

ADVENT 3C
December 15, 2024



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
PERRY, FL

GATHERING

P -PASTOR, L- LITURGIST, **BOLD -ALL**

PRAYER (PRAYED SILENTLY UPON ENTERING THE SANCTUARY) We pray: Merciful God, you come into our midst longing for communion with us, becoming one of us. Break our resistance to life with you, show us the path toward just relations, and bring us into your unimaginable peace, in Jesus' name. Amen.

PRELUDE "*Lo, How a Rose E'Er Blooming*" Geistliche Kirchengesang
Arr. by Fred Bock

INTROIT "*Wait for the Lord*" and "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

ANNOUNCEMENTS/PASSING OF FRIENDSHIP PADS/SESSION SHARING

We stand.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L Prepare the way of the Lord! **Let us sing praises to the Lord, for God has done glorious things.**
Let us shout aloud and sing for joy, for great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel. **Come, let us worship God.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, making all things new. **Amen.**

Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

(silence for reflection)

P Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.

Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

P A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

GLORIA PATRI

Glo-ry be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly

6 Ghost; As it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and ev-er

10 shall be, world with-out end. A - men, A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P We pray: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CANDLE-LIGHTING LITANY & HYMN

L God our life and our breath. **We await your coming as an expectant mother awaits her child's birth, and an expectant father longs to behold his child's face.**

(the candle is lit as we sing v. 5 & 6 of O Come, O Come Emmanuel)

5 O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

6 O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

L We pray: **Blessed Spirit, come to this place and make us increase and abound in love for one another by the reading of your word. Amen.**

We sit.

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3:14-20

- L ¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!
Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
 O daughter Jerusalem!
- ¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
 he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
 you shall fear disaster no more.
- ¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.
- ¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
 a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
 he will renew you in his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing
 ¹⁸ as on a day of festival.
- I will remove disaster from you,
 so that you will not bear reproach for it.
- ¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
 at that time.
And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
 and renown in all the earth.
- ²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
 at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
 among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
 before your eyes, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Isaiah 12:2-6

(we say responsively by whole verse)

L Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day: **Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known his deeds among the nations; proclaim that his name is exalted.**

Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. **Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.**

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

L 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

We stand.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:7-18

P The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke the 3rd chapter:
Glory to you, O Lord.

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” 11 In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” 13 He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” 14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 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.”

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

We sit.

SERMON

“The Next Right Thing”

Rev. Pr. J. David Bryant

We stand.

SERMON HYMN

To God be the Glory

GTG 634

1 To God be the glo - ry; great things he has done!
2 Great things he has taught us; great things he has done,

So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
and great our re - joic - ing through Je - sus the Son;

who yield - ed his life an a - tone - ment for sin,
but pur - er and high - er and great - er will be

and o - pened the life - gate that all may go in.
our won - der, our trans - port, when Je - sus we see.

THE NICENE CREED

L Let us profess the faith, saying: **We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the (†) resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

We sit or stand.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P In this season of watching and waiting, we pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

L *(brief silence)* For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of church of God, and for the unity of all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For clergy and for all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the world and its leaders. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all those in need, the suffering, the oppressed, travelers and job seekers, for those on our prayer list and for those we name before you now (*Pause*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For people trying to rebuild their lives after experiencing devastation, abuse, violence or the betrayal of trust, that they may know the intimate love of God, on whom they can rely. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those experiencing loss and tragedy amid the busyness of the coming Christmas season, that they receive the perfect gift of Christ's peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who rest in the peace of Christ, and for all the saints who have gone before us who dwell in your holy habitation. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

P Holy One, you have promised us that the day of our salvation is near. Keep us faithful in love and watchful in prayer, so that we may stand with confidence and joy at the coming of Christ, our redeemer and Lord. **Amen.**

We sit

STATEMENT ON ORDINATION

P We are called into the church of Jesus Christ by baptism and marked as Christ's own by the Holy Spirit. This is our common calling, to be disciples of Jesus Christ and servants of our servant Lord. Within the

community of the church, some are called to particular service as ruling elders. Ordination is Christ's gift to the church, assuring that Christ's ministry continues among us. Through ordination of ruling elders, God provides for acts of care and compassion in the world, for the ordering and governance of the church.

FOR RULING ELDERS BEING ORDAINED AND INSTALLED – Clerk of Session

CB Representing the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church, the session of First Presbyterian Church now ordains Jamie Poppel to the ordered ministry as ruling elder; and installs her to active service in this congregation.

FOR RULING ELDERS PREVIOUSLY ORDAINED AND NOW INSTALLED – Clerk of Session

CB Additionally, to active service the session installs those who have been previously ordained: Juanita Ratliff, Martha Davis, and Bobby Harper.

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO OFFICERS

P Jamie, Juanita, Martha and Bobby, do you trust in Jesus Christ your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? *I do.*

Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you? *I do.*

Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will

you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? *I do and I will.*

Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions? *I will.*

Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit? *I will.*

Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world? *I will.*

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church? *I do.*

Will you seek to serve all people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love? *I will.*

Will you be a faithful elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in councils of the church, and in your ministry will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ? *I will.*

CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS TO CONGREGATION – Clerk of Session

CB Do we, the members of God's church, accept Juanita Ratliff, Martha Davis, Bobby Harper, and Jamie as ruling elders, called by the Holy Spirit, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ? *We do.*

Do we agree to encourage them, to respect their discernments, to support their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ who alone is Head of the Church? *We do.*

PRAYER OF ORDINATION WITH LAYING ON OF HANDS

(all teaching and ruling elders may join)

P We pray: Eternal God, for your servants in every age, we give you thanks and praise. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon these ruling elders, whom you called by baptism as your own. Grant them the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. May they be faithful to your church, expressing the compassion of Christ for the poor, the friendless, the sick, the grieving, and the troubled.

God of grace, give them prudence and sound judgment, and courage to order the life of the church in obedience to your Word. Nourish them in the life of the Holy Spirit, that they may exercise the ministry of discipline with humility and compassion. Guide them in governance, on this session and in every council of the church, that they may be servant leaders following Christ who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life to set others free. Give them joy in their walk of faith and a sure sense of your abiding presence for their work of ministry. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord and Head of the Church.

Amen.

DECLARATION OF ORDINATION & INSTALLATION

Faithful leaders, those now newly ordained and those called to service again, you are ruling elders installed to the ordered ministries of service and governance in the church of Jesus Christ and for this congregation. Be faithful and true in your ministry so that your whole life will bear witness to the crucified and risen Christ.

CHARGE

Hear the words of the Apostle Paul: “Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Corinthians 16:14)

Jamie, Juanita, Martha and Bobby, you are now entrusted with positions of leadership and trust in this congregation. See that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church. Seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world. Be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified. Be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

Hear the words of Jesus, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)

PRESENTATION AND PEACE

Jamie, Juanita, Martha and Bobby, may Almighty God who has called you now empower you to fulfill the duties to which you have been called, directing your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

EUCCHARIST

We sit.

OFFERTORY

L Freely you have received, freely give. Let us return to God the offerings of our life and the gifts of the earth.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *“Like a Child, I Wait”* By Ruth Elaine Schram

DOXOLOGY

(Red Hymnal)

#624

Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise *him, all crea-tures
here be-low; praise *him a-bove, ye heaven-ly host; praise
Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost. A-men.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

L Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

P This is the table, not of the church, but of Jesus Christ. It is here for those who love him and who want to love him more. So come, you who have much faith and you who have little; You who have been here often. And you who have not been for a long time or ever before; you who have tried to follow and you who have failed; come, not because the Church invites you; It is Christ, and he invites you to meet him here.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho-san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -



san-na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:



Christ has died. Christ is ris-en. Christ will come a - gain.

With this bread and cup, we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. (+) Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.



A - men, a - men, a - men.

LORD'S PRAYER

As Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

P Jesus said: I am the bread of life. Jesus said: I am the vine; you are the branches. Come to me and never be hungry; believe in me and never thirst.

The gifts of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

LAMB OF GOD



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

P God feeds us with tender mercy. **Come to the table.**

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

COMMUNION HYMN

THERE IS A PLACE OF QUIET REST GTG 824

1 There is a place of qui - et rest, near to the heart of God,
 2 There is a place of com - fort sweet, near to the heart of God,
 3 There is a place of full re - lease, near to the heart of God,

a place where sin can - not mo - lest, near to the heart of God.
 a place where we our Sav - ior meet, near to the heart of God.
 a place where all is joy and peace, near to the heart of God.

Refrain

O Je - sus, blest Re - deem - er, sent from the heart of God,

hold us, who wait be - fore thee, near to the heart of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L We pray: Give ear, O God, to those whom you have nourished with this holy food: and bring us we pray, to the glory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

SENDING

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

P The blessing of the † triune God be with you now and always. **Alleluia!**

SENDING HYMN

REJOICE, THE LORD IS KING!

GTG 363



1 Re - joyce, the Lord is King! Your Lord and King a - dore!
2 Our Sav - ior, Je - sus, reigns, the God of truth and love;
3 His king - dom can - not fail; he rules o'er earth and heaven;
4 Re - joyce in glo - rious hope! For Christ, the Judge, shall come

Re - joyce, give thanks, and sing, and tri - umph ev - er - more.
when he had purged our stains, he took his seat a - bove.
the keys of death and hell are to our Je - sus given.
and gath - er all the saints to their e - ter - nal home.

Lift up your heart; lift up your voice! Re - joyce, a - gain I say, re - joyce!

DISMISSAL

L Go in peace. Seek the Lord. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE *“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”* Rowland Hugh Prichard
Arr. by Carol Tornquist

Leading Worship: Rev. Pr. J. David Bryant, Minister; Paul Wiggins, Liturgist;
Leah Metzger, Accompanist & Director

Notes & Announcements

- **Poinsettia Order Forms** are available in the Narthex
- **Session meeting** December 17th at 5:30 pm
- **Christmas Fellowship** Supper December 18th at 5:45 pm
- **Christmas Eve** Worship Service 7:00 pm
- **Ushers** for December 22nd: Bobby Harper, Martha Davis, Mike Perrine, Nancy Bell
- **Liturgist** for December 22nd: Margaret Poppell
- **FPC website** www.firstpresperry.org
- Send **prayer requests** to prayer@firstpresperry.org or contact Jeanne Hilgendorf

A Musical, Holden Evening Prayer

by Marty Haugen

December 15, 2024

4:30 pm

Contact Pastor Bryant and Leah Metzger for more information.

Your Mission/Outreach committee asks that you welcome Cindy Corell as she shares her ministry at worship December 22.

Cindy previously served in Haiti and has been supported by FPC donations for several years. She currently serves with FONDAMA as a catalyst for food, hunger and agribusiness concerns in this new assignment. She will be based in the Dominican Republic and will travel with other PCUSA missionaries to surrounding countries.

First Presbyterian Church
Presents
A Musical Reflection on the Birth of Christ
310 Plantation Rd. Perry, FL
12/22/24 at 5pm

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us John 1:14

FPC PRAYER LIST

TOGETHER, WE PRAY FOR:

FAMILY OF SHIRLEY ERWIN (MARGIE RAWLS)

BLUE CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

BIBLE STUDIES

SUNDAY SCHOOL

OUR SOUP MINISTRY

SUPPER TEAMS

PASTOR & HARRIET BRYANT

ALL GOING THRU HEALTH & EMOTIONAL ISSUES

ALL WHO LOST HOMES

TIRELESS VOLUNTEERS

TRAVELERS TO AND FROM FL

MARNE HELBERG'S SISTER

BETTY JEAN

FAMILY OF JIM CULBREATH

CHERYL RICKETSON, RECOVERY

FLETCHER'S FRIEND'S GRANDSON, CAMDEN MOSLEY

HILGENDORFS, DR APPTS AND TESTS, WARREN, LILY

MIKE LOCKHART

RITA BENOIT

RON POPPELL

ALL AWAITING TEST RESULTS

AND, ALL UNNAMED NEEDS IN OUR HEARTS. LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER. AMEN

Session Committee leaders

Administration-Joey Ratliff, Michael McMillan, Chuck Eckel

Christian Education-Martha Davis

Clerk-Cindy Brown

Congregation Care-Nancy Bell

Finance-Chuck Eckel

Mission/Outreach-Cindy Brown

Worship/Music-Marilyn Culpepper, Zachary Wiggins