



## ORDER OF WORSHIP

DECEMBER 15, 2024 | 8:15 & 11 AM

### PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

#### MEDITATION BEFORE WORSHIP

As the dark awaits the dawn, so we await your light.

O Star of promise, scatter night. Loving, bright, till shades of fear are gone.

As the blue expectant hour before the silv'ring skies,

We long to see your day arise, whole and wise, O lucent Morning Star.

As the moon reflects the sun until the night's decrease,

May we your healing light release, living peace unto your holy dawn.

Shine your future on this place. Enlighten ev'ry guest.

That through us streams your holiness. Bright and blest, come dawn, O Sun of grace.

#### PRELUDE | *Fantasia on Greensleeves (What Child is This?)*

Ralph Vaughan Williams

#### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

8:15 AM: Jon Crantz, Pastor of Community Life

11 AM: Emmanuel Paulpeter, Pastor of Outreach

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

Our souls magnify the Lord!

**Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior!**

The mighty One has done great things for us!

**Holy is his name!**

Let us worship God.

**For he is our Maker and our Redeemer; from generation to generation he gives mercy.**

#### Please stand

We declare aloud  
why we are here.

based on Luke 1:46-50

## PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Father in heaven,

our hearts desire the warmth of your love,  
and our minds are searching for the light of your Word.

Increase our longing for Christ, our Savior.

Remind us that others also long for you.

Teach us to make room for them, and give us the strength to grow in love,  
that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence  
and welcoming the light of his truth.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## PROCESSIONAL HYMN | *The First Noel*

THE FIRST NOEL



The first Noel the angel did say was to certain poor  
They looked up and saw a star shining in the  
Then let us all with one accord sing praises  
shepherds in fields as they lay, in fields where they lay  
east beyond them far; and to the earth it  
to our heav'nly Lord, Who hath made heav'n and  
keep-ing their sheep, on a cold win-ter's night that was so deep.  
gave great light, and so it con-tin-ued both day and night.  
earth of nought, and with his blood our life hath bought.  
No-el, No-el, No-el, No-el born is the King of Is-ra-el.

Please be seated

## THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE: ADVENT III

8:15 AM: The Patton Family

Today we light the first two candles of the Advent wreath.

11 AM: The Simmons Family

The candle of HOPE and the candle of PEACE. Now we light the third candle of Advent. This is the candle of JOY. As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of his birth. From the Book of Isaiah, we read the words of our Lord:

Isaiah 65:18

"But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight."

From the New Testament, the words of Paul to the people of the church at Galatia:

Galatians 5:22-25

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit."

Let us pray:

We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for fulfilling your promise of a Savior and what that means in our lives. Thank you for the gift of salvation through the birth of your Son, Jesus. Create us anew as we wait, and help us to see your glory as you fill our lives with your living Spirit. Amen.

**Please remain seated**

Christina Rossetti was an acclaimed poet of the romantic era and a devout Christian. At first glance, her references to midwinter, frozen earth and snow seem like sentimentalism over substance. But the text unfolds with rich truth. We can be sure that the poet knew that there was probably no snow in Bethlehem at our Lord's birth. The images of earth frozen like iron are surely metaphors for the bleakness of our lost condition. The text unfolds with the glory of the Incarnation and a call for us to respond by giving our hearts.

**ADVENT HYMN | In The Bleak Midwinter**

CRANHAM

1 In the bleak mid - win - ter frost - y wind made moan,  
 2 Our God, heaven can - not hold him, nor earth sus - tain;  
 5 What can I give him, poor as I am?  
 earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;  
 heaven and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign:  
 If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb,  
 snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
 in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble - place suf - ficed the  
 if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet  
 in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.  
 Lord God Al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.  
 what I can I give him, give my heart.

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

8:15 AM: Wei Yang, Elder | 11 AM: Kristen Foxley, Elder

Prepare the way of the Lord!

**Prepare the way of the Lord!**

Let us confess our sins to God, beginning with a moment of silent reflection.

*Silence is Observed.*

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Lord Christ,

we confess our willingness to be loved

**but also our reluctance to love.**

We confess our readiness to accept your forgiving love

**but also our refusal to forgive.**

We confess our eagerness to grasp your offer of redeeming love

**but also our resistance to follow you with complete trust.**

In this Advent time, forgive us our failure to respond as we should.

Come to us anew, and by your grace, assist us to receive you

**with joy, as the shepherds;**

**with gratitude, as Simeon;**

**with obedience, as Mary;**

**with love, as you have loved us.**

Even so: come, Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Your sins are pardoned. The penalty is paid.

**Thanks be to God!**

**SONG OF PRAISE | Gloria (Angels We Have Heard On High)**

Gloria...in excelsis Deo!

Gloria...in excelsis Deo!

based on Isaiah 40:1-2

**Please stand**



**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.**

**Please be seated**

Magnificat in G:  
Johann Pachelbel was a composer in the early Baroque style. He is best known for his Canon in D, but composed much more than that. While this music is less complex than, say, JS Bach, it is ornate. The music speaks in bursts of shapes and gestures. At a glance, the music might seem to be all one idea. But with the joining of music and text the choir and ensemble find plentiful variations in the shape of the musical ideas - sometimes sharply accented, other times more rounded and sustained. It's like a varied fireworks display. One need not understand how the music was created in order to enjoy it, any more than one needs to know engineering and stone-masonry in order to stand at the entrance to an ornate cathedral and enjoy the overall effect. The Magnificat is Mary's prophetic song of praise upon receiving the news that she would be the mother of the Lord. It is one of several important Canticles (biblical songs) that explores the amazing miracle of Advent, Incarnation, and God's plan to redeem us to himself.

**PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Because we have been reconciled to God and one another, we use this moment to bless one another with God's peace.

**ADVENT CHORAL CELEBRATION**

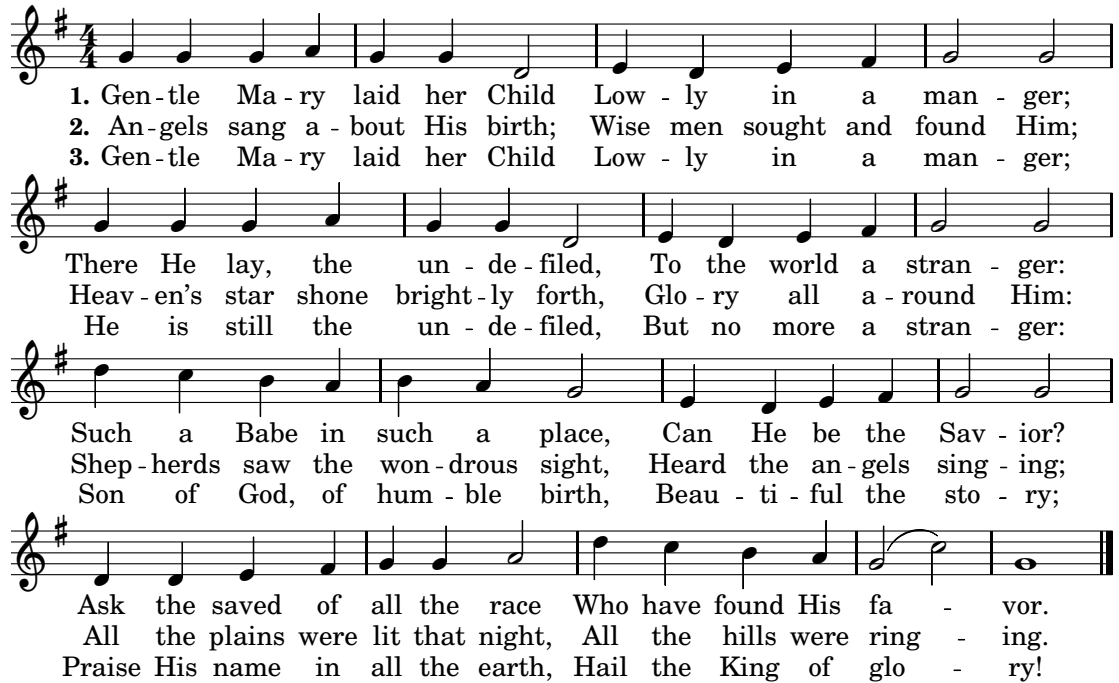
**INTRODUCTION TO MAGNIFICAT**

Dan Wagner, Director of Worship

**MAGNIFICAT IN G**

Johann Pachelbel

*Magnificat anima mea Dominum;*  
My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
*et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo,*  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
*quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae;*  
for He has looked with favor on His humble servant.  
*Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*  
From this day all generations will call me blessed,  
*quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius,*  
the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His Name.  
*Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies timentibus eum.*  
He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation.  
*Fecit potentiam in brachio suo; dispersit superbos mente cordis sui;*  
He has shown the strength of his arm, He has scattered the proud in their conceit.  
*deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles;*  
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the humble.  
*esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes.*  
He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.  
*Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae,*  
He has come to the help of His servant Israel for He has remembered his promise of mercy,  
*sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.*  
the promise He made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever.  
Amen.



1. Gen-tle Ma-ry laid her Child Low-ly in a man-ger;  
 2. An-gels sang a-bout His birth; Wise men sought and found Him;  
 3. Gen-tle Ma-ry laid her Child Low-ly in a man-ger;

There He lay, the un-de-filed, To the world a stran-ger:  
 Heav-en's star shone bright-ly forth, Glo-ry all a-round Him:  
 He is still the un-de-filed, But no more a stran-ger:

Such a Babe in such a place, Can He be the Sav-ior?  
 Shep-herds saw the won-drous sight, Heard the an-gels sing-ing;  
 Son of God, of hum-ble birth, Beau-ti-ful the sto-ry;

Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His fa-vor.  
 All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ring-ing.  
 Praise His name in all the earth, Hail the King of glo-ry!

## HEARING THE WORD

### MESSAGE | Making Room In the Pews (Luke 2:21-35)

Curtis A. Bronzan, Senior Pastor

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

8:15 AM: Jon Crantz

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.

11 AM: Emmanuel Paulpeter

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.

### CALL TO GENEROSITY

### HODIE! (TODAY!) A CANTATA FOR CHRISTMAS

John Leavitt

#### I. Long Ago Prophets Knew

Long ago prophets knew Christ would come born a Jew,  
 come to make all things new, bear his people's burden, freely love and pardon.  
 Ring bells, ring, ring, ring. Sing choirs, sing, sing, sing.  
 When he comes, when he comes, who will make him welcome.  
 God in time, God in man, this is God's timeless plan.  
 He will come as a man, born himself of woman, God divinely human.  
 Ring bells, ring...  
 Mary, hail! Though afraid, she believed, she obeyed.  
 In her womb, God is laid: 'til the time expected, nurtured and protected.  
 Ring bells, ring...  
 Journey ends! Where afar Bethlehem shines, like a star, stable door stands ajar.  
 Unborn son of Mary, Savior, do not tarry!  
 Ring bells, ring, ring, ring. Sing choirs, sing, sing, sing.  
 Jesus comes, Jesus comes, we will make him welcome!

#### II. Cantate! (Sing!)

*In dulci jubilo.* (in sweet rejoicing) Let us our homage show.  
*Exultate Deo adjutori nostro.* (Rejoice in God our helper.)  
*Jubilare Deo, Deo Jacob.* (Rejoice, God of Jacob.)

(continues on the next page)

*Cantate Domino canticum novum.* (Sing to God a new song.)

*Cantate Domino omnis terra.* (Sing to God all the earth.)

*Alleluia! Gloria! In dulci jubilo.*

Let us our homage show. Our heart's joy reclineth in the manger low.

There, angels singing, O there the bells are ringing. *Alpha es et O!* (Alpha and Omega)

*Exultate Deo. Alleluia... Exultate Domino. Alleluia!*

### III. O Magnum Mysterium

*Soloists: Olivia Russel-Botto, Soprano. Vickie Wagner, Alto*

*O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum,*

(O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament)

*ut animabile viderent. Dominum natum jacentem in praesepio!*

(that animals should see the newborn Lord, lying in a manger!)

### IV. Hodie! (Today!)

*Hodie. Christus natus est. Hodie. Noel!* Born today.

Christ the Lord is born! Christ is born, hodie!

Sing for the Savior appears now on the earth, the angels sing,

and now the archangels rejoice.

Now, on this day, the righteous rejoicing sing Gloria in excelsis.

*Gloria in excelsis Deo, Alleluia! Christ is born today! Hodie. Christus natus est...*

Now on the earth, the angels sing... Gloria in excelsis Alleluia! Noel! Born today!

### V. Ding Dong! Merrily On High

Ding dong! Merrily on high, in heaven the bells are ringing!

Ding ding! Verily the sky is riven with angels singing.

Gloria Deo, Hosanna in excelsis.

E'en so here below, below, let steeple bells be swungen,

and "I-o-i-o-i-o!" By priest and people sungen.

Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis.

Pray you, dutifully prime your matin chime, ye ringers;

May you beautifully rime your evetime song, ye singers. Gloria, Hosanna in excelsis.

## SENDING

Please stand

### HYMN OF WORSHIP | *What Child Is This*

GREENSLEEVES



1. What Child is this, who, laid to rest, On Ma - ry's lap is sleep - ing? Whom  
2. Why lies He in such mean es - tate, Where ox and ass are feed - ing? Good  
3. So bring Him in - cense, gold, and myrrh, Come, peas - ant, king to own Him. The



an - gels greet with an - thems sweet, While shep - herds watch are keep - ing?  
Chris - tian, fear: for sin - ners here The si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
King of kings sal - va - tion brings; Let lov - ing hearts en - throne Him.



This, this is Christ, the King, Whom shep - herds guard and an - gels sing.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
Raise, raise the song on high, the vir - gin sings her lul - la - by;



Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the Son of Ma - ry!  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the Son of Ma - ry.  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Ma - ry.

## BENEDICTION

Curtis A. Bronzan

## POSTLUDE | *Chorale Prelude on 'Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her'* Johann Pachelbel (From Heaven Above to Earth I Come)

### MUSICIANS

Chancel Choir, Dan Wagner (conductor & Director of Worship), Jeong-Suk Bae (organist & accompanist), and Festival Orchestra

#### Violin I

Christine Elston, Concertmaster  
Alan Johnson  
James McLeland

#### Violin II

Michael Fahey  
Esther Park

#### Viola

David Bynog  
Mary Fulgham

#### Cello

Eleanor Herrera  
Enn Rene Diaz

#### Bass

Elisabeth Steves

#### Flute

Wendy Bergin

#### Oboe

Season Summers

#### Clarinet

Roberto de Guzman  
Brian Briones

#### Bassoon

James Roberson

#### Percussion

Alec Warren  
Blake Wilkins

#### Harp

Stacey Franklin

#### Musician Contractor

Daniel Shipman

### TREES

The trees are placed in the Sanctuary and Chapel today to the glory of God by the Flower Guild.

### CARING MINISTRY UPDATES

Taha Hussain and family for the loss of their brother, **Yacim "Baker" Hussain**, on Thursday, November 28, 2024.

Scotty Light for the loss of his wife, **Patsy Light**, and Walter Light, Laurie Saunders and Myscie Acomb for the loss of their mother on Friday, November 29, 2024.

Sammie Graves for the loss of her husband, **Tom Graves**, on Saturday, November 30, 2024. Condolences to their daughter Gail Graves Wood and son, Tom (Kristina) Graves, grandchildren Julia (Dalton) Harris, Nicholas Wood and predeceased grandson Thomas Wood; great grandchildren Ford and Will Harris.

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## Serve Opportunity

### Ushers Needed for Christmas Eve Services

Preparations are underway for our Christmas Eve services, which will be held at 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM. Our Connections team is looking for ushers to serve at each of the services. Please help us as we seek to welcome well both our guests and members of our community. To sign up, please visit the Connections Desk at Palm Court or visit [fpchouston.org/serve](http://fpchouston.org/serve).

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### PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Curtis A. Bronzan, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Jon Crantz, Pastor of Community Life

Rev. Dr. Courtney McLaughlin, Pastor of Equipping

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Paulpeter, Pastor of Outreach

Rev. Jeanmarie Tade, Pastor of Caring

# Celebrate the Season

WITH FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## 23rd Annual Advent Missions Market - Last Day!

Today | 8 AM-1 PM | Palm Court

The Advent Missions Market offers unique crafts from artisans worldwide. These items make excellent Christmas gifts and the sales provide support and awareness for our global ministry partners.

## GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays


Today | 12 PM | Library

After a loss, the holiday season won't look the same. Traditions change. Some family members won't be there. Social gatherings can feel stressful. "GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays" is a 2-hour seminar that includes a video, sharing time, and a "Survival Guide" filled with tips and encouragement for managing the holidays after a loss. Lunch will be provided. Walk-ins welcome!

## Singles Community Lunch

Today | 12:30 PM | Off-Campus

It's time for the next FPC Singles gathering. Join other single or single-again adults today for lunch and fellowship. For the location, visit [fpchouston.org/events](https://fpchouston.org/events).

 Look for this symbol to find easy opportunities for an *intentional invitation*. Visit [fpchouston.org/intentional5k](https://fpchouston.org/intentional5k) to learn more.

For more activities, devotional resources, and Christmas Eve worship times, visit [fpchouston.org/advent](https://fpchouston.org/advent).

Join your FPC family on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!

## Christmas Eve Worship Schedule

### Children & Family\*

3 PM | Grand Hall

### Contemporary\*

5 PM | Grand Hall

### Traditional

7 & 9 PM | Sanctuary

\*Doors to Grand Hall will open 20 minutes before the start of the service.

## End-of-Year Giving

Your gifts are vital to our mission to *Cultivate Community in the Way of Jesus for the Flourishing of the City*, and December giving is an especially critical milestone in our annual budget plan. As you seek to *Make Room* this Advent, we hope you will prayerfully consider an offering to FPC. Whether it's to complete your 2025 pledge, a continuation of your giving for the year, or a first-time gift, your generosity is appreciated.

Please note, if it is a priority to have your contribution credited in 2024 for tax purposes, visit [fpchouston.org/giving](https://fpchouston.org/giving) to view our end-of-year deadlines.

## Connect

Text **CONNECT** to **90859** for more info about FPC Houston, ways to get involved, and upcoming events.

## Give

Your generosity helps impact the people, places, and ministries we serve. To contribute today, text **GIVE** to **90859** or place your gift in an offering box. Thank you for your faithfulness.

## Monthly Giving Report December Update

December 2024 Goal: **\$2,028,632**  
Giving to Date: **\$309,097**  
Amount Needed : **\$1,719,535**