the poor would receive good news.**

Leader: May joy break out in our worship today as we anticipate the One who comes into our world!

**People: Come thou long expected Jesus!**

\*HYMN#123 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

### INVOCATION

Father, we lift our voices in joyful praise. Let our hearts rejoice in Your salvation. May our songs rise as incense and fill this place with the sound of heaven.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and wonderful God, we confess that we have closed our eyes to what you are doing. We prefer to concentrate on problems, bad news and violence. When we do, we miss all the healing, freeing and helping you accomplish in our world. We pass up opportunities to participate in your Good News. We rob ourselves of so much joy. Forgive us and give us eyes to see, ears to hear, minds to understand, and hearts to treasure your mission in the world. Fill us with unquenchable joy at the coming of Jesus. **Amen.**

### SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

### ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Matthew 1:21)

The angel told Joseph, “You are to name the baby Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Believe the good news of the gospel: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Amen.**

### SIGNS OF RECONCILIATION

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

**Leader:** Let us the children of God, having confessed our sins and been reconciled to God, having been assured of God's graciousness and mercy, stand and offer that same peace and reconciliation to our brothers and sisters in Christ, forgiving each other and offering grace and peace.

*Please remain standing for the “Gloria Patri.”*

\*RESPONSE “Gloria Patri”

*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.*

\*HYMN#100 “My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout”

### CALL FOR THE OFFERING

We give to God’s work in the world in response to all that God has done for us. In awareness and gratitude, let us give God’s tithes and our offerings.

### PRAYER OF DEDICATION

We thank you God, for all the ways you work and heal and bless and free us. Accept these gifts given in great gratitude and in anticipation of Christ’s return. Multiply them for your glory and for the good of all people. Amen.

OFFERTORY "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen," and "O Come, Little Children" arr. C. Kimberling | Greg Robey, guitar, and Ashley Stanley-Robey, flute

### \*DOXOLOGY

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

ANTHEM "What Can I Give Him?" Christina Rosetti/ Gustav Holst, arr. Mark Schweizer

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Come Holy Spirit! Through the reading and hearing of the Word today, may a deep and complete joy be born in us. Amen.

### LECTIONARY SCRIPTURES:

(535/508) Isaiah 35:1-10  
(899/856) James 5:7-10  
(725/688) Matthew 11:2-11

SERMON “Joy in the Desert” Jackson Weller

\*HYMN#134 “Joy to the World”

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH The Apostles’ Creed  
**I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

POSTLUDE "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" Felix Mendelssohn/arr. C. Berry

### \*BENEDICTION

\*Please stand if able.

*\*Hymn lyrics projected on the screen can be found in the “Glory to God” hymnal in the pew.*