

First Presbyterian Church of Youngstown

The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

January 25, 2026

11:00 a.m.

* Please rise in body or in spirit.

Bolded words indicate unison responses from the congregation.

REFLECTION FOR WORSHIP

The following scriptures from the Revised Common Lectionary and reflection are provided for meditation as we prepare for worship.

Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27:1, 4-9, and Matthew 4:12-23

Reflections on Isaiah 9:1-4 from Daily Feast: Meditations from Feasting on the Word, Year A: *For Christians, the light of Isaiah's oracle breaks over us on the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, only a month after the shortest day of the year. Sunlight hours have begun to lengthen, the light remaining with us a little longer each day. The light Isaiah looks toward, however, is not light that grows gradually over time. The brightness of the light Isaiah proclaims shines on a people walking in darkness like a brilliant dawn suddenly breaking. This, surely, is the kind of light that illuminates every secret place, bringing a path obscured by shadows suddenly into view. It is the kind of light that gives direction and drives out fear.*

Isaiah speaks his prophecy of light into a moment of tremendous fear for the people of Israel, a time of "distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish" (Isa. 8:22). Assyrian invaders have attacked the northern kingdom, shearing away portions of Israel to create Assyrian provinces. With its images of "the boots of the tramping warriors" and "garments rolled in blood" (Isa. 9:5), the oracle in Isaiah 9 reflects the oppressive military occupation under which Israel struggles to live. Isaiah speaks his word of light and hope into a time of desolation.

STEPHANIE A. PAULSELL

Response: *When have you walked in darkness and difficult times, then seen a great light of hope?*

Prayer: *Thank you for breaking the yoke of my burdens, O God of deliverance, and for increasing my joy. Amen.*

WE GATHER

Organ Prelude

Jesus, The Very Thought of Thee

Robert Lau

Welcome and Announcements

Karen Cooper

WE PRAISE

*Call to Worship

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

We gather in the presence of God. Let us open our hearts and minds in worship.

*Gathering Prayer

Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us in your service.

Strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call;

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*Hymn #343, vss 1-4

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life

GERMANY

WE CONFESS

Call to Confession

Let us pause here to confess the sins that have kept us from recognizing and enjoying God's presence.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, when despair and suffering overwhelm us, we cry out for you and feel abandoned. We doubt your presence and your promises. We believe you have turned away from us in anger. We ask why you have forsaken us. In these moments, strengthen us in faith and fill our hearts with courage. We believe, God. Help our unbelief. Amen.

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

"The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

*Gloria #581

Glory Be to the Father

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.*

*Sharing the Peace of Christ

The Peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you!

WE LISTEN

Prayer for Illumination

God of epiphanies, you reveal yourself to us in diverse and numerous ways. Free us from the distractions that turn our focus away from you and your Word. Open us to the truth you reveal to us today. Amen.

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 9:1-4

Pg. 555

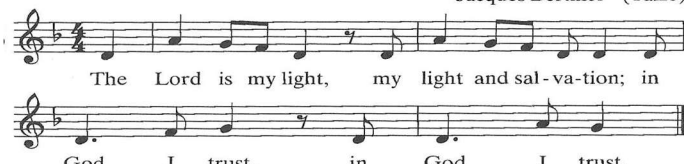
This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalter

Psalm 27

Pam Root, Cantor

Jacques Berthier (Taizé)



The Lord is my light, my light and sal - va - tion; in
God I trust, in God I trust.

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New Testament Lesson

Matthew 4:12-23

Pg. 785

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Why does it matter?

Rev. Payne Warner

Jesus and fulfilling the prophets

*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.

WE DEDICATE

Call for the Offering

Let us return a portion of the gifts we have been given to the support and furtherance of Christ's ministry and to support and comfort those most in need.

Offertory Anthem

Child of the Manger, Child of the Cross
The Motet Choir

Craig Courtney

Response of Thanksgiving #694, vs. 1 *Great God of Every Blessing

AURELIA

*Great God of every blessing, of faithful, loving care, you are the fount of goodness, the daily bread we share.
How can we hope to thank you? Our praise is but a start: sincerely and completely I offer you my heart.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

Holy God, we present these offerings to you in faith. We trust that you will bless and use them to further Christ's ministry and serve those in need. May these gifts bless those we know who are suffering and those known only to you. Amen.

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

In your mercy, O God, **hear our prayers.**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

***Hymn #724**

O Jesus, I Have Promised

ANGEL'S STORY

***Benediction**

Organ Postlude

Reflections on the tune "GERMANY"

**WE SCATTER TO CONTINUE OUR WORSHIP
IN SERVING OTHERS**

A warm welcome is extended to all who worship today.
May the gift of worship we offer honor God and serve as a blessing to you.

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WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. M. Payne Warner

Karen Cooper

THE MUSIC TODAY

Prof. Larry Harris

Pam Root, Soprano

The Motet Choir

ALSO SERVING TODAY

Ushers: John Einfalt and Patti Keenan

Facilities Staff: David Phibbs

ELDERS

Miranda D'Amico

Elsie Dursi

Margie Patterson

Patti Keenan

Carol Reed

Chuck Mansfield

Karen Cooper

Daniel Ayana

DEACONS

Michael Shepherd

Elizabeth Ayana

TJ Hudock

Wilma Miller

Julie Miller

Emily Slaven

WORSHIP NOTES

Our liturgies today were written by Teri McDowell Ott for the *Presbyterian Outlook*, the PC(USA) *Book of Common Worship*, and Rev. Warner.