

The Service for the Lord's Day

The Third Sunday of Advent

December 16, 2018

11:00 a.m.

“A friend is one to whom one may pour out the contents of one's heart, chaff and grain together, knowing that gentle hands will take and sift it, keep what is worth keeping, and with a breath of kindness, blow the rest away.”

—George Eliot



The **FIRST**
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
in PHILADELPHIA

est. 1698

WELCOME TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Grace and peace to you as we gather for worship! Here in this place, the seasons of our lives are marked: the children of God of every age are baptized, marriages are celebrated, and when one grieves, the whole body grieves together. We are a family of faith.

And just as Christ Jesus has welcomed each person to this church for over three hundred years, we extend our word of welcome in his name. Christ loves all, calls all, and welcomes all, and so members and guests alike enter to worship with the same profound welcome.

This congregation is steeped in history – three members of the church signed the Declaration of Independence. We are a part of the history of this city from its earliest days. But make no mistake about it: this is a living, breathing congregation seeking in real and tangible ways to make the grace of God known to our very modern world.

We would love to know you, and for you to know us. Please stay after the service and join in our fellowship time together where we enjoy refreshments, and most importantly, share our lives together. And if in getting to know us, you feel God is calling you to join together with us in living God's grace in this place, it would be our joy for you to become a part of this community.

Baron Mullis, Pastor

IF YOU ARE NEW HERE

Please fill out the pew pads in the black folders. You will find more information about our church on the Visitor's Information Display in the Narthex and in Old Buttonwood Hall.

There are several ways to become involved at First Church, both in the church and in the community. We are committed to the city of Philadelphia and support a number of mission programs and agencies working in this community. To learn more or to get involved, contact missions@fpcphila.org and check the announcements for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Childcare is provided each Sunday morning for babies and toddlers from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on the lower level of the building, reached by the stairs inside the 21st Street entrance.

Large print bulletins are available in the narthex.

Parking is available for worship services on the west side of 21st Street from Chestnut to Locust Streets and on the north side of Locust from 20th to 23rd. Ushers will provide a placard to display on your vehicle dashboard. Parking is also available at SP+ Parking, located at 2107 Sansom Street (next to Day by Day Restaurant). See ushers to validate your parking receipt for a reduced rate.

BE SOCIAL!

Social Media users—Check in at First Church and like our Facebook Page (facebook.com/FirstPresPhilly). Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @firstpresphilly, and join our hashtag campaign #firstchurchlove.

Visit our website to learn more, and subscribe to our email list: www.fpcphila.org

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

J. S. Bach

CANTICLE

Besançon Carol

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled. Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen. People, look east and sing today: Love the bird is on the way.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Tory Worthen and Carolyn Crego

*HYMN (*insert*)

Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers

Haf trones lampa färdig

*SENTENCES

Emily Roan

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7

*PRAYER OF ADORATION



WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Baron Mullis

* * *

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy and Eternal God, there are times when it is tempting to lapse into a faith that demands nothing of us. Christ has freed us from our sins, and so we continue with life as though nothing needs to change. But you, O LORD, call us to a life filled with hope, peace, joy and love. To settle for less is to ignore what Christ died to provide us. So, forgive us, we pray, for those times when we settle for less from ourselves than you would give us. Forgive us, and instill in us the desire to live up to our baptism, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray and continue our prayers...

**Those who are able may stand.*

KYRIE

Andrew Senn

Organ *mp*
Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.
mf
Christ, have mer - cy up - on us. Lord, have mer - cy up - on us.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The organ part begins with a rest, followed by a series of quarter notes: Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. The vocal part enters with the lyrics 'Lord, have mercy upon us.' The organ part continues with a series of quarter notes: Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. The vocal part continues with the lyrics 'Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.'

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Brothers and sisters, believe the good news.
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

ANTHEM

Lift Up Your Heads

John Amner

Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? It is the Lord strong and mighty. Ev'n the Lord of Hosts. He is the King of Glory.

* * *

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Shine in our hearts the pur-est light of your e - ter - nal word; o -
pen our eyes to com-pre-hend the mes-sage of our Lord. A - men.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The melody consists of quarter notes: D, E, F#, G, A, B, C, D. The lyrics are 'Shine in our hearts the pur-est light of your e - ter - nal word; o - pen our eyes to com-pre-hend the mes-sage of our Lord. A - men.'

OLD TESTAMENT

Zephaniah 3:14-20

(p. 862)

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 12:2-6

(p. 628)

GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18

(p. 59)

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***GLORIA PATRI**

Picardy

Glory be to God the Father, glory be to God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit, ever three and ever one.
As it was in the beginning, now and evermore shall be. Amen.

SERMON

The Way of God in a Wheat and Chaff World

Dr. Mullis

His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Luke 3:17-18

***HYMN 13**

Prepare the Way

Bereden väg för Herran

***APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

OFFERTORY

Hark! The Glad Sound

Andrew Senn

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long; let every heart prepare a throne, and every voice a song. On Him the Spirit, largely poured, exerts His sacred fire; wisdom and might, and zeal and love, His holy breast inspire. He comes the prisoners to release, in Satan's bondage held; the gates of brass before Him burst, the iron fetters yield. He comes, from thickest films of vice to clear the mental ray, and on the eyes oppressed with night to pour celestial day. He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure; and with the treasures of His grace to enrich the humble poor. His silver trumpets publish loud the jub'lee of the Lord, our debts are all remitted now our heritage restored. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim; and Heav'n's eternal arches ring with Thy belovèd Name. (Philip Doddridge, December 28, 1735.)

*PRESENTATION & DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

THE 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.

*HYMN 8

Lift Up Your Heads

Truro

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Improvisation

* * *

SUNDAYS @ FIRST

CELEBRATION!

Celebration! is a worship service that engages Christians of all ages through singing, interactive Bible lessons for children, prayer, preaching, and the Lord's Supper. Join us in Old Buttonwood Hall at 9 a.m.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A Sunday School class for young children and their families is held at 10 a.m. in the Cochran Room. Contact Sarah Weisiger (sarah.weisiger@fpcphila.org) for more information.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Each Sunday immediately following 11 o'clock worship our Deacons lead a brief period of intercessory prayer in Dr. Mullis's office. To request prayers, fill out one of the prayer requests and place it in the offering plate or join the Deacons for the prayer time after worship.

The liturgist today is the Elder Emily Roan. The Greeters are Kay and Marvin Keenze, and the ushers are Bill Swoope (Captain), Andrea Bowman, Judy Callan, Jennifer Gay, and Jack Melvin.

The Chancel flowers are given to the Glory of God and to the family of First Church by Bill Swoope.

MEETINGS THIS WEEK

Tuesday, December 18	Wise Retirees	9:30 a.m.
Thursday, December 20	Session	6:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DEDICATIONS

Today is the final day to submit donations and dedications for Christmas decorations; complete the form for dedications on the bulletin insert. The list of dedications will be published next Sunday. Contact Anita McLarin (anita.mclarin@fpcphila.org) for information.

GROUP SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN ADVENT

On Sundays in Advent the Rev. Barbara Chaapel is leading an experience of group spiritual direction from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. in the Whitefield Room. If you have questions, contact Barbara Chaapel (barbara.chaapel@fpcphila.org).

CHEER! A CHRISTMAS POPS CONCERT

Come celebrate the season **today** at 2 p.m. for a concert by First Church choir member Calli Graver and friends.

A SERVICE OF LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Advent and Christmas are not always seasons of joy for everyone. For many who mourn, who are anxious, afraid, or who feel alone, this can be a very difficult time. **This evening** at 6 p.m., First Church is offering a service of quiet meditation and reflection to bring light into the darkness. All are invited.

FPCQ CHRISTMAS PARTY

fpcQ, the LGBTQ+ fellowship group of First Church will hold its annual Christmas Party at the home of Larry Slagle & Mete Egeman in Fairmount tomorrow, December 17th, at 7 p.m. For more information and to RSVP, contact Larry Slagle (fpcq@fpcphila.org).

RIVERSIDE CHRISTMAS PARTY

All are invited to join First Church in bringing holiday cheer to the residents of Riverside Presbyterian Apartments (23rd & Race Streets) on Wednesday, December 19th, at 7 p.m. Volunteers are needed for entertainment and to provide food. Please contact Jordana Woodford (jordana.woodford@fpcphila.org) or the church office (office@fpcphila.org).

TWENTIES & THIRTIES GROUP

This Wednesday, December 19th, there will be no T&T gathering, as we will be attending the Riverside Christmas Party. For more information on the Twenties & Thirties (T&T) Group, contact Annie LeCluyse (youngadults@fpcphila.org), and join the Young Adult fellowship group on Facebook.

LESSONS & CAROLS

A festival of Lessons & Carols for Advent and Christmas will be held next Sunday, December 23rd, at 4 p.m. (A prelude begins at 3:40 p.m.) A reception will follow in Old Buttonwood Hall. Please plan to join us, and invite friends!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

On Monday, December 24th, we will celebrate the birth of the Christchild with services at 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

MOVING FIRST FORWARD - GROWING IN GRATITUDE

Pledge update (as of December 11): we have received 105 pledges for a total of \$382,842 for 2019 Annual Giving. This compares with 108 pledges for \$385,000 for 2018 as of 12/12/17. Thank you to all who have pledged! If you have not yet submitted your pledge for 2019, there's still time! Please complete a pledge card, available in the pews or in the church office. You can also pledge online at www.fpcphila.org/make-a-pledge.

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA

201 South 21st Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-567-0532
www.fpcphila.org

The Reverend Dr. Baron A. Mullis, *Pastor and Head of Staff*

The Reverend Megan LeCluyse, *Celebration Team Leader*

Mr. Andrew Senn, *Director of Music and Organist*

Ms. Suzanne Riemann, *Church Administrator*

The Reverend Jerry K. Foote, *Minister for Congregational Care*

The Reverend Sarah Weisiger, *Minister for Membership and Faith Formation*

Mrs. Patti Sassoli, *Director of Communications*

Ms. Annie LeCluyse, *Young Adult Leader*

The Reverend Barbara A. Chaapel

The Reverend Kenneth J. Ross

The Reverend Herbert D. Valentine

Parish Associates