

Christmas Cantata – God’s Gift of Love




December 20, 2020
4th 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

*God, we pray for all who are lonely in this season, or exhausted, or grieving.
Give them the courage of Mary as you fill them with the Holy Spirit.*

With Mary we sing: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” (Luke 1:46-47, NIV) Welcome to worship. With voices full of excitement, attitudes full of enthusiasm, and spirits full of joy let us actively give our worship to God.

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!

Prelude

Lo, How a Rose Is Blooming, Paul Manz (Op.17)

Welcome

Lighting the Advent Candles

He Came Down

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

*Hymn of Praise #104

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

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

God's love is announced in the promise of Christ.

God has done great things for us!

God's promises are fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

God's name is holy!

God's salvation is offered in the gift of Christ.

God's mercy extends from generation to generation.

Let us confess our sins to the one who lovingly promises and faithfully fulfills.

*Prayer of Confession (**Unison**)

O Lord God,

purify our thoughts;

they are never as pure as we would wish.

Cleanse our minds;

they are never as clean as you demand.

Open our hearts;

we need to make room for the coming of your Son.

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.**

**Forgive all about us that has stood in the way of fully welcoming Jesus as our
Lord and Savior.**

Forgive us in the name of the One who is coming again...

(Silent Personal Prayers for Forgiveness)

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

Believe the message spoken through the prophets of old
through the dreams and visions of the faithful.

**God grants us grace and peace through Jesus,
that we may know that God is with us.**

Because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus,
our sins are forgiven!

Blessed be the God of our salvation!

*Praising God for God's Forgiveness #82

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus (v 2)

Offering

Zu Bethlehem Geboren, Helmut Walcha

Prayers of the People and *The Lord's Prayer*

Tune: *Away in a Manger*

*Our Father in heaven
All praise to your name!
Your kingdom among us,
Your will done the same
By mortals and angels.
Come, Lord reign alone;
Oh, hear us and bless us
From heaven's high throne.*

*The Bread that we yearn for
Provide us each day;
As we forgive others,
Our sins take away;
In times of temptation,
Oh help us, be near.
From evil deliver
Your children most dear.*

*For yours is the kingdom,
O'er all things you reign.
And yours is the power;
All things you maintain.
To you be the glory,
Resounding again
From all of creation,
Forever! Amen*

Christmas Cantata
Love Reaches Out

God's Gift of Love

I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In, Traditional English Song
Love Has Come #110
A Hallelujah Christmas, Leonard Cohen

Love Came Down

Mary, Did You Know, Greene/Lowry
Jesu Bambino, Pietro A. Yon

Love for Us

Candlelight Carol, John Rutter

The Way of Love

Silent Night, Holy Night #122
Silent Night, Holy Night, Arr. James Kimball

*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

* Blessing Response

May the God of Hope

May the God of love go with us every day
Filling all our lives with joy and hope and peace
May the God of justice speed us on our way
Bringing light and joy to every land and race

Praying let us work for love
Singing share our love with all
Working for a world that's new
Faithful when we hear Christ's call

May our service be pleasing to God!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

As the session continues to discuss the budget for 2021, be on the lookout for the 2021 **Stewardship Brochure and Pledge Card** coming soon!

Our times of worship are **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 in the weekly Saturday morning email.

While we welcome those who wish to join us for worship in the **sanctuary** on Sunday mornings, please be reminded of the precautions the session has put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic: seating in the sanctuary is limited as we honor the 6 feet of social distancing; everyone’s temperature will be checked upon entering the building; masks are required while in the building; pew supplies have been removed; singing is prohibited; bulletins will be available after worship when exiting the building; prolonged socializing in the building is discouraged; gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer are readily available.

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.

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.

THANK YOU ALL! Your generosity to Operation Santa for Longfellow School was truly overwhelming! While our goal was to raise \$2,000, your gifts exceeded \$2,300! Because of your loving hearts and gifts, many Longfellow families will have Christmas gifts this year. Thank you for making this possible. The Mission Committee

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

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).

Our **Christmas Eve Worship** celebration will be this coming Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Our time of worship will be live-streamed on YouTube; and there will be a limited number of seats available in the sanctuary. (Please note: masks must be worn and singing is prohibited.) We will be celebrating communion, so if you will be joining us at home be sure to have something ready for the bread and juice.

“**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.

The session has called a **congregational meeting** to elect officers on Sunday, January 10, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. The nominating committee will nominate the following:

Elder Class of 2021

Sharon Lindstrom

Gary McFerrin

Elder Class of 2023

Jane Snowberger

Jennie Yates.

Deacon Class of 2021

Shirley Davis

Deacon Class of 2023

Dave Herman

Barb Flaherty

COMING WORSHIP THEMES

December 24, 2020

Christmas Eve

Communion

The Candle Creche

Next Sunday, December 27, 2020

1st Sunday after Christmas

Marsha Anson will be preaching while

John is on vacation

January 3, 2021

2nd Sunday after Christmas

Alissa Brown will be preaching while John is on study leave

January 10, 2021

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

January 17, 2021

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

MAY GOD BLESS THIS WEEK

All Events Live-Streamed or via Zoom Unless Noted

Today, Sunday, December 20	8:15 a.m.	Illuminating Advent Class
	10:00 a.m.	Worship (Limited seating in the Sanctuary)
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship Time
	11:30 a.m.	Children & Youth Ministries Committee
Tuesday, December 22	6:30 p.m.	Board of Deacons
Thursday, December 24		The Office is Closed
	10:00 a.m.	Illuminating Advent Class
	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship with Communion
Friday, December 25		The Office is Closed.
Next Sunday, December 27		John is on Vacation & Study Leave through Wednesday, January 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

Friday, January 1	The Office is Closed
Sunday, January 3	Sailboat Church embarks
Tuesday, January 5.....	Souler Energy Committee, 12:00 noon
Thursday, January 7	Worship Committee, 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 9.....	PW, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, January 10	Called Congregational Meeting to Elect Officers, 11:30 a.m.
Tuesday, January 12.....	Finance Committee, 4:00 p.m.
	Property Committee, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, January 13	River Readers, 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, January 14	Spiritual Life Committee, 12:00 noon

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

A Fresh Look Just when everything is bearing down on us to such an extent that we can scarcely withstand it, the Christmas message comes to tell us that all our ideas are wrong, and that what we take to be evil and dark is really good and light because it comes from God. Our eyes are at fault, that is all. God is in the manger, wealth in poverty, light in darkness, succor in abandonment. No evil can befall us; whatever men may do to us, they cannot but serve the God who is secretly revealed as love and rules the world and our lives.

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is in the Manger*