



***Embracing the Mystery:
God's Great Drama
and the Church's Role***

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

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
NOVEMBER 28, 2021
8:00 AM
KERR CHAPEL**

*First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa
Born by grace in 1885*

First Sunday of Advent

8:00 a.m., Kerr Chapel

The Words of Preparation

Peace to the whole community, and love with faith --from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Eph. 6:23

The Welcome

The Lighting of the Advent Candle (1) Hope

John and Debbie Favell

Today we light the candle of hope, mindful of the Lord's promise: *Blessed are those who put their trust in the Lord –those who have made the Lord their hope and confidence.* (Jer. 17:7)

**Come, Emmanuel, "God-Nearby"! Free us from our fears and sins. Strengthen our faith, deepen our love, anchor our hope!
Come, O come, Emmanuel!**

◆ **The Hymn** 9 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel VENI EMMANUEL

◆ **The Prayer of Adoration** Elder Debbie Favell

The Old Testament Reading Isaiah 1:16-20

(Responsively)

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes;

**cease to do evil,
learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,**

**defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.**

Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

The Prayer of Confession

Rev. Wally Johnson

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed --by what we have done and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. Lord, open our eyes that we might see our need. Cause us, by your Holy Spirit, to open our hearts in repentance. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers... *(in silence)*

The Solo

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Nancy Walters

Randie Lewis, soloist

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. Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, joy of every longing heart.

The Good News

Friends, embrace this good news with all of your hearts: in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness –for all who call upon Him!

Alleluia! Amen!

◆ **The Response**

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.

◆ **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 Epistle Reading Ephesians 6:10 – 23 (*The Message*)

And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way.

This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own.

Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life.

God's Word is an indispensable weapon.

In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters.

Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

And don't forget to pray for me. Pray that I'll know what to say and have the courage to say it at the right time, telling the mystery to one and all, the Message that I, jailbird preacher that I am, am responsible for getting out.

Tychicus, my good friend here, will tell you what I'm doing and how things are going with me. He is certainly a dependable servant of the Master! I've sent him not only to tell you about us but to cheer you on in your faith.

Good-bye, friends. Love mixed with faith be yours from God the Father and from the Master, Jesus Christ. Pure grace and nothing but grace be with all who love our Master, Jesus Christ.

The Sermon A Cautionary Ending to Ephesians?

Dr. Miller

This is a life-or-death fight to the finish against the devil and all his angels...

Eph. 6:12

The Invitation to the Table

Words of Institution

Prayer of Blessing

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Joys and Concerns of the Church

The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

◆ **The Hymn** May the Mind of Christ, My Savior ST. LEONARDS

May the mind of Christ, my Savior, live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph only through his power.

May the peace of God, my Father, rule my life in everything, that
I may be calm to comfort sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me as the waters fill the sea.
Him exalting, self-abasing: this is victory.

May we run the race before us, strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus as we onward go.

◆ **The Charge and Benediction**

◆ **The Postlude** Improvisation on the tune VENI EMMANUEL

◆ Please Stand

Worship Notes

The flowers in today's Sanctuary worship are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dr. Leonard E. Eames, Leonard J. and Sadie Eames and Arnold and Selma Asbury, given by Jean A. Eames and family.

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

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

Parish Register

Prayers for Healing: Jeanette Anderson, Jane Azlin, Johanna Boshuizen, Billy Boyd, Pat Brown, Eleanor Carmack, Dwight Creveling, Marilyn Davis, Donna Droege, Wandie and Mary Fitzpatrick, Pat Ford, Luke Fravel, Gary Gilliam, Glenda Goodwin, Gaye Graeler, Cynthia Hill-Meriwether, Mike Hopkins, Meg Hubler, Caroline Fravel Jones, Ray Kenney, Joyce Kunkel, Annelle Lanford, Carmelitti LeFlore, Amy Lesh, Laurence Mansur, Ann McKellar, Jan Miller, Rosemary Priest, David Osterholt, David Raybourn, Carly Rivers, Zach Rivers, Mary Ruddle, Susan Shults, Robert Shaw, Helen Marie Sisler, Cissy Ssettimba, Sally Stewart, Terry Thomas, Mary Lee Torbert, Quendy Veatch, Dayne Weierbach, Bill Weinrich, and Jack Williams.

With Gratitude for the Resurrection: Harvey Hunt, a member since 1975, died on November 19.

+ + +

Sermon Notes:

The article in the Wall Street Journal begins with this assessment:

Among the educated elite today, talking publicly about one's belief in the devil and his influence on the culture and the world would be social suicide. (WSJ: Aug. 5, 2011, John Murray)

Surely this is true. Most educated and savvy people today believe the devil and all of his minions are simply hangovers from the ignorance of earlier ages.

Maybe so. But Paul thinks differently. And we, who are called to submit to his apostolic authority, are urged to listen carefully.

What Paul says at the end of Ephesians is both surprising and revealing.

You'll remember that in the first five chapters, Paul has offered his stunning summary of what God has done in Jesus Christ, and what he believes will be the ultimate outcome. In a nutshell:

Sinful humanity will be redeemed at the foot of the cross.

Relationships will be restored, chasms bridged.

A mutual submission to Christ will culminate in joy, peace and a fruitful life.

And one day there will be a cosmic unity: God's great symphony of grace!

Because of all this, we expect Paul to end this letter on a joyful, celebrative note --an inspirational last word, cheering his readers on.

But no. His last word is profoundly cautionary.

The vision, he tells us, is not yet the reality. We still live in a sin-sick, dangerous and hurting world. There remains serious and deadly opposition to God's redemptive work.

This speaks directly to our Advent journey. Advent tells of God's incarnation, how he entered time (and this world!) in Bethlehem.

But we are still "in-between" what He has done —and what He will do. The Bible speaks of two "advents" --the first "advent" (arrival) of Jesus —and the second "advent" (the second coming) of the Master at the end of time.

In the meantime, in our time, there remains an adversary, the devil —with powers and principalities at his command. So what is the enemy's plan? What is the enemy seeking to do?

Says John Stott:

If God's plan is to create a new society, the adversaries will do their utmost to destroy it.

If God through Jesus Christ has broken down the walls dividing human beings of different races and cultures—the devil and his minions will strive to rebuild them.

If God intends his reconciled people to live in harmony and purity, the powers of hell will scatter among them the seeds of discord and sin.

Paul, of course, writes as a faithful Jew. His understanding of the devil is shaped by the Hebrew Scriptures—in which Satan appears at the very beginning of the story. The entire book of Job responds to the demonic scrambling of Job's good life and family.

In the New Testament, the first gospel describes Jesus being tempted by the devil. Every gospel speaks of his power to liberate those who are demon-possessed. Later, Judas, we're told, betrays his Lord through the adversary's prompting. Simon Peter puts it this way: *"Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a lion seeking someone to devour. But resist him—firm in the faith"* (1 Peter 5:8-9).

So Paul, at the end of this letter, raises the caution flag. To the Ephesians—and to us—he says: beware and be alert! *Put on the full armor of God—so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood...* (6:11).

First Church Updates

Happy New Year! This is the first day of the new *ecclesial* year! Advent means "coming near"—and the Advent season begins with God's in-coming and saving presence—in the person and work of Jesus, born in Bethlehem. Welcome to this year's Advent journey!

Has the Lord prospered you this year? Ron Pearson and Dr. Miller invite you to consider an over-and-above gift for the much-needed renovation of the Chapel organ. This is a capital project, and includes the full restoration of the eighty-year old organ. It will ensure that the next generations are able to be lift their voices in the Chapel and be led in worship—to the glory of God! You may choose to give your gift over a three-year period beginning this year. The Pearson-Miller team are ready to visit with you and respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you for your faithful giving to support the ministries of this congregation! Your gifts, your energy and your devotion are expressions of the presence of Christ in the world He loves. The Session of First Church is at work on the 2022 budget. Your commitment cards will greatly assist them in their work.

Celebrating Christmas Together - In the Atrium, watch for the *Celebrating Christmas Together* sign-up table today! And mark your calendar for Friday, December 17, as we celebrate Christmas with the students and faculty at Anderson Elementary. Each sponsored student will receive a Bible, a board game, a story book, socks and a sweatshirt - all in a festive First Church bag.

Next Sunday, Dec. 5, 5:00 p.m.: the play, *Kings of Judea*, will be presented in the FPC sanctuary! Bring your family and friends –and then stay for dinner and a fun discussion with a panel, including Bruce Long, the Director. Admission to the play is free; dinner is \$10. To pay for dinner online:



FPC Women’s Annual Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 5 in the Miller Library at 12:15 p.m. Join us for lunch and fellowship. There is no cost for this event. Reserve your spot by contacting Kathy Wilson at 918-301-1029 or kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org by November 30.

Dancing toward Delight –Thursday, December 9, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Lewis Conference Room, 2nd floor of the Bernsen Center - Join us for an evening of dance instruction, relational reflection, and Christmas cheer led by Wes and Stephanie Vander Lugt. No previous dance experience or partner is necessary, and anyone is welcome to come, learn, and enjoy. Instruction begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. Come early, enjoy some refreshments, and make sure to wear shoes that slide (no rubber soles)! Space is limited, so sign up here to reserve your spot.



Keith and Kristyn Getty Concert, April 22, 2022, in the FPC Sanctuary! Give your loved ones the gift of joyful music and worship. From this Friday, through Friday, December 31, save \$5.00 OFF the price of each ticket. The discount is automatically applied at checkout. Purchase tickets at www.FirstChurchTulsa.org/Getty22. After December 31, tickets will return to the regular price of \$35 each. All tickets are General Admission seating.

COME, GROW YOUR FAITH!

Adult Classes for NEXT Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

On Site:

Bible Walk	Minor Prophets	E101
Cornerstone	Wesley Bible Curriculum	E102
Covenanters	<i>Making Sense of the Bible</i> by Adam Hamilton	E205
Faith and Family	Old Testament Survey	E104
Forum	<i>Incarnation</i>	E200
The Niche 2.0	Bible Study	207
Pastor's Study	<i>Mere Christianity</i>	Stephenson Hall
Reflections	World Religions	E103
Sojourners (All Ages)	<i>Advent Observations</i>	E204
Upper Room	Bible Study	E313
Young Adults (20's and 30's)	Old Testament Survey	E104

On Site and Zoom:

Shepherds	Creeds and Confessions	E203
The Vine (Singles/couples)	<i>The Good and Beautiful God</i>	E100

EVENTS THIS WEEK

Today 11/28/21

- 8:00 a.m. Worship, Kerr Chapel
- 8:30 a.m. Worship, Stephenson Hall
- 9:30 a.m. Gatherings and Classes
- 11:00 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary, Stephenson Hall and Great Hall

Monday 11/29/21

- Guy's Monday Bible Study 11:45 a.m., Room E103
- Monday School 12:00 p.m., KRC
- Little Lambs 10:00 a.m., Outside Playground

Tuesday 11/30/21

- Precept Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Room E100

Wednesday 12/1/21

- Pastor's Study 11:30 a.m., Stephenson Hall
- Youth Praise Band 5:00 p.m., Powerhouse
- WNDR Dinner 5:15 p.m., Stephenson Hall
- Gloria Choir 5:30 p.m., Choir Room
- AWANA 6:00 p.m.
- POW and Amass Exodus 6:00 p.m., Powerhouse
- Adult Classes 6:15 p.m., Various Locations
- Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m., Choir Room

Saturday 12/4/21

- Before the Rooster Crows 8:45 a.m., E103

November 28, 2021
CHAPEL

Please help us with contact tracing and attendance by filling out the information below and leave this page 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.



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