

First Presbyterian Church

Service for the Lord's Day
Second Sunday in Advent

December 6, 2020

10:00 a.m.

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

Words of Welcome

Prelude

"Once He Came in Blessing"

arr. Michael Burkhardt

Call to Worship

Isaiah 49:13

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;

break forth, O mountains, into singing!

For the LORD has comforted his people,

and will have compassion on his suffering ones.

* Hymn 106

"Prepare the Way, O Zion"

1 Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near! Let every hill and valley a level way appear.

Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.

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

2 He brings God's rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above. His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth, and love. Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.

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

3 Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace, and tidings of salvation proclaim in every place. All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.

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

* Call to Confession

* Prayer of Confession

Holy God,

we confess that we do not walk in your light.

We hurt and destroy one another

and neglect the poor and hungry.

We let evil grow among us and fail to bear good fruit.

Forgive us, God of grace.

Awaken us to your Word,

so that we may be ready to welcome you with joy;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

* Silent Confession

* Assurance of Pardon and Passing of the Peace

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Light one candle for peace.

Because the world is broken and the wait is long,
but we refuse to be frozen by fear.

Peace comes in fits and starts-

a deep breath, a courageous truth, a humble heart.

“Prepare the way,” she whispers,
“for the Lord comes to make the broken whole.”
***So we light one candle, because it only takes one:
Christ with us.***

Instrumental Response

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,’”

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Psalter: Psalm 85 (Hymnal 449)

- 1 Show us, O Lord, your steadfast love, and let your saving grace be near;
when we return with open hearts the Lord speaks peace and we will hear.
- 2 Mercy and truth at last have met; justice and peace are reconciled.
Truth has arisen from the earth; justice looked down from heaven and smiled.
- 3 Lord, you will grant prosperity; our land will yield its full increase.
Justice shall go before your face; the pathway for your feet is peace.

A Moment with Our Children

Second Lesson: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Sermon: "Smoothing the Rough Places"

Rev. Carter

Advent Series: What Isaiah Could See

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Hymn 87

"Comfort, Comfort Now My People"

- 1 "Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God.
"Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load.
To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over."
- 2 For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,
calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here.
O, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,
and all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

Affirmation of Faith

A Declaration of Faith (PCUS), 5.3

***The Spirit enabled people of all races, classes, and nations
to accept the good news of what God had done in Christ,
repent of their sins,
and enter the community of faith.***

***We testify that today this same Holy Spirit
makes us able to respond in faith to the gospel
and leads us into the Christian community.***

***The Spirit brings us out of death into life,
out of separation into fellowship.***

***The Spirit makes us aware of our sinfulness and need,
moves us to abandon our old way of life,
persuades us to trust in Christ and adopt his way.***

In all these things we are responsible for our decisions.

***But after we have trusted and repented
we recognize that the Spirit enabled us to hear and act.***

***It is not our faith but God's grace in Jesus Christ
that justifies us and reconciles us to God.***

Yet it is only by faith that we accept God's grace and live by it.

Offering
Offertory

"Come Now, O Prince of Peace"

arr. Kenneth DeJong

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Prayers of the People

GO IN GOD'S NAME

Hymn 96

"On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry"

- 1 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!
- 2 Then cleansed be every life from sin; make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.
- 3 We hail you as our Savior, Lord, our refuge and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away like flowers that wither and decay.
- 4 Stretch forth your hand; our health restore, and make us rise to fall no more.
O let your face upon us shine and fill the world with love divine.

Charge and Benediction

Postlude

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

arr. Wilbur Held

The Poinsettia is given by the congregation to the Glory of God in celebration of Rev. Carter's 30 years as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Clarks Summit.

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PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Pastor	Rev. William Carter
Liturgist	Chris Norton
Coordinator for Children and Youth Ministries	Jana Schillinger
Director of Music	Frank Jones
Organist	Kay Ten Eyck
Usher	Drew Taylor

Church Family Announcements

We welcome all to our worship today. **Please sign in at the Welcome Table.** (In the event of an infection, you will be contacted.)

Our congregation intends to worship God, equips God's people for ministry in the world, and serves God in ways that are faithful to the Gospel.

For those of us in the sanctuary today, there are some details to review in the hope that no virus will be spread due to this gathering.

- All are required to wear face masks, sit only in designated pews, and maintain six feet of distance from people of other households.
- You may participate in the spoken segments of the service, but please do not sing.
- If you would like to visit with other worshippers, do so after exiting the building.
- At present, seating is limited to 50 people in the sanctuary, including worship leaders. Notify the church office (office@fpccs.org or 570-586-6306) by Friday noon when you plan to attend.

Tell us your prayer concerns. Prayer Request Cards are available in the pews. They may be dropped in the offering plates as you enter or exit the sanctuary.

Christian Education for children and youth continues despite the pandemic. See below for offerings. Contact Jana Schillinger for additional information at ce@fpccs.org.

For kids and teens, we offer:

- **Grace & Faith:** children age 4 to grade 5 will have a weekly lesson from our *Growing in Grace & Gratitude* curriculum. We will post a short video, downloadable worksheets, and more at fpccsway-grace.blogspot.com for you to enjoy whenever fits best in your schedule.
- **We Believe:** youth grade 6 and up can visit fpccsway-believe.blogspot.com for a weekly post featuring a Bible passage, reflection, and questions to ponder.

The Adults are invited to a ZOOM Advent Bible Study with Rev. Carter on Wednesdays (December 2, 9, 16, 23) during Advent. Check the "Light from the Hill" for reading material prior to the class.

Looking ahead: **Live - Friday, December 18, 2020 7:00 pm - Christmas with the 3 Divas jazz trio**
YouTube Broadcast - December 20 4:00 pm

Fiercely swinging, this powerhouse trio plays jazz with boundless musical joy. **Sherrie Maricle, Amy Shook, and Jackie Warren** met at the Cleveland Playhouse while playing in Maurice Hines' award-winning show *Tappin' Thru Life*. Ever since, they have been kindred spirits and the resulting musical synergy is fast and fierce. As the *New York Times* says, "Blistering Hot!"

Monday, December 21 is the longest night of the year. We offer a **Blue Christmas** service live from the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. This quiet service offers an opportunity to pray and worship God in the face of our losses and difficulties. Memorial candles will be lit by our worship leaders, as we offer prayers for peace and restoration. As with other services, we can welcome up to 50 people. **Reservations are strictly required.** We encourage all to take part online through our church's YouTube page, as the service will be live streamed.

This Week at a Glance

Today

10:00AM * Morning Worship Sanctuary

4:00PM Presbybop Celebrates Dave Brubeck's 100th Birthday
(In person and live streamed)

Monday, December 7 (Z) Mission and Justice Zoom

Tuesday, December 8

10:00AM * MBK Quilters Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, December 9

7:00PM * Bell Rehearsal Sanctuary

Thursday, December 10

7:00PM * Finance Room 210

Friday, December 11

Saturday, December 12

Sunday, December 13

10:00AM * Worship - **Reserve your seat:** office@fpccs.org or 570-586-6306 Sanctuary

11:00 * Special Session Meeting

* denotes gathering is face-to-face, with masks and socially-distant seating.

(Z) denotes gathering is online using ZOOM. Check our website or call the office for the link.

First Presbyterian Church
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