

**CHILDREN'S TIME**  
**CHORAL ANTHEM** "Noels of Christmas"

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**SCRIPTURE READINGS** Dennis Vogan & Pastor Emily

*Isaiah 62:1-3; Galatians 4:4-7*

*Luke 2:22-40*

**SERMON** "Being Present with Assurance"

**RESPONSE HYMN # 345** "Blessed Assurance"

**JOYS & CONCERNS**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**CALL FOR THE OFFERING**

**OFFERTORY** "Still, Still, Still," Traditional Austrian Carol,  
*arr. Marilyn Ham*

**\*"THESE GIFTS"**

"These Gifts" (tune of "What Child Is This?")

*These gifts we joyfully bring to you,  
to fill the world with meaning;  
our hearts and minds are longing for  
the life of which you are dreaming.*

*This, this our gift we bring,  
our lives we share, your praise we sing;  
show us your vision, Lord,  
for hope, and peace, and caring.*

*TEXT: Rev. Scott Cervas, Meadowthorpe Presbyterian Church  
(Lexington, KY)*

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**\*CLOSING HYMN # 132** "Angels We Have Heard on High"

**\*CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE** "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow," Spiritual,  
*arr. Lloyd Larson*

*Worship design and liturgy adapted from Worship Design Studio  
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# The Gift of Being Present

December 31, 2023

The First Sunday of Christmas



**December 31, 2023**

**MUSIC FOR THE GATHERING  
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP** (Greet one another)

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**PRELUDE** *"We Three Kings," by John H. Hopkins, Jr.,  
arr. Heather Sorenson*

**BECOMING PRESENT & LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES**

The Copeland Family

Worship Theme Introduction

Leader: We come giving thanks  
that the gifts we've been given  
are the gifts we can give.

**People: We open our hearts,  
readying them for the gift of a new year!**

Leader: The promises of hope, peace, joy, love, and light  
are the Divine Gifts we receive.

**People: We will use them  
to reassure those who need to know  
that they are the recipients of these gifts as well.**

Leader: The gift of hope is an essential survival tool  
because it reminds us  
that the hard times do not have the last word.

The gift of Christ's peace reminds us  
that we can have peace  
even in the midst of non-peaceful situations.

The gift of joy is not the equivalent of happiness,  
but rather the deep call to delight in the small things.

The gift of love is the clear call  
to us as Jesus' disciples.  
The more love we put into the world,  
the better the world will be.

The gift of Christ's light is the reassurance  
that we are never alone.

**People: We light these candles as a sign  
that we will be present with assurance  
in the world.**

*"What Can I Give Him?"* see insert

**UNISON PRAYER OF PRESENCE**

**Holy Living Light of God,  
you are our Reassuring Presence.  
Let this assurance grow in our lives each day,  
so we can be a present of assurance to others.  
Unwrap and open our hearts. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN # 136** *"The First Noel"*

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God our Savior, we confess  
that we fail to live in your light.**

**You reveal your saving love,  
but we hide your love from others.**

**You claim us as your children,  
but we do not claim you as our God.**

**Forgive us, God of grace.  
Help us to tell the world of your good news. Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**WHERE CHILDREN BELONG**

*This, this is where children belong,  
welcomed as part of the worshiping throng.  
Water, God's Word, bread and cup, prayer, and song:  
This is where children belong.*

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