



First Presbyterian Church

Wishing you and yours a blessed Christmas



December 24, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve Worship Service

**Please stand, if able. Responses are in boldface.*

PRELUDE

Three Fantasies for Christmas

Noël Goemanne
(1926-2010)

1. "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel" (hymn 88)
2. "Il est né le Divin Enfant"
3. "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"

"Christmas Scherzo"

June Nixon

(b. 1942)

Jack Rain, organ

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADORATION AND PRAISE

CALL TO WORSHIP

The splendor of God has been revealed among us. A child has come to change all our ways.

We who have walked in the shadows have seen the light. We have given up the unnecessary burdens we carry.

Authority has been assigned to the Wonderful Counselor. Peace and justice will prevail through eternity.

We will leave judgment to God, whose equity we trust. We are free to rejoice in the beauty God reveals.

Worship the One who breaks yokes and frees us. Great is our God, and greatly to be praised.

Let the heavens be glad, and let earth rejoice. We are ready to declare God's marvelous works.

***PROCESSIONAL HYMN 133** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" **ADESTE FIDELES**

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE Carol Lee Wathen & Gwen Tuthill

PRAYER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Awesome God, we confess our fear to let down our guard, to feel the wonder, believe the good news. Why would love choose to live among us, who are so unloving in our words and deeds? Why would you choose to place Trusting Innocence in the hands of sinners like us? We are afraid to bow down, lest we be accused of sentimental weakness. We hesitate to embrace the joy, lest it turn to disappointment in the cruel realities of this world. Forgive us, God, and awaken the child within us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us for lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly. Jesus Christ has come to us as God's gift. In Christ, we are redeemed from iniquity and purified to live as God's own people. Glorify and praise God through your zeal for good deeds. Accept and live within the peace God provides.

*HYMN OF RESPONSE 121 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (v. 3) ST. LOUIS

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

LESSONS AND CAROLS

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

FIRST LESSON *Isaiah 11:1-3, 4a, 6-9*

CAROL 129 "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" ES IST EIN' ROS'

SECOND LESSON *Luke 1:26-38*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise... (minister continues)

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

Please come, as directed by the ushers, by the center aisle to receive the bread, dip it in the cup, and return to your seat by the side aisles. Ushers will bring the elements to those who remain seated but wish to participate in the Lord's Supper.

PRAYER

THE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

CANDLELIGHTING

The congregation will stand (as able) and remain standing until the service concludes. The pastor will light her candle from the Christ candle and then light those of the candle lighters. They will then proceed down the aisles, lighting the candle of the person at the end of each row. When your candle is lit, please pass the light to the person next to you. This treasured ritual symbolizes the light of Christ moving from the announcement of the Word (John 1:1-5) and spreading throughout the world.

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright, round yon virgin mother and child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight. Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing: “Alleluia! Christ the Savior is born; Christ the Savior is born.”

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love’s pure light. Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light; with the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King; Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.

***THE LORD’S PRAYER** *(sung by the congregation)*

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. (Please extinguish your candle.)

RECESSIONAL HYMN

“Joy to the World”

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse ii found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

“Postlude sur un Noël” (Postlude on a Christmas carol— Denis Bédard
“Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella”) (b. 1950)

Christmas Decorations

The decorations in the Sanctuary this Christmas season are given...

To the glory of God and in memory of:

Ned Agee, by Chris Agee

Our Parents, by Vicki Fox

Loved Ones, by Betsy and Bo Godbold

*Betty Beall (Evans) Breedon, by
Elizabeth Hammer*

*Rev. Dr. David T. Evans, Jr., by
Elizabeth Hammer*

Loved Ones, by Sally Horrell

*Frances Kisten and Frank Bafaro, by
Karen Kisten and Ruth Bafaro*

*Loved Ones, by Ken and Kathie
Mayhall*

*Avis & Ariel Thomas from Ann and
Alex McKenzie and family.*

*Our Parents, by Evelyn and Harry
Moorefield*

Loved Ones, by Robert and Anne Nelson

Loved Ones, by Susan Schlecht

*Augusta Lee Scott and Sevility Smith, by
Lee and Margaret Scott*

*Charles E.H. Beck, by Annie, Dennis,
Henry and Emma Zuercher*

To the glory of God and in honor of:

*Herbert and Elizabeth Anderson, by Guy
Anderson and Elizabeth Hammer*

*Helen Krauss Leslie, by Guy Anderson
and Elizabeth Hammer*

Jesus' Birthday, by the Harrison Family

Jean B. Hallock, by Richard W. Hallock

*Diane and Dennis Zuercher, by Annie,
Dennis, Henry, and Emma Zuercher*

To the glory of God by:

Al May

One Solitary Life

from a sermon by Dr James Allan Francis in "The Real Jesus and Other Sermons" © 1926

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself..

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

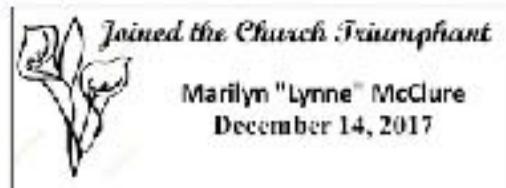
I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life....

December 24, 2017

FPC NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

DECEMBER PRAYER

Eternal, everlasting Lord, who are mortals that you are mindful of us? Yet in never ending, immeasurable love, you entered into the human condition as a helpless infant of humble birth and through the witness of your Son's earthly life, set humankind and your world on the path of redemption. This Advent season, as we wait with anticipation to celebrate His birth and look forward to the promised second coming, keep us alert. Awaken our senses, our minds, and our hearts to the in-breaking of your Holy Spirit in our lives. Help us to notice the miracles of the ordinary. Help us to tune in to your love song that serenades us in the beauty of the sunrise, the whisper of the breeze, and the laughter of children. Help us to catch glimpses of you in the eyes of a stranger, the opportunities for growth presented by obstacles, and the blessings of the interruptions in life. Thank you for bringing new life to every moment of every day. Fill our days of waiting with the wonder of your presence. Come, Lord Jesus, come!



If you would like to honor or memorialize a loved one with chancel flowers, please fill out a green envelope, available in the church pew. Enclose your donation of \$45 with the memo "Chancel flowers." Flower envelopes may be dropped in the offering plate or delivered to the church office.



PRAYER CONCERNS

Please remember in prayer: LuElla Ames, Millie Bradley, Rev. Bob Burkhardt, Kat Cline, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Jim and Petra Garnett,

Jacquelyn Georges, Nancy Grandoff, Martha Ann Haile, Dave Herzik, Claire Hoel, Hilman Holifield, Dwight Holshouser, Jean Howie, David and Barbara Hubbell, Bonnie Jackson, Jim and Iberia Johnston, Glenice Kelley, Michael Liguori, Tom Lippert, Ilda Hall Littell, Dave and Pam Malone, Barbara Mauger, Kathie Mayhall, Nancy McLaughlin, M.D. Miller, Tommy Miller (Johnny's brother), Tamara Murphy, Col. Dick Newton, Janet Poling, Bob Reed, Joy Russak, Marge Siebert, Jane Snoke, Laura Unger, Philip Ware, Rev. Alice Winters, and Dennis Zuercher.

Please pray for our family and friends serving overseas in the military: Brian Herzik, USA; ADM James Loeblein, USN; CPT Robert Wilson, USAF. *Please provide us with mailing addresses for our card ministry.*

If you know of others, please let us know. Contact **Blanche Ganey** (bganey@fpc-stpete.org).

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

The Christmas Joy Offering will be received today. Please show your support and gratitude for those who faithfully serve. By giving, you help provide critical financial assistance for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need.

PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS TREE

As you begin writing your Christmas cards this season, please consider bringing a card for the Pastor's enclosing a donation for the Pastor's Assistance Fund provides support throughout the year to congregation and others local social services to pay for utility shelter, and other necessities. Each members of the Mission Ministry will Christmas trees located in the back



Christmas tree and Assistance Fund. The confidential financial members of our recommended by bills, medical needs, Sunday in December, be available at the of the fellowship hall

and sanctuary following the 9:00 and 11:00 services, respectively, to take your donations and hang your cards. They will also provide you with a card if you need one.

DINING WITH DAWN

The next scheduled “Dining with Dawn” is Sunday, January 7, in the youth center at 12:30 p.m. If you signed up for this time slot, please make your way to the youth center after church.

BLUE CHRISTMAS?

Christmas is a season of joy for most people. But we all have years when it seems more like a Blue Christmas. If this sounds like you, let us come to visit awhile. Stephen Ministers, men and women, are ready to be with you, one-on-one, in utmost confidentiality. Please contact **Pastor Dawn**, or call **Ginger McCoy** at 804-2494.

MEDITATION FOR CHRISTIANS

You are invited to experience meditation and a new small group. We meet on alternate Tuesday evenings. Next meeting will be December 26 in the chapel from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Our group leader is **Carlen Maddux**. For more information, please contact **John Sims** (867-4032, or simsjr@eckerd.edu). We welcome your inquiries and presence.

END-OF-YEAR GIVING



During December, many of us consider steps we can take to reduce our income tax burden due by April 15 of the following year. One effective step is to increase charitable contributions before year end. If you have not yet completed your 2017 Stewardship pledge, or if you would like to contribute a designated gift to another need in the church (e.g., new chairs for the Fellowship Hall), we hope you will consider giving toward those causes before December 31. All contributions to the Lord’s mission work through First Presbyterian

Church of St. Petersburg are greatly appreciated.

YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

Please note that all contributions for the year 2017 must be received by **December 31st** unless they are mailed to the church, in which case they must be postmarked by **December 30th**.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24**CHRISTMAS EVE****Praise Worship Service 10:00 AM F'ship Hall**

FPC Bus Transportation from

Westminster 9:45 AM Church Bus

Children's Sunday School 10:00 AM

Children & Family Worship 4:00 PM F'ship Hall**Traditional Candlelight Service 7:00 PM**

Sanctuary

Alcoholics Anonymous 8:00 PM N-121

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25**Merry Christmas****Church Office Closed****TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26****Church Office Closed**

Parents' Morning Out (PMO) 9:00 AM Child Care

Faith Dev. Bible Study 9:30 AM N-123

Girl Scout Troop 439 6:30 PM S-206

Alcoholics Anonymous 7:30 PM N-121

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27

Kids' Fun Day 9:00 AM Youth Cntr

Girl Scout Troop 128 7:00 PM S-206

Alcoholics Anonymous-Women 7:00 PM N-121

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28

Kids' Fun Day 9:00 AM Youth Cntr

Pastor's Lunch Bunch at Gigi's 12:00 PM Off-

site

Men's Community Bible Study 6:30 PM Youth Cntr

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29

Men's Sunrise Bible Study 7:30 AM N-123

Kids' Fun Day 9:00 AM Youth Cntr

Parents' Morning Out (PMO) 9:00 AM Child Care

Girl Scout Troop 570 6:30 PM S-206

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30**New Hope Christian****Fellowship****5:30 PM Offsite**

Al-Anon Family Group

7:00 PM N-121

Merry Christmas to you and yours from the church
staff!

Rev. Dr. Dawn Conti, Pastor ♦ Matt Caine, Director of Music ♦ Jack Rain, Organist

Susan Key, Parish Associate ♦ Ashley Davis, Day School Director ♦ Carol Riley, Children's Ministry

Coordinator Stacey Ramirez, Director of Child Care ♦ Jessica Rentschlar, Youth Ministry Coordinator ♦

Carole Igney, Bookkeeper ♦ Johnny Miller, Building & Grounds Superintendent ♦ Bob Langley,

Custodian ♦ Blanche Ganey, Office Manager

701 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701 ♦ Church Office: (727) 822-2031 ♦ Fax: (727)
894-2971

Day School: (727) 894-5889 ♦ Web site: www.fpc-stpete.org ♦ E-mail: office@fpc-stpete.org