

*“And she gave birth to her firstborn son
and 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, OK*

*Seven-thirty o'clock in the Evening
December 24, 2020*

Sanctuary

A Celebration of Christmas
December 24, 2020
Half-past seven o'clock in the evening

The Words of Preparation

He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord. How happy is the one who has put his trust in the Lord....!

Psalm 40:3-4

The Prelude

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen
The Donohues: Lucy, Elias, James, Samuel

The Welcome

Julia and Lydia Campbell, Dr. Miller

Ah, the carolers are everywhere, telling the story of this holy night! May their voices travel over all the earth! Did you hear the words? So much hope and joy! We're grateful to welcome the Case family who will light the great candle on our Advent wreath.....

The Lighting of the Christ Candle

The Case Family: Jeremy, Jessica, Jacob, James

Tonight we light the Christ candle, reminding us that in the darkness of our world, amid all our pain and sadness, good news came to us on that holy night in Bethlehem.

Just as the prophets had said, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light!"

And the angel offered the Christmas proclamation: "Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that is for all the people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!"

On this holy night, we remember. And we open our hearts to receive Him afresh!

The Prayer of Christmas

The Solo O Holy Night

Adolphe Adam, arr. Mark Hayes

Taylor Conley, soloist

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining, it is the night of the dear Savior's birth. Long lay the world in sin and error pining, till he appeared, and the soul felt its worth. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees! Oh hear the angel voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born. Truly he taught us to love one another; his law is love and his Gospel is peace. Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in his name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, let all within us praise his holy name. Christ is the Lord; then ever praise we, his power and glory evermore proclaim.

The Call to Worship

As He came so long ago, so He comes again, tonight, ready with a blessing for whomever will receive it! So let's go to Bethlehem together! And as we go, let's stand, lift our voices, and on this holy night, let us worship God!

The Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem! Come and behold Him born the king of angels. *O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above: "Glory to God, all glory in the highest!" *O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

True God of true God, Light of light eternal, He came into our world to save and redeem! Born of a woman, knowing every hardship. *O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning: Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n; Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing! *O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord.*

The Story: Gabriel and Mary (from Luke 2)

Well, it all happened once upon a night in the tiny town called Nazareth. God sent a message to a young Jewish woman, named Mary. She was engaged to man named, Joseph, whom she loved very much.

Gabriel suddenly appeared to Mary and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you!" Mary didn't know what to think. She was confused and surprised.

"Don't be afraid, Mary," said the angel ---for God is smiling upon you. He wants you to know that you will conceive and give birth to a baby boy ---and you will name Him Jesus.

He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his ancestor David --and this child shall reign forever over Israel: his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am not even married."

And Gabriel said: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, Mary, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born in you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. And be assured of this: the Word of God will never fail.

And Mary said to the angel: "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be done to me according to your word." And then the angel left her.

The Story

Mary Ponders and Sings: *Magnificat*

Julia Metcalf

My soul will magnify the Lord: I rejoice in God my Savior, in the wonder of his favor. For He has done great things for me; He was mindful of His servant. Every age shall call me blessed. The Hope of Abraham come in the giving of a Son; for He who promised is mighty in remembering his mercy. My soul will magnify the Lord for His grace to those who fear Him through every generation. The proud he scatters to the wind as the ruler's strength is broken, and the rich are left with nothing. The humble lifted high, and the hungry satisfied; our Portion and our Treasure, our Hope and Help forever.

Luke 1:46-55

The Story Gabriel and Joseph (from Matthew 1)

And Joseph, yes, God cared about him, too. So He sent his angel Gabriel to Joseph as well. Joseph was a young carpenter who grew up with Mary in Nazareth and came to love her very much. He couldn't wait to be married to her. Listen to what Joseph has to say.....

Joseph's Reflection

Rev. Dan Hutchinson

The Solo

Joseph's Christmas
Eric Baird, composer and soloist

Oh, this was not my Christmas wish, to raise the son of the King. This Holy Child, this gift to man, of whom the angels sing.

This was not my dream of love; a wife, a life, a child. This is not the way it's done, but on us, heaven smiled.

What to think, what to think? The angel said, "Do not fear, do not fear all that lies ahead."

"She will bear a son, and you will call his name, Jesus. He will save you from your sins." He will save us from our sins. He will save me from my sins. Amen.

Son of man, but no this man, the one that He'll call dad. I'll give my heart and soul and strength, and all the plans I had.

What to think, what to think? The angel said, "Do not fear, do not fear all that lies ahead."

"She will bear a son, and you will call his name, Jesus. He will save you from your sins." He will save us from our sins. He will save me from my sins. Amen.

The Story An Unexpected Edict From Rome (from Luke 2)

So Joseph married Mary and then it happened. A decree went out from Augustus Caesar that touched every part of Israel. Everybody had to go back to their ancestral home in order to be registered for a census. So Joseph and Mary had to travel all the way to a little town called Bethlehem, about 75 miles –just when Mary was about to have her baby.

Such a long trip. How hard and difficult it must have been. When they arrived they found a quiet place in crowded Bethlehem out in one of the caves, where the animals would be put up for the night. The carol tells us the story and includes in stanza three our prayer on this holy night.

The Carol O Little Town of Bethlehem ST. LOUIS

O little town of Bethlehem how still we see thee lie; above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by. Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light, the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight!

For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above, while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love. O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the King and Peace to men on earth!

O holy Child of Bethlehem descend to us, we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in be born to us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!

The Story God’s Angel Army Sings to the “Nobodies” (from Luke 2)

That night in Bethlehem shepherds, as always, were outside guarding their flocks. An angel of the Lord suddenly showed up right above them, the glory of the Lord shone around them, and the shepherds and their sheep were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look—I’m bringing you good news of great joy for all the people. For tonight right over there in Bethlehem, a Savior is born for you –the Messiah, the Lord! And you’ll know it’s the truth when you find a little baby wrapped in bands of cloth, lying in a manger, that’s right: where the animals feed.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a giant choir of angels praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

The Anthem

Christmas Angels
Choir Ensemble

Lloyd Larson

The Homily

God in the Feeding Trough?

Dr. Jim Miller

“You will find Him...lying in a manger.” Luke 2:12

The Story

The Shepherds Do Their Research (from Luke 2)

When the angels had left and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each another, “Let’s run to Bethlehem and see all of this that’s happened! For the Lord has sent us this message!

So the shepherds ran as fast as they could –and, sure enough, they found it just as the angels had said: Mary and Joseph were there, and the little baby was lying in the manger.

The Carol

Away in a Manger
Lucy Donohue, soloist

Away in a manger no crib for a bed, the little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay. The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay!

(Congregation joins)

The cattle are lowing the poor Baby wakes, but little Lord Jesus no crying He makes; I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky! And stay by my cradle ‘til morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care; and take us to Heaven

The Story A Global Good News and the Gift of Worship (from Matthew 2)

Ah, finally these magi, these mysterious kings arrive –and they offer their gifts from the heart: *On entering the house, the magi saw the child with Mary his mother. And the wise men all knelt down and worshipped Him. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

These men came from a very long way! Why? Because they believed that this news was the best ever --for them and for everyone else! For you and me, too. They discovered that Jesus' presence in our lives brings joy to everybody, everywhere! For to whomever will receive it, Jesus is God's gift of Joy to the world! And they've been singing about it ever since, and inviting us to join with them! Joy to each and to all! Lift up your hearts!

Sharing the Light of the World

The Candlelighting

In Him was life, and His life was the Light of all. The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never overcome it! John 1:4-5

The Anthem

Night of Silence

Daniel Kantor

Chancel Choir Ensemble

Cold are the people, winter of life, we tremble in shadows this cold endless night. Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, flowers that will echo the sunrise. Fire of hope is our only warmth, weary, its flame will be dying soon. Voice in the distance, call in the night, on wind you enfold us, you speak of the light. Gentle on the ear you whisper softly, rumors of a dawn so embracing. Breathless love awaits darkened souls, soon will we know of the morning. Spirit among us, shine like the star, your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar. Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely, rising in the warmth of your Son's love. Star unknowing of night and day, spirit we wait for your loving Son.

The Carol

Silent Night

STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright, 'round yon virgin mother and child! Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight, glories stream from heaven afar; heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia; Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."

(we lift our candles on the 3rd stanza)

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light radiant beams from Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace; Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

◆ The Charge and Benediction

(Please extinguish candles and bring them to the receptacles at the doors of Stephenson Hall following worship.)

◆ The Postlude

In Dulci Jubilo

J. S. Bach

◆ *Please stand*

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Welcome to the First Church community!

Since 1885, as the first church established in Tulsa, we seek to be faithful in service to Jesus Christ and the common good. If you do not have a church home, we'd love to welcome you as a member among us. Look over the various ministries and mission opportunities listed below:

Sunday Morning Worship

Currently, during the pandemic, we have three “in-person” worship services each Sunday:

- 8:30 a.m. Stephenson Hall (informal worship with weekly communion)
- 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary (Ensemble Choir)
- 11:00 a.m. Great Hall, Bernsen Center (Tulsa International Fellowship).
(Both 11:00 o'clock services are Livestreamed)

Growing Your Faith!

Adult Discipleship (call for brochures with more information):

- Fifteen Sunday morning classes for adults of all ages at 9:30 a.m.
- Weekday Bible studies.
- KGroups – Home-based fellowship groups.
- Wednesday Night Downtown - Varied classes offered for adults and AWANA clubs for children. Dinner is served at 5:15 p.m., classes are from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- Pastor's Study – led by Dr. Jim Miller, offered two times each week.

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 Dan Hutchinson at 918-301-1040.

Christian Classics in Lent – Join us every Monday during Lent for lunch and study of classic Christian literature.

Inquirers' Class – An opportunity to explore what it means to join the church; to learn more about our particular family of faith; to ask questions; to enjoy a time of fellowship with others and meet some of our pastors. Our next class begins January 17. For more information or to register please contact Patricia Hall at 918-301-1028 or phall@firstchurchtulsa.org

Presbyterian Women – Monthly fellowship and Bible study meetings.

Serving the Master!

Helping Hand Ministry – Serve the neediest Tulsans through a food pantry, informal counseling and financial assistance. Members typically serve one day a week for three hours in the morning (9:00 a.m. - 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 reach out to those in need – to the sick, the friendless, to any who may be in distress – both within and beyond this community of faith.

Friday Food Distribution – Consider joining us as we partner with First Baptist Church North Tulsa in giving away groceries to those in need. For more information, please contact Alison Biggs at allisonbiggs@gmail.com.

Global Mission Trips – Serve Christ in the world through medical mission in Mexico; disaster relief in the U. S.; evangelism in Romania; or encouragement and fellowship in Malawi.

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

Masterwork Academy – After school program which serves under-resourced children as they discover the joy of music, visual art, ballet, faith and fitness, and Bible study.

Emerson Elementary School – There is always a way to be a blessing at Emerson, our adopted school: be a mentor, help in the classroom, read to the students, serve at a school function, show the children at Emerson how much God loves them!

Children's Ministries – Serve the Master by tending his lambs at AWANA, VBS, Sunday School, etc.

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

Hospital Chaplains – Volunteers who offer caring visits when members are hospitalized.

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 Ministry - We believe a child's sense of identity in Christ begins at a very young age and our desire is for them to understand they are a part of God's big story.

From Sunday's Discipleship Hour, Wednesday night AWANA and VBS to family events including Fall Festival, Advent Workshop and more, we are committed to partnering with families to raise up children who see themselves as part of the family of God – the Church.

FPC Youth - A community of Middle School (5th - 8th) and High School (9th - 12th) students who seek to grow in 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.

Dear First Church families and friends,

We're all aware of the increasing transmission of this COVID virus. And we all want to do whatever we can to diminish the risk for those who gather here.

As we make our way into our Christmas celebrations the First Church Session has enacted a "mask-always" protocol for events here at First Church, including worship.

It will be a great day when we can lift these protocols --but for now we ask you to abide by these expectations-- that we hope and pray will serve the common good.

Please help us with contact tracing and attendance by filling out the information below and leaving the program on the pew as you leave.

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Member _____ or Guest _____

Seating Location: (Please circle where you are sitting.)

Front Left - Front Center - Front Right

Back Left - Back Center - Back Right

Left Balcony - Center Balcony - Right Balcony

or

going to the link: bit.ly/fpcregister;

or

using the QR code below.



December 24, 2020, 7:30 Worship Service in the Sanctuary

THE FIRST CHURCH PASTORS

James D. Miller, Ph.D., *Pastor*

Daniel Hutchinson, M.Div., *Associate Pastor*

James Estes, M.Div., *Associate Pastor*

Wambugu Gachungi, M.Div., *Associate Pastor*



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