



hope

First Presbyterian Church El Campo, Texas

First Presbyterian Church seeks to provide a spiritual home that proclaims God's presence and love to all people by creating a welcoming environment for Christian spiritual growth through worship, fellowship, and education, joyfully celebrating God's love as disciples serving the community and the world.

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

November 27, 2022

1st Sunday of Advent

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Three Reflections on "Savior of the Nations, Come"*
Plainchant adapted by Martin Luther; arr. David Lasky

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP AND ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

One: We have good news, good news! God is drawing near in the coming of the Christ Child.

One: We know the story. Jesus is coming to us as a baby. But why would the Christ Child come to us?

All: Jesus comes to us because we are part of God's creation, made in God's image. Our purpose is to love and to serve God.

One: With the coming of the Christ Child comes the hope of salvation; a hope that will deliver us. Where do we find this hope in our world?

All: We find this hope in God who is strong and wise, who speaks the truth and never changes, who does what is good and right and surrounds us always and everywhere.

One: What happens if our hope falters in the midst of hardship, struggles, difficulties, and sin?

All: Our hope rests in God who is always faithful; even when we are not. God will fulfill the covenant of grace and bring us to eternal life.

One: We light the first candle, the candle of hope. Let us wait with hope for the Christ Child.

*HYMN #83 *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

1 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.

The Advent Wreath is a symbol of light growing in a time of darkness, leading up to the birth of Jesus who is the light of the world. This year church group leaders will call us to worship with our Advent Wreath Lighting. Leading today are POW leaders – Melissa Erwin, Ester Latapie, Jana Fernandez, Janice McCormick, and Liz Rasmussen.

2 Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

3 Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

4 By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne.

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Great God of Presence and Promised Coming, we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to fulfill your desire for us to love one another. We have not followed the paths you have given us, choosing instead to follow our own. We have broken relationships. We chase consumer desires. We have rebelled against your love. Free us for joyful obedience, through the Advent of Christ, Our Lord, Our Messiah, Our Hope. Amen. (Silent Confession.)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Good News! God so loved the world that he gave sinful and broken humanity a gift: Emmanuel, God with us.

This proves God's love toward us!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

All: **Thanks be to God.**

*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.**

HEARING OF THE WORD OF GOD

This morning's anthem, *Prepare the Way of the Lord*, was composed by William Rowan in 1987. Set in a light classic style, the music's rhythmic impetus drives the call of the prophet Isaiah to "Prepare!" for the Advent of the Lord. The text is based on Isaiah 40:3-5. Skilled as an organist, choir director and composer, Rowan has written 10 hymn tunes that were selected for inclusion in the *Glory to God* Presbyterian hymnal.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 40:3-5, NRSVUE

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Prepare the Way of the Lord

William Rowan

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 3:1-12, NRSVUE

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.' " Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Be Brave and Have Hope

"One of the essential paradoxes of Advent: that while we wait for God, we are with God all along, that while we need to be reassured of God's arrival, or the arrival of our homecoming, we are already at home. While we wait, we have to trust, to have faith, but it is God's grace that gives us that faith. As with all spiritual knowledge, two things are true, and equally true, at once. The mind can't grasp paradox; it is the knowledge of the soul."— Michelle Blake (Author, Seminary Graduate, Episcopalian)

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Apostle's 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.

*HYMN *Angels We Have Heard on High*

1 Angels we have heard on high,
singing sweetly through the night,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their brave delight.

Refrain:
Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo.

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?
What glad tidings did you hear? [Refrain]

PRAYER CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Stanza one of *Angels We Have Heard on High* ends with the mountains' response to the angels' song. Today we are singing that the mountains are "echoing their brave delight," though some translate this French hymn as "echoing their joyous strains." Theologically, both of these phrases make sense. God is doing a brave, new, amazing thing in becoming human. And all creation responds to this incarnation with abundant joy.

CALL TO GIVE

OFFERTORY

Waiting for the Lord

Colin Curtis

*THE DOXOLOGY

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

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN #88 *O Come, O Come Emmanuel (s. 1-4)*

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

2 O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily:
to us the path of knowledge show;
and teach us in her ways to go. [Refrain]

3 O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. [Refrain]

4 O come, thou Root of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save
and give them victory o'er the grave. [Refrain]

*BENEDICTION

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

Seek Ye First

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And his righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you,
Allelu, alleluia!**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, alleluia!**

POSTLUDE

Pièce Triumphant

Craig Penfield

One License A-736067; CCLI #11514120 & 2046772

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. Dr. Erin McGee, Preaching
Ted Lashley, Music Director
Steve and Nancy Porter, Ushers

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: Placed today by Bill and John Bender in loving memory of Jo Ann Bender.

PRAYER LIST

Blair Couey
Bob Mericle

Alexander Stillman
Gerald Ripple

THIS WEEK AT FPC:

Wednesday, November 30

5:30 pm - POW Pageant Practice

6:00 pm - Choir Practice

Saturday, December 3

10:00 am – Christmas Decorating, Sanctuary

Sunday, December 4

11:00 am – Worship – Christmas Pageant

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Saturday, December 3 – Christmas Decorating, Sanctuary; 10:00 am

Sunday, December 4 - Youth Christmas Pageant; 11:00 am Worship

Sunday, December 11 - Choir Cantata; 11:00 am Worship

Wednesday, December 14 - 6:00 pm - Location: The Erwins (1304 Ave K) Gather for fun together! Wear festive socks, sweaters, hats, or whatever! Bring an appetizer to share! Hot chocolate will be served, but feel free to bring whatever you would like to drink and an appetizer. Caroling on the Hayride starts at 6:30 pm. Feel free to climb on the hayride and sing loud and proud (being on-key is optional) OR stay at the Erwins for fellowship!

Saturday, December 24 - **5:00 pm** Christmas Eve Worship

Sunday, December 25 - 11:00 am Christmas Day Worship

Wear your favorite Christmas sweater or socks! Let the kids come in their PJs!

Come for a "dressed down" morning of Christmas worship!

2023 Pledge Update

We are still receiving pledges for 2023 and have not quite yet met our 2023 goal. If you have already provided your pledge amount via the pledge card or by email, THANK YOU! If you have not yet done so, please let the church know of your intention to give. If you are unsure if you have submitted your pledge card, just give the office a call or email and we would be happy to check. Please note: if you signed up to give through our online automatic draft, please also let the church office know if you intend to continue at the same or a changed amount. We have no access to individual's online pledging arrangements. God has blessed us; Let us bless God's world!

CHURCH OFFICERS

Class of 2022

Gerry Couey, Treasurer
Jana Fernandez
Linda dale Raun

Hal Erwin
Tommy Hitzfeld

Class of 2023

Elizabeth Clapp
Taylor Martin

Vicki Ekstrom
Derek Treybig

Class of 2024

Diane Barger
Dick Ramsey

Mary Johnson, Clerk
Lynn Reed

CHURCH STAFF

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Erin McGee
Adult Music Director – Ted Lashley
Communications Assistant – Leigh Ann Neel
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