

*And Mary gave birth to her firstborn son,  
wrapped him in bands of cloth,  
and laid him in a manger --because there  
was no room for them in the inn.*

Luke 2:7



## *A Celebration of Christmas*

**First Presbyterian Church, Tulsa**

*The Sanctuary*

**December 24, 2023**

**Eleven o'clock in the morning**

# **Christmas Eve**

*11:00 a.m., Sanctuary*

## **The Words of Preparation**

*And it's not just a human thing: God's base emotion towards us is love. When God looks at us, he brims over with delight and affection. The Scriptures even go as far as saying that God is Love, meaning that the fundamental element making up the Trinity is Love. And so, it's no surprise that love plays a central role in the Christmas story—from Joseph's protective love for Mary, to Mary's deep love for her newborn son, to the Father's love for us in sending Jesus in the first place, love is laced the whole way through. As the people of God, we get to sit in this love, abiding in it, and letting it wash over us. And as we allow it to reach us to our core, we realize that it is our call to embody it, as well.*

*Bethany Allen, Bridgetown Church*

## **The Prelude**

In the Bleak Midwinter  
Consider the Stars  
Oh Children Come

## **The Welcome**

Rev. Julia Metcalf

*(Please sign, pass, and return the blue friendship register.)*

## **The Lighting of the Advent Candle (4) Love**

*Jerry and Patricia Hall*

The candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy are burning. Today, we light the candle of Love reminding us of the Lord's great gift that comes down at Christmas. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; the one who follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life." We light this candle as a sign of the coming light and love of Jesus Christ.

**Dear Lord Jesus, as you came so long ago, come again today and meet us in this house of prayer. Remind us that out of your love for the world you have come to conquer sin and death. Cause us to heed your invitation to come to Bethlehem where, with the shepherds and the angels, we learn to adore you as the Messiah, the Lord. AMEN.**

## The Call to Worship

Great God, we join our voices with David,  
**singing of your steadfast love and faithfulness.**

We join our voices with Mary, saying

**"You have done great things."**

Strengthen us with the good news:

**Jesus Christ, you have been with us from the beginning and  
will be with us until the end.**

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

**Let us dwell in Your love in the house of the Lord forever!**

◆ **The Hymn** 23      Angels We Have Heard on High      GLORIA  
*Acolytes: Sammy Hand, Lucy, James and Samuel Donohue*

◆ **The Prayer of Adoration**      Elias Donohue

**The Old Testament Reading**      Isaiah 53:1-6

## The Prayer of Confession

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers: we have not loved you first as God;  
we have not loved our neighbor as ourself; in our weakness, grant your  
strength; in our fear, grant courage; in our blind and deaf ways, give us  
both ears that hear, and a clear vision. Forgive us our sin and cause us to  
draw close with glad and grateful hearts! Lord, in your mercy, hear our  
prayers *...(in silence)*

**The Confession Response**      Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus      HYFRYDOL

Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free; from our  
fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee. Israel's strength and  
consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art; dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

Joy to those who long to see Thee, Day-spring from on high, appear. Come, Thou promised Rod of Jesse, of Thy birth, we long to hear! O'er the hills the angels singing news, glad tidings of a birth; "Go to Him your praises bringing Christ the Lord has come to earth!"

Come to earth to taste our sadness, He whose glories knew no end. By His life He brings us gladness, our Redeemer, Shepherd, Friend. Leaving riches without number, born within a cattle stall; this the everlasting wonder, Christ was born the Lord of all.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a King, born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone; by Thine all-sufficient merit raise us to Thy glorious throne.

### **The Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, embrace the good news with all of your hearts: In Jesus Christ, the Messiah, Emmanuel, God-with-us, there is forgiveness—for all who call upon him! **Alleluia! Amen!**

◆ **The Hymn** 41 O Come All Ye Faithful ADESTE FIDELES

◆ **The Affirmation of Faith** The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.

### **The Blessing of the Young Disciples**

## **The Song of Preparation**      Come Adore the Humble King

Come, adore the humble King, lowly in the manger; fall before His majesty, hail the little Savior! Hope what hope no tongue could tell, God has come with us to dwell, His name is Emmanuel, O praise the humble King!

Come, adore in humble state, He the song of angels! Join the wise who call His name –and with all creation. Who, O who, would condescend? God unknown now calls us friend; Love that none could comprehend, O praise the humble King!

Come, adore the King who came to our world to save us; born to heal our prideful race, crown us with forgiveness! Fall, O fall, before the one, Who in mercy left His throne; Christ the Lord God's only Son, His glories now we sing! O praise the humble King.

Come adore, come adore; come adore the King, bow before come adore the Name above all names!

## **The New Testament Reading**      John 15:12-17

### **The Sermon**

Christ Our Love

Rev. Julia Metcalf

*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you... John 15:12*

### **The Sacrament of Communion**

Words of Institution

Prayer of Blessing

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

### **The Offertory**

Sans Day Carol

Cornish Traditional Carol, arr. John Rutter

Now the holly bears a berry as white as the milk, and Mary bore Jesus, who was wrapped up in silk; *and Mary bore Jesus Christ our Saviour for to be, and the first tree in the greenwood, it was the holly!* Now the holly bears a berry as green as the grass, and Mary bore Jesus, who died on the cross: *Refrain.* Now the holly bears a berry as black as the coal, and Mary bore Jesus, who died for us all: *Refrain.* Now the holly bears a berry, as blood is it red, then trust we our Saviour, who rose from the dead. *Refrain.*

## The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

◆ **The Closing Hymn** 40 Joy to the World! Antioch

◆ **The Charge and Benediction**

**The Postlude** Toccata on the French carol, *He Is Born, the Divine Christ Child*

Denis Bédard

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### **Christmas Day Worship!**

*Tomorrow: 11:00 a.m.*

Refreshments following worship in the Atrium.

### **New Year's Eve Worship!**

Pancake Breakfast: 9:30 a.m., atrium

Sunday, December 31: 11:00 a.m.

## **Welcome to the First Church community!**

Merry Christmas! We are so glad to welcome you on this holy day; your presence adds to our joy!

If you do not have a home congregation, we warmly invite you to worship with us. We are a Presbyterian Church that is Evangelical in nature, meaning we take seriously the good news that life is found in Jesus Christ alone, and that this life is on offer to the whole world! We also place ourselves in the historic Reformed tradition, and we seek to be faithful to the Lord of the Church and the apostolic tradition that we have received.

Consider worshipping with us each Sunday morning! You will find service times below. Come and lift up your heart and your voice each week with God's people.

Below, you will also find ways to cultivate faith and friendships, as well as places to serve the common good in Jesus' name. We are glad that you are here, and we pray every blessing upon you and those precious to you!

## **Sunday Morning Worship**

- 8:00 a.m. Kerr Chapel (traditional worship and weekly communion)
- 8:30 a.m. Stephenson Hall (contemporary worship and weekly communion)
- 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary (Traditional worship with choir)
- 11:00 a.m. Stephenson Hall (contemporary worship and weekly communion)
- 11:00 a.m. Great Hall, Bernsen Center (Tulsa International Fellowship).

### **Our 11:00 o'clock Sanctuary Service:**

Broadcast, Cox Channel 3, live at 11:00 a.m.,

Rebroadcast, 5:00 and 10:00 p.m.

Streamed on Facebook, Youtube, *FirstChurchTulsa.org/YouTube*,  
*and the FPC Website: [www.firstchurchtulsa.org](http://www.firstchurchtulsa.org)*

## **Growing Your Faith!**

### **Adult Discipleship**

- Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. (15 classes available.)
- Weekday Bible studies.
- KGroups – Home-based fellowship groups.
- Wednesday Night Downtown – Full programming for all ages.
  - Optional Dinner 5:30, Stephenson Hall for all
  - 6:00 p.m. AWANA Clubs for children through grade 4
  - 6:00 p.m. Middle School (Pathfinders), High School (Exodus)
  - 6:15 p.m. Adult Classes
- Pastors' Studies
  - Rev. Dan Hutchinson, Sundays, 9:30 a.m.
  - Rev. Wambugu Gachungi, Wednesdays 6:15 p.m.
- Quarterly spiritual retreats and other opportunities for prayer and spiritual formation

**Tulsa International Fellowship** – Join with others from across the world for a time of worship and fellowship each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. in the Great Hall, Bernsen Center.

**Young Adults** – First Church is committed to providing a place for Young Adults to connect with one another and with the larger church. Find us on Facebook and Instagram at *Young Adult Ministries@FPC* or contact Rev. Julia Metcalf at 918-301-1030.

**Inquirers' Class** – A “No-strings-attached” opportunity to explore what it means to say “Yes” to Jesus, embrace His Church, and learn about this particular family of faith. Questions are invited. Friendships are formed. Our next class begins Sunday, January 21, 9:15 a.m. (for four weeks). To register, contact Patricia Hall at 918-301-1028.

**Presbyterian Women** – Monthly fellowship and Bible study meetings.

### **Serving the Master!**

**Helping Hand Ministry** – Helping to prevent evictions and keep the utilities on, Helping Hand Ministry provides funds to those in need of a hand up. Come and see the good being done any Monday or Tuesday from 9-noon.

**Guild of Intercessors** – Intercessory prayer group that believes prayer is powerful and life-changing.

**Faith Partners** – A ministry offering compassion, resources, education and hope for those affected by addiction.

**Deacons** – Join the Deacons in serving those in need – the sick, the isolated and lonely, to any who may be overwhelmed or distressed – both within and beyond this community of faith.

**Hope is Alive** – Join the deacons in one of eight annual visits with the residents of Hope is Alive community. Come witness God’s power, quietly forging radical life transformation in those suffering from addiction.



**Global Mission Trips** – Serve Christ in the world through mission partnerships around the world. 2024 partner visits include a journey to North Carolina in May, Ireland in July and hosting a delegation from Kenya in the Fall. For details, email Hannah at [damron@firstchurchtulsa.org](mailto:damron@firstchurchtulsa.org)

**Works of HeART** – Weekly art class for clients at the Day Center for the Homeless.

**Masterwork Academy For Faith and Fine Arts** – Training K-5th grade students, daily after school, in the joys of music, visual art, ballet, theater, fitness, and Bible study.

**Marion Anderson Elementary School** – There is always a way to be a blessing at Anderson, our partner in education school: be a weekly lunch buddy, help in the classroom, read to a student, or serve at a community night.

**Children’s Ministries** – Serve with us in the church’s Nursery, Preschool, or Elementary ministries by teaching, planning, or rocking babies!

**Telecare** – Help us keep in touch with homebound members and those who need encouragement.

## **Music Ministries!**

First Church strives to glorify God across the broad spectrum of musical language. From children’s worship arts and seasonal youth ensembles to the adult Chancel Choir, Contemporary Worship Team, and TIF band, plus a handbell choir, and Gloria women's choir, there is a place for you to use your musical gifts at First Church.

## **Next Generation Ministries! *(Cradle to College)***

**Children’s Ministries** - We are committed to coming alongside families as they raise their children in the faith of Jesus Christ. We focus on Spiritual Education, Worship, Service, and Fellowship by offering Sunday morning programming, Awana, VBS, and special events throughout the year.

**FPC Youth** - A community of Middle School (5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>) and High School (9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>) students who seek to grow in their relationship with Christ; encouraging one another in the day-to-day, and living as the Church here and now!

**University Ministries** – Designed to reach, teach, and love college-aged students throughout Tulsa so they may be life-long followers of Jesus Christ. Find us on Instagram at *@ukirktulsa* for more information.

*For more information on any of the above, please contact the church office at 918-584-4701 or [www.firstchurchtulsa.org](http://www.firstchurchtulsa.org).*

First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa links

Website: *FirstChurchTulsa.org*

YouTube: *FirstChurchTulsa.org/YouTube*

Facebook: *@FirstChurchTulsa*

Instagram: *@FirstChurchTulsa*

LinkedIn: *@FirstChurchTulsa*

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