

December 13, 2020

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.

Preaching: Rev. Rich McDermott

Liturgist: Rev. Chris Campbell

Organist: Shina Heo

The Worship of God

11:00 a.m.

The greenery is offered 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

God of all hope and joy, open our hearts in welcome, that your Son, Jesus Christ, at his coming may find in us a dwelling prepared for him, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

Lighting the Advent Candles

The Stephenson Family

Gathering Music

Shina Heo

Call to Worship

The Lord has done great things for us!

And we are filled with joy!

Our God has turned our weeping into singing,

Our tears into songs of joy!

O Christ, come anew in our hearts this day,

And remain in us forever.

Prayer of Confession (silently, then said together)

Merciful God, you love justice; why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form of evil?

You have given us the gift of your Spirit; why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us? You have given us the words of the prophets and the Word himself; why, then, do we despise and ignore what we have heard from you? You have sent the light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light?

Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

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

Anthem

Of the Father's Love Begotten
Cassandra Kirby, soprano

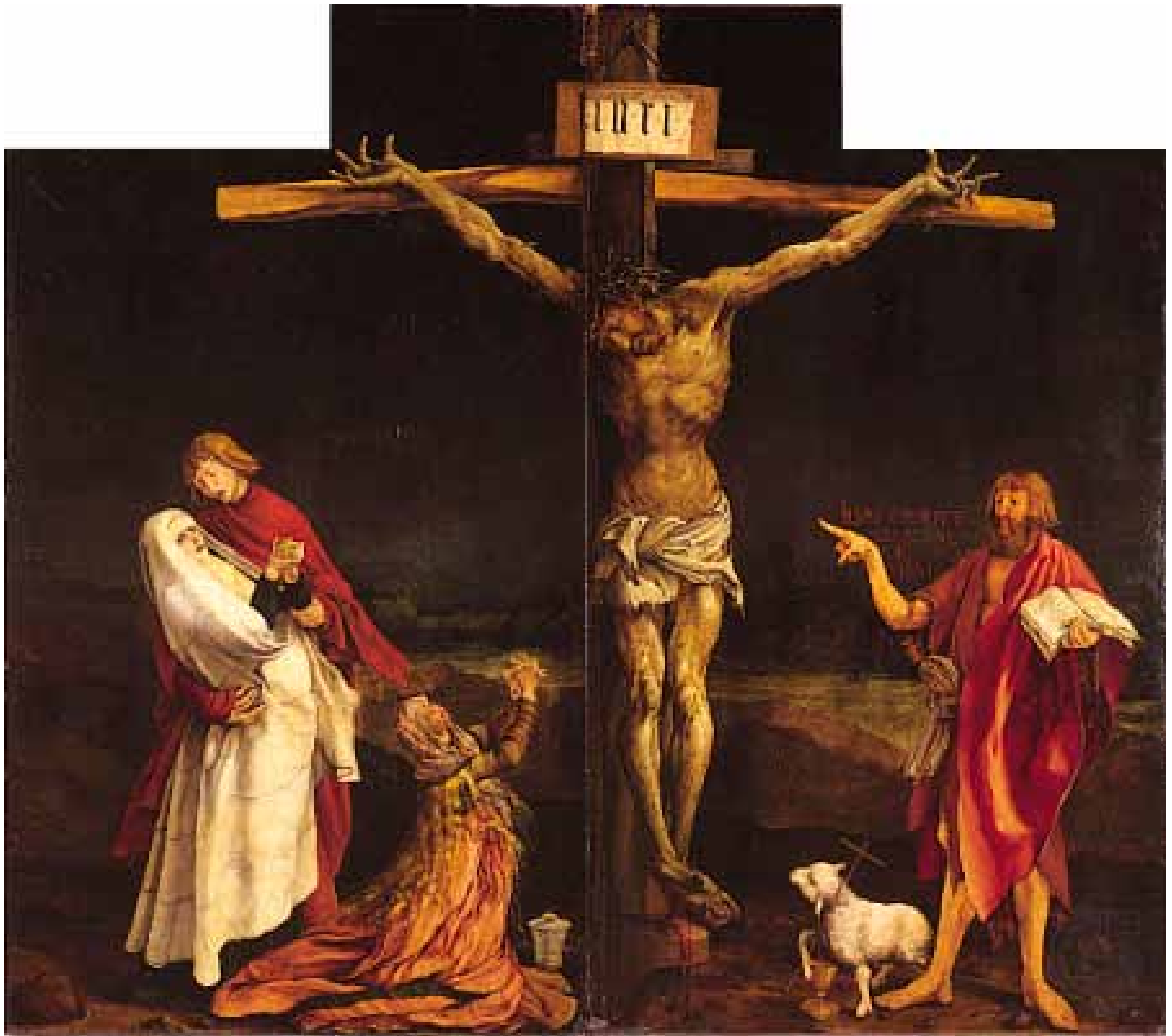
arr. Emily Crocker

Community Joys and Events

Sermon Notes

John - The Voice Crying in the Wilderness

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28



Christmas Poinsettias!

Today is the last day to order the Christmas Poinsettias!

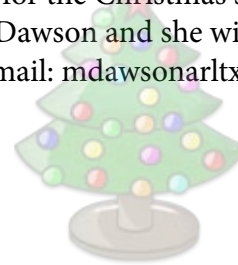
Please help us prepare our Sanctuary to celebrate the birth of our Savior by ordering a poinsettia. We will not be ordering as many as in previous years because of Covid. Order forms are in the Narthex, Chapel hall and church office. Please complete the form and place it in the offering plate, the baskets in the Chapel hall and Narthex, or mail/bring them to the church office. The cost is \$10.00 each. For your convenience, you can fill out the digital Poinsettia Order Form on the church website Give page at: <https://firstprestexas.org>.

The Mitten Tree 2020

FPCA will not be setting up the Mitten Tree for donations this year. We are not using the portion of the church that houses the tree, and we have a reduced number of members coming physically to the church services. Typically, warm clothing items such as mittens or gloves, socks, scarves, etc. are donated. If you would like to contribute this year, please donate directly to Mission Arlington. You can learn about what they need most, along with other information, on their website: missionarlington.org.

The Dove Tree 2020

If you are interested in “adopting “ one of our shut ins for the church for the Christmas season please call or text Marge Dawson and she will set you up with one or two. Email: mdawsonarltx@gmail.com or call 817-980-6825.



Offering

If you would like to give your tithes and offerings in person today, please use the envelope provided in the pews. You can drop the envelope off in the offering plate while departing the sanctuary when the service is completed. Please feel free to continue giving as you have during this time whether that is mailing checks or giving online. We are most thankful for your generous support!

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 are in the office, chapel hallway and the narthex or designate on your check which offering you are supporting. If you want envelopes mailed to you, please contact the church to make your request.

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 undesignated offerings will benefit PCHAS. To find out more about PCHAS, visit: <http://www.pchas.org>. You may 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.

Gifts of Hope 2020

FPCA will not be setting up tables for the Gifts of Hope donations this year. We have a reduced number of members coming physically to the church during Covid-19. Typically, members would give a donation for a non-traditional gift (for example, a duck or a chicken through World Vision) and would receive a card to give notifying the recipient that a donation was given to a non-profit organization on behalf of the individual. While we will not be standing in the hallway collecting funds for these gifts, members may go directly to the websites for these individual organizations and submit donations.

- World Vision (gift catalog) <https://donate.worldvision.org/giftcatalog>
- International Justice Mission (gift catalog) <https://gifts.ijm.org/>
- Voice of the Martyrs donate to provide Bibles: <https://www.persecution.com/bibles/>
- Voice of the Martyrs donate to provide Action Packs: <https://www.persecution.com/actionpacks/>
- Arlington Charities online donation: <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/WebLink.aspx?name=E254039&id=7>
- Presbyterian Children's Home and Services – participate in the FPCA Christmas Eve Offering via online giving, or sending a check to the church office.

Preschool Teachers Needed

We are currently looking for qualified teachers to fill part-time positions for our Infant, Toddler, and Pre-K classes. If you are passionate about working with children and want to provide them a safe environment that they may grow socially, emotionally, cognitively, and are given opportunities to learn about God's love, then First Presbyterian Preschool Arlington is just the place for you. We are accepting applications Monday through Friday from 7:30am -5:30pm. You may apply online at www.fppsarlington.com, call us at 817-274-4051, or simply stop by the office. We are looking forward to hearing from you. Sincerely, Preschool Staff

FPCA Newsletter

The Newsletter is available outside the Chapel and in the Narthex. The News continues to be in the church-wide email each month. The Newsletter is also on our church website. By using this digital method to send the Newsletter, the church is saving with both printing and mailing costs. If you prefer to have a copy mailed to you, please give the church office a call and let them know.

Important Hygiene Information to Remember

For now, in order to keep our church gatherings safe during the era of the coronavirus, remember, please:

1. If you are sick, stay home.
2. If your health is compromised, stay home.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water (20 seconds) regularly throughout the day, and especially before gathering.
4. Minimize touches to your face.
5. Wear a face covering and maintain social distance from those outside your family.
6. Use hand sanitizer if hand washing is unavailable.

At this point in time, we believe these are the appropriate measures to take, and we urge you to continue to come to worship and praise the Lord as one Body in Christ. We realize these may need to change in the future. Thank you for your understanding.