



First Presbyterian Church of Athens

In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!

December 27, 2020
10:00 a.m. Livestream
First Sunday of Christmas

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, please silence your cell phone. Consult an usher if you need a personal hearing device, large-print bulletin or large-print hymnal.

Greeting

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Prelude

Partita on *In dulci jubilo*

James Vivian

Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

Song of Gathering

ADESTE FIDELES

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

Call to Worship

Come, let us sing God's praise with creation!
Praise God, sun and moon! Praise God, shining stars!
Come, let us sing with Simeon and Anna!
Our eyes have seen salvation, God's gift for all people!
Come let us sing God's praise together
and worship the Christ-child born for us!

*Hymn 28

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

O God, in Christ you were born a humble child, love-made-flesh, God-with-us. Forgive us when we fail to follow in your way of humility, love, and peace. Free us to see your Light reflecting in the faces of friends and family, neighbors and strangers, enemies and friends, and make us shine forth with your love.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

*Assurance of Pardon

**Those who are able may stand.*

A special word of

welcome: thank you for being with us for worship this morning. We are delighted and hope that you will join us again next Sunday.

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice, in its original form *In dulci jubilo*, dates from at least the 14th century. The original was a "macaronic" carol, meaning it was in two languages, German and Latin. Though the present version is only in English, it is sung to the traditional German folk melody.

***Congregational Response**

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

***The Peace**

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson

Psalm 92:12-15

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Solo

Dost Thou in a Manger Lie

Bruce Neswick

Dost thou in a manger lie, who hast all created,
stretching infant hands on high, Savior long awaited?
If a monarch, where thy state? Where thy court on thee to wait?
Scepter, crown, and sphere?

Here no regal pomp we see, nought but need and penury:
why thus cradled here?

“For the world a I love supreme brought me to this stable;
all creation to redeem I alone am able.

By this lowly birth of mine, sinner, riches shall be thine,
matchless gifts and free;
willingly this yoke I take, and this sacrifice I make,
heaping joys for thee.”

Christ we praise with voice bold, laud and honor raising;
for these mercies manifold join the hosts in praising:

Father, glory be to thee for the wondrous charity
of thy Son, our Lord.

Better witness to thy worth, purer praise than ours on earth,
angels’ songs afford.

The solo is a text by Jean Mauburn (1460-1503), translated into English and set to a new carol by twentieth century composer Bruce Neswick. Neswick has tradition of writing a new carol to send with his Christmas cards. This is one of those carols.

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child, a 20th-century text by a English-born Canadian clergyman, was originally a poem called “The Manger Prince.” It is set to a late medieval song usually sung as the carol *Good King Wenceslas*.

Next to the Nicene Creed, The Apostles’ Creed is the most universally accepted doctrinal statement in Christendom. Although not written by apostles, it reflects the theological formulations of the first century church. Arising from an early baptismal creed, it underwent development, attaining its present form in the eighth century.

Second Lesson

Luke 2:25-38

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Simeon and Anna

Dr. Carol Strickland

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 27**

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM

***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.

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory *In dulci jubilo* Johann Sebastian Bach

***Doxology** Hymn 592

**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**

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

***Hymn 29** *Go, Tell It on the Mountain* GO TELL IT

***Charge and Benediction**

***Congregational Response** GLORIA
Gloria in excelsis Deo; Gloria in excelsis Deo.

Postlude *Improvisation* John Coble

Like other material from oral traditions, the 19th-century spirituals flourished without being written down. Their refrains were their most stable parts, and narrative stanzas were often improvised to fit. These Nativity stanzas recall that tradition.

Texts and music for hymns and sung responses reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714861

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*
Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*
John Tsao, *Soloist*

USHERS

Stephen Covington

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Rebecca Carlton

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIANS

Bryan Owens, Jack Palmer

FLOWERS

The poinsettias in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer requests can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, or by the Prayer Request link on our church website (firstpresathens.org).

2020 Holiday Benevolence Market Goes Virtual

Like so much of this year, our 26th annual Holiday Benevolence Market has become a virtual event, but rest assured that your donations to the 27 participating non-profit organizations will provide real-world benefits! You can find the shopping list by visiting our church homepage and clicking on the button labeled "Holiday Benevolence Market." That will take you to the shopping list so you can print it and fill it out at home. Please mail your completed form and check to Holiday Benevolence Market, P.O. Box 1592, Athens, GA 30601, or drop it by the church office. If you have any questions, please call Denise Horton at 706-247-6027.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Kitty Donnan, Clerk of Session
Carol Strickland, Associate Pastor

CLASS OF 2020

Jeff Bangle
Meghan Bawcum
Bob Burton
Julie Hayes
Sydney Jackson
Avery McLean
Jeanne Nadenicek
Carl Nichols
Tom Reigle
Judy Scanlon

CLASS OF 2021

Jennifer Walden Abbott
Michelle Clendenen-Shaw
Elizabeth Earl
Ed Ferguson
Rob Haire
Grace Lu
Chris Pope
Mixon Robinson
Rosemary Stancil

CLASS OF 2022

Karen Burg
Kitty Donnan
Larry Jones
Andy Jordan
Jimbo LaBoon
Tom Landrum
Beverly Phares
Courtney Pittman
Smith Wilson

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor* (cstrickland@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Kim Ness, *Director of Youth Ministries* (kness@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Natalie Bishop, *Director of Children's Ministries* (natalie@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Roger Burbage, *Church Administrator* (rburbage@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Administrative Assistant for Congregational Care & Membership* (lbell@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Communications Specialist* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Jennifer Sunderlin, *Receptionist/Administrative Assistant* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Angie Townsend, *Accountant* (angie@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotteposs@gmail.com)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIMITED IN-PERSON WORSHIP

If you would like to join us next Sunday for a limited in-person worship, please click on the Eventbrite link on the church website. Alternatively, you can contact the church office at (706) 543-4338 and we will add you to the list. Please make sure to read the additional instructions that are posted on the website. If you are over 65 or have underlying health conditions, we encourage you to stay home and join us via Facebook or YouTube.

“SUNDAY CONVERSATIONS”

Sunday Conversations will return on January 3

Join Dr. Ryan Baer for “Sunday Conversations” as we reflect on the morning worship service and take a deeper dive into the Bible texts read and proclaimed from the pulpit.

Zoom ID: 706-543-4338 (PW: 185185)

Led by Dr. Ryan Baer (ryan@firstpresathens.org)

COMMITMENT REMINDER

Thank you to all who have made a financial commitment for 2021. We depend on the generosity of everyone to support our ministries and missions. If you have not yet made your commitment, please do so by **December 30 at noon** so the Session can plan the 2020 budget. You may mail your pledge card to the church office, or make a pledge online at firstpresathens.org/home/giving. If you have any questions, please contact Roger Burbage at rburbage@firstpresathens.org.

2020-21 WEEKDAY SCHOOL

First Pres Weekday School registration for Fall 2021 begins for in-house students on **Tuesday, January 12**. On **Friday, January 15 at noon**, community registration begins. Our Weekday School is a half day church preschool serving 3 months through 5 years. Questions? Call our director, Elaine Johnson, at (706) 206-8180 or e-mail elaine@firstpresathens.org.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 27 - First Sunday after Christmas

- 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School (*please check firstpresathens.org for more information*)
- 10:00 a.m. Service Livestream on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Carol Strickland preaching
Limited in-person worship (please go to firstpresathens.org to register)

Tuesday, December 29

- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting via Zoom

Thursday, December 31 - New Year's Eve, Church Office Closed

Friday, January 1 - New Year's Day, Church Office Closed

- 10:00 a.m. Meals on Wheels Delivery

Sunday, January 3 - Second Sunday after Christmas, Communion Sunday

- 9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School (*please check firstpresathens.org for more information*)
- 10:00 a.m. Service Livestream on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
Limited in-person worship (please go to firstpresathens.org to register)
- 11:30 a.m. “Sunday Conversations” with Dr. Ryan Baer (*Zoom ID: 706-543-4338, PW:185185*)

LOOKING AHEAD

January 8 - Food Sunday drop-off (9:30-11:00 a.m.), Church Office parking lot

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

IN DULCI JUBILO 6.6.7.7.8.5.5

Medieval Latin

Trans. and para. John Mason Neale, 1853; alt.

German folk tune, 14th century

Harm. David Hugh Jones, 1953

1. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
 2. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
 3. Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;

Give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 Now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 Now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!

Ox and ass be - fore Him bow, And He is in the man - ger now.
 He hath o - pened heav - en's door, And we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all To gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.

Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Gentle Mary Laid Her Child

27

TEMPUS ADEST FLORIDUM 7.6.7.6 D

Joseph Simpson Cook, 1919

Piae Cantiones, 1582
Arr. Ernest C. MacMillan, 1930

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!

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

29

GO TELL IT 7.6.7.6 with refrain

African-American spiritual
Arr. John W. Work III, 1940

Stanzas, John W. Work II (1872-1925)

Harm. and adapt. Melva Wilson Costen, 1987

Refrain

Go, tell it on the moun - tain O-ver the hills and ev - ery - where;

Go, tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

Fine

1. While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night,
2. The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When lo! a - bove the earth,
3. Down in a low - ly man - ger The hum - ble Christ was born,

Be - hold through-out the heav-ens There shone a ho - ly light.
Rang out the an-gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
And God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

D.C.