

Worship at First Presbyterian Church
The Second week of Advent: PEACE
Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 10 am

*"The morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,
to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide us to the path of **peace**." (Luke 1:78-79)*

PRELUDE

WELCOME

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HYMN #2: 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASSING THE PEACE, PRAYERS FOR THE CONGREGATION

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

CHOIR

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON (unison)

Gracious God,
how often we settle for a glittery "greeting card" kind of peace,
or the worn-out kind of peace that lingers
when all the wrapping paper has been recycled
and the good-byes have been said.

But in our hearts, we long for something more,
a strong and lasting peace:
when families are reconciled,
when the world's divisions are healed,
and human dignity is restored to all.

**Lord, forgive us for our false images of peace,
our tendency to make this season about the busyness of Christmas
rather than the Prince of Peace,
our agitation when things don't go as we want,
our tendency to stir up, rather than calm down controversies,
our failure to be peacemakers,
the absence of the Holy Spirit's fruit of peace in our lives.**

**Come, Lord Jesus; forgive us and restore us.
Come, Lord Jesus; guide us and deliver us.
Come, Lord Jesus; teach us and renew us.
Come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.**

After corporate prayer we will have a few moments of silence for personal confession.

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HYMN #38: IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
From heaven's all gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lowly plains
They bend on hovering wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

And ye, beneath life's crushing load,
Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way
With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours
Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When with the ever circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.

READING AND PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Sermon: *"A Weary World Rejoices: A Thrill of Hope . . ."*

Luke 1:39-56

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town ⁴⁰ where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁴² Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. ⁴³ Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? ⁴⁴ When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. ⁴⁵ You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

⁴⁶ Mary responded,

"Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.

⁴⁷ How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

⁴⁸ For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

⁴⁹ For the Mighty One is holy,
and he has done great things for me.

⁵⁰ He shows mercy from generation to generation
to all who fear him.

⁵¹ His mighty arm has done tremendous things!
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.

⁵² He has brought down princes from their thrones
and exalted the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away with empty hands.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel
and remembered to be merciful.

⁵⁵ For he made this promise to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children forever."

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE WITH OUR OFFERINGS

*The metal basket in the offering plate is for gifts to support
our deacons' provision of care, support, and financial assistance to those in need.*

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DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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HYMN #31: HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King.
 Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
 God and sinners reconciled!"
 Joyful, all ye nations rise,
 Join the triumph of the skies;
 With the angelic host proclaim,
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

*Hark! the herald angels sing,
 "Glory to the newborn King!"*

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
 Christ the everlasting Lord!
 Late in time, behold Him come,
 Offspring of the virgin's womb.
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
 Hail the incarnate Deity,
 Pleased in flesh with us to dwell,
 Jesus our Emmanuel. *[Refrain]*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
 Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
 Light and life to all He brings,
 Risen with healing in His wings.
 Mild He lays His glory by,
 Born that we no more may die.
 Born to raise us from the earth,
 Born to give us second birth. *[Refrain]*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

CALENDAR

- TODAY** Choir Practice (9:00 in Parlor)
 Sunday Worship (10:00 in the Sanctuary)
 Congregational Meeting (immediately following the service)
- Tuesday, Dec. 10** Tuesday Crew (9:00–11:30)
- Wednesday, Dec. 11** Quilting Group (10:30 – 2:30)
- Thursday, Dec. 12** Combined Session and Deacons (6:30 pm)
- Saturday, Dec. 14** Creation Station (11:00 – 1:00)
- Sunday, Dec. 15** Choir Practice (9:00 in Parlor)
 Sunday Worship *with Choir Cantata* (10:00 in the Sanctuary)
- LOOKING AHEAD** December 24: Christmas Eve Services (5:00 and 10:00)
 December 29: Sharing Table (before and after the service)

Did you know that nearly a third of people in our country report experiencing periods of loneliness? And many people are *chronically* lonely. Loneliness can strike especially hard at Christmas. That means, of course, that Christmas is a wonderful time to introduce people to the friendship and community a church provides—and a God who seeks to be our friend. I'd like to invite you to think about who you know, who you run into, who lives near you who might be longing for a place where they can feel accepted, where they can experience a sense of "home." And of course, after thinking about them, invite them to one—or more—of our Christmas services—and tell them they'll find family here!

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