



## First Presbyterian Church

Las Cruces, New Mexico

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023 - 10:30 A.M

*Enter to worship – Leave to serve*

### PRELUDE

“He is Coming” (1886 hymn tune by Ira D. Sankey)

Chester Nordman (1895-1973)

“The Holy and the Ivy”

Ross Anderson (1934-2015)

“What Shall I Give to the Child in the Manger?” (traditional Catalan Christmas Song)

Douglas E. Wagner (b.1952)

\*\*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

“The First Nowell”

The First Nowell

### ASSEMBLE IN GOD’S NAME

### \*CALL TO WORSHIP

Rosa Taylor

(Psalm 96)

Leader: O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**People: Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.**

Leader: Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples.

**People: For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. Worship the Lord in holy splendor; tremble before him, all the earth.**

### \*HYMN OF PRAISE

#143 “Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

Regent Square

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

Loving God, as we approach the time of Christ's birth, help us to throw wide the doors of our hearts in preparation. Help us sense the importance of what happened so long ago when Mary and Joseph entered Bethlehem, to remember the words of the angels, and worthily celebrate the promises fulfilled when Jesus was born. Help us make this a season of joy and grace for all those around us. In our worship, help us proclaim your love and your mercy in all our words and movements of praise and adoration. Lord, hear our 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**

## PLEASE BE SEATED

CALL TO CONFESSION

#137 "He Came Down"

He Came Down

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Forgive us, Merciful God, for our lives and thoughts are so busy and distracted. We don't mean to dishonor you, but there things we want that distract us and our attention away from obeying your will. We say and do things that come out wrong, that cause unintended hurt and harm. We can be so focused on our perspective, that we miss seeing a larger picture of your gracious purpose and love. By your grace, help us grow so that we will live in this world with more forbearance and compassion. Forgive us and empower us, O wise and wonderful God to use the time and resources of our lives well, and may we walk with you in a more faithful response to your gracious love.

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, we are already forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**Leader:** What is the true basis in life upon which we can trust and hope?

**People:** **In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve. We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

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

The Chilaka Family

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

### GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Amon Taylor

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

CALL TO PRAYER #110 "Love Has Come"

Bring a Touch

### PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM "Still, Still, Still"

Arr. Norman Luboff

## **PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD**

### SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Isaiah 61:1-2, 8-10 Luke 1:38, 45-55

Dr. Janet Loman

Isaiah 61:1-2, 8-10 (New Revised Standard Version)

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Luke 1:38, 45-55 (New Revised Standard Version)

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON                                      Pointing Toward the Light and Lamb                                      Rev. Norm Story

\*CLOSING HYMN                                      #159 "O Sing a Song of Bethlehem"                                      Kingsfold

**GO IN GOD'S NAME**

BENEDICTION

\*CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION      #113 "Angels We Have Heard on High"      Gloria

\*POSTLUDE                                      Hymn Tune Improvisation                                      Howard A. Smolleck



*Liturgist-Rosa Taylor      Deacon Captain-Divine Mboh*

*Sound System-Rusty Smith      Video-Brent Brewer*

*Greeting Before Worship Service:*

*Cliford Kum Ateghah-E Dr. Chibuzo Chilaka-W Nancy Tasker-Johnson-S*

*Greeting after Worship Service:*

*Amon Taylor-E Rev. Norm Story-W Rev. Nick Koontz-S*

Rev. Dr. Norm Story	Pastor	Rev. Pyong San Yu	Korean Congregation
Dr. Janet Loman, CP	College Ministry	Dr. Howard A. Smolleck	Organist
Ada Castle	Commissioned Pastor	Karen Candusso	Salt & Light Coord.
Dr. Paul Deason	Commissioned Pastor	Karen Candusso	Youth Group Sponsor
Beth Borchert-Thomas	Dir. of Music & Bells	Veronica Giron	Secretary
Rev. Nick Koontz	Dir. of Family Ministries	Miranda Baker-French	Bookkeeper



## **Please Remember in your Prayers**

- Prayers for all those traveling, all those visiting loved ones, and all those missing their family during this season.
- Prayers for all those wrapped up in the brutal conflict in the Holy Land. We pray not for borders or nations, but for each individual who desperately needs God to be present with them as our Emmanuel.
- Prayers for Arnold McMillan, who is in the hospital.

### **Continued Prayer List:**

**Jessica Stout, daughter of Beth Thomas; Jeremy Borchert, Rev. Jay Bishop;**

**John & Melanie Grant; Linda Seaton's father; Eileen Hood; Vanessa Medina; MacDugall-Deason family;  
Shannon, Daughter of Bill & Virginia Haynes; Rev. Marcus Burr;**

**Mary Olberg; Rev. Dave Schreoder; Jeanine Krenzer;**

**and Doris Hamilton, Norma Klein, Ann Miller all at The Heritage.**

HAPPY  
*Birth*day  
TO YOU



**12/26 Dina Schroeder**

**12/28 Diana Davidson**

**12/29 Joy Miller-Bell & Bill Akins**

**12/30 Pam Briggs & Janet Green**



## **Fellowship**

**Join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments following Worship  
this morning in the Jones Hall Fellowship area.**

**This is a great time to welcome and greet  
new friends and old friends alike.**

**Fellowship this morning will be hosted by  
The Marconi Family.**



*Welcome*



Our Worship services are now available:

- In-person, with Covid19 precautions
- Live-stream on YouTube, First Presbyterian Church Las Cruces, NM
- Video archive on the church website, our Facebook site or YouTube

Covid 19 Precautions:

- Seating in the 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 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.

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

Tithes, gifts and offerings can be done in a variety of ways.

- Cash or check in the purple offering box.
- Check sent by mail.
- Online at [fpc.lc/giving](http://fpc.lc/giving) or via the QR code to the bottom right.

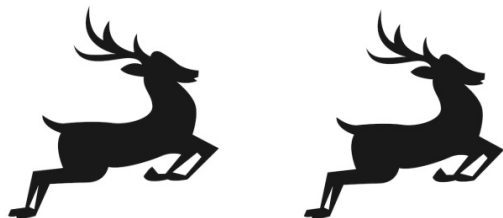


- Using the app "Church Center".
- Text 84321

More information can be found on our website [fpc.lc](http://fpc.lc)

\*Weekly and/or monthly giving envelopes are now available in the Parlor located in Jones Hall.\*

New Church office hours! Monday-Friday 9AM-2PM, Phone 575.526.5559 \*Office will be closed Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>.\*



**Sunday, December 24, 2023**

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School led by Rev. Nick Koontz in the Jones Hall Library, a lesson on Karl Barth, Barth's View of the Incarnation
- 9-11:45 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 together in the Sanctuary
- 11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Hall
- 12:00 PM Sermon discussion in the Jones Hall Library with Rev. Story
- 4:00 PM Family Oriented Service in the Sanctuary
- 7:00 PM Traditional Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary

**Monday, December 25, 2023**

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!  
Office Closed

**Tuesday, December 26, 2023**

Office Closed

**Wednesday, December 27, 2023**

- 12:00 PM Deadline for submissions for the Sunday Bulletin & The Good News
- 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

**Thursday, December 28, 2023**

**Friday, December 29, 2023**

**Saturday, December 30, 2023**

**Sunday, December 31, 2023**

9:00 AM Adult Sunday School led by Rev. Nick Koontz in the Jones Hall  
Library, a lesson on New Years

9-11:45 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 together in the Sanctuary