**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

**Service of Lessons and Carols**

**Thursday, December 24, 2020 6:00PM**

**Rev. Amy Pospichal, Pastor Marjorie McKenzie, Accompanist**

**WELCOME!**

**\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN “O Come, All Ye Faithful” Red Hymnal #170**

**OPENING SENTENCES: PSALM 96**

 Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

 **Sing to the Lord and bless God’s name;**

 **tell the good news of salvation from day to day.**

 Declare God’s glory among the nations,

 God’s marvelous works among all the peoples.

 **For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. Praise the Lord!**

**LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE Linda and Richard Randals**

Light one candle for Christ.

Because the world is broken and the wait is long

but Christ is with us through it all.

In humble manger in a back water town - a baby.

On a convict’s cross - a king.

in every heart and every home where hope, peace, joy, and love endure-Christ with us.

“Glory to God in the Highest heaven,” she whispers, “and peace to all on earth.” So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.

**Unison Prayer: God of all glory, this day and all days belong to you. You alone are worthy of our full praise, devotion, and thanksgiving. We, who have so much, dare to ask for one more thing. We humbly ask that you fill our hearts with Christmas grace- the power to restore, to welcome, to celebrate, and to see Christ’s power brought forth in this world. Pour this Christmas grace into our heart and give it substance in our thoughts, our words, and our deeds. In Christ’s own name, we pray. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**Carol “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Red Hymnal #147**

**FIRST LESSON Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19 Kenna McKenzie-Young**

*Adam and Eve disobey God’s command and disrupt the order and goodness of creation*

**8**They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9**But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” **10**He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” **11**He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” **12**The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” **13**Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent tricked me, and I ate.” **14**The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,
    cursed are you among all animals
    and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
    and dust you shall eat
    all the days of your life.
**15**I will put enmity between you and the woman,
    and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
    and you will strike his heel.”

**17**And to the man[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+3%3A8-15%2C+17-19&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-73a)] he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
    and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
    ‘You shall not eat of it,’
cursed is the ground because of you;
    in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
**18**thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
    and you shall eat the plants of the field.
**19**By the sweat of your face
    you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
    for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
    and to dust you shall return.”

**SECOND LESSON Genesis 22:15-18 Emily Priddy**

*God promises that, through Abraham, all the peoples of the world will be blessed*

**15**The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, **16**and said, “By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, **17**I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, **18**and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.”

**Carol “O Little Town of Bethlehem” Red Hymnal #171**

**THIRD LESSON Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 Rev. Amy Pospichal**

*The people who walk in darkness receive the promise of the Messiah*

The people who walked in darkness
    have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
    on them light has shined.

For a child has been born for us,
    a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
    and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
    Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
**7**His authority shall grow continually,
    and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
    He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
    from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**SPECIAL MUSIC “Carol of the Bells” Jubilee Ringers**

**FOURTH LESSON Isaiah 11:1-4a, 6-9 Marjorie McKenzie**

*The Messiah will come from the root of Jesse to restore the peace of creation*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
    and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
**2**The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
    the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
    the spirit of counsel and might,
    the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
**3**His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
    or decide by what his ears hear;
**4**but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
    and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
    the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
    and a little child shall lead them.
**7**The cow and the bear shall graze,
    their young shall lie down together;
    and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
**8**The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
    and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder’s den.
**9**They will not hurt or destroy
    on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord
    as the waters cover the sea.

**Carol “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” Red Hymnal #160**

**FIFTH LESSON Luke 1:26-35, 38 Emily Priddy**

*An angel appears to Mary and announces that she will bear a holy child*

**26**In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, **27**to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. **28**And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Luke+1%3A26-35%2C+38&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24914a)] **29**But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. **30**The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31**And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. **32**He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. **33**He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” **34**Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Luke+1%3A26-35%2C+38&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24920b)] **35**The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=+Luke+1%3A26-35%2C+38&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24921c)] will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

**38**Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

**CAROL “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” Red Hymnal #163**

**SIXTH LESSON Luke 2:1-16 Kenna McKenzie-Young**

*Mary gives birth to her child; Angels appear to shepherds*

**2**In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2**This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3**All went to their own towns to be registered. **4**Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. **5**He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. **6**While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. **7**And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**8**In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9**Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10**But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: **11**to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A1-16&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24977a)] the Lord. **12**This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” **13**And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A1-16&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24979b)] praising God and saying,

**14**“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
    and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+2%3A1-16&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-24980c)]

**15**When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” **16**So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

**Carol “Angels We Have Heard on High” Red Hymnal #158**

**SEVENTH LESSON Matthew 2:1-11 Marjorie McKenzie**

*Magi from the East come seeking the Messiah and offer gifts to the baby Jesus*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23171a)] from the East came to Jerusalem, **2**asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23172b)] and have come to pay him homage.” **3**When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; **4**and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23174c)] was to be born. **5**They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

**6**‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
    are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
    who is to shepherd[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23176d)] my people Israel.’”

**7**Then Herod secretly called for the wise men[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23177e)] and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. **8**Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” **9**When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23179f)] until it stopped over the place where the child was. **10**When they saw that the star had stopped,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+2%3A1-11&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23180g)] they were overwhelmed with joy. **11**On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**SPECIAL MUSIC Kenna McKenzie-Young**

**EIGHTH LESSON John 1:1-14 Rev. Amy Pospichal**

*The Word of God becomes flesh and lives among us, full of grace and truth*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was in the beginning with God. **3**All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4**in him was life,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26039a)] and the life was the light of all people. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

**6**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. **8**He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. **9**The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26044b)]

**10**He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. **11**He came to what was his own,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26046c)] and his own people did not accept him. **12**But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, **13**who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

**14**And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son,[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+1%3A1-14&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26049d)] full of grace and truth.

**Christmas Homily “One Candle” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

 It only takes one candle. One light born of God. So that the rest of us may also become Children of God. What a beautiful idea. To be born not of blood or the will of the flesh or of the will of humankind, but to be born of God. We are not the light. John the Baptist wasn’t either, though he came to tell everyone that the light of God, is coming.

 There is a saying: “A single candle cannot be extinguished by darkness.” There are many versions of the saying and different people are given credit for it. But its power does not come from who first said it, but what it says: a single candle cannot be extinguished by the darkness.

 As lonely as that candle must feel, it says to me is that darkness cannot put out our light. There is no way that a flame flickering in the night can become invisible. Except… it may SEEM invisible is if it is too far away from us. But it cannot be extinguished. The trick to staying in the light is to get close enough to it. And for others to see it, to come close to them. Light is a metaphor for so many things. It suggests seeing with wisdom. It suggests joy. It suggests an ethical way of living. It suggests the life that God wants from us.

We need more light in this world. The kind of light that brings hope to humankind, especially to those around us. The kind that helps **US** find hope on a dark day. The sort of light that miraculously envelopes us in beauty when it seems we are surrounded by ugliness. The light that guides us through the darkness.

Isaiah said, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light!” The great light of which he spoke was God, to shine hope and strength on them during their period in exile. Isaiah is the only prophet whose writings spoke to both periods of exile: earlier, in Assyria, and to those exiled in Babylon. He knew about darkness. He knew that it had been a long time since they had seen their own homes and their own sacred spaces of worship, now desecrated by foreign invaders. That which had been holy was no longer holy. The fabric of their society was disrupted. Many of us have no idea what it is like to be invaded like that, disrupting everything we hold dear, or take for granted.

Until maybe now, at least at a microscopic level. We have had viral invaders here and they have affected the fabric of our lives. No matter what side you may be on politically, it has made 2020 a bummer in many ways. I don’t have to name it all because we’ve all seen it and I think we may be tired of talking about it.

All it takes however, is just one light. The light of Christ. His wisdom, compassion and peace cannot be extinguished.

A vaccine may be the best gift we will get this year. But God is doing even more than that. During our exile, we have also seen examples of innovation and courage. Churches are forced to change our ways, even if dragged kicking and screaming along the way. People of faith continue to shine the light of God into that darkness.

I recently read a Facebook post from a local motel owner who asked, “What good things have happened this year?” Sadly, I wanted to answer him, but at the time I truly couldn’t think of anything. But in retrospect, I can say that I have been experimenting with baking. (thank you, Kenna, for the sourdough starter!) I have also seen others of you make Christmas gifts early, for people in our church whom you’ve never met. People are writing more letters and cards because they cannot see each other as much. We had our first “Blue Christmas” service yesterday. People have seen a greater need for parades. Families have found ways to be together through Zoom, to celebrate birthdays and play games. Amid the darkness, we can still shine our light, and it cannot be extinguished if it is powered by the presence of God. It only takes one.

When Linda and Richard lit the Christ candle tonight, they said, “So we light one candle, because it only takes one: Christ with us.” It only takes one light, the light from our Savior Jesus Christ, who provides us the power and courage to shine in the darkness. A single light cannot be overcome by the dark. If you cannot see, reach out. If your light cannot be seen, use it to look around until you find someone else to shine it with you. You have the power, as children of God. Light your light shine! Amen.

**\*Carol “Joy to the World!” Red Hymnal #161**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, THE LORD’S PRAYER**

God of our Salvation,
we come to you on this wondrous night to gather in praise,
to lift up your name with friend, family, and stranger.
In the beginning, your creative work began with a word,
and tonight, your creation continues with the Word made flesh.
On this holiest of nights, we join the everlasting chorus saying:
    Glory to God on highest!  Great is your name in all the earth!

Like Mary, we ponder these things in our hearts,
and wonder how you could love us so much
as to actually become one of us & with us.
Thank you for your steadfast presence in our lives!

And yet, on this night on which we celebrate the fulfillment of love,
we recognize that there are many who still waiting for fulfillment:
of adequate food and shelter…
of peace and the end of violence…
of reprieve from the fierce grip of grief…
of restoration of broken relationships…
of a renewing of heart, mind, or body…
of healing from a chronic illness…
of an end to addictions…
Giving God,
        give us the courage to do your work, and to share your peace from the manger.

We pray this night especially for those who are traveling…
for those who have lost loved ones in the past year…
for those who struggle with mental illness…
for those who fight addiction …
for those who will be traveling in the coming days and weeks…
for those who work on Christmas:
especially medical workers, police, and emergency personnel…
for those who cannot make it home for Christmas…
hear us we pray, O God, in silence…

In all that we do and in all that we are,
send us forward with the majesty of this night
to share the grace with everyone we encounter.
This we pray in the name of your Son, who taught us to pray saying:

**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, forever.  Amen.**

**\*Closing Hymn “Silent Night, Holy Night” Red Hymnal #154**

**CHARGE AND BLESSING**

***\*Rise in body and/or Spirit. For all other carols you may remain seated.***

*Please place your candles and sleeves in the baskets provided as you exit. Make sure you pick up a sack of treats as you leave.*

***God Bless your Christmas and the New Year!***

**About Advent Candles:**

In the Ancient World, people lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter’s season and to pray for the return of the light. The church has Christianized that practice in the lighting of the Advent wreath. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of the world. Until the dawning of that Great Day, we watch and wait in the Holy Spirit for Christ’s coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.



**About the Service:**

This Service of Lessons and Carols is adapted from the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols that has been celebrated annually at King’s College, Cambridge, for almost a century. The eight Scripture lessons are those traditionally used at the festival.

**Special Thanks:**

*-To our musicians and readers for telling the story*

*-To our Board of Deacons for assembling the gift sacks.*

*-To our decorating team who prefer anonymity (we know you!).*

*-To you for joining us in worship this evening!*

***Musicians:***

*Marjorie G. McKenzie – piano and handbells*

*Kenna McKenzie-Young – harp and handbells*

*Emily Priddy – guitar and vocals*

*Robin Cherry and Amy Pospichal - handbells*

*Stay up to date on events and activities by visiting our Facebook page. We are best able to be contacted at* *1stprestucumcari@gmail.com**. Worship is at 11:00AM on Sundays.*



**Christmas Eve 2020**

***First Presbyterian Church***

*306 E Aber St, PO Box 367, Tucumcari, NM 88401*