

1st Sunday of Christmas
ORDER OF WORSHIP
10:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 31, 2023

Seasonal Color: White

WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Please take a moment to silence your cell phones and electronic devices. And, with the gift of music, let us prepare our hearts, minds, and souls for this special time with God and with one another.)

PRELUDE: “Noel Joyeux”

Gordon Young

(Please stand in body or spirit and let us join together in the Call to Worship)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 148

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights!

All the shining stars praise you, O God, for you commanded and they were created.

Praise the Lord from the earth, young men and women alike, old and young together.

Let everyone praise the name of the Lord, for your glory is above the earth and heaven.

Let us worship God.

*PRAYER OF PRAISE AND ADORATION

Eternal God of the covenant, you have clothed your people with the garments of salvation, and covered them with the robe of righteousness.

We praise your name for your work of redemption, sending us Jesus the promise of peace. Hear our rejoicing as we sing hymns of thanksgiving; hear our prayers as we give voice to our inmost thoughts. Fill us with the presence of your living Spirit, and give us wisdom to live in the light of your gifts. Amen.

*OPENING HYMN: “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

GTG # 136

WE ARE RENEWED IN GRACE

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

God of compassion, have mercy upon us as we make our confession. The year is soon spent. What we ought to have done still awaits action, while we commit acts not in accord with your will. We think of ourselves before others; we serve our own needs. We keep for ourselves the gifts of your graciousness. The new life you offer is not yet proclaimed in the land. Forgive us our sins and make us more faithful. Help us to use our time wisely as we follow Christ’s way. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice” (vs 3)

GTG #132

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;

Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save!

Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.

Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

WE RECEIVE GOD’S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord, open our hearts and by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

pg. 692

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES:

Laura Sparks

SECOND LESSON: John 1:1-14

pg. 91

SERMON: “When God Runs Free”

Rev. David Roquemore

*HYMN: “Love Has Come”

GTG #110

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S GRACE

*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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 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, forever. Amen.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY: “Still, Still, Still”

arr. Paul Manz

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

“What Child is This” (vs 3)

GTG # 145

So bring him incense gold, and myrrh; come, one and all, to own him.

The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.

Raise, raise the song on high. The virgin sings her lullaby.

Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Eternal God of redemption, you bless your creation and it springs forth with beauty. You judge your people with righteousness and new life abounds. We bring you now the fruits of our labors. Bless the work of our hands, so that what we do reflects the radiance of your love. Fill us with your Holy Spirit; so that what we say proclaims to all people the new hope in Jesus. Amen.

WE LEAVE TO SERVE

*CLOSING HYMN: “Angels from the Realms of Glory”

GTG # 143

*BENEDICTION

POSTULUDE: “In Dulci Jubilo”

J. S. Bach/arr, Joyce Jones

*Please stand in body or spirit.

Bold print words are read in unison.

Lay Leader for this morning is Margy Butterfield.

Elder on Call this week is Brenda Eckard.

Copyright information for today’s service music:

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“In Dulci Jubilo”, music J. S. Bach, arr. Joyce Jones, from *The Joyce Jones Christmas Collection*, Bradley Publications, New York, NY. CCS WORSHIPcast License # 15043

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Our service organist today is Brenda Eckard. Brenda and her husband Ray are members here at First Presbyterian. Brenda is a retired educator. Also, Brenda served as our early service organist for 20 years. We thank her for sharing her musical talents with us today for our worship service.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS – THERE ARE NO STRANGERS WITHIN THIS SANCTUARY: If you would like more information about the church and our programs, please stop by the visitor’s table in the narthex.

1. You are in God’s House. We want you to feel God’s presence.
2. All around you are Christian people. They will want to shake your hand and greet you in the name of Christ. Won’t you meet them with a friendly smile? We would not have you leave this place without a warm welcome and a feeling that you want to come back.
3. Please sign the Friendship Book.
4. Those interested in membership information or who desire to join are asked to speak to David Roquemore, Pastor, call the church office, or check the Friendship Book.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH: (10:00am) Worship bags for children are located in the entryway. In addition, children (ages 3 yrs. old – 2nd grade) are welcome to stay with their families for the entire service, or they may attend B.L.A.S.T. Children's Church following the *Time for Young Disciples*, when children will be led from the Sanctuary to our Children’s Church room and they will return to the sanctuary before the closing hymn.

THE PEACE CANDLE: The smaller, glass candle on the Communion table is a *peace candle*, and here is the candle’s story and meaning.

In 1986, a group of Americans attended a Russian Orthodox worship service. At the close of the service, an elderly woman pressed a three-ruble note into the hand of a Presbyterian pastor (only about \$5 in American dollars, but a significant gift for this elderly woman). The woman asked him to buy a *candle* with it, and light that candle in his church as a symbol for *peace*. That Presbyterian pastor purchased a *candle* with the money, placed it on the Communion table in his sanctuary, and lit it during each worship service. Then the church bought other candles, in glass containers, and sent them to other churches with the request that they be lit during their worship services, as a symbol of our common hope for *peace*.

These *peace candles* have since spread across our world and across denominations. Our congregation received our *peace candle* on Sunday, November 16th, 2014. And, we have shared a *candle* with our sister church of El Redentor in Guatemala. Together with sisters and brothers in Guatemala and around the world, we light our candles every time we worship to remind us to pray for peace in our lives, in our communities, and in our world.

THE MINISTERS
All Members of First Presbyterian Church

THE MINISTRY STAFF
Laura Sparks – Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry
lsparks@fpcnewton.com
Catherine C. Murdock – Director of Music

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF
Kim J. Berry – Office Manager
kberry@fpcnewton.com
Jim Ten Kate - Treasurer
Bill Inscoe - Treasurer Emeritus

MISSIONARIES OF THE CHURCH
Lawrence & Inge Sthreshley – Congo
Rev. Dr. John McCall - Taiwan



THE SESSION

Class of 2023

Brenda Eckard (5)
Debby Reynolds (2)
Suzanne Rhinehart (2)
Randy Williams (4)

Class of 2024

Gary McDougal (1)
Charles Moody (3)
Amy Owensby (1)
Amy Yenderusiak(3)

Class of 2025

Lynette Inscoe (2)
David McCart (3)
Mimi Michael (4)
Randy Miller (4)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| (1) Council on Discipleship | (4) Council on Sharing |
| (2) Council on Caring | (5) Council on Praise |
| (3) Council on Administration | |

Suzanne Rhinehart - Clerk of Session

PASTOR
Rev. Dr. David Roquemore

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Serving the Newton-Conover area since 1858
Partners with Iglesia El Redentor, Guatemala

Sunday, December 31, 2023
1st Sunday of Christmas
10:00 a.m.



701 N. Main Avenue
(828) 464 – 0648

Newton, NC 28658
www.fpcnewton.org

MISSION STATEMENT:

Following Christ together in witness, love and service.

Pastor David Roquemore may be reached at:
828-464-06485 (Church) droquemore@fpcnewton.com
717-512-2779 (Cell)