



First Presbyterian Church
Las Cruces, New Mexico
December 22, 2024 - 10:30 A.M
4th Sunday of Advent - Love
Enter to worship – Leave to serve



PRELUDE

“A Maiden Most Gentle” (Traditional French Carol)	Andrew Grant (b. 1963)
“The King Shall Come” (Renaissance carol tune)	Lani Smith (1934-2015)
“Gentle Mary Laid Her Child....Hail the King of Glory” (Hymn tune of 1582)	Noel Rawsthorne (1929-2019)

**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

O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36 NRSV)

INTROIT “Angels, From The Realms Of Glory” Regent Square

ASSEMBLE IN GOD’S NAME

*CALL TO WORSHIP Donna Marconi
(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.

Leader: Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.”

People: 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. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

*HYMN OF PRAISE #119 “Hark! The Herald Angel’s Sing” Mendelssohn

***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 “You Are The Lord, Giver Of Mercy!” Wayfaring Stranger
Chancel Choir

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

God of light and love, we humble ourselves and ask forgiveness for the wrongs we have done and harm we have caused. Sometimes we live in darkness rather than seeing the light of your love for us and for all your children. We have often failed to live out your compassion and light to others. Spiritually, our eyes have been closed, and that blindness has caused hurt and harm. In our moments of doubt, give us strength and courage to believe. May we be open to new possibilities, a fresh vision of greater understanding and boldness in a life of faithfulness, integrity, and truth.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION AND REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE AND MERCY

Leader: God's light is present in this world, present in the Christ child, born to lead us out of darkness. God's light is in the world, and the darkness did not overcome it. We are loved; we are forgiven.

People: God's grace is in the world. Our sins, failures, and missteps cannot overcome it. Truly, we are loved and we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.

Leader: Just as loving parents still love and spoil their children, even when they don't live up to their full potential, so you, Almighty God, Parent of us all, still love and spoil us out of your limitless grace.

People: So let us live new lives of Christian faith, obedience, joy, love and peace that reflects the grace and forgiveness of God!

HYMN OF ASSURANCE #128 “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” W ZLOBIE LEZY

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 Montgomery 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.*

GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES Brooke Montgomery

- Children are asked to sit on the carpet squares in the front.

CALL TO PRAYER #139 “That Boy-Child Of Mary” Blantyre

PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM “Still, Still, Still” Arr. Norman Luboff

PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON Luke 1:5-7, 10-15, 18-20, 26-31, 34-38, 46-49 Dr. Janet Loman

Luke 1:5-7, 10-15, 18-20, 26-31, 34-38, 46-49 (New Revised Standard Version)

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.”

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was

Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." 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 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.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON	"Here am I, Servant of the Lord"	Rev. Norm Story
*CLOSING HYMN	#134 "Joy to The World"	Antioch

GO IN GOD'S NAME

BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION

"Angel's We Have Heard On High"	Gloria
Gloria in Excelsis Deo! Gloria in Excelsis Deo!	

*POSTLUDE	Hymn Tune Improvisation	Howard A. Smolleck
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Liturgist-Donna Marconi Deacon Captain-Patricia Adu-Mensah

Sound System-Rusty Smith Video-Brent Brewer

Greeting Before Worship Service:

Dawn Griffin O'Neal-E Donna Marconi-W Linda Pearson-S

Greeting after Worship Service:

Donna Marconi-E Rev. Norm Story -W Brooke Montgomery-S



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

Please remember in your Prayers

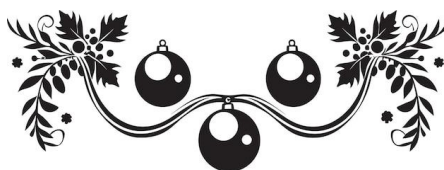
- *The family of Joyce Curry, who passed on December 17th.*
- *The family of Eileen Hood, who passed on December 16th, funeral services will be held on January 3rd at 2:00 P.M. in the FPC Sanctuary.*
- *Baby Isaac Green.*
- *Paul Deason's nephew, Joel Armstrong as he navigates a diagnosis and changes to his work,*
- *Brad Class who is facing some health concerns.*
- *Joseph Montgomery who is ill.*
- *Praises for the gift of music and all the wonderful performances offered this past Sunday. Also, for the compositional work of our own Jacob Dalager.*

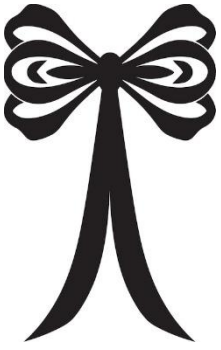
Continued Prayer List

Barbara Wolflick; Johnnie Aldrich; Tracy Howard; Ken Osborne; Mel Parish; Sherry Lindsey; Heidi Harbaugh; Josie Fietze; Sara Kay; Jack Curry, who are at home; Jerry and Rayma Claessen at Grace Village; Arnold McMillan; Nancy Cowan's sister in-law; Mary Olberg; Millie Conrad; Rev. Marcus Burr, at the Village of Northrise; Dorris Hamilton, Mel Parish, and Ann Miller at The Heritage.

Fellowship

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 Hardin Family in celebration of Roni's Birthday.





12/22 Sandy Abernathy

12/22 Andrea Regmi

12/26 Dina Schroeder

12/28 Diana Davidson



Welcome!

Our Worship services are available:

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

CORONAVIRUS 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:**

1. Cash or check in the purple offering box.
2. Check sent by mail.
3. Online at fpc.lc/giving or via the QR code on the right.
4. Using the app "Church Center".
5. Text 84321



CCLI License No. 540727

More information can be found on our website fpc.lc

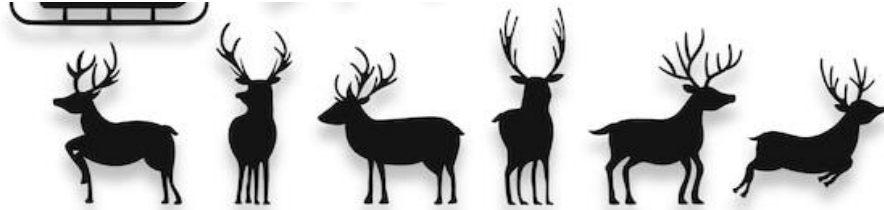
Thank you for your continued generosity and faithful giving.

200 E. Boutz Rd., Las Cruces, NM 88001

575.526.5559

Church Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

In the Life of the Church



Sunday School

Beginning January 5th, 2025, Rev. Larry Hicks will begin leading an eight-week Adult Sunday School class at 9:00 AM, in the church library on "The Art of Forgiving."

Books on the subject by the late Lewis Smedes will be provided.

Mr. Smedes, a best-selling author on the subject, was one of Rev. Hicks' favorite seminary professors and was also a mentor of Pastor Story.

Christmas Eve

We will be having a candlelight service at 4:00 PM and a traditional Christmas service at 7:00 PM. We look forward to seeing and spending Christmas Eve with you and yours. Happy Holidays!



Holiday Reminder



The Church office will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th and Thursday December, 26th in observance of the Christmas holiday. We will resume normal

business hours on Monday December 30th. On behalf of all of the church staff and committees, we wish you all a very merry and blessed holiday season.

Merry Christmas!



Sunday, December 22nd

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School with Catie Brewer is viewing and discussing the video series "The Gospel of Matthew" in Jones Hall Library
- 9-11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Jones Hall
- 9:00 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Jones Hall
- 9:30 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 (see announcement)
- 12:00 PM Sermon Discussion with Rev. Norm Story

Monday, December 23rd

- 12:00 PM Deadline for submissions for The Good News
- 7:00 PM Bells Rehearsal

Tuesday, December 24th

- 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service in the Sanctuary
- 7:00 PM Traditional Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 25th

Office Closed

Thursday, December 26th

Office Closed

Friday, December 27th

Office Closed

Saturday, December 28th

Sunday, December 29th

9:00 AM Adult Sunday School with Catie Brewer is viewing and discussing the video series "The Gospel of Matthew" in Jones Hall Library

9-11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall

9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Jones Hall

9:00 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Jones Hall

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