



The Work of Christ... And of His Church

*Called to make fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ:
Inwardly Strong
and
Outwardly Focused.*

**DECEMBER 10, 2023
8:30 AM
STEPHENSON HALL
*First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa
Born by grace in 1885***

Second Sunday of Advent

Stephenson Hall, 8:30 a.m.

Words of Preparation

Surely the entire divinely arranged plan of our Redeemer's [coming] in the flesh is the reconciliation of the world—it was for this purpose that he became incarnate, for this he suffered, for this he was raised from the dead—that he might lead us, who had incurred God's anger by sinning, back to God's peace by his act of reconciliation. Hence he was rightly given the name "Father of the world to come" and "Prince of peace".

Bede

Prelude

Beneath the Night Sky

Walking beneath the night sky, looking up at endless stars, wondering how we can see that far and what they say about eternity. Long ago, beneath the night sky, the wise men from afar followed one bright leading star, believing there's more to this story.

And when I think of all the gifts I could give to you; I hope I give hope, I hope I give joy. But I want to tell you only what I know to be true; I know there is love, I know there is life.

Shepherds beneath the night sky looking up at endless stars, an angel choir appeared from afar, saying "Peace, goodwill to all. For unto you is born this day, a Savior who is Christ the King, the light of life and truth He brings, and the hope of eternity." *Refrain*

If there is love, and if there is life, then light breaks through the night. And if love is alive and life has a name; His name is Jesus.

In the mystery of the moment, is the darkness what is true, or is light shining down on me and you saying there's more to this story.

Welcome and Call to Worship

Rev. James Estes

Songs of Praise

Of the Father's Love Begotten

Of the Father's Love Begotten of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be, He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He, of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.

O ye heights of heaven adore Him; angel hosts, His praises sing; powers, dominions, bow before him, and extol our God and King; let no tongue on Earth be silent, every voice in concert ring, evermore and evermore.

Christ, to Thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee, hymn and chant and high thanksgiving and unwearied praises be: honor, glory, and dominion, and eternal victory, evermore and evermore.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

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 every nation, Joy of every longing heart!

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!

Joy to those who long to see You, Dayspring from on high, appear; come, O promised Shoot of Jesse, of your birth we long to hear. O'er the hills come voices ringing –news, glad tidings of a birth: "Go to him, your praises bringing: Christ the Lord is come to earth!

First Reading

Isaiah 9:1-11

Elder John Harper

Lighting the Advent Candle Peace (2)

Neel and Erica Kumar; Elle and Kai

We gather around the advent wreath knowing that the only hope for our world is coming from outside of it; that the fires of hope are lit from a divine, transcendent flame. And in quiet confidence this hope gives rise to the promise of peace. Paul writes this about hope and peace to the church in Rome: “May the God of hope fill you with all peace in believing, so that by the power of the spirit you may abound in hope.”

We receive the fire of hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and naturally it ignites the flame of peace. From the promise of the incarnation these twin stars of hope and peace shine out as beacons to those in the darkness of sin and death. Amid the storms that rage and the shadows that pursue, there are these lights shining steadfast so that we cannot lose the way—I am the way, says Jesus, and only in him are true hope and peace to be found. Join me now in the Prayer given us in Paul’s letter to the saints in Rome:

“Almighty God of hope, fill us now with the hope that you give us in your son, Jesus Christ, and let us take hold of the other-worldly peace on offer through Him. Grant that by these gifts we might abound in hope and peace before a fearful and disquieted world; now, forever, and always. Amen.”

Prayer of Confession We Confess

Almighty God, we confess our sin; what we have done, what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

Have mercy. Have mercy on us. Have mercy. Have mercy on us.

Most gracious God, we have lost our way. Like wandering sheep, we have gone astray. We're truly sorry and we turn back. Now, for the sake of Your Son Jesus Christ...

Have mercy. Have mercy on us. Have mercy. Have mercy on us.

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. So hear and believe the good news that in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness for all who call upon Him. **Alleluia! Amen!**

Response of Gratitude We Confess (Reprise)

As far as the East is from the West, so far have you removed our sinfulness. You carried our guilt and shame upon yourself; we are forgiven, forgiven. We are forgiven, forgiven.

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.

Passing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

The Joys and Concerns and the Prayers of the People

Offering Christ is Lower Still

Breathe in, reach out, touch the hem of your garment now. Help me, heal me; my mind, my body, and soul.

Let the king descend, living word made flesh. Lift this heavy heart to your throne, o God. In his wounds I find room for all of mine. When from grace I fell, Christ was lower still.

Humbly, lowly, Jesus waits in the valley. My Savior suffers with me; with Him, I'll rise again.

Let the king descend, living word made flesh. Lift this heavy heart to your throne, o God. In his wounds I find room for all of mine. When from grace I fell, Christ was lower. 'Til the earth is filled, Christ is lower still.

We lift it all up to you Lord. We lift our heads, we lift our hands. We lift it all up to you Lord. We lift our dreams, we lift our plans. We lift it all up to you Lord. We lift our sorrow and our pain. We lift it all up to you Lord. We cast our cares on you again. We lift it all up to you Lord. *Refrain*

Gospel Reading

John 14:25-27

Sermon

Christ our Peace

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

(John 14:27)

Sacrament of Communion

Words of Institution

Prayer of Blessing

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

Charge and Benediction

Song of Sending

Joy to The World

Joy to the world! The Lord is come: let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world! The Savior reigns: let us our songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love!

+ + +

We welcome you on this second Sunday of Advent! Advent is a word that means “*coming near*”. During this season, we remember that Christ has come, that Christ comes to us today, and that Christ will come again. Whatever you bring with you here today, we pray that you will sense the incoming presence of Christ among us, the warmth of this community that He has called together, and the joy of serving in His name.

If you do not have a church home, we would love to welcome you! For information, contact Patricia Hall (918-301-1028 or phall@firstchurchtulsa.org).

Parish Register

Prayers for Healing: Cathy Akin, Jane Azlin, Adelle Beathe, Steve Brill, Pat Brown, Roy Cail, Randy Corelli, Dwight Creveling, Marilyn Davis, Judah DeSpain, Donna Droege, Cecil Drummond, Gaye Graeler, Rita Graeler, Cynthia Hill-Meriwether, Meg Hubler, Warren Hubler, Jeannie Dickey Kelsay, Joyce Kunkel, Carmelitti LeFlore, Amy Lesh, Ann McKellar, Jon Mercer, Jan Miller, Jim Miller, David Osterholt, Bill Peacher, Shari Postier, Lyle Proffitt, Bob Pyle, Helen Quiring, Carly Rivers, Mary Ruddle, Jo Carolyn Rushing, Robert Shaw, Jane Sneed, Cissy Ssettimba, Larry Tromp, Marcia Tromp, and Susan Waldie.

With Gratitude for the Resurrection: Quendy Veatch, a member since 1975, died on December 5.

Worship Notes

Services are broadcast on Cox channel 3 (each Sunday) at 11:00 a.m., 5:00 and 10:00 p.m., on the FPC Facebook page, or *FirstChurchTulsa.org/YouTube*.

Please notify the church if you have a pastoral need, change of address, phone number or other important family news. Contact Kathy Wilson at 918-301-1029 or *kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org*.

For those who need hearing assistance in the Sanctuary or Stephenson Hall, audio headsets are available from the ushers. Also available are large-print hymnals and Bibles.

The Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God by the Halliburton family –with gratitude for the “Greens Teams” past and present, who have beautified the season over the past 56 years.

The festive exterior wreaths are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of:

- George, Daphne, Geordie, and Mark Matson, and Michael and Janice Dorndorfer, and Bill and Peg Templeton by the Matson family.
- Joe and Betty Hawes by Joe and Pam Hawes and family.
- Vivienne and Allan J. Edwards, Jr., and Duncan Fuller by their family
- Jimmie Mathews by the Gary Mathews family.

Our *Letter of Blessing* today goes to Ralph Veatch.

Thank you for your faithful support of the ministries of First Church! Weekly tithes and offerings to the Lord may be given electronically at *firstchurchtulsa.org*, text 405-276-4141 or by using the QR code below.



First Church Updates

It is Stewardship Season! Thank you for taking the local church seriously and giving of your very best to the Master. In this transition time, your support in prayer and giving is vital.

For information regarding the transition and the future of pastoral leadership, check out the website at firstchurchtulsa.org and look for the highlighted word “transition”. If you have questions, concerns, or comments, please don’t hesitate to reach out to any of the members of the Transition Team by sending your inquiries to FPCTransition@firstchurchtulsa.org.

Pastoral Prayer: Join us as we pray for the pastoral transition. If you’re interested in receiving a weekly prayer prompt, please text [@pastorfpc](https://twitter.com/pastorfpc) to “81010”.

Young Adults: First Church is committed to cultivating faith within the next generation, providing a place for young adults to connect with one another and with the larger church. Find us on Facebook, Instagram at [@fpcyoungadults](https://www.instagram.com/fpcyoungadults) or contact Rev. Julia Metcalf at 918-301-1030.

Guild of Intercessors – Please let us know if you would like a Guild member to pray for you, your family members, or your friends. Your prayer requests will also be shared with the pastors. To submit a prayer request, call Paula Peterson, Guild Chairman at 918-296-5548, text at 918-688-2163 or email at mandppeterson@msn.com.

Presbyterian Women’s December Mission Project is Emergency Infant Services. EIS provides help for children 5 and under. They will be collecting funds for diapers in the collection box in the atrium.

Internship Opportunity – Are you a college student who loves God and enjoys working with youth? Next Generation Ministries is now receiving applications for its summer youth ministry internship program. Contact Steve Wilson at swilson@firstchurchtulsa.org for more information.

The Gift Back Mission Market is open in the atrium today and December 17. Honor your family and friends with the gift of music. First Church is helping our partner school in Nairobi launch a music education program. All gifts will be used to establish this program for local students. For more information visit us at the table in the atrium.

Events This Week

Monday School - Rev. Dan Hutchinson will teach on December 11. His topic will focus on what it means to be Orthodox, Reformed, and Evangelical. The lesson begins at 12:00 p.m. in Kirkland Library with an optional lunch at 11:30 a.m. in the Bernsen Reception Room.

Seasons Women's Gathering – Join us for our next session of “We Saved You a Seat: Finding and Keeping Lasting Friendship” as we explore our relationship with Jesus as the ultimate model for authentic friendship. Bring a friend! We meet tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. in the Miller Library.

Wednesday Night Downtown

Dinner at 5:15 p.m. in Stephenson Hall – Class starts at 6:15 p.m. This week, all classes will end at 7:00 p.m., and we will join together in the courtyard for Carols and Cocoa.

Seekers Bible Study, room E104 - Rev. Wambugu

6 Great Dates, room E103 - Jerry and Anne McCoy, and
Rev. Dan Hutchinson

Jesus, the Light of the World, room E100 - Duff Points

Young Adult Christmas Party – Friday, December 15 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at Michael and Valerie Grogan's home (25351 E. 51st St., Broken Arrow). Please bring a white elephant gift to exchange.

Mark Your Calendar

December 17 is Christmas Music Sunday! Regular services at 8:00 in Kerr Chapel and 8:30 Stephenson Hall. At 11:00, we will meet in the Great Hall and in the Sanctuary. In the Great Hall, the contemporary and international services will

combine and music will be led by the TIF and contemporary worship musicians. The traditional worship in the Sanctuary will feature the Chancel Choir, First Church Choristers, an orchestra and the Overtones bell choir.

Ukirk and Exodus Alumni Christmas Party – Sunday, December 17 from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at the home of Pastor Julia’s home (1523 S. Delaware Pl.) Dinner is provided; please bring a white elephant gift to exchange.

Mark Your Calendars with these events:

December 15	Celebrating Christmas Together
December 17	Christmas Music Sunday
December 24	Christmas Eve Services
December 25	Christmas Day Service, Kerr Chapel
January 31	New Year’s Day Worship, Sanctuary
January 7	Burning of the Greens and Epiphany Plunge
Jan. 15 – Feb. 22	January Series

Christmas Services:

Christmas Eve: Sunday, December 24:

(all are candle-lighting)

11:00 a.m.	Worship Service	Sanctuary and Great Hall
5:00 p.m.	Children’s Nativity Musical	Sanctuary
7:30 p.m.	Lessons and Carols	Sanctuary
11:00 p.m.	Watchnight and Communion	Sanctuary

Monday, December 25: *Christmas Day*

11:00 a.m. Kerr Chapel

Sunday, December 31, 2023: *New Year’s Eve*

9:30 a.m.	Pancake Breakfast, Atrium and Stephenson Hall
11:00 a.m.	Worship, Sanctuary

COME, GROW YOUR FAITH!

TODAY 12/10

- 8:00 am Worship: Kerr Chapel
- 8:30 am Worship: Stephenson Hall
- 11:00 am Worship: Sanctuary, Stephenson, Great Hall

Monday 12/11

- 10:00 am Little Lambs, Wiseman Hall
- 11:30 am Monday School, Kirkland Library
- 11:45 am Guy's Monday Bible Study, E103
- 6:30 pm Seasons Women's Gathering, Miller Library

Wednesday 12/13

- 5:15 pm Wednesday Night Dinner, Stephenson Hall
- 6:00 pm Awana, POW, Amass Exodus
- 6:15 pm Adult Classes
- 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room
- 7:00 pm Carols and Cocoa, Courtyard and Stephenson Hall

Saturday 12/16

- 8:45 am Before the Rooster Crows, E103

Adult Sunday School Classes for **NEXT Sunday, 12/17** at 9:30 a.m.

<i>Cornerstone</i>	Advent Series	E102
<i>Covenanters</i>	Advent Series	E101
<i>Faith and Family</i>	Advent Series	Prayer Room
<i>Forum</i>	Advent Series	E200
<i>Harbingers</i>	The Life You've Always Wanted	E202
<i>Morning Glory</i>	Advent Series	B318
<i>Young Parents</i>	Guest Speaker	E205
<i>Pastor's Study/Foundations</i>		
	Advent Series	E104
<i>Reflections</i>	Advent Series	E103
<i>Shepherds</i>	Advent Series	E203
<i>Sojourners</i>	Advent Series	E204
<i>The Vine</i>	Advent Series	E100
<i>Westminster</i>	Maccabees	Tower Room
<i>Young Adults and Ukirk</i>		
	Advent Series	E201