

December 15, 2019

# First Presbyterian Church

The Third Sunday of Advent



## Following Jesus, Transforming Life

### *Mission Statement:*

First Presbyterian Church of Arlington is transforming life by glorifying God, following Jesus, and loving our neighbor.

Ask an usher for a large print bulletin, Bible, or hearing enhancement device.

Prayer cards, visitor information cards, and offering envelopes can be found in the pews. Please place them in the offering plate.

Preaching: Rev. Rich McDermott

Liturgist: Rev. Chris Campbell

Organist: Cheryl Harris

8:30 Lay Leader: David Peden

11:00 Lay Leader: Matt Annen

# *The Worship of God*

8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

The poinsettias of given to the glory of God.

**Words in bold are spoken by the congregation.**

§ Invites all who are able to stand.

Please silence all phones and devices.

## **Gathering**

Preparation for Worship

*Stir up your power, O God, and come to set us free by the righteousness of your birth in our midst, by the light of your face shining upon us, and by becoming our brother, our friend, our salvation.*

*We pray this in the name of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.*

Prelude

Savior of the Nations, Come

Dieterich Buxtehude

Lighting the Advent Candles

(8:30) Christine Apperson and Mitzie Duke Brown

(11:00) The Gifford Family

This Advent, we call out to God.

**Mighty God, creator of the world, break through all that keeps us from you.**

**We ask for your mercy to reform us in your image. Shine on us, O God of justice.**

**Come to us, O Christ the Light. Amen.**

Call to Worship

Out of little Bethlehem comes one who is to rule in Israel.

**He shall be great to the ends of the earth.**

Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior.

**God's mercy extends from generation to generation. Holy is God's name!**

Let us worship God.

§ Hymn 106

Prepare the Way, O Zion

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

§ Prayer of Confession (silently, then said together)

**God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we know your story,**

**we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world.**

**We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled.**

**Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend.**

**Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you,**

**turn our apathy into acts of love and service.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.**

§ Assurance of Pardon

Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel! **In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

§ The Gloria Patri

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

§ Passing the Peace

Greet those around you with, **"The peace of Christ be with you."**

Community Joys and Events

(11:00) The Order for Confirmation and the Sacrament of Baptism

Alexis Asoh, Ryan Farnell, Lesiga Formusoh, Beckett Smith, Lydia Terwilliger

Also to be baptized: Erin Ken and Evan Ngochi

**Proclaiming**

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:5-20

New Testament page 56

Children’s Time (11:00)

Children (age 3 to fourth grade) are invited to go to Kids For Christ (KFC) in room 216.

Anthem (11:00)

Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain

Carolyn Jennings

*Climb to the top of the highest mountain, Joyous tidings proclaim to the world,  
Lift up your voice, Shout the good news: Behold, your Lord comes to you.  
He will feed his flock like a shepherd, He will carry the lambs in his arms,  
He will ever keep them safe from harm. Behold, your Lord comes to you.*

*He who made the stars in the heaven, He who fashioned the earth and the sea,  
From time eternal, He was Alpha and Omega, He will come in pow’r, He will rule with truth,  
Hope of all the nations, Light of all. He will love the little children,  
He will hold them in his arms. Love him and trust him as a child,  
Behold, your Lord comes to you. Trust him as a child.*

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:21-25, 57-66

New Testament page 56

The Sermon

The Characters of Christmas: Elizabeth and Zechariah

Rev. McDermott

**Responding**

Pastoral Prayer and 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 Offering of Our Tithes, Gifts, and Lives

Offertory (8:30)

Praise to Thee, Jesus Christ

Johann Sebastian Bach

(11:00)

Songs of Praise

African Praise Choir

*March on unto to victory the Lord has conquered, March on to victory, we are more than conquerors.*

*We are walking in the light of God who is on the Lord’s side, I want to know*

*I am on the Lord’s side. I am on the Lord’s side and the Lord on my side. So long as I live, I am on the Lord.*

§ The Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**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.**

### *Sending*

§ Hymn 88

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel  
Stanzas 1, 4, 5

VENI EMMANUEL

§ Charge and Benediction

the congregation joins hands

Postlude

The Nativity of the Lord

Olivier Messiaen



### *Comments for Contemplation*

#### The Characters of Christmas: Elizabeth and Zechariah

Luke 1:5–25, 57–66

1. Madeleine L'Engle says this: "Those who believe they believe in God but without passion in the heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, and even at times without despair, believe only in the idea of God, and not in God himself." Those are profound and powerful words. Questions and doubts that make us seek for truth and search for \_\_\_\_\_ can be very good.
2. There are, of course, other kinds of doubt that are not healthy. When we doubt everyone around us, unless we are in some sort of hostile captivity, then we may have a problem. When our doubts begin to overwhelm us, leading us to unbelief and even chronic despair, then we may have lost our bearings and our perspective. When we doubt what we know is a clear word from the Lord, then we are shutting ourselves off from the blessing of \_\_\_\_\_ to that word.
3. For Christians, Advent is a time of preparation and repentance, a time when we can focus on our faith in Christ and allow the Lord to help us change and grow in new ways. Of course with the busyness and commercialism of the season, that is not always an easy thing to do. But I would challenge us all to find and space and a new rhythm for prayer, for worship, for service to others and for a personal \_\_\_\_\_, like a visit or a call, with someone who could really use it. That can make Christmas truly meaningful, and will make a difference in our world.
4. Zechariah and Elizabeth were getting on in years, and they had no children because Elizabeth was barren. The assumption in that day was that if you were barren you were doing something wrong, or you were being punished. For years they had prayed to the Lord for children and now that prayer was a distant memory. We can assume that they had moved on to seek out what God had for them in other areas of their lives, but they were deeply disappointed at not being able to have children. You can bet that they had questions and \_\_\_\_\_.
5. This child whose name is to be John, which means "God is gracious," will be a forerunner of the Lord like the prophet Elijah. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, but it will be to make ready a people \_\_\_\_\_ for the Lord. If Zechariah would have just said "thank you," or "praise God!" he would have been fine. But he asks (and this is my guess as to how he said it) "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years."

## ***This week @ FPCA***

Sunday 12/15

8:30 a.m.                      Worship in Chapel  
9:45 a.m.                      Sunday School  
11:00 a.m.                     Worship in Sanctuary  
12:00 p.m.                    Confirmation Reception  
1:00 p.m.                      Tailgate Party  
2:00 p.m.                      PCGRC

Monday 12/16

1:30 p.m.                      **Annual Reports Due**  
   FPCA Book Club

Tuesday 12/17

9:00 a.m.                      Senior Flexibility Class  
10:00 a.m.                     Ladies Bible Study  
6:30 p.m.                      HOPE Tutoring

Wednesday 12/18

8:00 a.m.                      Men's Bible Study  
10:00 a.m.                     Quilting Group  
6:00 p.m.                      Ring of Praise Handbells  
7:30 p.m.                      Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday 12/19

6:30 p.m.                      HOPE Tutoring  
7:00 p.m.                      Session Meeting

Friday 12/20

9:00 a.m.                      **Preschool Christmas Holiday**  
   Senior Flexibility Class

Information for the December 29 bulletin should be turned in to Kim at the church office by this Monday.

## ***Prayer Ministry***

***Prayers for those with health and other concerns:***

Apana Agha, Elaine Bahn, Jack Bos, James (Andrew) Bridges, Vannah Caylor, Frank and Allena Coburn, Edna Collins, Lee Carol Copeland, Marge Dawson, Michael Deardorff, The Farnell Family, Don Farrell, The Gifford Family, Joe and Lila Glenn, Andrew Hydock, Bob Johnson, Tim Karnes (Pat May's son), Gary Lindley, Pat May, Barbara Mooers, Betsy Pense, Nita Price, Jim L. Quick, Jillian Reynolds, Joan and Homer Reynolds, Donna Vickers, Nancy Welborne, Karl Winter

***Prayers for family serving in the armed forces:***

Ben Boughton, Riley Curnutt, Austin Curran, James Dailey, Eric Dill, Jeff Grimes, Nathan Haerer, Damien King, Mike Mancini, Amie Murtha, Stephen O'Neil Sosa, Colin Peden, Jason Polk, Ryan Powell, Ryan Regalado, Peyton Steeno, Christopher Young, Robbie Wallace

***Prayers for our home-bound members:***

Esther Albright, Suzette Armstrong, Polly Baugh, Shirley Bragg, Renabel Clutz, Bobbie and Tom Fowler, Jack Gray, Marge Harrand, Barbara Hughes, Barbara Kraemer, Jeanne Malone, Allen and Charlene Miller, Cary and Ruth Moore, Carrie and Cosme Pacot, Ann Pitstick, Al Smithson, Betty and Jack Snowden, Lorraine Swanson, Brooks and Connie Taylor, Dee Uhri, Richard Whitenight, Mary Jane Wright.

***Prayers for those who do not know Christ***

If you have any congregational care needs, please contact Pastor Rich McDermott at 817-274-8286.

## **FPCA's Two Special Offerings in December**

Our church supports two special offerings during the month of December. One is the Christmas Joy Offering which goes directly to Presbytery. The other goes to Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services (PCHAS). Offering envelopes can be found outside the sanctuary or chapel or designate on your check which offering you are supporting. A Presbyterian tradition for almost seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering is designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to provide congregations a direct way of supporting specific causes that help those in need. The receipts from the Joy Offering are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to the National Ministries of the General Assembly Council to support Presbyterian racial ethnic education. To read a brief account of how one family benefited from the Christmas Joy Offering, visit: <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/story/arms-church-around-us/>. Our church continually supports PCHAS but especially at Christmas. During FPCA's Christmas Eve services, the offerings that aren't designated otherwise will benefit PCHAS. To find out more about PCHAS, visit: <http://www.pchas.org>. You could also speak to Marge and Bob Dawson, PCHAS Ambassadors and volunteers, about this very worthy organization which supports many children and families in a variety of ways throughout Texas.

Submitted by Sheri Quick and Bob Dawson Mission and Evangelism Team

## Confirmation Sunday

Today is Confirmation Sunday. There will be a Reception following the 11:00 a.m. service in the Parlor.

## Tailgate Party

It's tailgate time after church today! Following the reception for the confirmation class, we will bust out the burgers, dogs, and bbq! We will turn on the early football games in the Fellowship Hall, and await the afternoon game featuring your Cowboys versus the Rams. All are invited and please bring some chips, sides, or desserts. Also if you have games like cornhole, please bring those so we can do this right! It is on church premises so this will be an alcohol free event. We look forward to a fun day. Feel free to invite a friend, preferable a Cowboy fan!

## Estimate of Giving Cards

Thanks to all of you who have turned in your Estimate of Giving card for 2020! We are so grateful for your commitment to Jesus' mission and ministry at FPCA! **If you have not turned in your Estimate of Giving card, please do so as soon as possible!** We need to wrap up our Will You Grow? generosity campaign for our annual giving. Cards can be located in the Narthex, or in the hall outside the chapel, or in the church office, or you can fill one out online! Your name and your estimate of giving will help our WYG team out considerably! Thank you so much for helping us to complete our WYG campaign, and for committing yourself anew to the Lord and His mission at our church! May God bless you!

## Gifts of Hope returns!

FPCA will once again be offering Gifts of Hope for the 2019 Advent Season. Gifts of Hope is an alternative gift market that offers a creative and caring way to honor friends, family members, colleagues, etc. through donations to a wide range of outreach organizations. "Shoppers" choose an organization, donate the amount specified, and then receive a card to give as a gift to friends or family. This program not only supports outreach organizations, but also seeks to offer a less materialistic option for gift giving.

Gifts of Hope will be available for sale after both worship services between Sunday, December 1st and Sunday, December 15th and are also available for sale in the church office during the week. If you have any questions or are available to help with the program (by selling Gifts of Hope before/after worship services, etc.), please email Suzie McCoy at [smccoybelize@gmail.com](mailto:smccoybelize@gmail.com) or contact the church office.

## A Little Christmas Eve Fellowship

Before you go home after Christmas Eve service, be sure to join the Hospitality Team for cookies, coffee, and cocoa! Come directly after service and outside the Sanctuary in the Red Hall. It won't last long, and we'd love to spread the cheer of Christmas that we know will soon be here!

## SAVE THE DATE

### New Year, New Beginnings

January 11 at 10:00 a.m. Parlor

The new year is around the corner, and a time most look forward to a fresh start by hitting the reset button. Please make plans to join with other women of FPCA as we explore how to begin the new year (and decade) right, through learning the discipline of dedicating daily time with Jesus Christ. More details to Come!  
Women's Ministry Team

## The Mitten Tree

Please help families during this Christmas season and during the cold winter months by bringing new warm gloves, hats, and scarves and hang them on the Mitten Tree! These will be given to Arlington Charities for children and adults in time for Christmas. The Mitten Tree is located by the choir room. Please stop by and make someone's Christmas happy...and WARM!

## The Dove Tree

The Dove tree is up outside the choir room in the Westminster hall. Each dove has a name of one of our home bound members. Please take a dove and make a visit to one of our senior members. A small gift, a visit, poinsettia, etc. will brighten their Christmas season and you will be blessed in return.

# Confirmation Sunday

December 15, 2019

## Our Confirmands



### **Alexis Asoh**

My name is Alexis Asoh I am 16 years old. My parents are Emmanuel and Germaine Asoh. I was born in Cameroon and I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri. My family and I recently moved to Texas. I go to Timberview High School.



### **Ryan Farnell**

Ryan David Farnell (age 12) was born and raised in Arlington, Texas. He attends Ditto Elementary as a 6th grader where he participates in choir, STEM club, and plays cello. His parents are Russell and Laura Farnell, and he has one sibling, Will Farnell.



### **Lesiga Formusoh**

Lesiga is 12 years old. She was born in Burleson, Texas and has lived here since. She is a seventh grader at St. Paul Preparatory Academy. Lesiga was baptized here at First Presbyterian Church by Pastor Rob McClelland.

She is one of two daughters born to Peter and Clara Formusoh. The entire family worships here at FPCA.



### **Beckett Smith**

Beckett is 13 years old. He is a student at Shackelford Junior High in the 8th grade. He was born in Fort Worth and has lived in Grand Prairie and Arlington. He was baptized at First Presbyterian of Amarillo when he was 3 months old in September 2006. He was a student here at First Presbyterian Preschool from age 2-5. Our family has 4 members, parents Brian and Melissa Smith and Beckett has one younger sister, Greenlea Smith. She was also a student here at FPPS and looks forward to the day she can attend the Confirmation class.



### **Lydia Terwilliger**

Lydia Terwilliger is in 8th grade at Newman International Academy. She has 3 brothers- Samuel, Jonathan and David. Her parents are Kyle and Diane Terwilliger. Her grandma also lives with the family. She loves animals, especially dogs.