



"I Am With You" by Lauren Wright Pittman | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

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Memorial Presbyterian Church

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

4TH Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

When You're Afraid, Give Me Your Hand

Tethered

When we were children, we fell asleep
with walkie talkies tucked under our pillows.
All that separated us was a bathroom,
a hallway, a few feet of empty space,
but as children, even small distances can feel like miles.

So after the parents whispered prayers over our skinned knees
and spelling tests, after they kissed our sweaty foreheads
and tucked us into bed,
we'd pull the walkie talkies out from under our pillows.
We'd roll the dial on the top of the transceiver.
We'd sputter that invisible tether to life.

And with a few crackles in the quiet of the night,
you'd whisper my name.
I'd press down the button.
I'd promise I was close.

As an adult, I don't know what ever happened
to those blue-grey walkie talkies.
But I know,

that even today,
if the monsters in the closet feel too real,
and you whisper my name,
I promise I'll be close.

Prayer by Rev. Sarah A. Speed
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PRELUDE

Candelight Carol

J. Rutter

BRINGING THE LIGHT

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Here in worship—

we pray together,

we stand together,

we sing together,

we listen together.

Here in worship—

we are not alone.

So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry,
remember this moment.

We are not alone.

Let us worship our with-us God.

*SONG OF PRAISE

People, Look East

Hymnal, No. 105

*CONFESSION AND PARDON

When you were afraid,
did I stay by your side?

Did I offer my hand,
or did I leave you alone?

When you were afraid,
did I choose solidarity?

Did I see your fear,
or did I only see mine?

Friend, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too.

So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

Now we must ask—

when you were afraid,

did we stay by your side?

Did we offer our hands,

or did we leave you alone?

When you were afraid,

did we choose solidarity?

Did we see your fear?

Or did we only see ours?

Friends, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.

Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too.

So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

We accept your grace and would love to start again.

May it be so, with God's help.

Alleluia, amen.

(Time for silent reflection)

Family of faith,
no matter where your path has led you in the past, today is a new day. So join
me in declaring this good news:

We are known. We are forgiven! We are sent to serve.

May we step forward in faith, always moving closer to God's call. Amen.

***THE PEACE**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

***SONG OF RESPONSE** Angels We Have Heard on High (refrain) Hymnal, No. 113

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

Trudy Beard

SCRIPTURE READING

Page No. 583

Isaiah 41:5-10

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

A Little Child Will Come to Lead Us

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25

Page No. 783

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

When You're Afraid, Give Me Your Hand

Tracy L. Evans

***SONG OF FAITH**

We're Not Alone

Bulletin p. 7

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

We have seen the valley.

We have seen a sky without stars.

**We have seen the longest night,
and still we believe.**

We believe in a with-us God.

We believe in the hope of tomorrow.

We believe that good news is louder than fear.

We believe this good news is for all people.

**So even when our knees shake,
even when our voice trembles,**

even when fear is all around us,
 we will hold onto that good news.
 We will reach for each other.
 We will look for God in our midst.
 We will sing songs of joy.
 We will proclaim:
 Unto us, love is born.
 We have seen the longest night,
 and we have seen unimaginable love.
 So still, we believe.
 Amen.

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal, p. 35

*Please pray the Lord's Prayer
 in the language and wording most familiar to you.*

THE OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Creator of the Stars of Night (verse 4)

Hymnal, No. 84

To God the Father, God the Son,
 and God the Spirit, Three in One,
 praise, honor, might, and glory be
 from age to age eternally. Amen

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

FOLLOWING THE WORD INTO THE WORLD

*SENDING SONG

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Hymnal, No. 107

*BLESSING AND CHARGE

*POSTLUDE

People, Look East

Arr. by D. Milan

*Please rise in body or spirit.

We invite anyone who wishes to consider membership in this church to contact the pastor or a member of the session. Membership in this church is a step made by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith or transfer of church letter.

Lectionary Readings for December 28: Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23.

The Food & Shelter items of the month for December are gloves and socks. Please place your donations in the box by the church information table.

We're Not Alone

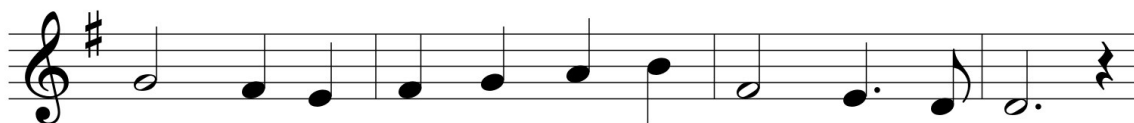
ADESTE FIDELES Irr. with refrain

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

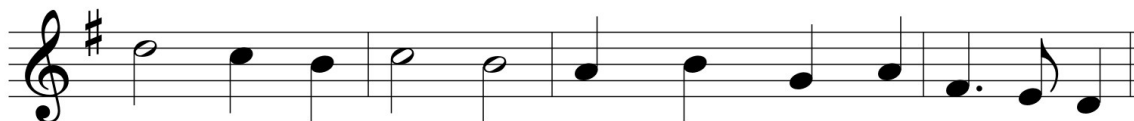
Music by John Francis Wade, 1751



Fear all a - round you tells you you're a - lone ____
Give me your hand to hold when you feel frigh - tened
When peo - ple live in fear ____ for their safe - ty
For - ward we march to - geth - er toward God's kin - dom



Urg - ing you to build walls and i - so - late
We can up - hold each o - ther in ____ our fear
Let us put priv - ilege on the line ____ for them
Build - ing a big - ger ta - ble, not tall - er walls



I know your fear be - cause I feel it, too ____
Per - son by per - son, we'll find strength to - geth - er
Stand with our sib - lings in ____ sol - i - dar - i - ty
Work - ing to - geth - er, no - thing is im - poss-i - ble



When fear grows deep in - side us, re - mem - ber what u - nites us



No, no - thing can di - vide us; we're not a - lone