

December 20, 2020

# First Presbyterian Church

The Fourth 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: Betsy McDermott

Organist: Shina Heo

# *The Worship of God*

11:00 a.m.

The Poinsettias are 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

*Mighty God, your faithfulness is magnified in the coming of your Son, in the long-awaited birth of the promised Messiah. May we, like Mary, proclaim your greatness as we rejoice in our Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Lighting the Advent Candles

Judy Northup

Gathering Music

Shina Heo

Call to Worship

My soul magnifies the Lord.

**My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.**

For the Mighty One has done great things, and holy is God's name.

**Let us worship God.**

Prayer of Confession (silently, then said together)

**Faithful God, we know that you are always there to guide us, yet we often make plans without listening to you and discover that our human agendas can drown out our ability to hear your will for us. We repent of these faults and turn to you in love.**

**Forgive our offenses and pardon our sins, that our lives may magnify your holy name forever. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

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

Anthem

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus  
Dolly Hall, alto

arr. Shina Heo

Community Joys and Events



## *Comments for Contemplation*

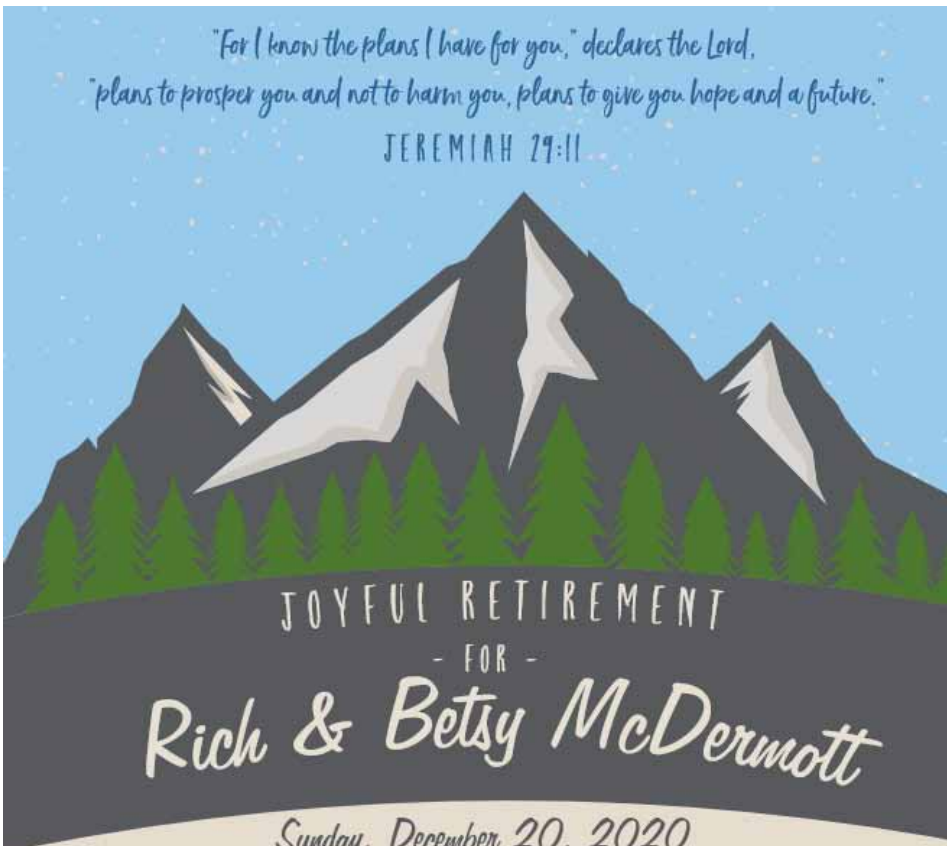
### Perfect Faith

Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–38

1. Many Christians simply try to keep their faith in a place where it doesn't get too intrusive in their lives. They limit their commitment to Christ, and as a result, they also limit what they can hear and receive from God. They are not prepared and not in the right \_\_\_\_\_ to receive all that God has for them.
2. I hear the Lord speaking to me through Scripture, I hear the Lord speaking to me through prayer by the Holy Spirit, I hear the Lord speaking to me through other people and especially other Christians, I hear the Lord speaking to me through experience and \_\_\_\_\_ and then in other ways where I have no experience and in ways many people think is unreasonable.
3. Mary, the mother of Jesus was a person, who by her faith, changed the course of history. It is fair to say that if Mary had not responded in faith to Gabriel's message, we would not be here today, and the one-third of the world that claims to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ would be dramatically different. But, by the grace of God, Mary did respond in faith and offers us the ultimate example of faith. In fact, Mary is a \_\_\_\_\_ example of how we are to receive God's love.
4. Of course, at this point, I believe Mary had a choice. She could have rejected the news as terrible, and protested this call to her from the Lord. Like Zechariah in the story before this, she could have shown no faith and \_\_\_\_\_. She was young, unmarried, poor, had a plan for the future that this would foul up, and had to figure out a way to tell Joseph to whom she was engaged.
5. "The system of values and social worth whereby the proud, mighty, and rich are apart and above, and do not recognize kinship with people below is utterly rejected.... Mary, who is elevated, remains humble. Her elevation did not create a barrier between her and others so that they became her servants. She, who is honored above all women, did not become \_\_\_\_\_. She is known to the disciples and the early Christian believers as one who bore the Christ child but who remained humble." [Diogenes Allen] She not only understood the gospel, she lived it.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*


JEREMIAH 29:11




JOYFUL RETIREMENT  
- FOR -  
*Rich & Betsy McDermott*

*Sunday, December 20, 2020*  
(AFTER CHURCH)

1200 South Collins Street | Arlington, Texas 76010



12:00 to 12:30  
Drive-by Parade Celebration  
Narthex Front Doors  
(Collins Street. We suggest you enter  
from the south parking lot, by Carter and  
drive North in front of the Church)



12:30 to 1:30 Outdoor Reception  
Narthex on the grassy knoll area  
(South Collins Side)

## 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](http://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](mailto:mdawsonarltx@gmail.com) or call 817-980-6825.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 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.

## 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](http://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