

First Presbyterian Church

December 15, 2024

Welcome



Sermon: “*Keep Advent Weird*”

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Third 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

Sabrina Sowden

Today's Flowers

There is no flower dedication today.

Last Week's Attendance, December 8

8:30 a.m. Worship Service - 12

11:00 a.m. Worship Service - 126

Online Worship Attendance - 20

Total Attendance – 158

8:30 A.M. WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

Preparing to Receive God's Word

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

We gather because we are waiting.

We are waiting for the coming of Christ.

With hopefully anticipation we prepare for Christ's coming.

We prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace.

With heart, soul, mind, and voice, let us worship God.

Christ is coming to make all things new.

*Hymn #36

In the Bleak Midwinter

1. In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone:
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter,
Long ago.

3. Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But His mother only,
In her maiden bliss,
Worshiped the beloved
With a kiss.

*Please stand if able.

4. What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him:
Give my heart.

*Call to Confession

*Silent Prayer of Confession

*Assurance of Pardon

Christ comes to us this Advent, not to judge and condemn, but to forgive and save.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

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

*Gloria Patri

Moment for Stewardship

The Word

Scripture Readings

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Matthew 3:1-6

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Keep Advent Weird”
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 #38

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

1. 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.

4. 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.

*Charge and Benediction

*Postlude

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11:00 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE

Preparing to Receive God's Word

Opening Music

Welcome and Announcements

Introit *Star of Wonder*
FPC Handbell Choir

Lighting of Advent Wreath Candles *Lynn & Mike Wisda*

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, Peace, and Joy candles)

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

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

God of power and glory, we confess we have not been the people you hope us to be. The very ones you favor and lift up, we too often ignore and ridicule. The ones you knock off their pedestals, we admire and emulate. We are so focused on having more and more that we risk being sent away empty.

Forgive us, O God, for the times when we have been happy to hear the gospel without truly living it. Forgive us for uncaring attitudes when we base our opinion of another person's worth on what they own, or how they look; on what they say, or how they live, rather than accepting them for who they are—people made in your image. Forgive us for our selfish desires that do not serve your purposes. Forgive us for misplacing our hope in anything other than the Christ-child born in a stable. Heal us, restore us, forgive us, bless us. This **we pray in Jesus' name.**

*Please stand if able.

*Silent Prayer of Confession

*Assurance of Pardon

Christ comes to us this Advent, not to judge and condemn, but to forgive and save.

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

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

*Gloria Patri

Moment for Stewardship

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

*Doxology

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

*Choral Response

The Word

Children's Christmas Pageant (hymns displayed on slides)

O Little Town of Bethlehem #44 (verse 1)

Away in a Manger # 25 (all 3 verses)

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing #31 (verse 1)

We Three Kings #66 (verses 1, 2, 3, & 5)

Joy to the World! #40 (verses 1 & 4)

Scripture Readings

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Matthew 3:1-6

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

“Keep Advent Weird”

Rev. Seth Saathoff

Responding to the Word

Prayers of the People

*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

Notes

This Week's Scripture Readings

Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ **On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:** “Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸ **as on a day of festival.” I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.**

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

Matthew 3:1-6

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”** ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.



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.

REMINDER! For those of you who are considering donating stock to the church or making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from your IRA to the church for the calendar year 2024, this memo is to remind you that the transaction must be completed by 12/31/2024 if you want the contribution to be a tax deduction for 2024. However, please try to complete transactions **before the last week in December to avoid a last minute “glitch” that may keep you** from being eligible for a 2024 tax deduction. Yvonne Rose has paperwork in the church office that facilitates the stock donation process so please feel to contact Yvonne if you wish to donate stock.

Also, for those who intend to pre-pay their pledge for 2025 in the calendar year 2024, please note that this should be completed before the last week in December as mentioned above.

Yours in Christ,
Administration Committee

Lunch and a Movie December 21 - Sign Up Now

Whether finishing up your last-minute Christmas shopping, or just taking a break from the holidays, FPC will provide lunch and a movie from 12:00-2:00 p.m. on December 21. We'll provide lunch (hot dog & chips), or kids can bring their own. We'll have "The Grinch" (2018) playing on the big screen. Space is limited, so sign up early. You can register your kids or sign up to volunteer at <https://vbspro.events/p/fpcdropandshop>.

Revamping our Fellowship Sunday School Class

After more than 35 years of teaching our Fellowship Class, Cara Wood has retired from teaching Sunday School here at FPC. While we will miss her and appreciate her many years of service, we are looking forward to revitalizing and revamping the Fellowship Sunday School Class. As we enter into the New Year, **we'll be looking for new ideas for the upcoming studies. On January 5th and 12th we'll explore several possible curriculum options. Please join us in Room 204 to help decide our path.** This is a great opportunity to get plugged in and help lead and participate in our Sunday morning classes. Please contact Glenn Elms at geatelms80@consolodated.net or Dena Sowden at dsowden@fpcconroe.org.

Sunday Greeters Needed

FPC Conroe is a warm welcoming church due to friendly faces meeting and greeting members and visitors each Sunday. As such, we are in need of MORE greeters, so we are asking Sunday school classes to provide 2+ greeters one Sunday a month. The schedule is as follows:

1st Sunday – Seekers Bible Study

3rd Sunday – Bereans Class

2nd Sunday – Fellowship Class

4th Sunday – Exploring Our Faith

If you do not attend a Sunday school class, but would like to volunteer, please contact Judy Weinburger at (713) 202-8458, or by email at garyjudyweinburger@gmail.com. Thanks to everyone who has volunteered to welcome all people to our church. May the Lord be with each of you.

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.

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.



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), Brooke J., 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 15</i></p>	<p>8:30 a.m. Worship with Communion (Sanctuary) 9:30 a.m. Bereans Sunday School Class with Bob Shepherd (Rm. 105) Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Class (Rm. 204) Max Lucado study series "What Happens Next - A Traveler's Guide Through the End of This Age." 9:30 a.m. Exploring Our Faith with Susan Buckley (Rm. 206) 9:30 a.m. Seekers' Bible Study with Randy Blanton (Library) Study of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians 9:30 a.m. FPC Kid's Sunday School (Rm. 203) 10:30 a.m. Fellowship (Narthex) 10:40 a.m. Praise band (Sanctuary) 11:00 a.m. Worship Service (Sanctuary and Facebook Live www.com/fpcConroe or YouTube.com/fpcConroe) 12:30 p.m. Session Meeting 5:00-7:00 p.m. The Spark (Gym)</p>
<p><i>Monday</i> <i>December 16</i></p>	<p>1:30 p.m. Monday Bible Study (Parlor)</p>
<p><i>Wednesday</i> <i>December 18</i></p>	<p>9:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Mission Sewing (Rm. 105)</p>

December Scheduling Changes

On December 24th, FPC will hold one service, which will be held at 7:00 p.m., in the Sanctuary. We hope to see you all there.

On December 29th, there will not be an 8:30 a.m. service, so that we can come together for Lessons & Carols at 11:00 a.m.

Saturday December 21	12:00-2:00 p.m. Lunch and a Movie (Getaway or stay & play) (FLC)
Sunday December 22	<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 (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. Youth Progressive Dinner</p>

Save the Date

December 18 Lifeline Screening Event at FPC

December 21 Lunch and a Movie

December 22 Youth Progressive Dinner

December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service

December 25-26 Christmas Observance (Church office closed)

December 29 Lessons and Carols Service at 11:00 a.m.

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

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Church Office (936) 756-8884 Fax (936) 756-8842

Website: www.fpcConroe.org

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