

Micah 5:2-5a
The Coming Peace



*Fourth Sunday
of Advent*

December 19, 2021



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 firstpresgfmt

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

Come, Lord Jesus!

Be with all who are weary of waiting not only for Christmas but for your final coming.

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church on this fourth Sunday of Advent. In worship, Christian education, fellowship and service, we continue to look toward the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 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.

All **music** copied, projected, and live streamed with permission, CCLI #2716126, OneLicense A-722348, CSPL 104723.

All **scripture** passages quoted or referred to are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), unless noted.

If you are comfortable standing, please do so when you see an asterisk "***". There are **hearing enhancement** devices and **large print** bulletins available from the ushers. Please join us after worship for **fellowship** downstairs in the Social Hall.

*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*

May our worship be pleasing to God!

GATHERING BEFORE GOD

Prelude *Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her (From Heaven Above to Earth I Come)*

I. *Allegretto cantabile*

II. *Scherzando*

III. *Pastorale, Ernst Pepping*

Time of Silence

Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Candle (Leader **People**)

Song #137

He Came Down

*He came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
he came down that we may have joy;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*He came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
hallelujah forevermore.*

*Song of Praise #121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

***Our Confession and God's Forgiveness (Leader People)**

In the world,
and in this season,
there are many claims on our lives.

**We take this time to remember
that in our baptism,
Jesus claimed us as his own.**

We acknowledge before God
and one another
that we have not followed Jesus
with all our heart
and mind
and strength.

**Trusting in God's grace,
we confess...**

**All Giving God,
we come before you
in need of your wisdom and grace.**

You call us to follow in the path of your love.

**Forgive us, O God,
when we choose
the easy way,
the selfish way,
the fast way,
the successful way,
the nice way,
the friendly way,
and the comfortable way.**

**In your mercy,
forgive us.**

**Grant us wisdom
to welcome your way,
and to seek things that will endure
when Jesus comes again...**

(Silent Personal Prayers of Confession)

The coming of Jesus is certain.

God's promise is true.

Trust in the transformational power of God's forgiveness
and receive the gift of God's love.

**In Jesus, Immanuel – God with us,
we are forgiven!**

Thanks be to God.

HEARING THE GOOD NEWS

Message in Music

He Shall Feed His Flock, G.F. Handel

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture & Message

Micah 5:2-5a
The Coming Peace

RESPONDING TO THE GOOD NEWS

*Affirmation of Faith (**Unison**)

The Confession of 1967, 9.20, adapted

God the Holy Spirit fulfills the work of reconciliation in us, the people of God. The Holy Spirit creates and renews the Church as the community in which people are reconciled to God and to one another. God enables us to receive forgiveness as we forgive one another and to enjoy the peace of God as we make peace among ourselves. In spite of our sin, God gives us power to become representatives of Jesus and his gospel of reconciliation to all people.

*Hymn of Response #753

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

Giving of God's Tithes and Our Offerings

Offertory

Still, Still, Still, Arr. Matthew Weston

Prayer of Dedication (Leader **People**)

You deliver us, O God,
from exile,
separation,
and despair
into communion with each other,
with you,
and with your good news.

We thank you

**for all that draws us close together,
astounding us with lives transformed by gratitude.**

Accept our gifts as signs of our gratitude
for what you give us every day
and as honor to your presence in our world;

**for the sake of those who stand in need
and Christ Jesus,
who saves us.**

Amen.

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

(tune: *Away in a Manger*)

SENDING FOR SERVICE

*Sending Song #119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

*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 *Vom Himmel hoch, da kom ich her (From Heaven Above to Earth I Come)*
J.S. Bach

May our service be pleasing to God!

SPECIAL NOTES ABOUT TODAY'S WORSHIP

Advent is the first season of the Liturgical, or Christian, Year. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. Our word "advent" comes from the Latin *adventus* which means "coming": Christ has come, Christ is coming, and Christ will come. The season of Advent is about Jesus, the Word, "coming." It's about anticipating and preparing for Jesus' arrival. God comes to us in many and various ways. God speaks to us through the prophets and saints. God comes and speaks to us when we are listening. God comes in the beauty and mysteries of nature. Most of all, God comes in the person of Jesus, speaking to his listeners face to face. The color of Advent is purple (or blue) signifying the royalty of the one who comes and our penitence at his coming.

The Prophet Micah "Micah" is a shortened form of the name "Micaiah" meaning "who is like the Lord?" As with most of the Minor Prophets, we know very little about Micah. He lived in Judah during the reigns of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah from 743 to 687 BC. He was from the town of Moresheth, probably also known as Moresheth Gath, located in southern Judah. "Micah" is a common biblical and extrabiblical name. Search of the name "Micah" in the Bible and you will find several Micahs mentioned in the Old Testament, mostly in list of names. From his prophetic sayings we know Micah believed strongly in the ancestral line of David as God's holy line of rulers and in the city of Jerusalem as God's holy place on earth.

The Book of Micah Micah was not a happy camper. For him life circumstances are grim: as a nation Judah is in extreme distress with Jerusalem under siege; for the people, there is little, if any, hope. Micah's message stressed judgment upon the people because of their social injustice, especially by those in positions of power and authority. For Micah, the judgment of God is appropriate and unavoidable. But Micah does see hope. As is found many times in the Bible, Micah sees beyond the current circumstances to what God promises to do. The seven chapters of the book of Micah can be divided in the following way: Chapters 1-3 are mainly prophecies of doom and condemnation, prophesying how God's punishment will fit the people's crime; Chapters 4-5 are where we find the visions of a hopeful future in which God will rescue the people of God from exile; Chapters 6-7 are where we find God's message of restoration. The book has been dated as early as around 700 BC and as late as pre-586 BC. There are two passages from Micah that most Christians are familiar with: The first is Micah 5:2-5 words we often hear during Advent, Christmas and Epiphany; the second is Micah 6:6-8. Look them up!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Gift of the Nutcracker *The Nutcracker* was first performed in 1892 and quickly became a holiday tradition, one that continues for many families to this day. In *The Gift of the Nutcracker*, Matt Rawle takes a look at this Christmas classic in a new way – through the lens of faith. Rawle uses the iconic tale to help us understand God’s greatest gift of the Christ child and of the kingdom Christ came to build. Much like Clara, we are all caught in an Advent season, pondering a most extraordinary gift. Join us throughout Advent on Sundays at 8:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m., or on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Books are still available.

On Wednesday, December 29th at 6:00 p.m. we will gather for dinner and to watch a performance of *The Nutcracker*.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matthew 5:4) Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year; except when it’s not. During the holidays, for many of us, the magnitude of our weary world weighs on our hearts and minds. Our grief and sorrow feel stark against the backdrop of festivity and joy that everyone else seems to be feeling. Many can suffer for all kinds of reasons, whether it be chronic pain, broken relationships, shattered dreams, fragile faith, illness, disease, or unexpected loss. Grief and sorrow feel particularly sharp when compared to the festivity and joy everyone else seems to be feeling. For some, Christmas is not merry, Christmas is blue. Yes, blue as in the blues. As in “I am feeling blue.” This afternoon from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. we’ll offer comfort to those who are feeling blue this Christmas season with our **Blue Christmas Reflections and Worship**. From 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. there will be self-guided reflection stations in the social hall for those feeling blue to experience the hope that comes with waiting for Jesus to appear. From 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. we will join together in the sanctuary for worship, looking for comfort that can only come from God, in our time of mourning.

Reading a book by yourself is pleasant. Reading a book and talking about it with others who have also read it is a pleasure. **River Readers** will start 2022 by reading and discussing “Sensible Shoes” by Sharon Garlough Brown. The novel tells the story of four strangers who come together on a journey of discovery. On review says, “...this is not simply a novel. It is a spiritual experience.” Join us January 12th at 10:00 a.m. in the library.

The next Beth Moore Bible study will be **Wising Up**. This is a 4 parts series with 3 sessions in each part. The first 3-session part will be Monday, January 10th – Monday, January 24th at 6:30 p.m. in the Ross Library, and by Zoom. If you would like more information, please contact Alissa or call the church office.

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

Our times of worship are **live streamed** on our YouTube channel and Facebook page. Search for “First Presbyterian Church Great Falls MT” on either site. Recordings of previous live streams will remain on both sites. Direct links to upcoming live streams can be found on our website and in the weekly Saturday morning email. If for some reason, the live stream fails, we will establish a new stream connection. Return to our YouTube channel home page, or Facebook page, to find the new link.

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).

Prayer Partners Prayer requests may be made by calling Jane Snowberger (761-0518) or Marla Wilckens (452-0226).

Upper Room, Bulletins, Sermon Manuscripts If you would like any of these mailed to you on a weekly basis, please let the office know.

Pictorial Directory We are organizing an inhouse production of an updated pictorial directory. To help us, please send us an individual picture of everyone in your household, as well as a group picture. If you prefer, we can arrange for someone to take the pictures at the church, or in your home. If it is convenient for you, today there will be an opportunity to have pictures taken after worship.

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

Remember: articles for the PRESS, or eblast, are to be e-mailed directly to Faith at publications@firstpresgfmt.org. If you use her personal email address, or the office email of secretary@firstpresgfmt.org, there is no guarantee they will be noticed for inclusion in a timely manner.

All **church meetings**, classes, and events (including worship) held at the church are hybrid events, which means you can attend in person, or online through either YouTube or Zoom, depending on the event. Please respect the comfort and safety level of others, including honoring social distancing and potentially wearing a mask. Also, if you are not feeling well, please stay home and join us online (either on YouTube or Zoom). The normal Zoom meeting ID is 491 101 0646 and the passcode is 406884 or type the following into your web browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4911010646?pwd=azRJamU5dFRFdTdXU3R5Um1UZ09wZz09>

Financial Update:	November	December to Date	Year to Date
Income	\$40,148.99	\$34,786.51	\$429,664.71
Expenses	<u>\$44,075.95</u>	<u>\$41,799.27</u>	<u>\$489,107.35</u>
Difference	(\$3,926.96)	(\$7,012.76)	(\$59,442.64)

WOW (Worship on Wednesday) has programs for children, youth, young adults, and adults. Our hope is to attract community members as well as congregation members. Childcare will be available for all under 3. Dinner is served at 6:00 p.m., with programs/classes to follow. Invite a neighbor and join us!

When the frost is on the pumpkin, it's time to start leafing through that cookbook collection – or the internet – for the stews, breads, soups, casseroles and cookies that seem to taste best in autumn. The new **church cookbook**, Feeding the Flock, is now available. It was put together by Presbyterian Women from recipes shared by the congregation. The book is available in the church office and soon, during Fellowship Time. Price is \$15 for one or two for \$27. As an added bonus, if you purchase the books during Fellowship Time, you may receive a vintage First Presbyterian collectible at no additional cost, as long as supplies last.

COMING WORSHIP THEMES

December 19, 2021 – 3:00 p.m.

Blue Christmas Reflections and Worship

December 24, 2021

Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion

The Candle Creche

Advent Candles: Kerri and Jan Nelson

December 26, 2021

1st Sunday of Christmas

Colossians 3:12-17

New Clothes for Christmas

January 2, 2022

2nd Sunday of Christmas

January 9, 2022

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

Mark 1:1–11

Biblical Practices for Faithful Living:

Baptize – Remember Your Baptism

Communion

January 16, 2022

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Exodus 14:10–31

1 Peter 2:10

Biblical Practices for Faithful Living:

Baptize – Cross the Divide

MAY GOD BLESS THIS WEEK

Unless noted, all events are hybrid (in person and live-streamed or via Zoom)

Today, Sunday, December 19	8:15 a.m.	The Gift of the Nutcracker Class
	10:00 a.m.	Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Fellowship Time
	11:30 a.m.	The Gift of the Nutcracker Class
	3:00 p.m.	Blue Christmas Reflections & Worship
Tuesday, December 21	9:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
Wednesday, December 22	6:00 p.m.	WOW (Worship on Wednesday) for all ages
Thursday, December 23	12:00 noon	Spiritual Life Committee
	6:30 p.m.	The Gift of the Nutcracker Class (Zoom only)
Friday, December 24		Office is Closed
	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Worship
Next Sunday, December 26	10:00 a.m.	Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Fellowship Time

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

Unless noted, all events are hybrid (in person and live-streamed or via Zoom)

Monday, December 27	.....	Office Closed
Wednesday, December 29	.....	Movie Night – The Nutcracker, 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, January 2	.....	John is on Study Leave
Monday, January 3	.....	Office Closed
Tuesday, January 4	.....	Souler Energy Committee, 12:00 noon Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, January 6	.....	Worship Committee, 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 8	.....	Presbyterian Women, 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, January 9	.....	Children & Youth Ministries Committee, 11:30 a.m.
Monday, January 10	.....	Beth Moore’s Rising Up Class Begins, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, January 11	.....	Finance Committee, 4:00 p.m. Property Committee, 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, January 12	.....	River Readers, 10:00 a.m.
Monday, January 17	.....	Office Closed

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
Alissa Brown
Mary Fagenstrom

Randy Houtz (Clerk)
Sharon Lindstrom
Gary McFerrin

Scott Royce
Jane Snowberger
Jennie Yates

Deacons

Bruce Buer (Mod.)
Shirley Davis

Barb Flaherty
Tom Hazen

Dave Herman
Chris Pfof

Deb Skinner
Marla Wilckens

Staff

Rev. John E Ritchie, Pastor (906-322-9490)

Alissa Brown, CE Director

Joan Schmidt, Ministry of Music

Craig Anton, Facilities Manager

Keyna Myers, Office Manager

Faith Janes, Publications Secretary

Liza Nosich, Accounts Payable/Payroll

Financial Secretary

Butch Steele, Worship Video Coordinator

Alex Rosenleaf, Choir Director

Kari Rosenleaf, Bell Choir Director

Johnny Ritchie, Music Assistant & Praise
Band Director

Remember to Reach Out For many people, the holidays bring sorrow, grief, and stress. If you're hurting, turn to Jesus and his power. Learn from the woman who, desperate to be healed, reached out to touch the edge of Jesus' robe and was immediately cured. Sometimes we think our healing process will be so exhaustive that we hesitate to take the first step. Or we doubt that Jesus still performs miracles. Amid your pain, have you reached out? Have you dared to touch Jesus' robe? He is there, waiting to say: "Your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." (Mark 5:34, New International Version)

—Julie Lee



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Prayer Requests for the Week of December 19, 2021

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. (Psalm 25:1)

This week's staff/officer:	Alex Rosenleaf, Choir Director
This week's elder:	Ginger Blevins
This week's deacon:	Bruce Buer
This week's ministry:	Stewardship Committee
This week's mission support:	Presbytery of Glacier
This week's home bound/care center:	Buz & Mary Sibert
This week's families	Aidyn Campbell Colton Carter James Carter

Other prayer requests:

Judy	Christofer Brown	Rashad
The Family of Betty Reiquam	Darrell Schamp	Cary
Thelma	Deloras	Rita & Family
Gibson Flats Fire	Carla Moran	The Family of Shevy McMahan
Denton Fire	Health Care Workers	Dan Hinch & Family
Storms in the Mid-west	Sara	Those suffering trials in silence
Kevin		

If an update on prayer requests has not been received after three weeks, the request will be removed from this list. Please call the church to update the prayer list.

Notes from Worship – December 19, 2021

Micah 5:2-5a

The Coming Peace