

# Welcome All to Sunday Worship Service



DECEMBER 13, 2020

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | 2408 N. NAVARRO ST. | VICTORIA, TEXAS 77901

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## ORDER OF WORSHIP

First Presbyterian Church  
December 13, 2020  
Third Sunday of Advent

*For everyone's safety,  
please wear masks and maintain  
social distancing at all times.*

Prelude: A Child of Hope

- Lani Smith, 1970

Welcome and Announcements

Passing of the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.  
All: **And also with you!**

Opening Sentences

One: Rejoice in the Lord; again, rejoice!  
All: **Be gentle to all: the Lord is near.**

Call to Worship

One: The Promised One of God brings good news  
to the oppressed and binds up the brokenhearted.  
All: **We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**  
One: The Promised One of God proclaims liberty  
to captives and release to prisoners.  
All: **We are witnesses to the light of Christ!**  
One: The Promised One of God comforts all who mourn  
and gives a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
All: **Rejoicing always, praying without ceasing,  
holding fast to what is good,  
we are witnesses to the light of Christ.**

Prayer of the Day (*unison*)

We thank you, O God,  
for all those in Scripture who have pointed to Christ:  
for your prophets Elijah and Isaiah,  
for other prophets, and for John.  
We thank you, too,  
for those in our lives who have pointed us to Christ:  
pastors and teachers, strangers and friends.

*(Continued on next page)*

**Prayer of the Day** *(continued)*

Give us eyes to see Christ today  
among those who are oppressed, imprisoned,  
brokenhearted, or beaten down,  
and we will give our testimony, too:  
how Christ releases and sets free;  
how he turns ashes into garlands;  
how he repairs and builds up what was ruined.  
We, too, will point others to Jesus,  
the Light of the world. Amen.

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath -  
The Joy Candle or the Shepherds' Candle**

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing. *Isaiah 35:1*

**Opening Hymn** *(silently singing)*: “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

No. 2

**Invitation to Confession**

Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts  
through our lives and relationships.

But God is able to restore us.

Like water coursing through a desert,  
the waters of baptism flow through us,  
reminding us that we belong to God  
and are raised to new life.

**Prayer of Confession** *(unison)*

**Merciful God, you love justice;  
why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing  
and every form of evil?  
You have given us the gift of your Spirit;  
why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us?  
You have given us the words of the prophets  
and the Word himself;  
why, then, do we despise and ignore  
what we have heard from you?  
You have sent the light into the world;  
why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light?  
Forgive us. Restore us.  
Till and tend us as your garden  
until righteousness and praise spring up,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

*John & Paige Horadam*

**Kyrie Eleison** *(silently singing)*

**Lord, have mercy upon us.  
Christ, have mercy upon us.  
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us!  
Even if we have gone out in tears,  
God brings us home shouting for joy.

Believe in God, Friends!

Believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

**Gloria Patri** *(silently singing)*

**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.**

**Prayer of Illumination**

Holy One,  
giver of life and light,  
as your word is read and proclaimed,  
illumine our hearts and minds,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
our lives may reflect God's glory. **Amen.**

**First Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

P.P. 691-692 in the Old Testament

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;  
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations...

*(Continued on next page)*

**First Scripture Reading** *(continued)*

For I the LORD love justice,  
 I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
 I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
 Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
 and their offspring among the peoples;  
 all who see them shall acknowledge  
 that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.  
 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
 my whole being shall exult in my God;  
 for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
 he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
 as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
 and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
 For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
 so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
 to spring up before all the nations.

**Anthem:** A Christmas Medley

C.F. Schneider

**Second Scripture Reading:** John 1:6-8, 19-28

P.P. 91-92 in the New Testament

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light....

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"   
 as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

**Sermon:** John the First Witness

Rev. James DeMent

John 1:7: He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

*Silence and stillness***Congregational Hymn** *(silently singing)*: "In the Bleak Midwinter"**Prayer of Thanksgiving** *(unison)*

Gracious God,  
 teach us to give thanks in all circumstances,  
 for you are always with us.  
 Thank you for the privilege  
 of sharing what we have with others,  
 of giving ourselves away in love,  
 and of receiving the gifts that others share with us.  
 With our whole being,  
 spirit and soul and body,  
 we rejoice in you.  
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Doxology** *(silently singing)**Genevan Psalter, 1551*

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

**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 at 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.

**Closing Hymn** *(silently singing)*: "Angels, from the Realms of Glory"

No. 22

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer****Charge and Benediction****Postlude:** Break Forth, O Beautiful Heavenly Light*- Johann Schop, 1641/  
 arr. J.S. Bach, 1734*

We have reproduced below the lyrics of the hymns selected for this morning's worship service. All the hymns below are either in the public domain or have been reproduced, under license, from *The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville: 1990). If you are worshipping with us from home, we encourage you to sing along. If you are worshipping with us in the Sanctuary, we invite you to contemplate the lyrics as Robert Wyatt, our Choirmaster, plays the melodies. Under our current Health Protocols, we must refrain from singing out loud, but that does prevent us from finding comfort, hope, strength, and courage in these familiar hymns. Follow the verses in this order:

Verse 1  
Verse 2

Verse 3  
Verse 4

**Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

**In the Bleak Midwinter**

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.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;  
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
Worshiped the beloved with a kiss.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;  
Heaven 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 my heart.

**Angels, From the Realms of Glory**

Angels, from the realms of glory,  
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
Ye, who sang creation's story  
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:

Sages, leave your contemplations,  
Brighter visions beam afar;  
Seek the great desire of nations;  
Ye have seen His natal star:

Shepherds, in the field abiding,  
Watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing,  
Yonder shines the infant light:

All creation, join in praising  
God, The Father, Spirit, Son,  
Evermore your voices raising  
To the eternal Three in One:

**Refrain:**

Come and worship, come and worship,  
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

**Caregiving Concerns and Prayer Requests**

Kathryn Amsler

Gloria Aouelle

Leonard "Mac" McCameron

Kathleen McCameron

Roland Merrill

Sarah Waldrop

Nathan Galvan  
(Son of Leila Galvan)

Samantha Skaggs  
(Niece of Roxanna and  
Henry Hauschild)

John & Jere Swoboda  
(Prior FPC Members)

Carol Wisdom  
(Daughter of Lea Lenz)

**For caregiving concerns—please contact:  
Jack Kleinecke (361. 212.3229); or Gayla Whitaker (361. 935.0950)**

**FPC Opportunities for Worship & Service**

**Sunday, December 20**

10:30 AM Worship Service

*Installation of Elders elected to the Session Class of 2023*

*A copy of our  
"COVID-19 Pandemic  
Public Health and Safety Protocols  
for In-Person Gatherings  
at the Church"  
can be obtained as you enter the church  
or at our website:  
www.fpcofvictoria.org.*

**FPC Victoria Servant Leadership**

**Session Members**

Jim DeMent, Moderator  
Jack Kleinecke, Clerk of Session  
Billy Leske, Building & Grounds  
Dawn Neel, Christian Education  
Linda Patterson, Worship  
Marsha Ricottilli, Asst. Clerk, Mission & Outreach  
Susan Salinas, Caregiving & Fellowship  
Jim Stokes, Finance  
Gayla Whitaker, Caregiving & Fellowship  
Bill Wilkinson, Personnel

**Other**

Paula Leske, Presbyterian Women  
Melissa Samudio, Presbyterian Day School  
Shelley Hartman, Dawn Neel, and Helen Resendez,  
Kids for Christ, Vacation Bible School



*The Lighting of The Advent Candles*



The third candle on the Advent Wreath is known in various traditions as the "Shepherds' Candle" or the "Joy Candle." Whatever designation is used for each of the candles lit in sequence during the four Sundays of Advent, the participation of the congregation together with specific members in the lighting of the candles is intended to commemorate the unfolding story of the Advent Season—the story of our redemption through God's grace made manifest in his only begotten Son, Our Lord and Savior.

Come Lord Jesus, come!

**Clergy, Music, and Administration**

Rev. Jim DeMent, Interim Pastor  
Robert Wyatt, Organist/Choirmaster  
Tasha Wolf, Office Administrator

**Office Hours**

Monday — Friday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
361.575.2441  
info@fpcofvictoria.org