

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN: #105 People, Look East (Verses 1, 4, & 5)

CALL TO CONFESSION (Psalm 80:1-7)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

As we begin our journey to the light, we confess that our lives have not always been lived in ways pleasing to God. Our shame has left us feeling distant from the One who is both Mother and Father to us all. Yet even now, our longing for the One who tears open the heavens and comes down kindles like a fire in our soul. Even now as we wait, we dare to hope. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON Psalm 80:17-19

*GLORIA PATRI (Hymnal, p. 581)

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

MOMENT WITH CHILDREN (Mark 13:24-37)

BLESSING OF THE PARAMENTS 2 Chronicles 2:5-7

Leader: Even as this rich cloth reminds us of earthly majesty and power, it points beyond to the perfect justice and power of Christ's majesty.

People: We adorn our sanctuary with these paraments to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we ask God's blessing on them and on ourselves.

BLESSING OF THE POINSETTIAS Isaiah 35:1-2

Leader: Because these plants turn bright and lively in the cold, short days of winter, we see in our own native land echoes of a Christmas miracle.

People: We place these blooming plants in the chancel to remind ourselves that Christ brings life to a suffering world, and we ask God's blessing on them and on ourselves.

BLESSING OF THE EVERGREENS Isaiah 60:13

Leader: Because the needles of pine and fir appear not to die each season, the ancients saw them as signs of things that last forever.

People: We hang these evergreens to signify the everlasting reign of Christ, and we ask God's blessing on them and on ourselves.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISMON TREE

Leader: Here in this place, we prepare for the coming of the Lord, and here we rekindle our prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus," as we await his coming as the bright morning star.

People: We hang these signs of Christ – lights, stars, and symbols of our King – to remind us of his identity and his story, as we ask God's blessing on them and on ourselves.

HYMN: #92 While We are Waiting, Come

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES & WREATH (John 1:1-5)

Leader: Like the prophets of old, we await the promised salvation of the Lord, and we look for the Light to shine again in the darkness.

People: We place these lights in this holy space as a witness to the light of Christ present with the faithful in every time and every place, and we ask God's blessing upon them and on ourselves.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES (Beatty Family)

Leader: In this season of Advent, we are here to watch and wait and pray for the coming of light into the world. We long for the day when the things of darkness – selfishness and greed, suffering and oppression – shall be no more. Today we light the first candle of Advent—the sign of God's hope.

People: A candle burns, the sign of our hope. God of hope, come to us again this Advent. May your hope live within us, burning as a light in our lives.

Leader: Lord, by your presence, light up the past, that we might learn from it with thankfulness. Light up the present, that might live in it with love. Light up the future, that we might prepare for it in hope.

People: As we watch and wait and pray this Advent season, may we always be ready to encounter the Lord who is already and always with us. Amen.

HYMN: #85 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah
(verse 1-sing twice)

BLESSING OF THE NATIVITY Luke 2:8-15

Leader: May we remember the Messiah who came to live and dwell among us, a King not born in a palace but in a lowly stable.

People: We place these figures in the nativity, recalling the wonderful mystery of the birth of our Savior, and we ask God's blessing on them and on ourselves.

HYMN: #121 O Little Town of Bethlehem (Verses 1 & 4)

THE GIFTS OF CHRISTMAS 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

OFFERING

THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS & PRAYER OF DEDICATION

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *from A Brief Statement of Faith*
(in unison)

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one true God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord be with you

And also with you

We lift up our hearts

We lift up our hearts to the Lord

Let us give our thanks and praise

It is right to give our thanks and praise.....

HYMN: #82 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Assisting in Worship Today

Russ Garmon, Host Elder; Monty Howard, Head Usher;
Keturi, Priscilla, and Airlie Beatty, Candle lighters;
Toni Deaton, Liturgist; Tina Fletcher Selvaggi, Elements.

Assisting in Worship Next Sunday (Dec. 10)

Jordan Conner, Head Usher; **TBD, Candle lighter**; Martha Clevenger, Liturgist.

In Our Prayers at First Presbyterian

Our Troops	Gordon Hunter	Bruce Campbell
Sara Grace Pullen	Melba Blount	Amy Lopez
Joe Yeakley	Grace Byrd	Gayle Shumate
Gladys Gray	Pat Skauge	Mildred Miller
Gaye Furry	Preston Helton	Loretta Kibler
Donald R. Smith	Catherine King Robertson	Bennie Neve
Ron Davis	Jan Burns	Kristen Rueb
Janice Hale	Dub Holcomb	Family of Bob Lube
Family of Chris Hubbert	Jackie Book	Martha and Dan Reynolds
Ruth Green	Audrey Hucks	Larry Ratliff
Martha Clevenger	Jack Gray	Jean Angotti
Family of Carole McFarland	Joyce Isaacs	Jim Calvert
Deryl McKenzie	Family of Natalie Salisbury	Petra Strassberg
Tammi Fucci		

Announcements

- ♦ Be sure to come back to FPC this evening for the annual University Chamber Singers' Concert at 6 p.m. A reception will follow in Fellowship Hall.
- ♦ It is time to order poinsettias for Christmas. An insert is in today's bulletin with all the details.

Upcoming Events

- ♦ Monday, Dec. 11, 10 a.m.—PW Circle meeting
- ♦ Wednesday, Dec. 13, 6 p.m.—Session meeting

We extend to you a very special welcome. We hope our time together will serve to nurture you in your Christian faith. If you are interested in learning more about the Christian faith, the Presbyterian Church and the ministry and mission of this church, please contact the church office.

First Presbyterian Church

1216 Monroe Street Commerce, Texas 75428
(903) 886-3783

Website: www.fpc-commerce.com

Email: fpc-commerce@embarqmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fpcccommerce

Pastor: Rev. Krista Rasco

Clerk of Session: Wally Tucker

Choir Director: Micah Krajca

Pianist: David Vergara

Nursery Attendant: Carolyn McFarland

Session Members

2017
Walter Davis
Helon Razniak
Petra Strassberg

2018
Martha Clevenger
Jordan Conner
Wally Tucker
Bettina Zvanut

2019
Brenda Estes
Tina Fletcher
Russ Garmon

*Service for the Lord's Day
First Presbyterian Church
Commerce, Texas
December 3, 2017*

1st Sunday of Advent / Hanging of the Greens



HANGING OF THE GREEN'S WORSHIP SERVICE

adapted from liturgies provided by the Rev. Meredith Kemp-Pappan & Rev. Phyllis L. Stutzman

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION: BLESSING OF THE GREEN'S WORSHIP SERVICE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: As we have prepared this sanctuary for the coming of the Christ child, so we will prepare our hearts.

People: With what shall we come to God's house?

Leader: Bring branches of cedar and holly, bring evergreens and a pine tree, hang wreaths and garlands.

People: Make the church fragrant with the smell of living things and our holy play. In acts of hanging greens and listening to the words of prophets and seers let us make our hearts and this space a place of inward and outward preparation for the One who comes to give us second birth.