



First Presbyterian Church

Las Cruces, New Mexico

First Sunday of Christmas

December 29, 2024 - 10:30 A.M

Enter to worship – Leave to serve

PRELUDE

“Cold December Flies Away: (Catalonian carol)

Wilbur Held (1914-2015)

“The Ninety and Nine: (American gospel hymn)

Ellen Jane Lorenz (1907-1996)

“Angels from the Realms of Glory” (with “For unto Us a Child Is Born” from Handel’s *Messiah*)

Edwin C. Johnson (b. 1942)

**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

And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.” (Matthew 9:10-12 NRSV)

CHORAL INTROIT

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

ES IST EIN” ROS’

ASSEMBLE IN GOD’S NAME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Nick Koontz

(from Ezekiel 34)

Leader: For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep.

People: **I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.**

Leader: I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God.

People: **I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak.**

*HYMN OF PRAISE

#123 “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear”

Carol

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

Lord God, your eyes are open day and night watching your children; your ears are always ready to listen to our prayers. We have come to worship you. We come tired from our lives, in need of refreshment and re-creation. We come with worries, in need of your guidance. Please, send your Spirit to lift us out of our preoccupation with our own needs. Allow us to see you with eyes of faith, and to hear with understanding and gratitude. Awaken in us a longing to please you, and to worship you in faithful obedience and truth...**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

"In the Bleak Midwinter"
Chancel Choir

Cranham

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

Lord God, for this day and all the blessings it contains, we thank you and praise you. We live surrounded by your grace and mercy, and yet at times we live as if it were not so. Help us reset our priorities upon the eternal, and live lives that reflect your compassion and forbearance. We hear of your salvation and grace, yet sin is still close and real; daily, we are enticed and drawn away from you and your gracious ways. Have mercy upon us, and enter our hearts with healing transformation. Forgive the wrong of what we have done, what we have said, and the sins of our hearts.

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: By God's grace we are loved and saved. Through the blood of Christ, our sin is forgiven, thanks be to God. Amen.

Leader: If God's love is so powerful, why is there evil in the world?

People: No one can say why, for evil is a terrible mystery. Still, we know that God's triumph over evil is certain. Our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is himself God's promise that suffering will come to an end, that death shall be no more, and that all things will be made new.^[1]

HYMN OF ASSURANCE #142 "'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime" UNE JEUNE PUCELLE

^[1] Question #14, The Study Catechism: Confirmation Version, Approved by the 210th General Assembly (1998) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Brooke Montgomery

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

CALL TO PRAYER

#114 “Away in a Manger”

Cradle Song

PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM

“There’s a Star in the East”

Follow

PROCLAIM GOD’S WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Psalm 8 Luke 15:1-10

Dr. Janet Loman

Psalm 8 (New Revised Standard Version)

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Luke 15:1-10 (New Revised Standard Version)

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So he told them this parable: “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“I Will Bring Back the Strayed”

Rev. Norm Story

*CLOSING HYMN

#136 “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Go Tell It

GO IN GOD’S NAME

BENEDICTION

*CHORAL BENEDICTION

“Angels We Have Heard on High”
Gloria in Excelsis Deo! Gloria in Excelsis Deo!

Gloria

*POSTLUDE

Hymn Tune Improvisation

Howard A. Smolleck

Liturgist-Donna Marconi Deacon Captain-Patricia Adu-Mensah

Sound System-Curtis Benaway Video-Rusty Smith

Greeting Before Worship Service:

Linda Pearson-E Donna Phillips-W Dawn Griffin-O’Neal-S

Greeting after Worship Service:

Brooke Montgomery-E Rev. Nick Koontz -W Rev. Norm Story-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

- *Joe White's mother.*
- *Michelle and Ken Osborne.*
- *Safe travels for Steve Harbaugh as he travels and all those traveling this week.*
- *Paul Deason's nephew, Joel Armstrong as he navigates a diagnosis and changes to his work.*
- *Brad Class who is facing some health concerns.*
- *Those who are having a "blue" Christmas. May we be renewed in the sense that Christ really is Emmanuel, God-with-us.*

Continued Prayer List

Barbara Wolflick; Johnnie Aldrich; Tracy Howard; Mel Parish; Sherry Lindsey; Heidi Harbaugh; Josie Fietze; Sara Kay, now recovering at home; Jack Curry; 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.

After-Worship 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 Marconi Family.

12/29 Joy Miller-Bell

12/30 Pam Briggs

1/1 Stephanie Benaway

1/1 Brad Class



12/29 Bill Akins

12/30 Janet Green

1/1 Cecilia Mboh

1/2 Esther Smolleck

1/4 Jacqui Jones



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



Adult 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.

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



Wishing You a Happy New Year!

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
- 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 30th

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

Tuesday, December 31st

- 12:00 PM Deadline for submissions for The Bulletin

Wednesday, January 1st

Office Closed

Thursday, January 2nd

- 1:30 PM Listening Prayer in Jones Hall Parlor

Friday, January 3rd

Office Closed

Saturday, January 4th

Sunday, January 5th

- 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School with Rev. Larry Hicks leading a study of Rev. Lewis Smedes', "*The Art of Forgiving*" in Jones Hall Library (see announcement)
- 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
- 12:00 PM Sermon Discussion with Rev. Norm Story