

First Presbyterian Church
Las Cruces, New Mexico
4th Sunday in Advent
December 18, 2022 - 10:30 A.M
Enter to worship – Leave to serve



PRELUDE

“Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” (Polish Carol) Wilbur Held (1914-2015)
“While by My Sheep” and “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come”
Robert J. Powell (b. 1932)

“The First Noel” Arr. Bill Ingram
Handbell Ensemble

**The Prelude functions like a curtain that separates our world from the worship place of peace and sanctuary. We enter prayerfully. We wait expectantly, listening for God’s Spirit and truth, which challenges us to return to the world equipped for faithful and useful Christian service.
* *Those who are able, please stand* *Please turn off all cell phones*

WELCOME, GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEDITATION IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations. I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
(Psalm 89:1-2 NRSV)

INTROIT

“He Is Born” Arr. Bill Ingram
Handbell Ensemble

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Eric Montgomery

(Isaiah 35)

Leader: 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.

People: They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

Leader: For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

People: A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

#147 "The First Nowell"

The First Nowell

*PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

O Lord, how blessed we are, for your gracious love fills and surrounds us. Thank you, for you have given us a beautiful place to live and experience your creation. We are grateful that you have brought us here, to this time and place, to praise and worship you in the company of our sisters and brothers in faith. In this season of giving, may we grow deeper in our walk with you, our compassion toward others, and our hunger to live in the peace of Christ. Quicken in us an earnest desire to serve and glorify you more and more, day by day. O Father, send your Holy Spirit to guide us and transform us through our worship this day. **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**

PLEASE BE SEATED

CALL TO CONFESSION

#144 "In the Bleak Midwinter"

CRANHAM

- Congregation to sing verses 1, 2, and 4
- Choir to sing verse 3

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Holy God, forgive us. In this season of anticipation, the voices of advertisers and culture compete for our attention, drowning out your voice. We busy ourselves with tasks we think we're supposed to do and neglect those things we ought to do. Those things you call us to do, we do grudgingly and without joy. We lack the generous spirit of Mary, who heard your call and assented without question. Instead of feeling put upon, she lifted her voice in a song of honor and wonder. Renew our spirits. Fill our hearts with joy and song so others see in us the grace and mercy you have given us through your Son. Instill in us a spirit of gratitude. Open our eyes and ears, and prepare our hearts to receive the most precious gift of all.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION AND REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE AND MERCY

Leader: Hear the words of Jesus and be comforted. "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Abide in me and in my love." Friends, believe the Good News, all our sins are forgiven.

People: **We know and we believe, that as we wait for the birth of the baby Jesus, the blessed return of our Savior, that we are already forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Leader: What do we mean when we speak of "the forgiveness of sins"?

People: **Because of Jesus Christ, God no longer holds my sins against me. Christ alone is my righteousness and my life. Grace alone is the basis on which God has forgiven me in him. Faith alone is the means by which I receive Christ into my heart, and with him the forgiveness that makes me whole.¹**

INVITATION TO ADVENT

Please sing to the tune of "Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

*Kindle this flame of Love.
May it burn bright and true.
Lighting the way that is of God;
the journey we pursue.*

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

Brent and Catie Brewer and family

¹ Question #62, The Study Catechism: Confirmation Version, Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Congregational Response

Please sing to the tune of “Breathe on Me, Breath of God”

*God’s realm is our desire
Where peace and justice reign.
Heaven and earth combined as one,
when Christ shall come again.*

HYMN OF ASSURANCE

#112 “On Christmas Night All Christians Sing” SUSSEX CAROL

- Choir to sing verse 1
- Congregation to sing verses 2, 3, 1nd 4

GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Lon Anderson

Momento de buenas noticias para los discípulos jóvenes

- Children are asked to sit on the carpet squares in the front, and masks are optional for those who have been vaccinated.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Sophia Chiasomka Ezinwa Chilaka
daughter of Faith and Chibuzo Chilaka

CALL TO PRAYER

“A Christmas Lullaby”
Handbell Ensemble

Arr. Bill Ingram

PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM

“Angel’s Carol”
Diana Gutierrez and Beth Thomas

John Rutter

PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Psalms 130

Romans 1:1-7

Dr. Janet Loman

Psalm 130 (New Revised Standard Version)

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

Romans 1:1-7 (New Revised Standard Version)

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON "Does It Make Any Difference?" Rev. Norm Story

*CLOSING HYMN #121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" ST. LOUIS

GO IN GOD'S NAME

BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION "Gloria In Excelsis Deo!"

*POSTLUDE Hymn Tune Improvisation Howard A. Smolleck

Liturgist – Eric Montgomery Deacon Captain – Divine Mboh

Sound System – Max Schroeder Video – Dina Schroeder



Join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments immediately following Worship this morning in the Jones Hall Fellowship area. This is a time to welcome and greet new friends and old friends alike. Fellowship this morning is hosted by the Chilaka family.

Rev. Dr. Norm Story	Pastor	Rev. Pyong San Yu	Korean Congregation
Dr. Janet Loman, CP	College Ministry	Dr. Howard A. Smolleck	Organist
Bobby & Karen Candusso	Youth Group Sponsors	Karen Candusso	Salt & Light Dir.
Beth Borchert-Thomas	Dir. of Music & Bells		

Greeting before Worship Service:

Wanda Mattiace – E Lucy Eyong – W Patricia Adu-Mensah - S

Greeting after Worship Service:

Eric Montgomery – E Rev. Norm Story – W Lon Anderson – S

***Those who are able, please stand**

Please turn off all cell phones

Please remember in your prayers: Don Rhodes; Arnold McMillan; Linda Seaton's father; Jean O'Neill; Joyce Hill; Rev. Jay Bishop; Johanna Miller, Dorris Hamilton, Genevieve Ariege, Clyde Treat, and Norma Klein at the Heritage; Rev. Marcus Burr; all who feel isolated in these troubled times; Presbyterian Church (USA); Deacons' Ministries; "El Caldito" soup kitchen; La Casa, domestic abuse shelter; Missionaries Doug and Sherry Barron, CRU-headquarters in Orlando Florida.

Welcome!

We come together as a community at worship to experience the grace of God, who is present in our midst. This is a time to open ourselves to Him and to each other. Expect great things of God and His grace will come to you! Thank you for coming to First Presbyterian Church; we are glad that you are here. If you are not active in a church home in this community, we invite you to consider joining our fellowship and sharing in this ministry of Christ.

Our sacred space is not this building or this Sanctuary, but it is the fellowship we share, the hospitality we live, and the presence of God we see in each other.

For prayer requests during the week, call the church office to get your request on the Church-wide Prayer Chain, or e-mail Linda Ramirez at linda@fpc.lc

Our Vision: A place where Christian love is modeled

Our Mission: To be a place where Christian love is modeled through:

1. Understanding, celebrating, and sharing God's Word.
2. Following obediently where God is leading us.
3. Leading, nurturing, and serving our community for Christ.

Greetings! Our worship services are now available

- 1) in-person, with Covid19 precautions
- 2) live-stream on YouTube (search for: First Presbyterian Church Las Cruces, NM)
- 3) video archive on the church website, our Facebook site or YouTube

Covid19 precautions:

- **Seating in West and South sections of the Sanctuary is unrestricted. The East section is reserved for those wishing to wear masks and social-distance.**
 - Hand-sanitizer and wipes are located at each door.
 - A purple box with slots for depositing your offering is located in each aisle. Please register your presence with contact information and any prayer requests on the small slip of paper in your bulletin and place it in the purple offering box in the aisle, so that if we need to do contact tracing later, we can contact those who were present.
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

12/19 – Marquez Sanchez, Richard Pond

12/21 – Donalee Bartholomew

12/22 – Sandra Abernathy

12/26 – Dina Schroeder

(If we missed your birthday, please call the office at 575-526-5559 or email Linda at linda@fpc.lc)

No Salt & Light on Wednesday, December 21, 2022

Donations to support your church can be done in a variety of ways. Thank you for your continued generosity and faithful giving.

- 1) Cash or check in the offering (purple boxes in the Sanctuary)
- 2) Check sent by mail
- 3) Church website: fpc.lc and click on the “heart” icon or fpc.lc/giving or scan QR code
- 4) Smartphone App: Church Center
- 5) Text 84321



The **Mary Martha Circle** is once again collecting books for ages 4 months through 8-9 years old to be given away by the Children’s Reading Alliance non-profit. This group was founded in 2010, has given away many thousands of books, and has trained parents on the importance of reading to and with their children. Also, there is a dedicated group of volunteers who are “**reading buddies**” in the classroom helping the children learn and want to read. We have a large, blue plastic bin in Jones fellowship hall for collecting books. Please consider donating a book or more for the upcoming holiday recess.

If you need more information, please call Helen Moser, 575.647.3365 or Cheri McMillan, 575.526.2395.

CHURCH CALENDAR

Call the church office 526-5559 for information on any events, or by the net: www.fpc.lc or
by e-mail: linda@fpc.lc Rev. Norm Story e-mail: revstory@fpc.lc
Facebook: Look up First Presbyterian Church of Las Cruces

Sunday, December 18, 2022 4th Sunday of Advent – Christmas Joy Offering

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School in Jones Hall Library with Catie Brewer. The class will be viewing and discussing R.C. Sprout's "Face to Face with Jesus."
9:00 – 11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall
9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Branigan Hall
9:00 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Reeves Hall
9:15 AM Choir rehearsal with Beth Thomas in the Sanctuary
10:30 AM Worship Service
11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Hall
12:00 PM Sermon discussion in the Jones Hall Library with Rev. Story

Monday, December 19, 2022

Tuesday, December 20, 2022

- 3:00 PM Listening Prayer in the Jones Hall Parlor
Call Mary Maley at 269-209-4357 if you have questions
7:00 PM Session Meeting in Jones Hall Library

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

- 12:00 PM **DEADLINE for submissions for the Sunday bulletin**
No Salt & Light
5-7:00 PM Youth group with Karen Candusso

Thursday, December 22, 2022

The Good News Newsletter goes out on Saturdays. Please send submissions to:
scotty.benaway@sbcglobal.net

Friday, December 23, 2022

Saturday, December 24, 2022 Christmas Eve

- 4:00 PM Informal family-oriented Candlelight Service.
7:00 PM Traditional Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols.
Childcare available for birth-age 3 at 6:45 pm in Branigan Hall.

Sunday, December 25, 2022 Christmas Day

- 9:00 – 11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall
10:30 AM Worship Service
12:00 PM Sermon discussion in the Jones Hall Library with Rev. Story

CCLI License No. 540727





Christmas Joy Offering
Share in the Joy of a Promise:
“For God who has promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23)

During Advent, we remember God’s promises to us, as we gather together to wait in hope for the birth of Jesus Christ!

We, in the Presbyterian Church, join this celebration of God’s faithfulness by **supporting those in need of help and hope.**

Thanks to your gifts, the **Christmas Joy Offering helps provide financial help** to those who have given their lives to God (our current & retired ministers, mission workers & their families.) It also **provides students hope** for a better life through education at Presbyterian-related schools like the Menaul School in Albuquerque.

Christmas Joy Offering envelopes are provided for your use today. These gifts of generosity bear witness to our faithful response to love one another, as Christ commanded.



Your deacons would like to thank the congregation of First Presbyterian Church for their generous support of the Christmas Basket ministry. We also would like to thank Jerry Silva of Save-Mart on Valley for his tireless work in putting together the foods at the best possible price. This year has been plagued by inflation, high diesel prices, and an uncertain supply chain, but he has navigated it all for us. Thank you, Jerry!



Contribution Envelopes for 2023

If you use contribution envelopes, please pick them up in Jones Hall.
Monthly or weekly envelopes are available.

Or, you can stop by the office and pick them up between 9am – 2pm.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Services – December 24 at First Presbyterian Church

**You are invited to worship with us as we
Celebrate Christ's birth.**

4:00 PM – Informal family-oriented Candlelight Service.

7:00 PM – Traditional Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols
Childcare available for birth-age 3 at 6:45 pm in Branigan Hall

