

CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

December 3, 2006

First Sunday of Advent

11:00 A.M.

WELCOME AND INVOCATION.....The Rev. Dr. Clay J. Brown, Pastor

PRELUDE: Now Come, Redeemer of Our Race..... Buxtehude
Joanne Daykin, Organist

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH..... CP, Beverly, and Brad Chappell
Taylor and Grayson

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means “coming,” and in this season we prepare for the coming of Christ. The Advent wreath helps us in our preparation. Its shape is a circle, symbolic of the truth that God has no beginning and no end and that God’s faithfulness lasts forever.

People: The light from the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love reminds us of God’s promises to us.

Leader: The first candle is the candle of hope. In Christ we find hope for today, for tomorrow, and for all time.

People: We are preparing for the fulfillment of the promise spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for wholeness and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

Leader: Today we light the candle of hope. As we look at the light of this candle, we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

People: We are the people of hope, God’s people, gathered in the name of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. Let us worship God!

*HYMN: Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus..... No. 153

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION..... The Rev. Dr. Fred Coates, Associate Pastor

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: . . . Friends, believe the good news of the gospel.

Unison: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Amen.

*RESPONSE: Chorus from Angels We Have Heard on High..... No. 188
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

CHILDREN’S SERMON

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Jeremiah 33:14-16

*HYMN: Good Christian Friends, Rejoice..... No. 198

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY: As Shepherds Lately Knelt..... Courtney
Chancel Choir

*RESPONSE: Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.....No. 34
Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION.....Kristin McMillan

SERMON LESSON: Luke 1:1-25,57-80..... Insert

SERMON: Myth Becomes Fact: Divine Interruptions..... Dr. Brown

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

- Invitation to the Lord’s Table
- Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Words of Institution and Breaking of Bread
- Communion of the People
- Post-Communion Prayer

*INVITATION AND BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE: The Lord’s Prayer.....No. 740
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.

POSTLUDE: Watchman Tell Us of the Night..... Manz

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* Those who are able will please stand.

If you are our guest today, welcome to First Presbyterian! We’re so glad you’re worshipping with us. For more information, please indicate your interest on the Friendship Pad and speak with one of the pastors following the service. God bless you! Please return to worship with us again.

You can become part of the First Presbyterian family of faith today by your profession of faith, transfer of church membership, or reaffirmation of faith. The Session meets after every service to receive new members. Please speak with Fred Coates, our associate pastor, following today’s service.

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

The flowers in the sanctuary this morning are given to the glory of God and in honor of our LuAnne Sledge for her commitment and dedication to First Church by Mike and Paige Ladd and family.

Welcome to the newest members of our church family: Mark Greene, who transferred from Central United Methodist Church in Mooresville; Elizabeth Rafi, who transferred from First Presbyterian Church in Waynesboro, VA; and Trey and Susan Weir who transferred from St. Mark’s Lutheran Church of Charlotte and First Baptist Church of Summerfield, NC

Announcements

The Promise-Driven Life—2007 Pledges: As of the latest report, we have received 178 pledges totaling \$559,350, with an average of \$3290.29 per pledge, with an additional 40 pledge cards received as "prefer not to pledge" but committing to give to the operating fund in 2007. If you have not had the opportunity to respond to "The Promise-Driven Life" for 2007, please do so at your earliest opportunity. *Please step out in faith as God leads you to do, trusting in his promises for your time, talent, and treasure.*

Share Christ with Christmas CDs You Can Give Away! Have you ever wanted a low-stress, high-touch, non-threatening way to share with your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members about the wonderful message of Christmas and about what's going at First Presbyterian Church? Here it is!

Today you will have the opportunity to take with you professionally recorded and produced music CDs from FPC's music ministry. The CDs have a Christmas theme, focusing on familiar Christmas carols. The CD jacket has a listing of our Advent and Christmas activities and a brief invitation from Clay Brown to join us in the joy of the season.

The CDs are free. As you give away these CDs, please invite the recipients to attend our congregation's Advent and Christmas events. Christmas is perhaps the best time of the year for evangelism, so you may hand out CDs to non-Christians and those without a church family as a witness of your faith in Christ.

We believe the Lord will provide both the people to whom you should give a CD and the funds to cover the production costs—approximately \$2 per CD—yet the CDs are meant for you to pass out as a free outreach of FPC's ministry without passing on any costs. Your kind donations will be gratefully accepted.

Coming December 10, 4:00-7:00 p.m.—1st Annual "Pastors' Wives Christmas Drop-in Open House" at the Manse. On Sunday, December 10, from 4:00-7:00 p.m., Cathy Brown and Jean Coates will host a come-and-go Christmas Open House at the Manse. Drop in for a few minutes, enjoy Christmas goodies in the newly renovated Manse, and celebrate the joy of the season with others! So the congregation may be received comfortably at the Manse, you are encouraged to vary the times when you drop in between 4:00 and 7:00, so that everyone who desires to attend may do so and those who prefer not to drive at night may visit during daylight hours.

Sermon Series for Advent and Christmas: *Myth Becomes Fact.* During the Advent and Christmas season, our pastors will preach on the glorious Christian story of the Incarnation, what the famous writer C. S. Lewis described as "myth becoming fact." The sermons are as follows:

- December 3—"Divine Interruption," Luke 1:1-25,57-80.
- December 10—No sermon: Chancel Choir Cantata from *Messiah*.
- December 17—"The God We're Dealing With," Luke 1:26-56.
- December 24, 11:00 a.m.—"Good News Comes to Earth," Luke 2:1-20.
- December 24, 5:00 and 7:30 p.m.—"The Grand Miracle," John 1:1-14.

Christmas Concert to follow supper: The congregation is invited to a fellowship supper on Sunday, December 3, at 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall. Prepared by hostess Jeilyn Fair, volunteers from Cirde No. 4, and the Christian Education Committee, the meal will cost \$4 for adults and youth, and \$2 for children and will consist of: baked chicken breast over rice, green beans with almonds, fresh cranberry/cherry relish, rolls, and dessert. Following the supper, we will move to the sanctuary for a concert by *Brass Act*, beginning at 7:00 p.m. This brass quintet is from Charlotte and will perform traditional festive seasonal music, as well as favorite carols for congregational singing. A nursery will be available for preschoolers during the concert, and as always, this is a free event, with a love offering being taken to help with expenses.

Announcements are continued on calendar page.



11:00 a.m. Worship
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

Calendar

- Sunday: 8:30 a.m. - Early Worship with Communion
 9:45 a.m. - Church School
 9:45 a.m. - Advent Workshop in the fellowship hall
 11:00 a.m. - Worship with Communion
Logos Registration
 3:00 p.m. - Prayer Shawl Ministry in the parlor
 5:15 p.m. - Alpha and Omega PYF
 6:00 p.m. - Church Fellowship Supper and Christmas Concert
- Monday: 9:30 a.m. - “Moms in Touch” in the Session room
- Tuesday: 12:00 p.m. - Women of the Word (No. 5) at the home of Sandra Harris
 5:30 p.m. - PYF Supper Club at Steak and Hogie
 6:30 p.m. - Cub Scouts
 7:00 p.m. - Exaltation Ringers
- Wednesday: 11:00 a.m. - Bible Study with Fronnie Gardner
 4:00 p.m. - Logos/MSM – *Happy Birthday, Jesus*
 5:00 p.m. - Kairos
 7:30 p.m. - Chancel choir
- Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - Bible Study with Peggy and Harding Rogers
 7:00 p.m. - Sisters in Christ (No. 2) Christmas party at the home of Angie Copeland
- Saturday: 5:00 p.m. - Wedding in Sanctuary
- Sunday 12/3: 8:30 a.m. - Early Worship with Cantata
 8:30 a.m. - Presbyterian Men’s Breakfast
 9:45 a.m. - Church School
 11:00 a.m. - Worship with Cantata
Logos Registration
 4:00 p.m. - Christmas Open House at the Manse until 7:00 p.m.
 4:15 p.m. - Alpha PYF
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CHURCH STAFF

Ministers: All the members of the congregation

<p>Pastor: The Rev Dr. Clay Brown Director of Music: Alan Sledge Director of Christian Education: Ellen Auten Preschool Director: Nancy Kortright Treasurer: LuAnne Sledge</p>	<p>Associate Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Fred Coates Organist: Secretary: Nellie Goodman Custodian: Billy Black Hostess: Jerilyn Fair</p>
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Announcements (continued)

Worship with us on Christmas Eve: We invite everyone to join us for worship on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24. We will begin with Church School at 9:45 a.m., followed by morning worship at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The sermon will be “Good News Comes to Earth.” We *will not* have an early worship service at 8:30 a.m. on that Sunday. In the evening, we will have two “Candlelight and Carols” services, one at 5:00 p.m. and the other at 7:30 p.m. with a sermon entitled, “The Grand Miracle.” Both services will provide an opportunity to sing familiar carols, enjoy the Cherub Choir and contribute to our denomination’s “Joy Offering” which supports retired ministers and racially ethnic colleges.

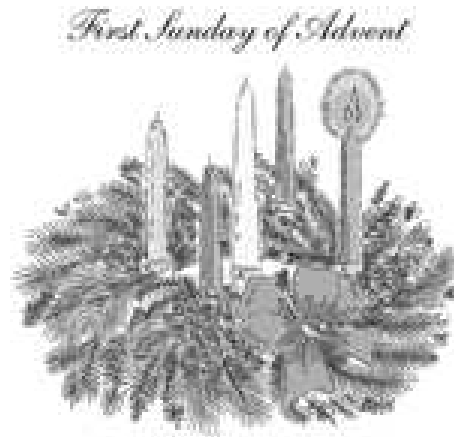
Advent Workshop: Everyone is encouraged to attend the Advent Workshop in the fellowship hall this morning from 9:45-10:40 a.m. Nursery care will be provided for children under 3.

Operation Christmas Child: Contact Ellen Auten by this Wednesday if you are interested in volunteering at Operation Christmas Child’s Charlotte Processing Center this Thursday, December 7. The group plans to leave at 8:15 a.m. and return by 2:00 p.m.

Cherub Choir: All children, preschool age through first grade, are invited to participate in a Cherub Choir during the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Practices will be held during church school, beginning next Sunday, December 10. Please contact Ellen Auten or Nancy Kortright if you have questions about the choir.

Logos/Middle School Ministry/Kairos Registration: Registration for second semester Logos (grades 1-6), Middle School Ministry (MSM – grades 7-8), and Kairos (grades 9-12) will take place the next three Sundays in the church parlor, after the 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship services. Returning participants should fill out a second semester form, and new participants should pick up registration forms and program information. Fees include a \$30 registration fee (new participants only) and a \$45 per semester tuition fee. **Second semester registration deadline is Wednesday, January 3.** Scholarship help is available upon request. Second semester begins on Wednesday, January 10.

Next Sunday’s sermon will be the Chancel Choir Christmas Cantata as the choir presents selections from Handel’s *Messiah*. On December 17, the *Myth Becomes Fact* sermon series will continue with the Rev. Dr. Clay J. Brown preaching on “The God We’re Dealing With” from Luke 1:26-56.



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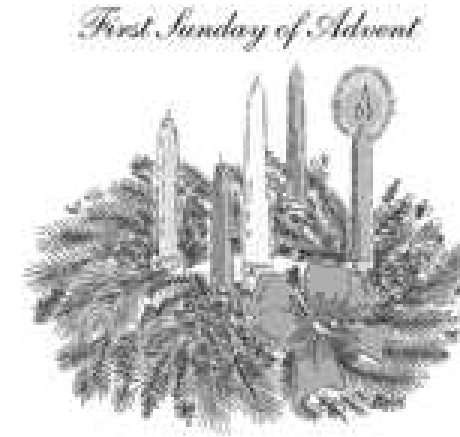
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SERMON NOTES ♦ DECEMBER 3, 2006

Myth Becomes Fact: Divine Interruption ♦ Luke 1:1-25,57-80 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION (VV. 1-4)

¹Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

- **Luke: “the first Presbyterian”...**
- **Theophilus: “lover of God”...**

A DIVINE INTERRUPTION (VV. 5-17)

⁵In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

- **Zechariah's job...**
- **When an angel shows up...**
- **The God of the interruption...**

A CRISIS OF BELIEF (VV. 18-25)

¹⁸And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

²⁴After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, ²⁵"Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

- **A fork in the road...**
- **Zechariah's typical human response...**
- **When God leads us to do something, it is usually “God-sized”**

A BETTER RESPONSE (VV. 57-64)

⁵⁷Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." ⁶¹And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." ⁶²And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. ⁶³And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. ⁶⁴And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.

- **A reason for rejoicing...**
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A DIVINE REVELATION (VV. 65-80)

⁶⁵And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, ⁶⁶and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people ⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, ⁷¹that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; ⁷²to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. ⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, ⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high ⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

⁸⁰And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

- **An ancient song: “The Benedictus”...**
- **God's plan is being put into motion...**
- **Myth is becoming fact...**

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