



## **Embracing the Mystery**

***Emmanuel:  
God-With-Us***

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

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**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**DECEMBER 12, 2021**

**8:00 AM**

**KERR CHAPEL**

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

# ***Third Sunday of Advent***

8:00 a.m., Kerr Chapel

## **The Words of Preparation**

God wastes nothing - not even sin. The soul that has struggled and come through is enriched by its experiences, and Grace does not merely blot out the evil past but in the most literal sense makes it good.

Dorothy Sayers

## **The Welcome**

### **The Prelude**

Breath of Heaven

arr. Craig Courtney

*Gloria Women's Choir; Gretchen Bashforth, Director*

I have traveled many moonless nights, cold and weary with a babe inside and I wonder what I've done. Holy Father, you have come and chosen me now to carry your Son.

I am waiting in a silent prayer; I am frightened by the load I bear. In a world as cold as stone, must I walk this path alone? Be with me now.

*Breath of Heaven, hold me together, be forever near me, Breath of Heaven. Breath of Heaven, lighten my darkness, pour over me your holiness, for you are holy, Breath of Heaven.*

Do you wonder as you watch my face, if another should have had my place? But I offer all I am for the mercy of your plan. Help me be strong, help me. *Refrain.*

## **The Lighting of the Advent Candle (1) Hope, (2) Peace (3) Joy**

*Ricky and Kim Jones*

The candles of hope and peace are burning. Today we light the candle of Joy, reminding us of the delight that came to the shepherds in the middle of the night:

*"Don't be afraid!" said the angel, "I bring you good news of a great joy that will be to all the people!"*

Please join us in our advent prayer:

**Most merciful Father, your presence is the source of our deepest joy. Cause us to welcome you afresh, prepare you room, and invite you into our lives, our relationships, our decisions. Let your Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven. Even so come, Lord Jesus. Alleluia! Amen!**

◆ **The Hymn** 16      The Angel Gabriel Came      GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

◆ **The Prayer of Adoration**      Elder Angela Garrett

**The Old Testament Reading**      Psalm 25:1-10

**The Prayer of Confession**

Dr. Wes Vander Lugt

Lord Jesus Christ, Giver of grace and mercy, Author of love:  
in mercy you come near; by grace you embrace us; in love hope is  
awakened. But we are a sinful and scrambled people. Attracted by  
sin, distracted by many things, we so easily get lost and find  
ourselves heartsick. Come, Emmanuel, and in your mercy, hear  
our prayers..... *(in silence)*

**The Assurance of Pardon**

Hear and believe the good news of the gospel: in Jesus Christ  
there is forgiveness –for all who call upon Him!  
**Alleluia! Amen!**

## ◆ **The Response of Gratitude**

Tell Out, My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord

WOODLANDS

## ◆ **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 Gospel Reading** Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But Mary was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

## **The Sermon** Fully-Devoted Discipleship?

Dr. Jim Miller

*Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.*

*Luke 1:38*

## **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** Lord of Advent, God of Glory HYFRYDOL

Lord of Advent, God of glory, guide us as we make our way; gift to us your Holy Spirit, be our Strength, our Hope, our Stay! Cause our hearts to beat with longing, grant our ears to hear your voice; guide us in these days of Advent, may we seek you and rejoice!

John the Baptist tells the story, pointing us to Christ the Son; speaking words of sin's great power, He declares sin overcome! Through the waters of repentance, in the ocean of Christ's love, we're embraced by God's forgiveness made incarnate from above!

Lord of Advent, God of glory, blessed Jesus, hear our prayers!  
Come among us, come within us, cause us all your love to share.  
May we give ourselves completely, may our lives advance your Way, cause our hearts to sing your praises, may your grace be on display!

#### ◆ **The Charge and Benediction**

#### ◆ **The Postlude** Improvisation on the tune WOODLANDS

◆ Please Stand

## Worship Notes

**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 fifty years.

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

- George and Daphne Matson, Geordie Matson, Mark Matson, and Michael and Janice Dorndorfer 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 Ellen, Lindsey, Emily Fuller and their family
- Jimmie Mathews by the Gary Mathews 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](mailto: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, Tom Reynolds, 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:** Fred Wightman, a member since 1960, died on December 4.

**The Sacrament of Baptism:** Eleanor Ruth Rhoa, daughter of Laura and Mark Rhoa, was baptized on December 5.

**Sermon Notes:**

Luke 1:26-38

Often called simply, *The Annunciation*, this text launches the reader into God's mighty act of entering time, taking on flesh, and dwelling among us. Someone has said that Jesus is the only God whose presence has an actual date in time. Luke 1:5 places the events described here as happening "in the days of King Herod of Judea", a well-known date in history –that is, *His-Story!*

One reason we need Advent is because we've all become too accustomed to this Story. We're no longer shocked by it. Nevertheless, every line, every turn of the page, urges us to embrace the adage: *God's Ways Are Not Our Ways*. The idea that God would become human is shocking enough. But we simply could never have predicted, expected, or even imagined what Luke tells us happened when God wrote Himself into His own Story.

Dale Bruner puts it this way: *When the Holy Spirit brings Jesus into history, much that good people think proper is contradicted.*

The story, as told by both Luke and Matthew, would be received by many (if not all) as simply scandalous: *God chooses to come to earth by first living in a peasant woman's womb?*

More than that: the story of Jesus' virgin birth doubles down on scandal:

Mary, *betrothed* to Joseph, is promised to him –but not yet (according to Jewish custom) considered his wife;  
Her pregnancy would be regarded as out-of-wedlock –a serious affront to the whole community of Nazareth;  
It places her entire future, and her kin, in immediate jeopardy;  
It puts great stress on her relationships with parents and family;  
The obvious question: *Who fathered this child?* becomes the ongoing talk in the village;  
Joseph, himself, is suspect –and (whether he was the father or someone else was), he is humiliated.

*Try to imagine not knowing the story that Luke is telling.  
How would you imagine the response of those hearing it for the first time?*

*Why would God do this? Why cause all this apparently needless anguish? Why not wait until Joseph and Mary are married before arriving in her womb?*

There are many responses to these questions –but perhaps one will suffice here.

The fact that Mary was a virgin when she conceived, declares like few events can, that God’s redemptive work is entirely His doing. God initiates the action. This is *His Story*. He comes to Mary, enters her womb by His own act –not hers or Joseph’s or anyone else’s.

The Trinity is seen as working in unity here. As one writer puts it: The office of the Holy Spirit, from the very beginning of the Christian story, is *to bring Jesus into human life*. The Spirit is *Christophorus*, “*the Christ-Bearer* –and utterly Christ-centered. *God was in Christ –reconciling the world to Himself! (II Cor. 5:19)*. This is great good news, indeed!

### **First Church Updates**

**We’re glad to be together in worship** on this the third Sunday of Advent! May the Lord’s presence cause joy in each of us –remembering His mighty works and trusting in His promises!

**We have a brief congregational meeting** immediately following today’s sanctuary service. Kim Jones, the Chair of the Personnel Committee, has led multiply “Session Conversations” regarding revised pastoral responsibilities – since the departure of Dr. Ryan Moore. The Session has acted to call a new Associate Pastor --and the purpose of this meeting is to elect an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. The 2021 Leadership Nominating Committee, led by Dru McQueen, offers this slate for your consideration:

Jessica John-Bowman  
Jimmy Inhofe  
Allan Kanyeki  
Michael Nsien  
Anne McCoy

**Interested in viewing last Sunday's stage production of *Kings of Judea*?**

Tomorrow night (Monday) is your chance! Join the *Cast Party tomorrow* in the Stephenson at 5:30 p.m. We'll hear from the cast, view the one hour production, and enjoy a good piece of Chef Joseph's pie! Please RSVP (to Dionna at 918-301-1015 or [dschooley@firstchurchtulsa.org](mailto:dschooley@firstchurchtulsa.org)) tomorrow and let us know you plan to come. We'll be sure to have enough pie for you!

**Come to Bethlehem and Sing!**

**Christmas Services:**

December 24: Christmas Eve

*(all are candle-lighting)*

3:00 p.m.	Carols and Communion	Stephenson
5:30 p.m.	Children's Pageant	Sanctuary
7:30 p.m.	Lessons and Carols	Sanctuary
11:00 p.m.	Watchnight	Sanctuary

December 25: Christmas Day

11:00 a.m. Chapel Service

**AWANA, Jammies for Jesus** – This Wednesday, December 15, at 5:30 p.m. in Stephenson Hall and the Courtyard, your entire family is invited to wear “jammies” while we enjoy ‘breakfast for dinner’, Christmas tree decorating in the Courtyard, the sharing of a gospel story, and a fun carol-sing! The event (including dinner) is free –and no RSVP is required.

**Celebrating Christmas Together** - This Friday, December 17, we celebrate Christmas with the students and faculty at Anderson Elementary. Each sponsored student will receive a Bible, a board game, a storybook, socks and a sweatshirt.

**Thank you for your faithful giving to support the ministries of this congregation!** Your gifts, energy and 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.

## **Presbyterian Women**

*The Soup Group*: Thursday, December 16, noon in the Miller Library.

*The Esther Circle*: Thursday, December 16, 10:30 a.m. in E-202.

**Keith and Kristyn Getty Concert, April 8, 2022, in the FPC Sanctuary!** Give your loved ones the gift of joyful music and worship. Purchase tickets before December 31 and save \$5.00. The discount is automatically applied at checkout. Purchase tickets at [www.FirstChurchTulsa.org/Getty22](http://www.FirstChurchTulsa.org/Getty22). After December 31, tickets will return to the regular price of \$35 each. All tickets are General Admission seating.

**There's something beautiful about welcoming new brothers and sisters** to the local expression of the Body of Christ that we call First Church. We give thanks for the following new members welcomed last Sunday:

### **Reaffirmation of Faith**

Katie and Brandon Evans

Carson Jones

Jay Lawson

Brad Morgan and Kinnee Tilly

### **Certificate of Transfer**

Nick Broline and Dr. Josie Whitley

Eva and Del Gustafson

Lexi Jones

Suzanne Tips

## 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
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	Proverbs	E203
The Vine (Singles/couples)	<i>The Good and Beautiful God</i>	E100

## **EVENTS THIS WEEK**

### Today 12/12/21

- 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 12/13/21

- 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 12/14/21

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

### Wednesday 12/15/21

- Pastor's Study 11:30 a.m., Stephenson Hall
- Youth Praise Band 5:00 p.m., Powerhouse
- WNDD Dinner 5:15 p.m., Stephenson Hall
- Gloria Choir 5:30 p.m., Choir Room
- Jammies for Jesus 6:00 p.m., Stephenson Hall
- 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 12/18/21

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

December 12, 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](https://bit.ly/fpcregister);

or

using the QR code below.



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