

Welcome All to Candlelight Worship Service



CHRISTMAS EVE
December 24, 2022

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

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ORDER OF WORSHIP

First Presbyterian Church
December 24, 2022
Christmas Eve
7:00 o'clock p.m.

Prelude "A Medley of Christmas Carols"

arr. Robert Wyatt

Welcome and Announcements

*Passing of the Peace

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you!**

Call to Worship

One: Do not be afraid; for see
I am bringing you good news of great joy.

All: **To us is born this day in the city of David
a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.**

One: This will be a sign for you:
you will find a child wrapped in cloth
and lying in a manger.

All: **Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace!**

Prayer of the Day (*unison*)

Living God, on this holy night we gather—
to stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory;
to sing with angels, rejoicing in your work;
to wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise;
to sit with Mary, cradling your love.

May the good news of this night inspire us
to tell the world of our great joy:

for to us is born a Savior,
the Messiah, the Lord.

Glory and praise to you forever! Amen.

**Please stand in body or spirit*

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath -
The Christ Candle**

Bob & Gayla Whitaker

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness,
on them light has shined. *Isaiah 9:2*

***Opening Hymn:** “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

No. 41

***Invitation to Confession**

In Jesus Christ our Lord
the grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation to all.
With confidence and joy,
let us confess our sin.

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

**Great and glorious God,
through Jesus Christ our Savior you have shown us
that the blessed age of grace has appeared
and the hoped-for time of salvation has come.
Yet we cling to the glories of the present age—
worldly passions and impure pursuits,
self-indulgent, crooked, and ungodly ways.
Redeem us from evil and cleanse us from sin,
through Christ, who gave himself for us,
so that we might be your people, holy and whole. Amen.**

***Kyrie Eleison** (*unison*)

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

***Assurance of Pardon**

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God’s people on earth.
Hear the good news of great joy!
Believe in God, Friends!
Believe the good news: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

***Gloria Patri** (*unison*)

**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 for Illumination

Loving God, by the gift of your Spirit,
teach us, like Mary, to treasure your words
and ponder them in our hearts;
through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh. **Amen.**

First Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7

P. 638 in the Old Testament

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.
You have multiplied the nation,
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
For the yoke of their burden,
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

Anthem: “Gesù Bambino”

Pietro A Yon, 1917

Solo by Dawn Neel

Second Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-20

P. 58 in the New Testament

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Sermon: Whose Good News Is It?

Rev. Jim DeMent

Luke 10:11: But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Silence and stillness

***First Congregational Hymn:** “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

No. 38

Offertory: Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

-Polish Carol

***Doxology** (*unison*)

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

***Prayer of Thanksgiving** (*unison*)

**We give you thanks, O Lord,
for the world of wonder you have made—
forest and field, sea and sky,
and for the gift of grace that you have given—
a little child,
lying in a manger.
Receive these gifts of tenderness and love,
of gratitude and praise,
and use them for your glory;
in the name of Jesus Christ,
the child of Bethlehem, we pray. Amen.**

***Affirmation of Faith (The Apostles’ Creed)** (*unison*)

**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.**

Prayers of the People

***Second Congregational Hymn:** “Angels We Have Heard on High”

No. 23

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.
All: And also with you.
One: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them to the Lord.
One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and just to give you thanks
in every time and in every place, almighty God.

We give you thanks for the gift of creation
and especially for the gift of our life.
We are grateful that you have made us in your image
and that you pardon us when we act
as though you have no authority over our lives.
We are grateful that you sustain us in your great love.

And so, with all your people,
with angels, archangels,
and with all the company of heaven
we praise and magnify your glorious name,
joining our voices in the eternal hymn:

You are holy, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ,
who was born of Mary
and shared the joys and sorrows
of the life that we know.
You anointed Jesus Christ with your Spirit
to preach good news to the poor,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
to give sight to the blind, and to liberate the oppressed,
proclaiming the year of the Lord's favor.
In Christ's baptism, suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
and made a new covenant with us
by water and the Spirit.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ,
we take from your creation this bread and this wine,
and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising, as we await the day of his coming,
proclaiming the mystery of faith:

SANCTUS: UNISON

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF FAITH: UNISON

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon your people
and upon these your gifts of bread and wine,
so that the bread we share and the cup we bless
will be for us the body and blood of Christ.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ
and with all who share this feast,
united in ministry in every place.
As this bread is Christ's body for us,
send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

Make us one with Christ,
one with our neighbors,
and one in service to all the world.

Keep us faithful in your service
until Christ comes in final victory,
and we shall feast with all your saints
in the joy of your eternal realm.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor are yours, almighty God,
now and forever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

One: Holy and astounding God,
At this table, in this meal,
we have been met by Christ—
the reflection of your glory,
the imprint of your being.

All: **As we go from this place
may our lives be a joyful song,
proclaiming the good news
of your righteousness and peace
for all the world. Amen**

***Closing Hymn:** "Joy to the World"

***Charge and Benediction**

At this time we light our candles as we sing our the closing hymn.

*Light your candle by tilting it into the flame of the candle of an Elder who will walk down each aisle.
Upon exiting the Sanctuary, please do not blow out your candle but rather allow an Elder to extinguish it.
Then place it in the designated basket.*

***Sending Forth:** “Silent Night, Holy Night”

**Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.**

**Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing: “Alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the savior is born!”**

**Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, love’s pure light,
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at thy birth.**

**Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing,
Alleluia to our King;
Christ the Savior is born,
Christ the Savior is born.**

Postlude: A Joyful King

-Barbara B. Kinyon, 1990

As the church bell rings, let us depart in silence and contemplation.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! the Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns:
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders of his love.



The Lighting of the Advent Candles

The last white candle to be lit in the center of the Advent Wreath is known universally known as the “Christ Candle.”

With all of the candles now lit, their collective light becomes a beautiful symbol of the Advent Season which culminates in Christmas, the day we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The light from the candles reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world who comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope. The light also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect the light of God's grace to others.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

- John 1:5

O Come, All Ye Faithful

O, come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
O, come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold Him,
Born the King of angels!

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing!

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God,
All glory in the highest!

Refrain:

O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
From heaven's all-gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world:
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing!

For lo!, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing.

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain:

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Caregiving Concerns and Prayer Requests

Gloria Aouelle **Bette Austin** **Nathan Galvan**
(Son of Leila Galvan) **Kathleen McCameron**
Maria Pezeski **Mikey Ruddock** **Carol Wisdom**
(Mother of Leila Galvan)

**For caregiving concerns—please contact:
Lynn McAuley (979.248.6238); or Gayla Whitaker (361. 935.0950)**

FPC Opportunities for Worship & Service

Sunday, December 25, 2022

No Service

Sunday January 1, 2023

10:30 AM Worship Service

**Lords Supper*

The church will close at noon on Thursday,
December 29, 2022, and will reopen at 9:00 AM on
Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

Unless otherwise requested, any donations to the
church received or postmarked on or prior to
December 31, 2022 will be recorded
as a gift made in 2022.

FPC Victoria Servant Leadership

Session Members

Jim DeMent, Moderator
Francis Byrne, Mission & Outreach
John Horadam, Buildings & Grounds
Lynn McAuley, Asst. Clerk, Caregiving & Fellowship
Dawn Neel, Finance, Assistant Treasurer, Worship
Patrick Patterson, Buildings and Grounds
Becky Richter, Christian Education, Personnel
Suzanne Salinas, Mission & Outreach, Worship
Gayla Whitaker, Caregiving & Fellowship
Bonnie Wilkinson, Clerk of Session, Personnel

Other

Lynn McAuley, Presbyterian Women
Melissa Samudio, Presbyterian Day School
Jim Stokes, Treasurer
Henry Hauschild, Historian

Pastor's Notes

Jesus was born when Augustus Caesar was the undisputed ruler of the Mediterranean World. History refers to this "golden era of peace" as the *Pax Augusta* or the *Pax Romana*. But, in fact, such "peace" was maintained by the harsh, unrelenting imposition of military might. Augustus' Roman legions reacted viciously against any rebellion, insurrection, or revolt against his authority. Slavery or death by crucifixion were the promised reprisals to terrorize anyone who threatened that peace.

Into such repression, God sent his Son. In our New Testament Scripture reading for Christmas Eve, the angelic chorus announces that the Messiah's birth promises peace to the world, but it will be a peace very different from the *Pax Romana*. Augustus sits on his mighty throne in Rome, and Jesus lies in his humble manger in Bethlehem. The contrast between the merciless strength of the Emperor and the gentleness of the baby is unmistakable.

And yet, glory to God in the highest!, the angels announce the arrival of the true Prince of Peace. Christ brings a peace that no earthly king will ever achieve. Such peace knows no boundary; it knows no limit. As the peace of Christmas Eve enters your heart, pray that such peace may overwhelm our world. Rulers come and go, and violence continues to beget more violence. Yet, Christ the King shall reign forever, and his peace is the true peace that God gave his creation through the birth of an infant in Bethlehem.

Clergy, Music, and Administration

Rev. Jim DeMent, Interim Pastor
Robert Wyatt, Organist/Choirmaster
Erica Colding, Office Administrator

Office Hours

Monday — Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
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