



Advent Sermon Series "The Wonder of Christmas"

During the Advent Season we are exploring the Wonder of Christmas once more.

It's still possible to pause and sense the Wonder of the surpassing gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. In this Advent Season we will seek to experience once again the awe, the wonderment, and the surprising grace of the Lord Jesus. Over four Sundays and Christmas Eve we will think about the Wonder of Hope, Faith, Love, Peace, and Joy.

Celebrate the Hope, Love, Peace, and Joy of Christ Jesus with us.

Sunday, December 6, "The Wonder of Faith" Luke 1:37-38; 1:45-55, Luke 1:28-38

This Weekend in Worship we think about the Wonder of Faith as we look at Mary's response to the angel Gabriel. It's great to first hear that, "the Lord is with you." If the God of all the universe is with you, you begin to feel pretty secure. But then Mary finds out the plan. She is to have a baby and not just any baby, it's Jesus, "the Son of the Most High." There's one big problem, she isn't even married yet. But then at end of this startling conversation, no huge revelation she responds, "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." That's remarkable faith in the Lord. We are going to think about the wonder of expanding our faith as we journey to the stable in Bethlehem once more.

--Craig

e-News

December 2, 2020

805 Western Ave., Joliet, IL 60435 815-727-9259 firstpresjoliet.org

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

No information

All in-person activities including Live Worship services are postponed.

While Covid-19 cases rise in our community we are hoping everyone can stay home, stay safe, and do their part in protecting our community.

Please continue checking communications from us for further updates on Holiday Services and when we might be able to worship together again.

We will confidently be continuing our Online Worship for the foreseeable future

For timely communication with staff we recommend email (office@firstpresjoliet.org) since we are largely working remotely. Voicemails will be checked and returned as possible.

We have **1 worship service online** with traditional and contemporary songs in the service. Look for it online,(YouTube (firstpresjoliet), facebook, our website) or check the email sent each Saturday afternoon.

December 2, 2020

Stewardship Report

 2020-2021 Budget
 \$734,307

 Year to Date Income
 \$396,310

 Year to Date Expenses
 \$392,716

2020-2021 Bequest/Gift Income Received \$4,200 Received for bathroom renovation—\$11,650 Per Capita: \$38.47

You may text your gift to FPJ at (815)205-3044 or go online to use a credit card

You can give by mail, by online giving through our website using the "Give" tab, and through electronic giving.

Thank you for your generosity.

THE PASTOR'S CORNER... Craig Herr, Senior Pastor

On Sunday, December 6, On this Second Weekend in the Advent Season we continue to worship through Online Video Worship on Facebook and YouTube. We will celebrate Advent Communion in Worship this Weekend. Make your preparations for communion by acquiring the bread and grape juice for your worship experience.

Come in faith to worship this weekend.

For Pastoral Care please call the office to leave a message to talk with a pastor or call us on our cell phones. We are available and can access our messages from home.

For the Advent Season please give through the church to buy food for hungry people in Will County. We are not going to order 120 poinsettia's this year. We are going to decorate the front of the Sanctuary/Worship Center for our Online Video Worship services. We will acquire some poinsettia's to add some color to the Christmas Trees and Characters from our large Manger Creche setting for the front of the church. Instead of purchasing poinsettia's we invite you to make donations to the church for the Northern IL Food Bank in memory of loved ones and to the Glory of God. Every \$1 you give will help provide \$8 worth of groceries for hungry people.

Our **Advent Online Devotional** Blog this Season has been changed up to focus on one scripture passage each day. Each passage is about the story of God's saving and redeeming love for us in and through Christ Jesus. I encourage you to access our Church Devotional Blog as you make your way through this Advent Season. Here's the link: https://firstpresjoliet.wordpress.com

As we journey through this unusual Advent Season, in a time of pandemic and restrictions, we still seek the Savior's presence, peace, and profound joy. Let's continue to say our prayers and ponder the gift of the Christ Child.

Craig

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Reminder: If you are experiencing emotional hardship (depression, grieving etc.) you can reach out to our Stephen Ministry to receive help from a trained team. This can be from someone in our FPJ family or not depending on preference. Everything is confidential. These are hard times but you are not alone, please contact Pastor Craig to be put in touch with Stephen Ministry.

Sunday, November 29, "The Wonder of Hope" Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

I work in downtown Joliet, in an office with no windows. So I like to slip outside, feel the sun and get some fresh air once in a while. A few weeks ago, I met a friend by the fountain across the street from the Rialto. And I noticed something odd. I saw various winter coats wrapped around trees. I asked my friend why and she said people leave coats on the trees so that those who are without a coat can take one and be warm. How WONDERFUL this is! It reminded me that hope is ALWAYS present, because hope is grounded in God and his promises. Hope is more than wishes, hope is a sure thing. A sure thing like God working through regular ordinary people to bring warmth to others.

We are beginning Advent, an Advent like none before it. Shopping still needs to be done. Christmas needs to be figured out. How do we celebrate safely? It's a whole new level to the chaos that the Christmas season typically brings. But Advent is a time of waiting. Not just to open presents, but to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Advent reminds us that God does not want to be distant, that he actually entered right into the midst of this busy, messy, loud chaotic world

This Sunday we took a look at parts of Psalm 80. Psalm 80 is actually a corporate prayer of lament. A catastrophe has befallen the community and the people cry out to God. Just as we do today. God has not abandoned us. He brings the good news of mercy, love and HOPE in person through Jesus Christ, born in the most humble of circumstances long ago.

Psalm 80 is a lament, and a beacon of hope. The people cried out to God to be saved. And he saves us. Unexpectedly. Powerfully. Hope comes into our world as a defenseless baby. The psalmist demanded that God's face shine, and shine it did - in the light of a child born in Bethlehem. The light that darkness has not, and will not, overcome

All of our virtual Worship Services are available on our YouTube page and website.

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