

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN



CHURCH IN GERMANTOWN

ALIVE,

DECEMBER 16, 2018

CELEBRATING

& SERVING

THE LIVING LORD!

*The mission of The First Presbyterian Church in Germantown
is to reflect the loving presence of Christ
as we serve others faithfully, worship God joyfully and share life together
in a diverse and generous community.*

In preparation for worship please take the opportunity to speak silently to God.
At the close of the service let us greet one another with cheerfulness.
Please be sure that your cell phone is turned off during worship.

December 16, 2018

Third Sunday of Advent

“Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.” – Robert Frost

ORDER OF MORNING WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM

GATHERING AS GOD’S FAMILY

Prelude: Two Carols

What Is This Lovely Fragrance?

Paul Manz

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

John Leavitt

Welcome and Announcements

Introit: *Savior of the Nations, Come*

Fourth Century

Savior of the nations, come, virgin’s son, make here your home. Marvel now, O heaven and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.

†*Lighting of the Advent Candle

The Williams Family

Joy is the space between your breath and your laughter.

Joy is a hand wrapped around yours.

Joy is your heart beating in sync with someone else’s heart.

Joy is that first day of a new season, and the intoxicating hope it brings.

Joy is dancing in your kitchen at home and singing in your car.

Joy is the first cry of a newborn baby.

Joy is contagious.

Joy is a song.

Joy is the daughter of gratitude.

Joy is the heart of praise.

Today, we plant our feet in joy. For much of Advent we assume the position of leaning forward, longing for the moment where God will break into this world once more. However, today we stop leaning to remember with gratitude all that God has already done for us, through us, and around us.

In past weeks, we lit the candles of hope and peace.

(light candle)

Today we light the candle of joy as a thank you for laughter and for hands that hold our own. We light the candle of joy for the change in seasons, for kitchen dance parties, and for newborns. And most importantly, we light the candle of joy as a sign of gratitude for a God who makes water in the desert, heals the sick, offers sight to the blind, and who knows us by name. If joy is the song of praise, then joy is where we stand, joy is home.

*congregation standing; †latecomers may be seated

CONFESSING OUR SINS TO GOD

Prayer of Confession

Author of everlasting life, we are quick to claim the joys and blessings of our baptism, but also quick to forget the cost of Christian discipleship; we are eager to draw from the wellspring of your salvation, but shrink from the refining fire of your baptism. Remind us once more, O God, that your good news carries more than the hope of your blessing for our lives, it carries the expectation that we will amend our ways. It is not enough to praise you with our lips, we must also love you with our actions: by sharing our wealth, by showing mercy to the needy, and by protecting the weak and defenseless. In these things there is joy. In these things do we show our faith and fidelity. Heal our hearts, compassionate One, that we may be a people of true repentance—a people who prepare for your Son’s birth by embracing the ones he loved.

Silent Meditation

Assurance of Pardon

†*Congregational Response 579: *Gloria Patri*

**Glory be to the Father
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.**

†*Sharing the Peace of Christ

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

(As worshipers, we come from diverse experiences and points of view. We have different racial, educational, and economic backgrounds. Yet we are all one in Christ. We symbolize this as we exchange with one another, by words and gestures, signs of peace and reconciliation such as, “The peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.”)

PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Eileen Jones, Reader

The First Lesson: Zephaniah 3:14-20

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Leader: God’s Word is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

The Time for Children

Children in grades five and younger may now leave for their classes.

Two English Carols: *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

arr. John A. Behnke

Ding Dong Merrily on High

arr. Sondra K. Tucker

Voices in Bronze Handbell Choir

The Second Lesson: Luke 3:7-18

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Leader: God, we thank you for your Word.

People: **The story of your grace.**

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

A Time for Meditation on the Word

*Hymn 36: *In the Bleak Midwinter*

CRANHAM

*Affirmation of Faith (from the *Confession of Belhar*)

We believe that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that God calls the church to follow God in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right; that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

We believe that, in obedience to Jesus Christ, its only head, the church is called to confess and do all these things, even though the authorities and human laws might forbid them and punishment and suffering be the consequence. Jesus is Lord. To the one and only God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be the honor and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer

Offering

Offertory: *There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob* (from *Christus*)

Felix Mendelssohn

There shall a star come out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel with might destroying princes and cities! As bright the star of morning gleams, so Jesus sheddeth glorious beams of light and consolation. Thy Word, O Lord, radiance darting, truth imparting, gives salvation; thine be praise and adoration! (Numbers 24:17)

*Congregational Response 592: *Doxology*

OLD HUNDREDTH

*Prayer of Dedication

GOING FORTH IN GOD'S NAME

*Hymn 13: *Prepare the Way*

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

*Charge and Benediction

*Congregational Response 585: *Threefold Amen*

McNeil Robinson II

Postlude: *In Dulci Jubilo*

J.S. Bach

WELCOME: If you are visiting with us today, please sign the Fellowship Pad at the end of your pew. We pray the hour will be meaningful to you and you will come and worship with us again. Everyone is cordially invited to a time of fellowship in the Longstreth Auditorium following the worship service.

COFFEE HOUR: This week's hosts: Lorraine Hall and Tim Robinson. Next week's host: Daniel Conner. Thank you to Ingrid Harris for supplying the munchies last week. If you love to bake, buy or share hospitality, we need you to host this important time of fellowship! Please speak to Delores Solomon if you feel called to provide the snacks or hands-on support.

THE MUSIC: On this Third Sunday of Advent, we emphasize the joyous anticipation of Christ's coming. At the lighting of the Advent wreath, we light the rose candle today—the color representing joy that reminds us, even in a season of darkness, we are called to rejoice. While Mendelssohn's oratorios *Elijah* and *St. Paul* are his best known large-scale choral works, his unfinished oratorio, *Christus* (1847) offers one of the nicest choral anthems for the season of Advent. We hear it sung by the Chancel Choir at the offertory today.

Looking ahead: Next Sunday, an extended prelude will begin at 10:45. Come to church early to enjoy Christmas Carol arrangements for piano four hands played by Ted Barr and Tony Thurman. Our Children's Choir will also be singing in worship. The Christmas Eve service will be preceded by an organ recital at 6:30. If you were unable to our *Messiah* concert, or if you would like to hear it again, the Internet livestream recording can be played on demand at www.fpcgermantown.org/Messiah-2018.

Save the Date! The Germantown Oratorio Choir & Orchestra will present a Brahms Festival Concert on Sunday, March 17, at 4 p.m. Rehearsals begin on Tuesday, January 8, from 7 -9 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The program will feature the music of Brahms, Robert and Clara Schumann in recognition of Clara Schumann's bicentennial. For more information or to participate, call the church office at 212-843-8811 or e-mail music.fpcgermantown@gmail.com.

DECEMBER CHALLENGE: CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING. During the Christmas and Advent season, we celebrate leadership—past, present and future—through support of the Christmas Joy Offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith and we want these leaders and their families who are grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need which are provided through the Assistance Program of the Presbyterian Board of Pensions. For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above.

THE RACHEL CIRCLE, an arm of the Presbyterian Women USA, will hold its monthly meeting tomorrow, December 17, at 11:00 a.m. in the Jennings Room. All women are welcome. Please bring your lunch. Drink and dessert will be provided. Also, for the next few weeks, **The Rachel Circle will be collecting new gloves, hats and socks for adults and children during Sunday worship.** All items collected will be given to the Germantown Avenue Crisis Ministry for distribution.

STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFT: Christmas is the time when we tangibly show our appreciation to our staff for all they do during the year to serve our congregation and the community. Most of us have experienced the “extra” each of these staff members put into their job. Staff Appreciation Christmas Gifts will be given to Kevin, Eileen, Tony, Evelyn, Christian, Heidi, Sara, Joan, Cindy, Terry, Whaley, Robert and Tanieya just prior to the holiday.

You can contribute to these appreciation gifts after church today, when a member of the Personnel Committee will be available during the coffee hour to receive your contribution. *Please be generous.* In the spirit of the season, the Personnel Committee.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS: The poinsettias in the sanctuary during the Christmas season are in memory and honor of our loved ones. As is our custom, these flowers will be delivered after Christmas to the sick and shut-in of our congregation. Please contact the church during office hours: Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. if you would like your family members' or friends' names included in the worship bulletin. The cost is \$15 per line. Listings will be accepted until Tuesday, December 18, 2018.

DINNER AND A MOVIE! The Christian Education Committee invites you to Dinner and a Movie on Friday, December 21, 2018. That is also the evening of the Youth Group lock-in and the youth will remain through the night; however, the entire church family is welcome to enjoy a pizza supper at 6:30 p.m. in the Longstreth Auditorium followed by a screening of the Christmas movie "Elf" in the Jennings Room starting at 7:15 p.m. Come join the fun and fellowship with us this Advent season!

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be closed from December 24, 2018 through January 2, 2019 to give our volunteers much needed time off and time with their families.

THE GACM will be closed for the Christmas holidays, with their last day of service being Thursday, December 20, 2018. The administrative staff will return on Wednesday, January 2, 2019. The food pantry will reopen on Thursday, January 10, 2019 and social services will resume on Monday, January 14, 2019. Many thanks to staff and volunteers for an amazing 2018!

2019 PLEDGE CARDS: Thanks to all who have submitted your 2019 pledge card—so far we have received 61 for a total of \$254,500. You can still make a difference transforming lives at FPCG and in the community beyond; just place your pledge in the *Transformed by Gratitude* box on the literature table and add your commitment toward next year's ministry.

WOMEN'S RETREAT: Save your place for the Women's Retreat on Saturday, March 2, 2019. The cost is \$30 and a \$10 deposit will reserve your spot. Gloria Bethea is taking reservations at the CD table in Longstreth after worship.

WINDOW ON THE WEEK

Sunday, Dec. 16	9:00 AM	Chancel Choir—Sanctuary
	10:00 AM	Worship—The Rev. Rebecca Segers preaching
	10:15 AM	Sunday School, Grades K-5
	11:30 AM	Chancel Choir—Choir Room
	11:30 AM	<i>Third Sunday</i> Interactive Bible Study
	11:45 AM	Confirmation Class—Youth Lounge
	12:15 PM 1:30 PM	Gun Violence Task Force—Finney Room Disciples Basketball Team Practice—Gym
Monday, Dec. 17	11:00 AM	Rachel Circle—Jennings Room
	1:00 PM	Ladies Teen Challenge—Gym
Tuesday, Dec. 18	10:00 AM	Angel Tree Gift Distribution, Jennings Room (10-11 a.m.)
	12:00 PM	Commonwealth Choirs Staff Meeting—Finney Room
	2:30 PM	Sunday Suppers—Kitchen, Longstreth Auditorium
Wednesday, Dec. 19	10:00 AM	Staff Meeting—Finney Room
	12:00 PM	Commonwealth Choirs Program Meeting—Primary Room
	7:00 PM	Property Committee—Finney Room
Thursday, Dec. 20	8:00 AM	Rev. Segers at Uncle Bobbie's, 5445 Germantown Ave., 8-10 am
	2:00 PM	Christmas Basket Distribution, Jennings Room (2-4 p.m.)
	6:00 PM	Disciples Basketball Practice—Gym
Friday, Dec. 21	3:30 PM	Drop-in Center—Youth Lounge, Gym
	6:30 PM	All-church pizza supper—Longstreth Auditorium
	7:15 PM	All-church movie viewing of <i>Elf</i> —Jennings Room
	9:00 PM	Middle/High School Youth Group Lock-in—Youth Lounge
Saturday, Dec. 22	10:00 AM	Open Gym
Sunday, Dec. 23	9:00 AM	Chancel Choir—Sanctuary
	10:00 AM	Worship—The Rev. Rebecca Segers preaching
	10:15 AM	Sunday School—Grades K-5
	11:30 AM	Chancel Choir—Choir Room
	11:45 AM	Confirmation Class—Youth Lounge
	1:30 PM	Disciples Basketball Team Practice—Gym

Church Officers

Elders

2019

Ingrid Harris
Joseph Leube
Delores Solomon

2020

Gloria Bethea
Andrea Overton
J. Randall Rosensteel

2021

Marc DiNardo
Robert Seed
Jason Williams

Clerk of Session:
Madeline Valentine

Deacons

2019

Ruth Cato
Diane Filter
Dick Liberty

2020

Randy Clever
John Orandosh
Carolyn Tarver

2021

Dhyan Cassie
Rhonda Highsmith
Dani Howard

First Church Staff

Director of Adult Education and Community Life	Pastor	Rebecca Segers
Director of Urban Ministry	Kevin L. Porter	Eileen Jones
Director of Music	F. Anthony Thurman	Sara Carter-Blanford
Director of the Gospel Choir	Evelyn Santiago	Christian Heyer-Rivera
Director of the Handbell and Children's Choirs	Heidi Mercado-Littles	Terry Boyer
Director of Christian Education	Joan Harris	Cindy Osborne
Parish Visitor	Tanieya Matthews, Robert Patterson, Harold Whaley	
Building Manager		
Administrative Assistant		
Bookkeeper		
Sextons		

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