

First Presbyterian Church



512 Third Street SW

Rochester, Minnesota 55902

Phone 282-1618

Service for the Lord's Day
December 20, 2015
Fourth Sunday in Advent

8:30 a.m.

Welcome to worship this morning.

- First Presbyterian Church welcomes families with young children. Staffed nursery care is available during worship. Audio from the worship service can be heard in the library (adjacent to the sanctuary) and social hall.
- If you are visiting because of medical treatment at Mayo Clinic we offer our prayers for healing.
- Our activities and programs are open to all, member and friend alike.
- We invite you to join us for coffee and fellowship in the social hall following the 8:30 service and in the atrium following the 11:00 service.

** As a courtesy to others, please silence cell phones. **

Gathering

Prelude

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Alleluia Ringers

John Behnke

Our worship begins with the prelude. Let the power of the music speak to you of God's glory; let its quietness tell you of God's peace; let its beauty lift your hearts in prayer.

Greeting and Welcome

Please sign the Opportunity for Friendship Register and pass it to the person next to you.

Opening Prayer

Advent Candle Song (Sing refrain, stanza 4, refrain. Please see insert.)

Lighting of the Advent Candle (We seek inner peace.)

Judy Felten

Jesus told his disciples, "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father."

The time draws near. We move to the center of history and the center of all life in the birth of Jesus Christ, who comes as a friend. We are no longer outsiders but insiders on the mystery of the world.

We light this fourth candle to honor the center of our lives and our history, Jesus Christ. Praise God for the gift of his Son.

Come, Lord Jesus, and awaken in us a real hunger for peace, peace within us and peace for the whole world. Amen.

Call to Worship

Jay Youmans

Not in the mighty places of power, but in little Bethlehem, in a room out back:

The Messiah is coming.

Not born in nobility and wealth, but of Mary and Joseph, ordinary people:

The Messiah is coming.

Not announced by prophets, priests and kings, but by two women, who were the first to know:

The Messiah is coming.

Nothing will be impossible for God, but when and where we least expect it, look among the straw and the stars:

The Messiah is coming.

◆ **Hymn 94** Now the Heavens Start to Whisper JEFFERSON

Call to Reconciliation (please be seated)

In the world, and in this season, there are many claims on our lives. We take this time to remember that in our baptism, Christ claimed us as his own. We acknowledge before God and one another that we have not followed Jesus Christ with all our heart and mind and strength. Trusting in God's grace, let us pray.

Silent Confession

Kyrie hymn 83 (stanza 1) Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus STUTT GART

Unison Prayer of Confession

God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary's song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.

Words of Life

Friends, God is for us and not against us. For that very reason, God sent the Son into the world – not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Amen.

◆ **Gloria Patri** REGENT SQUARE

Laud and honor to the Father, laud and honor to the Son,
Laud and honor to the Spirit, ever three and ever one.
Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, expected King!

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◆ **Passing of the Peace**

Due to health concerns in this cold and flu season, please refrain from shaking hands and greet each other with a word of peace or a wave of the hand.

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let us share a sign of the peace of Christ with one another!

The Word

Prayer for Illumination 92 (stanza 1) While We Are Waiting, Come WAITING (Cason)

While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Anthem Ave, Ave, the Angel Sang Robert Lau

Chancel Choir

O lowly maiden, O blessed woman, you have been chosen to bring us the king.
Peace be with you, O fairest holy one, Mary, mother, child of God.
Fair one so gentle, filled with the spirit, you will bear Jesus, the savior of all.
Don't be afraid now, God's love surrounds you, Mary, mother, child of God.
What will you call him, O lovely maiden? Rulers and nations will bow at his name.
Let all creation give thanks for the holy one: Jesus, Savior, child of God.

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Pass Prayer Cards to the aisle. An usher will collect them.

Children through third grade may go to room E206 for Kids' Zone or are welcome to stay with their parents in worship. Children above third grade should stay in worship.

A Time of Prayer for those who struggle in the holiday season

God, we may not be ready to rejoice. We have been hearing about happy Christmas times since October, and we are tired and disappointed already. Did you truly come for us? Do you really love us? Why doesn't it always feel like you do?

Hear us, O Lord, and answer.

God, sometimes when we feel loss, we are angry – why did this happen to us? What are we supposed to do now? How can you be called merciful, just or kind? Yet you are strong enough and love us enough to hear our frustrations and bear our loss. We lift our frustrations to you now.

Hear us, O Lord, and answer.

God, sometimes we need to grieve and there is no one to hold us or comfort us. Will you be our comforter? Can you help us bear our pain?

Hear us, O Lord, and answer.

God, sometimes it feels like we should be grateful; we may have more than others, yet we feel lost and numb. We want to love you, but we sometimes wonder – where are you? Why won't you lift this cloud from us? Don't you care?

Hear us, O Lord, and answer.

Scripture Reading of Comfort

Isaiah 40:1-8, selected verses

Time for Reflection

During this time of reflection, you are invited to come forward and light a candle and place it in the containers filled with sand. The light is a reminder that the light of Christ is coming into the world once more and no darkness can overcome it. If you wish to have a tangible reminder of God's love and comfort, the Pastors have anointing oil available.

Hymn 687 (seated)

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

ST. ANNE

A Weaving of Scripture

Luke 1:46-56 and Micah 5:2-5a

Mary's Song of Praise, with echoes from the prophet Micah

Message

Singing in the Darkness

Rev. T. J. Parlette

*** A Moment for Reflection ***

Our Response

◆ Hymn 100

My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

◆ Affirmation of Faith

from *Our World Belongs to God*, CRC in N.A.

Our hope for a new earth is not tied to what humans can do, for we believe that one day every challenge to God's rule and every resistance to God's will shall be crushed. Then God's Kingdom shall come fully, and our Lord shall rule forever. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession and the Lord's Prayer (using debts and debtors)

Let us pray to the Lord saying, "Hear us, O God"

Your mercy is great.

Offertory

At the Offertory

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

Paul Manz

Chancel Choir

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
Who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, The Lord, Almighty God.
Who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell therein, rejoice on earth, ye saints below,
For Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!
E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;
They need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!

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◆ Offertory Response, hymn 144 (stanza 4) What Can I Give Him?

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.

◆ **Unison Prayer of Dedication**

You deliver us, O God, from exile, separation and despair into communion with each other, and with your Good News. We thank you for all that draws us close together, astounding us with lives transformed by gratitude. Accept our gifts as signs of our gratitude for all we have been given. May they be used for the upbuilding of your Kingdom here on earth. Amen.

Sending

◆ **Hymn 104**

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

VALET WILL ICH DER GEBEN

◆ **Benediction**

◆ **Response, hymn 106 (refrain)**

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

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Postlude

Noël Bourguignon

André Fleury

Those who wish may be seated for the postlude. Our music is offered to the glory of God; if you want to express your appreciation, a spoken "Amen" or "Praise God" is appropriate.

WEATHER ADVISORY

If we need to cancel services due to extreme weather conditions, we will send that announcement to KTTC-TV, KTTC.com, put it on our WEB page FPCRochester.org, put it on the church's answering machine, and, if possible, send you an e-mail. Whenever canceling is a possibility, please check these sources for up-to-date information.

SAFETY ADVISORY

In the coming winter season when conditions can create slippery walkways, we ask all members to be responsible and wear appropriate footwear made for snow and ice and choose the safest path from your car into the building. The staff aims to keep the church walks as clear of snow/ice as possible, but each of us must also do our part for safety by exercising caution and discretion. Here's to a safe winter season!

About Our Church

Rev. Thomas J. (T.J.) Parlette, Pastor
Rev. Jay P. Rowland, Associate Pastor
Lee J. Afdahl, Director of Music/Organist
Rick L. Morris, Coordinator of Youth and Christian Education

Susan K. Kruger, Office Administrator
Harry E. Coleman, Facility Manager
Diane M. Johnston-Arthur, Custodian

Office hours: Monday-Thursday (7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.); Friday (7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.); Saturday (9:30 a.m.-noon)

First Presbyterian Church; 512 SW Third Street / Rochester, MN 55902; 507/282-1618
rochesterfpc@msn.com; www.fpcrochester.org

*The mission of First Presbyterian Church of Rochester
is to reflect God's love for all people by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Calendar for the week of December 20-December 27 (and beyond)

SUNDAY – December 20 (Advent 4)

We thank all who are sharing their ministries in worship today.

The **chancel flowers** are given for the Glory of God by Don and Barbara Cain in memory of loving family and friends.

A **nursery** for infants through 2-year-olds is staffed throughout the morning. We also offer a quiet space for nursing mothers. An usher would be happy to direct you if you don't know where the nursery is located.

Education hour:

The Education Hour today starts at 9:40 a.m. with every Sunday school child in a rehearsal for the pageant. Immediately following that rehearsal, children will then either go to rehearsal for the Christmas Eve service if they are in choir, or if they are not in one of the choirs, have a short Sunday school class.

9:40-10:45: Nursery - preschool (2-years-old)

9:40-10:45: Sunday school/education hour for grades 6 – adult education

Adults:

9:40 a.m.: *Kerygma Bible Study* in south fireside room ... *Matthew*

9:40 a.m.: *Current Issues* in Sheldon Jackson lounge ... *Headlines and More*

9:40 a.m.: *Grace-based Parenting Class* in room A-101 will continue with *Building Character*. All current and future parents and grandparents are welcome, even if you can't come every week.

Chancel Choir rehearses at 9:45 a.m.

The **Christmas Joy offering** will be dedicated today although your contribution will be gratefully accepted any time through January. Please note "Joy Offering" on the memo line of your check or use an envelope from the pew rack.

Covenant Fellowship's Christmas party will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the Sheldon Jackson Lounge. Please bring a wrapped "white elephant" gift to exchange and an hors d'oeuvre or dessert to share. Come even if you don't have time to fix or buy a food item. Hosts are Allen and Marcia Dollerschell and Cindy Kunzman.

MONDAY – December 21

Esther Circle will meet at noon in the lounge for a potluck lunch. Please bring a dish to pass and some Christmas goodies to share.

WEDNESDAY – December 23

The **Bible study** "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem" led by Rev. Parlette WILL be held.

All other Wednesday activities are cancelled.

THURSDAY – December 24 (Christmas Eve)

Services of worship at 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

3:00 Cherub and Calvin Choirs and youth handbell choirs warm up.

4:00 Worship service with Calvin and Cherub Choirs and Alleluia Ringers and Joyous Praise handbell choirs.

10:00 Chancel Choir and Jubilate Deo handbell choir warm up.

10:30 Prelude with ensembles, ringers, choir.

11:00 Candlelight service.

Child care will be provided at the 4 p.m. service only.

FRIDAY – December 25 (Christmas)

Pause in the midst of your busy day to celebrate with family and friends the birth of our Lord and savior, for unto you was born this day in the city of David a savior, who is Christ your Lord. No services will be held at the church.

SUNDAY – December 27

One service of worship at 11 a.m. No Sunday school.

The congregation is invited to an **Open House to celebrate Zella Boutelle's 100th birthday** on Sunday, December 27, between 1 and 4 p.m. at Samaritan Bethany Home (24 Eighth Street NW). If you are unable to attend, you can send birthday greetings to her at Samaritan Bethany Home / 24 8th Street NW #5-2461 / Rochester 55901.

For Your Information

Due to the great response to having pictures taken for a new **pictorial directory**, we have added January 15 and 16. If you weren't able to sign up before, please check again. Thanks!

Spread Christmas joy by ringing a bell for the Salvation Army. The Social Concerns Committee encourages FPC members to support the Salvation Army's Christmas Red Kettle campaign by spending an hour or two ringing bells at one of their collection sites. To volunteer, phone 288-3663, ex. 101 or register online at www.RochesterSA.org or www.RegistertoRing.com. A community menu will appear. Choose Bell-Ringing and follow the prompts. If you need assistance signing up, call **Al Dollerschell** (282-5025).

Alternative Giving Opportunity. The Mission Committee encourages you to consider making an alternative Christmas gift through the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Giving Catalogs, which list the specific opportunities, are on a table in the atrium. This is a chance to give a gift in honor of someone who has everything or to give a gift in memory of a loved one. Gifts may be in any amount. Please consider this Christmas shopping opportunity.

2016 budget update: Please keep those pledge cards coming! In November we dedicated our pledges to help underwrite FPC's General Budget and Outreach Budget for 2016. Projected pledges and related income now total \$758,152, leaving a gap of about \$40,000 between income and committee requests. If you haven't returned your pledge card yet, please do it soon. Thank you! Thanks to those who have already responded!

Offering envelopes for 2016 are in the social hall. If there isn't a box with your name and you want to use envelopes, check in the church office. We also have boxes of envelopes available for children and youth.

Need a last minute Christmas gift? Judy Smithson will be in the atrium today between services with copies of the newly published **Stained Glass Splendor**, a history of the stained glass windows in our sanctuary and library. The cost is \$15 per book,

As you consider your **year-end financial donations**, please make your church a high priority. Gifts can be given to your General Budget or Outreach pledges for either this year or next year, as an "over and above" donation, designated for the Endowment Fund, or designated for special programs within the church. Talk to Carol Evans if you have any questions.

Among Our Church Family

Happy Birthday and Congratulations to Zella Boutelle who will celebrate her 100th birthday December 28

Children's Rehearsal Schedule for Pageant and Christmas Eve

Please note that the Education hour on December 20 starts at 9:40 a.m. with every Sunday School child in a rehearsal for the Pageant. Immediately following that rehearsal, children will then either go to rehearsal for the Christmas Eve service if they are in choir, or if they are not in one of the choirs, have a short Sunday School class.

- Pageant Practice for all youth ages 4-11/pre-K through grade 5 will be December 20 at 9:40 a.m.
- Christmas Eve practice for Cherub and Calvin Choirs will be held at 10:30 a.m. on December 20 (immediately following Pageant practice).
- On December 20 at 10:30, any child who is not in Cherub Choir or Calvin Choir will have an abridged Sunday School for the remainder of the education hour.

Advent Candle

Lee J. Afdahl ©1999



Ad-vent can - dle, Ad-vent can - dle, give us light a - long our



way. Guide us for - ward to the man - ger of our



Sav - ior Christ to - day. 1.Can - dle one re - minds us
 2.Can - dle two re - minds us
 3.Can - dle three re - minds us
 4.Can - dle four re - minds us
 5.Christ - mas Can - dle can re -



of the time when the pro - phets did fore - tell of the
 of the time John the Bap - tist did pro - claim, "Clear the
 of the time John re - vealed his pur - pose here, to pro -
 of the time when the an - gel Ga - bri - el came to
 mind - us of our Sav - ior Christ the Lord, of His



com - ing of the Son of God. Watch and pray; pre - pare you well.
 way, pre - pare the high - way, and the hills be - come a plain."
 claim the cap - tives' free - dom, and bap - tize with wa - ter."
 Mar - y, "Peace be with - you, for with God shall all be well."
 birth and our sal - va - tion, for 'tis He whom we a - dore.