

CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

December 24, 2006

Fourth Sunday of Advent

11:00 A.M.

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

PRELUDE: *Once He Came in Blessing*..... Manz  
Joanne Daykin, Organist

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH: Love.....The Paul Trimble family  
Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Last Sunday we lit the third candle, the candle of joy. We light it, along with the candles of hope and peace, to show that hope, peace, and joy come only through Jesus Christ.

**People: Jesus Christ is the hope of the world. Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. Jesus Christ brings true joy.**

Leader: The fourth candle is the candle of love. God loves us so much that he gave his only Son, Jesus, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.

**People: We are preparing for the days spoken of by the Apostle Paul, when God's love will reign supreme. For love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never ends. Faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love.**

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

**People: We are the people of love, God's people, gathered in his name. Let us worship God!**

\*HYMN: *O Come, All Ye Faithful*..... No. 182

\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O God, forgive the times we look with a cynical eye on the advent of Your peace in our world. Forgive us for doubting the grace You have revealed in Your Son, Jesus. Forgive us for ignoring the wonder of Your love for us. With the birth of the Christ Child, You shine the light of Your forgiveness on our inner darkness. So, may the love of Christ guide us like the star that led magi to Bethlehem. We pray in the name of the One born in Bethlehem's manger, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: The Christmas season gives us much to ponder, but the timeless message of salvation heralded by angels, attended by shepherds and acknowledged by wise men still rings clearly. 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!**

ANTHEM: *What Is This Lovely Fragrance?*.....arr. Waugh  
Exaltation Ringers

CHILDREN'S SERMON

EPISTLE LESSON: Titus 3:4-7

\*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.**

\*HYMN: *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*..... No. 221

PASTORAL PRAYER 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.**

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming*..... arr. McKlveen

\*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

GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 2:1-20*

SERMON: *Myth Becoming Fact: Good News Comes to Earth*..... The Rev. Dr. Fred Coates

\*HYMN: *Angels From the Realms of Glory* (Verses 1-3)..... No. 189

\*INVITATION AND BENEDICTION

\*RESPONSE: *Angels From the Realms of Glory* (Verse 4)..... No. 189

POSTLUDE: *From Heaven On High*.....Held

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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.

## Announcements

**Next Sunday's sermon**, by Dr. Coates is entitled, *When the Celebration Is Over*, and is based on Luke 2:41-52.

**The Promise-Driven Life—2007 Pledges:** 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.*

**December Offerings to the Operating Fund:** FPC consists of giving, generous people! December is the month in which we typically make up some financial ground before the year's end. Our desire is to fund fully our ministries and missions for this year and to end in the “black.” Please continue to give your usual tithes and offerings, and consider an additional gift to the Operating Fund this month.

**Worship with us on tonight:** We invite everyone to join us for one of our Christmas Eve “Candlelight and Carols” services, one at 5:00 p.m. and the other at 7:30 p.m. with a sermon titled “The Grand Miracle.” Both services will provide an opportunity to sing familiar carols, enjoy the Cherub Choir (5:00 p.m. only) and contribute to our denomination's “Joy Offering” which supports retired ministers and racially ethnic colleges.

**Saints Alive Trip:** Saints Alive is planning a trip to see the “Monet in Normandy” art exhibit at the North Carolina Art Museum in Raleigh on Thursday, January 4. The group plans to leave at 8:30 a.m., and will return in the early evening. Tickets are \$15. Please contact Ellen Auten (704-664-5275) to make a reservation.

**Logos/Middle School Ministry/Kairos Registration:** The registration deadline for the Logos (grades 1-6), Middle School Ministry (grades 7-8) and Kairos (grades 9-12) mid-week program is Wednesday, January 3. Please contact program director Valerie Mauney (704-663-7540) to register.

**Cherub Choir:** All children, preschool age through first grade, are invited to participate in a Cherub Choir during tonight's 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. The choir will practice at 10:00 a.m. this morning. Please contact Ellen Auten or Nancy Kortright if you have questions about the choir.

## Calendar

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. - **No Early Service today**  
9:45 a.m. - Church School  
11:00 a.m. - Worship with Exaltation Ringers  
5:00 p.m. - Candlelight Service  
7:30 p.m. - Candlelight Service

Monday: - Christmas day (church office closed)

Tuesday: - Church office closed

Wednesday: No Logos/MSM/Kairos

Sunday 12/31: 8:30 a.m. - Worship  
9:45 a.m. - Church School  
11:00 a.m. - Worship



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

SCRIPTURE TEXT

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.  
<sup>2</sup>This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup>to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup>And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup>For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup>And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

SERMON OUTLINE

*Myth Becoming Fact: Good News Comes to Earth*

I. "GOOD," NEWS FROM ROME (2:1-7)

II. "GOOD NEWS" FROM HEAVEN (2:8-14)

III. GOOD NEWS INCARNATE (2:15-20)

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