



The Session and members of First Presbyterian Church, Fargo extend a sincere welcome to you. We are grateful for your presence today! We welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and to serve as an officer of the church.

We recycle! If you are not taking your bulletin, please drop it in the blue bin at the door as you leave.

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

We Gather in Christ

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Advent story of hope and mystery, anticipation, preparation, a kingdom of this world and the next, and a king appearing when we least expect. Heaven touching earth, the footsteps of the divine walking dusty roads as once they did in Eden, and a people, searching for a Savior, and walking past the stable. Open eyes and hearts, that this might be an Advent of hope to the world.

PRELUDE

Prepare the Way, O Zion
Sally Harmon, organist

arrs. Cherwien/Held

WELCOME & CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness all the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you,

and God's glory will appear over you.

Lift up your eyes and look around.

See and be radiant.

Let your heart thrill and rejoice.

Let us worship God!

***LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE**

Where do we see hope?

East side: In light that shines in darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

West side: In the light of one candle that illumines a face or ignites a thousand other candles.

Where do we see hope?

East side: In the human fragility of a baby, full of promise.

West side: For unto us a child is born, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God.

On this second Sunday of Advent, let us light a candle to see hope.

HYMN 109: *Blest Be the God of Israel

**Blest be the God of Israel, who comes to set us free;
who visits and redeems us, who grants us liberty.**

The prophets spoke of mercy, of freedom and release;
God shall fulfill that promise and bring the people peace.

God from the house of David a child of grace has given;
a Savior comes among us to raise us up to heaven.
Before him goes the herald, forerunner in the way,
the prophet of salvation, the harbinger of day.

On those who sit in darkness the sun begins to rise,
the dawning of forgiveness upon the sinner's eyes.
God guides the feet of pilgrims along the paths of peace.
O bless our God and Savior with songs that never cease!

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Saints, let us trust in God's love for us and confess our sin,
confident in God's mercy.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Confessing is like walking into a dark cave, seeing nothing, hearing nothing—we do not know what we will find there. Maybe we will find the bones of things long dead. Maybe we will find the silence not at all quiet, but full of unknown rustles. Maybe we will find ourselves and find old hurts or desires that are long dead and find some urge or temptation that could carry us away in a heartbeat. But it is only in the deepest dark that we can see the tiny light that is always present, that sliver that comes from an unknown place, that sliver of light that give us hope, that sliver of light that looks a bit like grace. It is only in the stillest silence that we can hear the whisper of mercy. Let us enter into silence. (a time of silent confession)

***DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

Friends: hear this good news and see the grace of God:
We are forgiven. We are free to go and live in the light of love.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

***RESPONSE:** *Come, Come Emmanuel*

Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.

Come, come Emmanuel. Come, Emmanuel.

The Word

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: reader, Lisa McEvers

Holy One, through your Holy Spirit
instruct us by the light of your prophets.
Illumine our hearts, that we may hear your call
to become your path into the world.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

May God bless the reading and hearing of this portion of the holy Word.

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that on the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON: The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey

***HYMN 514:** *Soul Adorn Yourself with Gladness*

**Soul, adorn yourself with gladness;
leave the gloomy haunts of sadness.
Come into the daylight's splendor;
there with joy your praises render.
Bless the one whose grace unbounded
this amazing banquet founded;
Christ, though heavenly, high, and holy,
deigns to dwell with you most lowly.**

**Sun, who all my life does brighten;
light, who does my soul enlighten;
joy, your wondrous gift bestowing;
fount, from which all good is flowing:
at your feet I cry, my Maker,
let me be a fit partaker
of this blessed food from heaven,
for our good, your glory given.**

**Jesus, source of lasting pleasure,
truest friend and dearest treasure,
peace beyond all understanding,
joy into all life expanding:
humbly now, I bow before you,**

love incarnate, I adore you;
worthily let me receive you
and, so favored, never leave you.

***PROFESSION OF FAITH:** *Nicene Creed*

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Responding to the Word

OFFERING



A reminder that offering plates are at the west & north doors of the sanctuary to receive your offering and yellow attendance cards or use the QR code to access the secure giving portal on our website!

OFFERTORY

Soon and Very Soon
Sanctuary and 7-12 Choirs; Bryan Poyzer,
director; Sally Harmon, piano

arr. Schrader

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy...

...we sing to the glory of your name:

RESPONSE 559: *Holy, Holy, Holy*

You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord...

...Great is the Mystery of Faith;

RESPONSE 560: *Christ Has Died; Christ Is Risen*

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

COMMUNION MUSIC *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*
St. Andrew's Brass; Jill Post, director

arr. Post

PRAYER

Bearing the Word into the World

***HYMN 106:** *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

Prepare the way, O Zion,
your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley
a level way appear.

Greet One who comes in glory,
foretold in sacred story.

Refrain:

O blest is Christ who came
in God's most holy name.

He brings God's rule, O Zion;
he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom,
and justice, truth, and love.
Lift high your praise resounding,
for grace and joy abounding. (Refrain)

Fling wide your gates, O Zion;
your Savior's rule embrace,
and tidings of salvation
proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing,
their adoration voicing. (Refrain)

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Lo, He Comes with Clouds
Descending

arr. Held



December 5, 2021

Covenant Of Prayer: Jennifer; Hannah; Bella Garcia; those who are experiencing homelessness in our community; and our sister congregation in Chogoria, Kenya.

FM Youth Symphony: Join us **tonight at 7:00 pm**, as the Youth Symphony holds their holiday concert in our sanctuary. Some of our First Presbyterian youth are members of the FMAYS!

Calling all Bakers: On Sunday, December 12, the youth will be hosting our annual cookie walk! If you'd like to donate some of your baked goods, we'd gladly accept them! To take COVID precautions, we ask that you prepackage your cookies/goodies in groups of 3-6 items in clear baggies. Please **deliver your cookies to the Jennie Roberts Room by noon on Saturday, December 11**. If you do not have a FOB to West doors, please drop off your items during office hours.

Congregational Meeting Called: After worship on **Sunday, December 12**, a congregational meeting has been called to review the 2021 financials, to receive the 2022 budget from Session, and to approve any changes to the terms of call for the Rev. Holtey. Summaries will be handed out at the meeting; more detailed budget info can be found in the church office that morning.

Poinsettias: It's time to order your Christmas Poinsettia! You can find order forms online, at the Info Kiosk, and in the December Messenger. Orders and payments should be delivered to the office **no later than noon on December 13**. Please write a separate check for your poinsettia; do not include with your offering.

A Christmas Ring and Sing-along: This FREE concert on **Monday, December 13 at 7:00 pm** is presented by the FM Area Music Club. Several area organists; the women's choir, The Noteables; and the handbell choir, BELLissimo, are participating in this family-friendly event with narration from Pastor Mary. FPC is well-represented in the membership of these groups!

Attention Snow Birds: Please make sure you notify the office of your winter address **along with the start and end date** for using that address. We need all of that info to keep the system (and thus, the communication) in working order. Most items are mailed at special non-profit rates and those items are not forwarded even if you have a forward order at the post office. Your help keeps the lines of communication open and we thank you for helping us with this task.

ManUP: ManUP, a men's Bible study, kicks off its monthly sessions on **December 14 at 6:45 am via ZOOM**. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, October-May. Intended to help men understand what the Bible says in relation to what is expected of a Christian man, the study this year examines the Epistle to the Hebrews. A copy of the study guide can be obtained at Hebrews: An Open Door to God | Presbyterian Mission Agency or you can request a copy and ask for a Zoom invitation from Bruce Maylath at ring4linguist@yahoo.com. No advance preparation is required for each month's study.

PW News: PW Board meets via ZOOM on Tuesday, **December 14 at 10:00 am**. There is no General Meeting this month. Also via ZOOM, the PW Bible Study, held Tuesday, **December 21 at 2:00 pm**, will focus on Lesson 4, "Ruth and Loyal Love," led by Pastor Holtey. Our November study was enjoyed by 19.

So far this year, our PW YWCA rep has delivered 507 pillows for use by those in need at the Y. Last month, 54 rolls of paper towels and 33 shampoos/conditioners were delivered. For December, we will collect aspirin, Tylenol, ibuprofen, etc. Please place your donations in the YWCA bin in the coat room. We will also be collecting winter items for men - such as winter hats, hand warmers, winter gloves, long underwear, and water bottles in the New Life Center bin.

New Pilgrimage Class: January's Pilgrimage class is new and meant for current participants and FPC congregants who may be interested in becoming part of The Pilgrimage ministry. Titled, *Seeking God Together*, the 2-session class will provide small group experience steeped in contemplative Christian tradition. Kit O'Neill will teach the class with current pilgrim guides as small group facilitators. Recommended reading for the class is, *The Pilgrim's Compass*, by Paul H. Lang, available in the church library. Contact Mike Wavra (wavramw@aol.com) or Judy Rippentrop (jirippentrop@yahoo.com) by **December 15, 2021, to indicate your interest**.

Sunday School Christmas Party: Jesus is coming, and we're all invited to the party! Come to the Sunday School for All Ages party **December 19 at 9:15 am**. Start in the Social Hall. Rick Raum will read a Christmas story from his and Betty's book, *Drive-Through Christmas Eve*. (They will be on hand to sign books before and after worship for \$10; \$4 will be given back to children's ministry). Then collect puzzle pieces by making cards and gifts, singing Christmas songs, and hearing stories. Be sure to stay for the church service for treats and nativity afterward!

Carols by Candlelight: Join us in the Sanctuary on **December 19 at 6:30 pm** for *The Weary World Rejoices* which will feature our church's vocal and instrumental ensembles plus congregational carol-singing and "candle" lighting in a celebration of word and seasonal music. Christmas treats will be served "to-go" after the service. This service will also be livestreamed.

Christmas Joy Offering: This offering supports the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, honoring the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families during times of critical financial need. It also supports Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color, and leadership receiving much-needed assistance while they discover and pursue their professional goals. Christmas Joy envelopes may be found in the pew racks, as well as the Welcome Desk Info Kiosk, or use the online giving portal found on the church website. This offering will be **dedicated on Dec. 19**, but collected through the end of December.

Convenient Giving! Did you notice the QR Code in the bulletin? Session discussed, and Management & Finance Committee approved, the use of this code that's directly linked to our secure giving portal through Subsplash Giving. Open your smartphone's camera and focus the camera on the QR Code by gently tapping the code. Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the action. Easy and convenient- try it!

A Peek @ Next Week: We will enjoy music by the 7-12 Choir and the Westminster Ringers.

Hearing devices and large print copies of today's hymns are available, please ask an usher for assistance.

Nursery: Staff will be present **beginning at 9:15** for infants-3 years, in the nursery complex on the 1st floor.

Activity Bags for Children: Fun-filled tote bags are located at both doors.

Restrooms: Restrooms are located in the Gathering Space and on the lower level.

Prayer Request Cards: Cards are in pew racks for your use. Prayers will be committed to God along with the other offerings and also lifted up in prayer by the staff.

Peace Candles: The candle burning on the chancel symbolizes peace. We ask guests to take a candle back to your church as a gift from us. Peace candles can be found at the Welcome Center, near the west doors.

Wi-Fi: Wi-Fi is available throughout the church. (password: community650)

Church Staff

Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey-*Head of Staff, Associate Pastor*

Sally Harmon-*Music Coordinator & Organist*

Bryan Poyzer-*Adult Choir Director*

Jan Lundgren-*Business Manager*

Monica Gelinske-*Administrative Assistant*

Penny Andrist-*Children's Ministry Coordinator*

Kayla Bones-*Youth & Young Adult Ministry Coordinator*

Rick Fiebiger-*Facilities Manager*

Drew Brovold-*Custodian*

All staff emails are:

(first initial and last name of person)@firstpresfargo.org

L: Live Stream Option, H: Hybrid, Z: Zoom

Sunday, December 5

12:00 Confirmation

7:00 FMAYS Holiday Concert (L)-FREE

Monday, December 6

5:30 B&G Cmt. / Personnel Cmt. (Z)

6:30 Called Session (Z)

7:30 EduCon Cmt. (Z)

Tuesday, December 7

8:30 Bulletin Articles Due

12:00 S&E Board (Z)

5:30 Worship Cmt. (H)

Wednesday, December 8

1:00 Library Cmt.

5:30 St. Andrew's Brass / Genesis Ringers

6:15 2-6 Choir / 7-12 Choir

6:30 Westminster Ringers / Compass #4

7:00 Youth Group

7:30 Sanctuary Choir

Thursday, December 9

6:00 Compass #5

Friday, December 10 *No Church Events*

Saturday, December 11

12:00 Cookie Dropoff Deadline

Sunday, December 12

9:15 Annual Cookie Walk / Sunday School for All

10:30 Worship Service

11:30 Congregational Meeting

12:00 Confirmation

For Your Information

November 28 Worship Attendance:

136 in person, 37 Livestreamed

Contributions Received: \$19,247.00



Church Information

Office Hours:

M-TH, 8:30 am-4:00 pm

Phone: 701-293-6311

www.firstpresfargo.org