

Order of Divine Worship
1st Sunday in Advent
November 28, 2004

Gathering around God's Word

WELCOME AND SERVICE OF FRIENDSHIP Fred Coates
PRELUDE Selected

(Christy Floyd, organist)

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Isaiah 2:2-5)

In days to come the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest
and all the nations shall stream to it.

Many peoples shall come and say,

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths."

The Lord shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

**they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks.**

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more.

Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

*HYMN: "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" No. 721

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of light and life, You set before us today the challenges of laying aside the works of darkness; of putting on the light of Christ; of being watchful and prepared for Your coming in our midst in the person of Jesus Christ. As the people of God in this place we know that a crucial part of our witness is in revealing Christ to the world through the way we love and care for others. Forgive us for not loving as we ought. Cleanse our hearts and minds of all that hinders us from loving You and loving our neighbor. May our lives radiate a faith active in love, as we watch and wait for Your breaking into our world once more; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers: the night is far gone, the day is near. That day of salvation is experienced as we lay aside the works of darkness and put on the protection of the Light of the world. Friends in Christ, hear again and believe the good news of the gospel:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen.

*RESPONSE: "Angels We Have Heard on High" (refrain) Tune: Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Proclaiming God's Word

CHILDREN'S SERMON

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH.....(8:30 a.m.) Ray and Billy Brawley

Brad, Karen, Elizabeth and Jeffrey Brawley

(11:00 a.m.) Bob, Dot, Stacey and Kristen Campbell

*HYMN: "A Candle Is Burning" (refrain)..... Tune: MUELLER

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,

a candle of hope in December's dark night.

**While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Matthew 24:36-44 (pew Bible, page 26) (8:30 a.m.) Scott Vaughan

(11:00 a.m.) Phil Heilman

*HYMN: "Blessed Be the God of Israel"No. 158

SERMON: "Timing Is Everything" Fred Coates

Responding to God's Word

*HYMN: "Prepare the Way, O Zion"..... No. 152

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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

*GLORIA PATRI: "Glory Be to the Father"No. 734

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

ANTHEM: Solo (8:30 a.m.)..... Mark Garland

"Arise, O God, and Shine" (11:00 a.m.)..... arr. Mack Wilberg

(Chancel Choir)

*DOXOLOGY: "Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow" No. 34

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (8:30 a.m.) Kim Streb

(11:00 a.m.) Bailey Belcher

Sealing of God's Word

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND 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 for ever. Amen.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Bearing God's Word into the World

*HYMN: "We Thank You, God, for Feeding Us"..... Tune: Azmon

**We thank You, God, for feeding us in Jesus Christ our Lord:
His body broken is our food, our life, His cleansing blood.**

**Through Him we offer You ourselves – our all, to be Your own;
a holy, living sacrifice to lay before Your throne.**

**So send us out into the world, Your glory to proclaim,
and in Your Holy Spirit's power to live and praise Your name.**

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE:

Recordings of the 11:00 a.m. service are available at the sound console at the back of the sanctuary.

Visitors: Welcome to First Presbyterian on this Lord's Day. If you need a church home, we invite you to unite with our congregation. Please indicate your interest on the Friendship Pad. ...

Communion: As the elements are distributed today, we ask that you hold them until all have been served and then we will commune together. As the bread and cup are passed, you are invited to say to one another, "The Body of Christ broken for you," and "The Blood of Christ shed for you."

We welcome Carrie Johnson as our guest Choir Director today while Alan Sledge is away on vacation. Carrie recently received her masters degree in church music from Southern Methodist University.

Advent Workshop: Everyone is invited to attend the annual Advent Workshop this morning during the church school hour (9:45–10:40 a.m.) in the fellowship hall. Activities include Christmas crafts, singing, refreshments, and the opportunity to make an Advent wreath.

Your-2¢-A-Meal Hunger Offering to alleviate world hunger should be placed in one of the special boxes at the rear of the sanctuary today.

Stewardship: We hope to conclude our stewardship campaign today. If you have not yet made your commitments for the coming year, you may place them in the offering plate today. Extra commitment forms are at the rear of the sanctuary. As of last Wednesday, 168 commitments had been made for a total of \$433,252.

Saints Alive trip: Saints Alive is planning a trip to visit Old Salem on Friday, December 3. The group plans to leave at 10:00 a.m., have lunch at the Salem Tavern, then enjoy options including the Candle Tea (\$3), tour of historic Old Salem buildings (\$22), or shopping in the Old Salem village. Please contact Ellen Auten if you are interested in this trip.

Poinsettias: You are invited to place poinsettias (\$10 each) in our church this Christmas in memory or in honor of loved ones. While the names of all those memorialized and honored will be printed in the bulletin, only a limited number of poinsettias will be purchased, with the extra money going to the Deacons' Relief Fund to assist needy persons and families. Place your order with the church office by December 1.

Announcements and Calendar

- Sunday: 8:30 a.m. - Worship Celebration and Holy Communion
9:45 a.m. - Church School and Advent Workshop
11:00 a.m. - Worship Celebration and Holy Communion
7:00 p.m. - Session
- Monday: 1:00 p.m. - Library Committee
7:00 p.m. - Purpose Driven Life Bible Study at the home of Liz Price
- Tuesday: 5:30 p.m. - PYF Supper Club at Julia's Tally House
6:15 p.m. - Exaltation Ringers
7:30 p.m. - Senior High handbells
- Wednesday: 4:00 p.m. - Logos/MSM – *Looking Like Christmas*
7:15 p.m. - Chancel Choir
- Thursday 10:00 a.m. - Bible Study with Peggy & Harding Rogers
5:30 p.m. - Girl Scout Troop 591
- Friday 10:00 a.m. - Saints Alive to Old Salem
- Saturday: 8:00 a.m. - Promise Keepers



First Presbyterian Church

249 West McLelland Avenue
Mooresville, North Carolina

The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him...

Habakkuk 2:20

Operation Christmas Child: Please contact Ellen Auten if you are interested in volunteering at the Operation Christmas Child Charlotte Processing Center on Tuesday, December 7. The group plans to leave at 2:15 p.m. and return by 8:00 p.m. The volunteers will be preparing the shoeboxes for shipment overseas.

An Angel Tree has been set up in the parlor from which you may select an angel with name of a child whose parent is incarcerated. After purchasing a Christmas gift for the child, please return it to the church to be distributed in time for Christmas.

Alternative Christmas Gifts may be given in honor of family and/or friends. Members of the Witness and Service Committee will be in the parlor following worship today and the next two Sundays to provide information and to receive your gifts.

Liturgy Notes for Advent 1 - Year A

A new liturgical year and the new cycle of the Revised Common Lectionary begin today. The three-year cycle of scripture lessons in the lectionary is planned to cover the major themes of our faith in both the Old and New Testaments. Advent is the four-week liturgical season leading up to Christmas, which emphasizes the coming of the Messiah (a Hebrew word meaning, literally, “the anointed one”), both in His original birthday, and again at the end of time. Today’s Old Testament reading from Isaiah 2:1-5 focuses on the age of equity and peace to come in God’s Messianic Kingdom while the Gospel reading from Matthew 24:36-44 relates the words of Jesus concerning the unexpected coming of the Messiah and the Messianic Age. Both texts are grounded in the timeless theme of hope in the coming salvation of God.

The Liturgical color for Advent is a deep, rich purple which is the traditional color of royalty. The One Whose Advent we celebrate is indeed a King (celebrated particularly last Sunday on Christ the King Sunday). The purple of Advent is also the color of suffering, humility and penance and is used during Lent and Holy Week. Thus the two symbolisms connect Jesus’ nativity, the Incarnation, with the crucifixion, the Atonement. Jesus’ purpose for coming into the world was to reveal God and His grace through Jesus’ life and teaching, but also through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

The Advent wreath is a circle, which has no beginning or end. So we call to mind how our lives, here and now, participate in the eternity of God’s plan of salvation and how our good hope in Christ is to share eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven. The wreath is made of evergreen, because Christ came to give us eternal life through His passion, death and resurrection. The candles remind us of the great Biblical themes of hope, peace, joy, love and light. The light itself represents Christ, who entered this world to scatter the darkness of evil and show us the way of righteousness. The steady progression of lighting candles reminds us to increase our readiness to meet our Lord.

The major focus of the Advent season is, of course, the preparation for the coming of the Christ (“Christ” is translated from the New Testament Greek word, *christos*, which means “messiah”). There is a clear tension in Advent between “the now” and the “not yet.” That is one of the great themes of the Advent season. As we prepare for the Christ’s coming in Bethlehem, at the same time, we prepare for His second coming at the end of time. This tension between past and future is particularly embraced in the present as we meet the coming Lord in the Lord’s Supper. At the Lord’s Table, in one sacramental act, we proclaim His saving death and announce His coming again. Thus the tension of this season comes to life in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and is another expression of the creative tension in the life of the church as it lives empowered by the Holy Spirit under the shadow of the cross and in the glorious emptiness of the tomb!