

2nd Sunday of Advent
Communion

December 4, 2022

10:30 a.m. Worship



The Annunciation, Henry Ossawa Tanner, 1896

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth

--from Isaiah 11:3-4

First Presbyterian Church

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MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: REV. DR. SANDRA R. TICE

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN SMITH

COMMISSIONED LOCAL PASTOR: DR. WENDY L. LAMB

PASTOR EMERITUS: REV. JAMES C. HUFFSTUTLER

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST; AMY GANO, BELLS

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being **livestreamed** and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available **from the ushers**.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice w/those who rejoice, weep w/those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are **welcome** in worship. Younger children may go to the Nursery at any time.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Sunday, January 1st.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Mindy Rueda

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

This is the irrational season.
When love blooms bright and wild.
Had Mary been filled with reason.
There'd have been no room for the child.

– Madeleine L'Engle, *The Irrational Season*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

INVITATION to ADVENT

(We will remain seated until the opening hymn.)

SUNG REFRAIN

✘ “Comfort, Comfort now my people,
tell of peace!” thus says our God!

SPOKEN WORD

SUNG REFRAIN

✘ “Comfort those who sit in darkness
mourning under sorrow’s load”

SPOKEN WORD

SUNG REFRAIN

✘ To my people now proclaim that my pardon waits for them
Tell them that their sins I cover and their warfare now is over.

LIGHTING of the ADVENT WREATH

The nations shall beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks;

✘ nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

* Stand if you are able ✘ The congregation will read.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
✘ **the calf and the lion and the fatling will lie down together,
and a little child shall lead them.**

Friends, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen?

✘ **Amen.**

***HYMN 105**

People, Look East
Verses 1-4

BESANÇON

TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. After the time with Children, our children are encouraged to remain with us in worship. There are children's bulletins and activity bags available.

Infants through pre-Kindergarten may go to the Nursery at any time.]

ANTHEM

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

M. Praetorius

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.
Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To shew God's love aright
She bore to us a Saviour,
When half-spent was the night.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 11:1-6

Old Testament, page 640

(The prophet Isaiah speaks of a day we long to see. This is a longer version of the text from which the candle liturgy for Advent week two is taken.)

Luke 1:26-38

New Testament, page 56

(Luke gives us the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she has been chosen to bear the Messiah.)

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✘ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Dr. Wendy Lamb

MUSIC for MEDITATION

W. Zeitler

Alchemical Transformation: 2. Albedo (Purification)

(Let the music open a sacred space for you to listen.)

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We invite you to respond to God's Word. We offer our gifts to be part of God's purposes in the world. You are invited to bring your offering up to

the basket during the offertory. You may also place it in a basket on your way out or send gifts through the mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

SACRAMENT of the LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION to the LORD'S TABLE

SURSUM CORDA

The Lord be with you.

✘ **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

✘ **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

✘ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

GREAT PRAYER of THANKSGIVING

SANCTUS

James C. Huffstutler

✘ **Holy, holy, Lord Almighty, God of power and might.**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Glory in the highest!

Blessed! Blessed! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and OUR 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.

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

WORDS of INSTITUTION

WE SHARE GOD'S GIFTS

(Communion will be served by intinction at two stations. As you feel ready, please come up the center aisle to a station, receive a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, eat it, and return to your seat by the side aisle. The cup is non-alcoholic. Gluten-free bread can be found at the station by the pulpit. There will be rovers to bring the elements to you if you do not wish to come forward.)

SUNG PRAYERS

As we go forward to partake in the bread and cup, and as we wait and pray before and after, we sing our prayers together. These refrains will be sung over and over as we make them our own prayers.

SUNG REFRAIN 95 *Prepare the Way of the Lord*¹ Jacques Berthier

✘ Prepare the way of the Lord.
Prepare the way of the Lord,
and all people will see
the salvation of our God.

SUNG REFRAIN 90 *Wait for the Lord*¹ Jacques Berthier

✘ Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord, be strong take heart!

PRAYER after COMMUNION

✘ Gracious and abundant God,
Even as we wait for the fulfillment of your creation,
You meet us in Christ at this table, in this meal.
We thank you for feeding us with the bread of life
and quenching our thirst with the cup of salvation.
Now send us out into the world with the wonder of your Holy
Spirit
to share your life and love with all whom we meet. Amen.

*HYMN 107 *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* Marty Haugen

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

(For this season of Advent, as we “ring the bells that still can ring” we will be using one of our Whitechapel bells as we reflect on where we have seen God this morning.)

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Advent Improvisation*

(For health reasons we are not greeting at the door)

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Pastor Sandy is away for the final week of her annual leave.
She will be back in church next Sunday.

GREETERS: Tom & Donna Garza

USHERS: Margaret Doane, *Lead Usher*

Jim Siegmund, Mark Adelson, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEER: Dan Direen

VIDEO ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATOR: Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Judy Brewer, Jeannie & Larry Marona

Elders: Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney, Amy Smith

Deacons: Joanna Nord, Chris Wright-Thomas, Dan Direen

This Weeks' Celebrations

Dec 5	Bobbie Terrell Curtiss & Rebecca Allen
Dec 6	Bill McIntosh
Dec 7	Zienna Long
Dec 9	Maddie Ramirez

Yoga! We will be starting yoga classes again on Thursday, December 8. The classes, led by Cathleen Coombs, will be donation-based and will be for all levels. Join us in Room 10 at 5:15 p.m.

Alternative Christmas Market. Presbyterian Women will celebrate *Home for the Holidays* in Fellowship Hall on December 11 following Worship. We are highlighting three wonderful programs here at First Presbyterian San Bernardino: LIFE SKILLZ PROGRAM, FOOD MINISTRY, and INTERNSHIP PROGRAM. Stop by the tables on December 11 and talk with the adults and young people in these programs. We will provide thank you cards to share with your friends/family to show your support.

Symphonie Jeunesse Youth Orchestra for Strings invites you to attend their 2022 Holiday Concert, *Shining Brightly*, on **Sunday, December 11 at 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**. Admission is one non-perishable food item for the First Presbyterian Community Food Distribution Program.

Galleons' Christmas Gathering. The Christmas gathering will be held on **Sunday, December 11, at 5:00 p.m.**, at the home of Phil and Lynda Savage.

Photographer Needed. The Deacon's Food Ministry needs someone who can take pictures of the monthly Food Distribution on Saturday, December 17th from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. If you can take pictures and send them to Rick or Marilyn, let Rick know you are available.

We Are the Church Together! Thank You! As of November 29, we have received 54 pledges for a total of \$322,524. If you have not yet pledged, You can mail your pledge in, or drop it in the offering plate, or phone Laurie or Mimi at the church office, and we'll be happy to take your pledge over the phone.

More News and announcements are available in your Friday *Keeping in Touch* emails. If you are not receiving these, and you would like to, contact Mimi in the church office.

The Music Box

Last week we discussed the transformation of lead into gold in Medieval Alchemy, including the metaphorical transformation of the human heart from its default 'leaden' state into Enlightenment or Oneness with God. Commonly this was described as taking place in four steps. The first step is 'Nigredo' — darkness. One thing about seasons of darkness, especially our personal trips to the 'underworld' in times of loss and grief, is that they sharply clarify to us what's important and what's not so much. So this second phase, 'Albedo', is about letting go of the 'dross', the 'chaff' we identified in the first phase.

It's not that these things are necessarily bad in themselves: maybe there's 'stuff' that doesn't serve you anymore and it's time to take it to the thrift store. Maybe it's habits or practices that made sense in a former time in your life, but not so much anymore. Maybe it's resentment or anger you've been holding, that only hurts YOU and not the object of your anger — maybe it's OK to finally let that go. Albedo is about leaving behind that which no longer serves us.

There's plenty of 'leaving behind' in the Christmas story. Mary and Joseph leave their home town to go to Bethlehem, and then to Egypt (no small trip by donkey!), and then to Nazareth. As someone who has moved a lot, every time you move you let go of more things that aren't absolutely essential because that makes the move easier. After Mary and Joseph moved three times, how many possessions do you think were left in those donkey saddle bags? Not many! ("Three moves equals a fire!" —Benjamin Franklin)

The Magi too left behind their comfy Magi offices and traveled afar on camel back — not much fits in those camel saddle bags either. The shepherds leave their sheep. The angels leave heaven to sing to the shepherds. And most of all, Jesus leaves behind His heavenly throne and all that went with that to become a helpless baby to poor parents in a backwater of nowhere.

And who in the story refuses to even consider letting go of anything? Herod! He's so fearful of even the remote possibility of a threat to his throne in some distant future, that he slaughters a whole generation of innocent infants. Herod hangs on to "what's mine" with a literal death grip. Of course Herod ended up losing his throne anyway — as all rulers ultimately do — by dying. In Herod's case he died of a long, excruciatingly painful putrefying illness of uncertain cause, known to posterity as "Herod's Evil".

The thing is, letting go is woven into Life whether we like it or not. As we age we leave behind the things of youth — we leave behind the boundless energy of youth, for example, but hopefully that's offset by gaining wisdom (the hard way!) with time. Our circumstances change — always things gained and lost in the many seasons of Life. "You can't step into the same river twice" said Heraclitus 2500 years ago. Things evolve, WE evolve. We can fight that process — guess who wins anyway? Or we can embrace change and gain and loss as milestones on our Life Journey.

We can let these changes and gains and losses just happen to us. Or we can be proactive, embrace the process, and do the work of Albedo: embracing the new in our lives, and leaving behind, letting go that which no longer serves.

--William Zeitler

*Ring the Bells that still can ring, Forget your 'perfect' offering
There is a crack in everything, That's how the light gets in.
- Leonard Cohen "Anthem"*

*"This is the irrational season
when love blooms bright and wild
Had Mary been filled with reason,
there would be no room for the child."*

- Madeleine L'Engle

The world has changed and we have changed. The pandemic frayed relationships and changed churches profoundly. Political division and rancor are evident on our devices and in print and in our families. Weather events and climate migration cause disruption. Violence in places we had thought of as safe has changed us. We have been through some harrowing times- we are weary and long for peace.

Advent invites us to welcome the Light, to prepare for God's presence in unexpected places, and to celebrate- to ring the bells that still can ring.

The 'bells' that still can ring are:

- **The stories** we know, that may sound different, but still have good news in them.
- **The songs** that speak of a world we long for and dream of, not yet arrived in its entirety
- **Offerings** that bring something good into the world for God's sake
- **Candles** that make visible the truth that a light shines in the darkness and that it is a living thing- not the electrical grid- a precarious flame- but full of hope
- That the experience of **the Presence**, of Incarnate Love, can still surprise us.
- That **gathering for worship** can strengthen us for service and widen our hearts-

So this season, in spite of whatever grief or apprehension we may carry, we will gather week after week to ring the bells that still can ring. We acknowledge our longing, and celebrate that it is IN this darkness that the Light shines- and the darkness will never overcome it.