

First Presbyterian Church

December 22, 2024



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firstpresbyteriancarrollton.org



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December 22, 2024

10:30 A.M

PRELUDE – WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS CALL TO WORSHIP

O you who sit in darkness, with no hope of light and drunk with despair, look up. The light of the world is coming into your darkness; hope unearned and not deserved is coming. In the words of the prophet, arise for your light is come!

We light the first candle to remind us that we can trust God to bring light to our darkness and comfort to our loneliness.

Justice can be hard to come by. Many times what actually happened is obscured by a cloud of doubt and legalese to prevent justice. But the day is coming when a descendent of David will appear. The LORD's spirit will rest on him. He will not judge by mere appearances, or make decisions on the basis of hearsay. He will treat the poor fairly, and make right decisions.

We light the second candle in hope for when God's rule over all the world brings justice.

O God, you give us hope when all hope is gone. You love us despite our ungracious and self-centeredness. By giving us life, you bring your love to our lives. O Christ of God, come anew in our hearts this day, and remain in us forever.

We light the third candle to remind us of God's unfailing love for us

Now Jesus came to Nazareth, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and read where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set

free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." "For he is our peace."ⁱ

We light the fourth candle remembering that your grace brings peace and joy to our world.

*INVOCATION (*Opening Prayer*)

O God, open the doors to our hearts that this year we may have room for the birth of Jesus. O God, as we marvel over all that you are doing, overwhelm us with so much wonder that joyous words of praise spring forth from our lips. In this time of waiting, let true worship begin with the joy in our hearts. **Amen.**

*HYMN "Love Has Come!" #256 GREEN

1 Love has come, a light in the darkness! Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies. See, all heaven has come to proclaim it. Hear how their song of joy arises: Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior! Love! Love! Glory to God on high!

2 Love is born! Come share in the wonder. Love is God now asleep in the hay. See the glow in the eyes of His mother. What is the name her heart is saying? Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers. Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.

3 Love has come, He never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free. Love is Jesus within and among us. Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!

CALL TO CONFESSION, CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

O promised Christ: We are a world at war.

Our peace depends on your coming.

We are a sinful people.

Our pardon depends on your coming.

We are full of good intentions but weak at keeping promises;

Our only hope of doing God's will is that you should come and help us do it.

Lord Christ, Word made flesh, our world waits -
For your peace, pardon, and for your grace. Even so: come, Lord Jesus.ii
(Time of silent personal confession)

As we enter into this time of Advent, O God, we rejoice that while we were all sinners, rejecting your rule over us,
You still came to us in grace, pouring out your life so we could be made alive.
Yet, O God, because your timing is different than ours, we forget you create life where there is none and bring to life again that which has died.
We are surprised when you act in our lives, when our prayers are answered after we had long given up hope.
We are astounded when we find your answers exceed our wildness dreams.
So, O God, forgive us for all the times we doubt your goodness and love, striking out on our own to solve things rather than waiting for you to act.
Grant us the courage to follow you.
Help us share the good news of your life in us, redeeming and restoring the world to wholeness.

Hear the good news of God's amazing grace. In Christ we are loved and made new.
Therefore, rejoice because we are forgiven through God's grace!

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

May the peace, love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.
Let us greet one another in the name of the Lord.

***HYMN "Speak, O Lord" INSERT**
Speak, O Lord, as we come to You to receive the food of your holy word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us all Your purposes, for Your glory.

MESSAGE "God with Us – The Wonder of Christmas"

***HYMN "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" #251 GREEN**

1 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 men, from heaven's all-gracious King!"
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.

2 Still thro' the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav'nly music floats o'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hov'ring wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.

3 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.

4 For lo! the days are hast'ning on, by prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years shall come the time foretold,
When peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song which now the angels sing.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH "The Nicene Creed" PAGE 15 BLUE

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.

***HYMN “Go Tell It on The Mountain” #29 BLUE**

R Go, tell it on the mountain over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.

1 While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. (R)

2 The shepherds feared and trembled, when lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angels chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. (R)

3 Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. (R)

CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE

BENEDICTION

O Come, Emmanuel and ransom your captive people,
Restore to us the joy of your salvation.

O Lord, be gracious to us and bless us,

Make your face shine upon us and your peace cover us.

May all the peoples praise you, O Emmanuel.

May all rise and pay homage to you at your coming.

In our hearts and lives may we know that because of your coming, O Emmanuel, O God who lives with us,

Joy has come to the world and will never leave. Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE –

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Deacon of the Month:

December: Kathy Hutson

Upcoming Events:

Advent Study (Sunday before worship)	Dec. 22	9:30 AM
Christmas Eve Service	Dec. 24	6:30 PM
Annual General Meeting	Jan. 12	Following Worship

Worship Leaders: Hannah Mergen, Jay Stoneman, and Pastor Tim Dyck.

Mark 10:13-16

Now people were bringing little children to him for him to touch, but the disciples scolded those who brought them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it."

After he took the children in his arms, he placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Isaiah 9:2-6

The people walking in darkness see a bright light; light shines on those who live in a land of deep darkness. You have enlarged the nation; you give them great joy. They rejoice in your presence as harvesters rejoice; as warriors celebrate when they divide up the plunder.

For their oppressive yoke and the club that strikes their shoulders, the cudgel the oppressor uses on them, you have shattered, as in the day of Midian's defeat. Indeed every boot that marches and shakes the earth and every garment dragged through blood is used as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called: Extraordinary Strategist, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Luke 2:6-7, 9-12

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Matthew 2:1-11

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the time of King Herod, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem saying, "Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. After assembling all the chief priests and experts in the law, he asked them where the Christ

was to be born. "In Bethlehem of Judea," they said, "for it is written this way by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are in no way least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod privately summoned the wise men and determined from them when the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and look carefully for the child. When you find him, inform me so that I can go and worship him as well."

ⁱ Reading from Luke 4:18-21, Ephesians 2:14

After listening to the king they left, and once again the star they saw when it rose led them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When they saw the star they shouted joyfully. As they came into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their treasure boxes and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

ⁱⁱ Reprinted by permission from The Worship Sourcebook, Second Edition, © 2013, Faith Alive Christian Resources. P. 447.