

First Presbyterian Church

December 8, 2024

Welcome



Sermon: *“The Trees We Were Meant to Be”*

8:30 Worship with Communion Page 3

11:00 Worship Service Page 6

Scripture Readings Page 11

The Connection Page 13

Prayer List Page 17

Calendar of Events Page 18

Second Advent Sunday

First Presbyterian Church of Conroe Welcomes You!



If you are interested in learning more about our church, or wish to become active in our ministry teams and activities, please visit our website at fpcConroe.org. There you can fill out the visitor form online, or you can do so now by visiting our welcome desk.

We appreciate you joining us for services today.

~ Good Things to Know ~

Today's Worship Leader

Mark Sowden

Today's Flowers

There is no flower dedication today.

Last Week's Attendance, December 1

8:30 a.m. Worship Service - 19

11:00 a.m. Worship Service - 153

Online Worship Attendance - 24

Total Attendance – 196

8:30 A.M. WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

Preparing to Receive God's Word

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

God has raised up a mighty savior for us from the House of David.
Blessed be the Lord our God!
God has shown mercy and remembered his covenant.
That we might serve God without fear.
God has sent us a holy messenger to prepare the way.
God will guide our feet in the way of peace.

*Hymn #12

People, Look East

1. People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east:
Love the guest is on the way.
2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east:
Love the rose is on the way.
3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build,
Guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen
God for fledging time has chosen.
People look east:
Love the bird is on the way.

*Please stand if able.

4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east:
Love the star is one the way.

*Call to Confession

*Silent Prayer of Confession

*Assurance of Pardon

At the beginning, at the end, and in every time between,
the good news speaks to us of God's tender mercy and love for us.
God comes, not to punish, but to forgive; not to judge, but to save us.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

Because of Christ's great love for us, we are forgiven!

*Gloria Patri

The Word

Scripture Readings

Malachi 3:1-4, Luke 3:1-18

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"The Trees We Were Meant to Be"

Rev. Seth Saathoff

Responding to the Word

The Sacrament of Communion

Invitation to the Table

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Words of Institution

Communion of the People

Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Hymn #13

Prepare the Way, O Zion

1. 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.
O blest is Christ that came
In God's most holy name.
2. Christ 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.
O blest is Christ that came
In God's most holy name.

*Charge and Benediction

*Postlude

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"Prepare the Way, O Zion"
by Frans Mikael Franzen, Augustus Nelson, and Charles Price.
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CCL # 2714264

11:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE

Preparing to Receive God's Word

Opening Music

Welcome and Announcements

Introit *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Lighting of Advent Wreath Candles *Christi & Matthew Konze, Jocelyn*

We light these candles as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

Christ is the reflection of God's glory, the very imprint of God's own being.

Night and day we pray that God will strengthen us in holiness and love.

God, who began a good work in us, will bring it to completion on the day of Jesus Christ.

(Lighting of the Hope and Faith candles)

Thanks be to God for this good news of great joy!

*Hymn #12

People, Look East

1. People, look east. The time is near
Of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east:
Love the guest is on the way.
2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
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One more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather,
Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east:
Love the star is one the way.

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, you know us better than we know ourselves. You know every time we have scoffed at the John the Baptists of our day, foolishly believing that we don't need forgiveness or help. You know every time we have written off your messengers because they said **something we didn't like or didn't want to hear. You know how many** times we have judged others based on outward appearances and first impressions while neglecting to judge our own hearts.

Help us to hear anew the cries of those leading us to Christ. Turn our ears from willful ignorance so that we may listen earnestly to the prophets and turn our hearts from cold cynicism so that we may partake in genuine repentance. Prepare us all for the coming of Christ so that we may accept him as Lord of all.

*Silent Prayer of Confession

*Assurance of Pardon

At the beginning, at the end, and in every time between,
the good news speaks to us of God's tender mercy and love for us.
God comes, not to punish, but to forgive; not to judge, but to save us.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

Because of Christ's great love for us, we are forgiven!

*Gloria Patri

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Offertory

*Doxology

***Prayer of Dedication and The Lord's Prayer**

*Choral Response

The Word

Children's Time

Anthem

Still, Still, Still

Luboff

Scripture Reading

Malachi 3:1-4

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*Hymn #22

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1. Angels, from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye, who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

2. Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,
Yonder shines the infant light:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

3. Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great desire of nations;
Ye have seen His natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

Scripture Reading

Luke 3:1-18

Sermon

“The Trees We Were Meant to Be”

Rev. Seth Saathoff

Responding to the Word

Prayers of the People

*Hymn #13

Prepare the Way, O Zion

1. 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.
O blest is Christ that came
In God's most holy name.
2. Christ 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.
O blest is Christ that came
In God's most holy name.

Congregational Meeting

Called Congregational Meeting
First Presbyterian Church

December 8, 2024
Conroe, TX

Call to Order, Opening Prayer, and Declaration of a Quorum

2024 Nominating Committee Report

Nominees for Ruling Elders Class of 2027: Debbie Morse (Fellowship), Ron Massey (Care/Prayer), Kyle Walker (Missions), Sean Morton (Youth Elder serving a three-year term).

Nominees for Ruling Elders Class of 2025: Pat Hudson (Presbyterian Day School, fulfilling an unexpired term), Dena Sowden (Discipleship, granted a one-year extension by the Presbytery), Mark Sowden (Discipleship, granted a one-year extension by the Presbytery).

Election of Ruling Elders Classes of 2027 and 2025

Adjournment of Congregational Meeting

*Charge and Benediction

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and everywhere;
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light.
(Refrain)

*Postlude

This Week's Scripture Readings

Malachi 3:1-4

³ 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. ² 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 washers' soap; ³ 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. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.

Luke 3:1-18

³ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

⁷ **John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."**

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What, then, should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ **John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”**

¹⁸ So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Notes



Called Congregational Meeting on December 8

There will be a Called Meeting of the Congregation on December 8th, after the **11:00 service, to receive the Nominating Committee's report and to elect church officers.** Please plan to join us.

Stewardship Campaign Update

We have made a strong start to achieving a balanced budget for 2025. To date, we have received 90 pledges for slightly over \$600,800. This puts us ~90% toward that goal. There are still 20 individuals who pledged in 2024 that have not, as yet, committed to pledging for 2025. This represents a potential of \$71,500 in additional revenue. If you have already pledged to give for the 2025 Budget, thank you for your very generous support. If not, please prayerfully consider doing so. There is simply no way around the fact that achieving a **balanced budget requires everyone's financial support.** If you plan to pledge but have not done so for whatever reason, it is not too late. Either put your completed card in the collection plate on Sunday or drop it by the church office at your convenience. Our goal of a balanced budget is within our reach, so please pledge to do your part in achieving this goal.

Yours in Christ,

Administration Committee

Missions Committee Request Form Available

The Missions Committee has created an effective way for members of the congregation to request a one-time donation for the church to make to an organization, non-profit, or individual. While we are a generous congregation, there are limited funds each year for these one-time requests. The Missions Committee **Request Form can be picked up from/returned to Catherine Scheffler's mailbox** in the church office. You can also contact her at scscheffler@sbcglobal.net or (713) 715-9766 with questions or to get more information.

Be Aware of Seasonal Scams

Please be aware of accelerated scams that take place as we approach the holidays. One of the most often-used scam is receiving an email from your Pastor, asking for a gift card to be sent. If you receive anything to this effect, from Rev. Saathoff or the church, please do not respond or give out any of your personal information.

Church Directory Corrections

The Membership Committee is working on an updated listing/supplement for the recently printed Member Directory. If your information (address, phone #, email, etc.) was incorrect or needs to be updated, please send your information to Steve Scheffler at scscheffler@sbcglobal.net. We will print an updated page or pages that will be made available to all church members.

Life Line Screening at FPC on December 18

There is a simple, convenient way for you to get preventive health screenings and learn your risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions.

These painless screenings are accurate, affordable and will give you valuable information about your health that you can share with your doctor.

We are pleased to host Life Line Screening, who will be on site on Wednesday, December 18, at First Presbyterian Church Conroe. These 4 vital screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete.



Special screening package for \$159 for our members includes:

- Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- FREE Hypertension Screening

Call to schedule an appointment near you! 888-814-0466 and use code: HSCA001

LIFE LINE SCREENING
The Power of Prevention








**Join us for a
Christmas Program Dinner**
Thursday December 12th
Directly following the
5:30pm Christmas Program
Please RSVP at Office

P
D
S

**Brisket & Sausage
Green Beans & Mac and Cheese
Roll
Dessert
Beverages**

**Adult plate \$ 12
Kids plate \$ 6**

*RSVP
(936)
756-3990*

White Elephant Party

This is an opportunity for young adults to get to know one another in a relaxed environment with food and fun. Each gift should be less than \$20. Please RSVP so that we can provide adequate child care.



**20's & 30's & 40's
Christmas
White Elephant Party (*<\$20*)**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2024, 6-9 PM
BABYSITTING STARTS AT 6 PM @ FPC
**DROP THE KIDS AT CHURCH THEN HEAD TO
13249 AUTUMN ASH DR, CONROE 77302**

RSVP & INFO
936-525-7767
JENNYPETE@ME.COM

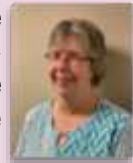
Prayer List

Members: Roy Kessler, Judy Weinburger, Ruth Masters, Paula Shepherd, Kyle Walker, Glenna Lang, Joe Clark, Jeannene Wendt, Reed Watson, John Lancaster, Nedra Murphy, Kari Elliott, Tildon Hebert, David Green, Ron Bailey, Joanne Deaver, Alice Helms, Polly Miller, Jean Ball, Mary Hudson, Paul Ivison, Don Myer, Virginia Tamborello, Jeanne Leverette, Virginia Olivier

Members' Relatives & Friends: Richard R. (Rose), George G., Karl W. (Watt), Ted M. (Rose), C.M. (Blott), Wes K. (Yates), Alicia I., James I., and Ron S. (Bailey), Susie K. (Davis), Anna and Wendy C. (Harshbarger), Thad M. (West), Danielle S. & kids, Kelly D., Stephanie R. (Riggs-Harpur), Blade B., Judy N. (Dukes), Bonnie L., Michael R. (Dwyer), Tom J. & family, Bill M. (Browder), Tony N. (Spinks), Aimee L. (Amoneno), Buddy H. (Hayter), Amanda N. (Bosse), Brenda H. (Cannon), Scott P. (Peterson), Linda S., Larry B., Janie M. (Harrison), Lindsey W. (Walker), Lisa J. (Miller), Shannon L. (Diamond), Rick J., Sydney H. and Martha K. (Juhl), Joe T. Sr and caregivers, Harry S., Jr. and family (Havens), Steve T., Lonnie H. and Vivian M. (Hammonds), Kim H. (Ganek), John R. (Hethershaw), James M., Patty M., Enrique E. (Moore), William W. (Weinburger), Jeffrey H. & Leah H. (Heasley), Katie B. (Pohla), Wendy S. (Adamson), Sherry M. (Garrison), Lee H. (Helms), Caleb & Michaela W. (Henderson), Gerald H. (Roberts), Tucker H. (Hudson)

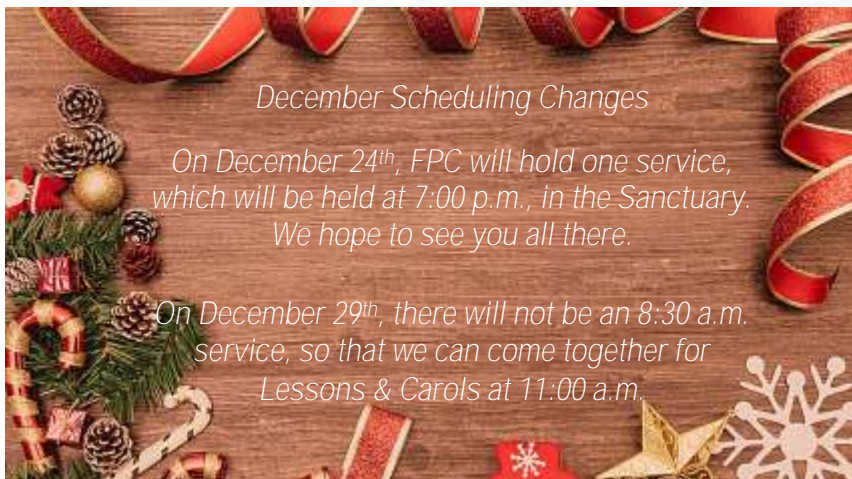
For Pastoral Care, Contact Rev. Callie Candee

Greetings from Reverend Callie Candee! I'm so grateful to have been asked to assist with pastoral care duties here at First Presbyterian Church-Conroe. I'll be available for phone and home visits. I'm carrying the church's emergency phone and can be contacted directly at (936) 290-4535.



Calendar of Weekly Events

<p><i>Sunday</i> <i>December 8</i></p>	<p>8:30 a.m. Worship with Communion (Sanctuary)</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Bereans Sunday School Class with Bob Shepherd (Rm. 105) Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Fellowship Class with Cara Wood (Rm. 204) Max Lucado study series "What Happens Next-A Traveler's Guide Through the End of This Age."</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Exploring Our Faith with Susan Buckley (Rm. 206)</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Seekers' Bible Study with Randy Blanton (Library) Study of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians</p> <p>9:30 a.m. FPC Kid's Sunday School (Rm. 203)</p> <p>10:30 a.m. Fellowship (Narthex)</p> <p>10:40 a.m. Praise band (Sanctuary)</p> <p>11:00 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary and Facebook Live www.com/fpcConroe or YouTube.com/fpcConroe)</p> <p>5:00-7:00 p.m. The Spark (Gym)</p>
<p><i>Monday</i> <i>December 9</i></p>	<p>1:30 p.m. Monday Bible Study (Parlor)</p>
<p><i>Wednesday</i> <i>December 11</i></p>	<p>9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Mission Sewing (Rm. 105)</p>



<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sunday December 15</i></p>	<p>8:30 a.m. Worship with Communion (Sanctuary)</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Bereans Sunday School Class with Bob Shepherd (Rm. 105) Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Fellowship Class with Cara Wood (Rm. 204) Max Lucado study series "What Happens Next-A Traveler's Guide Through the End of This Age."</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Exploring Our Faith with Susan Buckley (Rm. 206)</p> <p>9:30 a.m. Seekers' Bible Study with Randy Blanton (Library) Study of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians</p> <p>9:30 a.m. FPC Kid's Sunday School (Rm. 203)</p> <p>10:30 a.m. Fellowship (Narthex)</p> <p>10:40 a.m. Praise band (Sanctuary)</p> <p>11:00 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary and Facebook Live www.com/fpcConroe or YouTube.com/fpcConroe)</p> <p>12:30 p.m. Session Meeting</p> <p>5:00-7:00 p.m. The Spark (Gym)</p>
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Save the Date

- December 9-13 FPC hosts Family Promise
- December 15 **Children's Christmas Pageant**
- December 18 Lifeline Screening Event at FPC
- December 21 Dinner and a Movie Night
- December 22 Youth Progressive Dinner
- December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service
- December 25-26 Christmas Observance (Church office closed)
- January 1 **New Year's Day (Church office closed)**
- January 7 PDS classes resume
- January 8 Tacos & Trivia with Pastor Saathoff

Staff and Church Information

Staff

Rev. Seth Saathoff, Senior Pastor
Rev. Callie Candee, Pastoral Care
Dena Sowden, Director of Christian Education
Sharon VanSchuyver, Director of Communications
Yvonne Rose, Office Manager
Bonnie Hernandez, Music Director
Rolethial McKelvey, Accompanist
Jackye Cannon and Jane Corbit, Bookkeeping
Shirley Dukes, Parish Nurse



First Presbyterian Church

Physical Address:

2727 N. Loop 336 W., Conroe, TX 77304
Church Office (936) 756-8884 Fax (936) 756-8842
Website: www.fpcConroe.org

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Mailing Address:

2257 N Loop 336 W
Suite 140, # 349, Conroe, TX 77304