

**3rd Sunday of Advent
SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY**

WELCOME

Whatever your religious background and however you have come to be here, we are honored that you have chosen to worship today at First Presbyterian Church. We hope you feel welcome, inspired, and strengthened by the power of God to meet the challenges of your daily life.

GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

We begin worship with the musical prelude and lighting of the candles, reminding us of Christ's presence with us. Please use this time to make the transition from getting here to being here.

PRELUDE Noel L. C. d'Aquin

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Now the heavens start to whisper,

Many: the time is drawing near.

One: The desert will sing and rejoice.

Many: The wilderness will bloom with flowers.

One: We will hammer our swords into plowshares

Many: and we will study war no more.

One: This God promises to all of creation,

Many: and God's promise will be fulfilled.

*HYMN 105 People Look East BESANÇON

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of grace, through the prophets you called to your people, "prepare the way of the Lord." But we aren't ready. We pass by those in need, we turn away from the hungry still waiting to be filled, we ignore the cries of our siblings who are suffering. Forgive us! Give us love for your people, that in serving we might find joy, and in seeking to relieve suffering we might be agents of your peace. We open our hearts to you in silent prayer...

*KYRIE 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (v.7) VENI EMMANUEL

*O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace...*

***ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS**

*GLORIA 88 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Refrain) VENI EMMANUEL
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

FOCUS ON CHILDREN with
the LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES Nate Burt, Leo Elizalde,
Logan Knight, Kordell Looney

Advent is a chance to reclaim God's promise of love for our world and each one of us. On the heart in your bulletin, write the name of a person who needs to feel God's love at this time, (someone for whom this season is difficult), or someone for whom you give thanks that has shared God's love with you. Then, as we sing, you are invited to bring your heart forward to the table to the left of the lectern. Use a ribbon to attach it to the wreath, or leave it on the table as an offering, saying a silent prayer for love and comfort in our broken world.

HYMN 85 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (v. 1-3) TIF IN VELDELE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

OLD TESTAMENT READING Zephaniah 3:14-15, 19-20

One: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM Sky Song Russell Schulz-Widmar

*GOSPEL READING Luke 3:7-18

One: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON Good News of Great Joy? Rev. Cat Goodrich

DEDICATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

*HYMN 94 Now the Heavens Start to Whisper JEFFERSON

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH from the Iona Community

**We believe that God is present
in the darkness before the dawn;
in the waiting and uncertainty where fear and courage join
hands, conflict and caring link arms, and the sun rises over
the barbed wire.**

**We believe in a with-us God who sits down in our midst to share
our humanity.**

**We affirm a faith that takes us beyond the safe place:
into action, into vulnerability, and into the streets.**

**We commit ourselves to work for change and put ourselves on
the line;**

**to bear responsibility, take risks, live powerfully and face
humiliation;**

**to stand with those on the edge; to choose life and be used by
the Spirit for God's new community of hope. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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 God thanks and praise.

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.

CHORAL RESPONSE

WORSHIP OF GOD WITH TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

*Part of your offering today is the gift of your presence.
Please acknowledge your presence by signing the welcome book at the end of your row.*

OFFERTORY Infant Holy, Infant Lowly C. McMichael

*RESPONSE 144 In the Bleak Midwinter, (v.4) CRANHAM

*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.*

SENDING GOD'S PEOPLE INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN 92 While We Are Waiting, Come WAITING (Cason)

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

*POSTLUDE Hark, The Herald Angels Sing arr.Wilbur Held

*Please stand as you are able.

**If you would like to make a gift electronically, scan here to be directed to our online giving site:



ANNOUNCEMENTS

LET THE BELLS PLAY! Our 37-bell Rushton Memorial Carillon was the first such instrument in Birmingham and the third in the United States, when installed in 1924.

WE WELCOME GUESTS and celebrate that you are worshiping with us today. Your presence enriches our community. We hope the service held meaning and beauty for you. If you are returning to a distant home, we wish you the Lord's grace and a safe journey. However, if you live in the area and are seeking a faith community, we hope you will return soon so that we may get to know you better. To learn more about opportunities for spiritual growth and service, visit us on the web at www.fpcbham.org. May God's peace and blessing be with you.

IF YOU ARE SEEKING A CHURCH HOME, our Session meets on the *first Sunday of the month* in the Chapel following the 11:00 worship service to welcome new members. If you are looking for a faith community, we hope you will make First your home.

FOR CHILDREN: Children's bags and bulletins are available in the Narthex (ushers can locate them for you). Please empty and return the bags after worship. While all children are welcome in worship, the following alternatives also are available: *Nursery* is provided for infants (at least six weeks old) and toddlers. After the *Focus on Children*, children ages 3-7 will go to the balcony, where they experience a little of what worship is like while doing learning activities related to the scripture with coloring, puzzles, books, children's bulletins and more. When the sacraments of the Lord's Supper or Baptism are celebrated, children will return to the sanctuary. We invite those in second grade and above to remain in the sanctuary and participate in the entire worship service.

PRAYER REQUESTS Please use the Prayer Request and Information Change cards, found in the pew rack, to relay information to the church office. Print your name and any other information you may need to relay to the office and place it in the offering plate.

SERMONS are available from our website at www.fpcbham.org.

The **LITURGIST** for today is Mark Aldridge.

MISSION CENTERS OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FIRST LIGHT, INC. is a mission center of FPC, giving shelter and support services for homeless women and children. If you would like to help, speak to our pastors or call Ruth Crosby, Executive Director (323-4277). First Light's website: www.firstlightshelter.org

RUTH AND NAOMI SENIOR OUTREACH (RNSO) has as its mission to become spiritual companions to isolated older adults and to call, equip, and support others to do so as well. Contact chaplain@ruthandnaomi.org.

THE RUSHTON CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER provides quality childcare in a loving, nurturing environment – accredited by NAEYC and licensed by the Department of Human Resources. Call the CDC office at 322-8310. The Center's website is www.eprcdc.com

FAITH IN ACTION ALABAMA, a faith-based community-organizing effort FPC shares with faith communities throughout the city, works to improve quality of life for all our citizens. Faith in Action is a PICO network affiliate and can be reached at daniel@faal.org.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOUNDATION provides support to First Presbyterian Church for the maintenance and upkeep of this historic sacred space built in 1889. 10% of the Foundation's annuity payment aids mission selected by session. Contact Mark Aldridge for more information.

THE REV. CATHERINE GOODRICH, Pastor and Acting Head of Staff

THE REV. CATHERINE OLIVER, Interim Associate Pastor

THE REV. JIM STANFORD, Parish Associate

MS. PATTI WINTER, Director of Christian Education

DR. TIMOTHY THOMAS, Director of Music

DR. HYE SOOK JUNG, Organist

MS. EMILY BURT, Youth Director

MR. OWEN BLOMELEY, Administrator

MS. LAURA H. ROBERTSON, Office Administrator

MS. DEBBIE BOONE, Bookkeeper

MS. KANDIE WILEY, Sexton

THE REV. DR. ROBERT S. CRUTCHFIELD, Pastor Emeritus

Have you remembered the church in your will?