

Jeremiah 33:14-16
1 Peter 1:3-9
Romans 8:18-25
Illuminating Advent: Advent Hope




November 29, 2020
1st Sunday of Advent
First Presbyterian Church

1315 Central Avenue
Great Falls, Montana 59401
(406) 453-1411

Sunday Worship – 10:00 a.m.

www.firstpresgfmt.org

secretary@firstpresgfmt.org

 firstpresgfmt

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Jesus, may all who gather here feel welcome.

May we bless one another with your love as we worship in your presence.

We begin a new church year today with the first Sunday of Advent. We watch for Jesus' advent, or coming, among us: his return on the last day, and his presence with us now. **Welcome.** With voices full of excitement, attitudes full of enthusiasm, and spirits full of joy let us actively give our worship to God.

Last week, from Matthew 25, we were assured that Jesus will come again and that there will be a final judgment. How did Jesus appear in need in your life last week? When asked by Jesus, did you meet that need?

Be sure to check-in through **Social Media** or text message to let your family members, friends and followers know you are here to praise God. And like us on Facebook.

Please use the time before worship begins to prepare yourself for your **offering of worship** to God. Feel free to listen to music; read and meditate on the Scripture reading for today; or silently meditate on God's grace, emptying your mind of all distractions.

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* Please stand as able

*We are the Body of Christ
Joyfully Worshiping God
Compassionately Caring for One Another
Humbly Serving God
Continually Growing Together in God's Word
And Actively Sharing the Good News of Christ*

May our worship be pleasing to God!

GATHERING BEFORE GOD

Prelude

Oh Little Town of Bethlehem (Variations), Lewis Henry Redner,
arr. Johnny Ritchie

Welcome

Lighting the Advent Candles

He Came Down

*He came down that we might have hope,
He came down that we might have hope,
He came down that we might have hope.
Hallelujah forever more.*

*Hymn of Praise #734

Hope of the World

*Call to Confession (Leader **People**)

see Romans 8:14-15

Sisters and brothers,

all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

**We did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,
but we have received a spirit of adoption.**

Let us then confess our sin

with the freedom of children who know how deeply they are loved.

*Prayer of Confession (**Unison**)

Wondrous God,

**you have broken the power of sin and death,
and by your great mercy,**

you have given us new birth into a living hope.

But we have allowed our hope to wither,

our faith to wander,

and our love to grow cold.

Seeds of doubt grow quickly in our hearts.

Fear chokes off confidence

and prevents us from receiving your Spirit.

We promise to be instruments of your justice,

but we often walk by and ignore those who are abused in life.

We promise to live in your righteousness,

yet we continue to look on others as “not good enough.”

We promise to share the word of your salvation with others,

but when the time comes our mouths remain closed.

**O God,
have mercy on us.
We are not ready for your coming.**

**Forgive us,
in the name of Jesus,
the righteous branch of David,
and draw us close to you,
that we may breathe deeply of your presence
and find in you the fullness of hope...**

(Silent Personal Prayers for Forgiveness)

***Assurance of Forgiveness (Leader People)**

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,
God says unequivocally, irrevocably:
you are my own;
you are forgiven;
and I need you to be about my business in the world.

***Praising God for God's Forgiveness #82**

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (v 2)

HEARING THE GOOD NEWS

Message in Music

O Come, O Come Emmanuel, arr. Johnny Ritchie

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture & Message

Jeremiah 33:14-16

1 Peter 1:3-9

Romans 8:18-25

Illuminating Advent: Advent Hope

RESPONDING TO THE GOOD NEWS

*Affirmation of Faith (Unison)

The Confession of 1967, 9.32

The life, death, resurrection, and promised coming of Jesus Christ has set the pattern for the church's mission. His human life involves the church in the common life of all people. His service to men and women commits the church to work for every form of human well-being. His suffering makes the church sensitive to all human suffering so that it sees the face of Christ in the faces of persons in every kind of need. His crucifixion discloses to the church God's judgment on the inhumanity that marks human relations, and the awful consequences of the church's own complicity in injustice. In the power of the risen Christ and the hope of his coming, the church sees the promise of God's renewal of human life in society and of God's victory over all wrong.

*Hymn of Response #772

Live into Hope

Offering

Lord of All Hopefulness

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13, KJV, Traditional)

**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.

SENDING FOR SERVICE

*Sending Hymn #765

May the God of Hope

***Charge (Leader People)**

We are the Body of Christ;

**Joyfully worshiping God,
compassionately caring for one another,
humbly serving others,
continually growing together in God's Word,
and actively sharing the Good News of Christ.**

***Blessing**

***Postlude**

Angels We Have Heard on High, French Carol, Arr. Johnny Ritchie

May our service be pleasing to God!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tithes and Offerings may be mailed to the church office or made online through our website.

Our times of worship are now **live-streamed** on our YouTube channel; search for "First Presbyterian Church Great Falls MT" on the YouTube website. Recordings of previous live-streams will remain on our YouTube channel. Links to upcoming live-streams can be found on our website and our Facebook page.

The praise band is currently looking to welcome a few **female vocalists** to the crew! If you are a female vocalist, love working with others, and are passionate/energetic about serving and leading through music then please contact Johnny Ritchie at praiseband@firstpresgfmt.org or call/text at 260-224-5790.

During this time of social distancing, the Mission Committee has an opportunity to touch hearts and bridge the gap of our necessary distancing. Matthew 25:40 states "...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Our annual "Angel Tree" is now "**Operation Santa**". We are once again partnering with Longfellow Elementary to provide gifts to a number of their students. This year, instead of shopping and donating gifts, the school has asked us for monetary donations. A group of Longfellow teachers will then do the shopping. Please prayerfully consider a generous donation for these kids. Donations may be made to the church and marked Longfellow School by December 4th. Our goal is \$2000! Thank you for your support!!

The praise band wants to learn and lead your **favorite worship song**. Genre of the song does not matter, they can be contemporary praise, hymns, spirituals, etc. Please submit your request to Johnny Ritchie at praiseband@firstpresgfmt.org or call/text at 260-224-5790.

“Illuminating Advent” meets every Sunday at 8:15 a.m. (and repeated each following Thursday at 10:00 a.m.). This study looks at Advent through the four themes that are often used in connection with Advent wreaths and candles in churches: hope, peace, joy, and love. These terms are rich with biblical and theological meanings for the church and also have personal meanings for the disciples of Christ Jesus. Study of the images surrounding these four themes can enrich our Advent celebrations. We will also spend a week looking at Christmas, when the Word made flesh lived among us. And a week looking at Epiphany, which celebrates the message that Christ Jesus is for the whole world. Participant books are available in the office and can be delivered or mailed as desired. Let John or the office know if you need the Zoom link sent to you, and videos of all sessions will be posted to our YouTube page.

If you are not receiving **emails**, including the Saturday morning “Church Update”, please send your current email address to the office, secretary@firstpresgfmt.org.

Presbyterian Women are collecting children or adult winter hats, mittens, glove, scarves and socks during the holidays to be given to the Rescue Mission. **Donations** may be dropped off in the lobby near the office at the church until December 20th where there will be a Christmas Tree they will be put under. Look for pictures during the scrolling announcements on Sunday morning to see the growing pile of gifts!

Souler Energy, our weekly Sunday Worship broadcast, can be viewed every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on KFBB TV Channel 5 (cable channel 9).

COMING WORSHIP THEMES

Next Sunday, December 6, 2020

2nd Sunday of Advent

Communion

Isaiah 9:1-7

John 14:25-31

Ephesians 2:11-22

Illuminating Advent: Advent Peace

December 13, 2020

3rd Sunday of Advent

Christmas Pageant

December 20, 2020

4th Sunday of Advent

Exodus 34:1-8

John 13:31-34

1 John 4:7-21

Illuminating Advent: Advent Love

December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

Communion

The Candle Creche

December 27, 2020

1st Sunday after Christmas

Marsha Anson will be preaching while

John is on vacation

MAY GOD BLESS THIS WEEK

All Events Live-Streamed or via Zoom Unless Noted

Today, Sunday, November 29	8:15 a.m.	Illuminating Advent Class
	10:00 a.m.	Worship (Limited seating in the Sanctuary)
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship Time
Tuesday, December 1	12:00 noon	Souler Energy Committee
Wednesday, December 2	7:00 a.m.	Men's Group
	6:00 p.m.	Midweek Ministry
Thursday, December 3	10:00 a.m.	Illuminating Advent Class
	5:00 p.m.	Worship Committee
Next Sunday, December 6	8:15 a.m.	Illuminating Advent Class
	10:00 a.m.	Worship (Limited seating in the Sanctuary)
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship Time

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

All Events Live-Streamed or via Zoom Unless Noted

Tuesday, December 8.....	Finance Committee, 4:00 p.m.
	Property Committee, 5:30 p.m.
Thursday, December 10.....	Spiritual Life Committee, 12:00 noon
Saturday, December 12.....	PW, 9:30 a.m.
Tuesday, December 15.....	Session, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, December 22.....	Board of Deacons, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, December 24.....	Christmas Eve Worship, 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 27-Wednesday, January 6.....	John is on Vacation

The Officers and Staff of First Presbyterian Church welcome you to this time of worship and invite you to join us in ministry!

Head of the Church

Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior

Session

John Ritchie (Moderator)

Ginger Blevins	Sara Buley	Mary Fagenstrom	Scott Royce
Alissa Brown	Rees Davies	Kathy Herman	Dean Schamp
Jan Brown	Dave Dobbs	Randy Houtz (Clerk)	

Deacons

Stuart Brown	Shirley Davis	Chris Pfof	Robb Sparks
Bruce Buer (Mod.)	Tom Hazen	Deb Skinner	Marla Wilckens
Kitty Cornwell	Dave Herman		

Staff

Rev. John E Ritchie, Pastor (906-322-9490)	Liza Nosich, Accounts Payable/Payroll
Alissa Brown, CE Director	Financial Secretary
Joan Schmidt, Ministry of Music	Butch Steele, Worship Video Coordinator
Craig Anton, Facilities Manager	Alex Rosenleaf, Choir Director
Keyna Myers, Office Manager	Kari Rosenleaf, Bell Choir Director
Faith Janes, Publications Secretary	Johnny Ritchie, Music Assistant & Praise Band Director

Growing Through Gratitude Thankfulness, studies show, has multiple physical, mental and emotional benefits. Psychologist Robert Emmons calls gratitude “fertilizer for the mind” because of its powerful effects. He admits gratitude isn’t always easy – especially when life throws us curveballs (see the year 2020) – but says it can be most helpful during and after difficulties. Emmons suggests reframing challenges using thankfulness-based language. Ask, for example: Though I wasn’t grateful for the experience at the time, how can I be now? What lessons did I learn, and how did I grow as a person? Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul reframes his extensive sufferings and urges us to do the same. “Give thanks in all circumstances,” he writes, “for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV)