

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

A full-page background image featuring a dramatic sunset or sunrise sky with large, dark, textured clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow. In the foreground, a dark, rocky, and uneven terrain stretches across the frame. A small silhouette of a person running is visible on the horizon line, positioned between the words 'WITH' and 'ENDURANCE' in the title. The overall mood is one of perseverance and endurance.

# RUN WITH ENDURANCE

HEBREWS 12:1

**Kathy Staddon, Preaching**  
**Bethany Dodge , Liturgist**  
**Stephanie Davisson, Accompanist**



Welcome  
to  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
219-866-7005  
www.firstpresrensselaer.org  
www.facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-Rensselaer

Church Mission Statement: We are a Presbyterian church responding to new mission frontiers presented by our changing culture. Guided by our Lord Jesus Christ, we love, serve and embrace all people.

Sunday Offering: \$ 220.00   Christmas Joy offering: \$335.00  
Attendance: 16  
Pastor: Rev. Michelle J. Bartel, Ph.D.  
Youth Minister: Stephanie Davisson  
Director of Music: Stephanie Davisson  
Office Administrator: Bethany Dodge 219-866-7005  
Maintenance/Housekeeping: Pat McKinney

Prayer concerns: Jennifer Perez, Larry Alexander, Joan Butler, Tony’s grandmother, Joyce Cady, Carol Geisel, Dawn Jefferson, Rob Jefferson, Trent Jefferson, Kristian Jefferson, Aaron & Bridgette Helms & family, Joy Mendenhall, Sharon DeWees, and Pat Sheffler.

If you would like a child’s folder or a wireless hearing assistance device, let the usher know.

**The Lord’s Prayer**  
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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.  
Lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory,  
for ever. Amen.

Church Calendar		
Sunday, Dec. 29	9:30 a.m.	Worship
Monday, Dec. 30	9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.	Church Office open
Tuesday, Dec. 31	8:00a.m. — 12:00 p.m.	Church Office open
New Year’s Eve	4:00 pm	Bible Study
Wednesday, Jan. 1	Church Office Closed	Happy New Year!
New Year’s Day		
Thursday, Jan. 2	9:00am-4:00pm	Church Office open
Saturday, Jan. 4	7:00 p.m.	AA – Alcoholics Anonymous (Basement)
Sunday, Jan. 5	9:30 a.m.	Worship, Communion (choir sings)

Announcements:

The office will be open Monday from 9am-4pm and Tuesday from 8am -12pm. The office will be closed on Wednesday January 1st. The office will go back to regular hours (9am-4pm) on Thursday.  
Bible Study will meet on Tuesday, Dec. 31st at 4pm.  
There is no youth meeting this week.  
There is no choir practice this week.





# Preparing the Way

## Christmas Joy Offering 2024

developing & sustaining our leaders

If you have not yet made your contribution, there's still time!

Thank you for your giving!

1st Sunday of Christmas

December 29, 2024

✦ Please stand in body or spirit

Prelude

Welcome

Kathy Staddon

Call to Worship

Bethany Dodge

Leader: Eternal God, open our eyes to see your hand in the splendor of creation  
**People: and in the beauty of human life.**

Leader: Touched by your hand, our world is holy

**People: Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us,**

Leader: to share our blessings with our sisters and brothers

**People: and to experience the joy of life in your presence. Amen.**

✦ Hymn of Praise #133 *O Come All Ye Faithful*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Lord, we enjoy following you when the way is easy and our burdens are light. We admit, though, that it's much harder to follow when the path gets steep and opposition arises. It's then that we yearn to cast off the burdens of responsibility, to let go of tasks which seem more trouble than we counted on. Remind us, we pray, that we didn't sign on for "easy". We signed on to be faithful, wherever you might lead us. Forgive our hesitancy, our self-protectiveness, and give us the courage, we ask, to dare to go where you lead us. For we ask these things in the name of him who bid us take up our cross and follow him. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

Leader: Jesus never asks us to go where he is not prepared to go with us.

**People: Jesus never asks us to do what he is not ready to help us do.**

Leader: For your blessed faithfulness, we give you our gratitude, O Jesus.

**People: For the privilege to follow where you lead, we give you our obedience.  
 Amen.**

✦ Response #581 *Gloria Patri*



Announcements

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading          Psalm 30:4, 5, 11 &12          p. 505 OT

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord  
**People: Thanks be to God**

New Testament Reading          Philippians 4:4-8          p. 198 NT

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading          Hebrews 12:1-2          p. 226 NT

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

Sermon: “Finding Joy”

Hymn of the Word      # 132 *Good Christian Friends, Rejoice*

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

Prayers of the People

The Lord’s Prayer (we use “debts and debtors” in the prayer)

The Offering  
(The Offering plates will not be passed. You may place your offerings in the plates on the pedestals either before or after Worship.)

✠ Doxology      #607      *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow*

✠ Prayer of Thanksgiving

**In gratitude for your many blessings we bring you these gifts, O God. Help us use them to serve not only each other, but also this world which you sent your Son to reconcile to you. In his name we pray, and after his example we commit ourselves, once more, to live. Amen.**

✠ Hymn of Sending      #121      *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

✠ Benediction

Congregational Response          *Joy to the World* ( verse 1)

Postlude