

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Pastor: Rev. Emily Cowser

Liturgist: Karen Witte

Organist: Ann Swisher

“The one who is worthy of worship, glory, and fanfare spent decades in obscurity and ordinariness. As if the incarnation itself is not mind-bending enough, the incarnate God spent his days quietly, a man who went to work, got sleepy, and lived a pedestrian life among average people.”

- Tish Harrison Warren, *Liturgy of the Ordinary: Sacred Practices in Everyday Life*

**Please stand if you are able*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The Word became flesh and lived among us

ALL: And we have seen his glory.

One: The true light that enlightens everyone has come into the world.

ALL: Glory to God who has blessed us in Christ. Glory to God forever.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

While shepherds kept
their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain

that Jesus Christ is born!

The shepherds feared
and trembled
when lo! above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

Down in a lowly manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere;
go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!

*CALL TO CONFESSiON

*PRAYER OF CONFESSiON

ALL: God of love and compassion, you have come into the world and yet we have not recognized you. Forgive our lack of insight and open our eyes to see you here and now, that we may receive your grace through Jesus our Christ.

Amen. (*a moment of silent confession*)

*DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

*THE PEACE

*“Gloria Patri”

GtG #581

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.

OLD TESTAMENT READING Jeremiah 31:7-14 Page 1225

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PSALM READING Psalm 147 Page 981

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

NEW TESTAMENT READING Ephesians 1:3-14 Page 1817

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC “In Dulci Jubilo” Video

attrib. Heinrich Seuse, J.S. Bach, D. Buxtehude

Performed by Libera

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

GOSPEL READING John 1:1-18 Page 1645

One: The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ!

SERMON

*HYMN “In the Bleak Midwinter” GtG #144

In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan;
earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;

Snow had fallen,
snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak midwinter,
long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away
when he comes to reign:

In the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
the Lord God incarnate,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
may have gathered there;
cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;

But his mother only,
in her maiden bliss,
worshiped the beloved
with a kiss.

What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;

If I were a wise man,
I would do my part;
yet what I can I give him:
give my heart.

ALL: The darkness is our friend.

One: In the darkness of the womb,
we have all been nurtured and protected.
In the darkness of the womb
the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light.

ALL: It is only in the darkness

**that we can see the splendor of the universe –
blankets of stars, the solitary glowings of the planets.**

One: It was the darkness that allowed the Magi to find the star
that guided them to where the Christ-child lay.

**ALL: In the darkness of the night,
desert people find relief from the cruel relentless heat of the sun.**

One: In the blessed desert darkness
Mary and Joseph were able to flee with the infant Jesus to safety in Egypt.

**ALL: In the darkness of sleep,
we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed.**

One: In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up.

ALL: God spoke to Joseph and the wise men through dreams.

God is speaking still.

One: Sometimes in the solitude of the darkness, our fears and concerns,
our hopes and visions rise to the surface.

**ALL: We come face to face with ourselves
and with the road that lies ahead of us.**

One: And in that same darkness
we find companionship for the journey.

**ALL: In that same darkness
we sometimes allow ourselves to wonder and worry
whether the human race is going to survive.**

One: And then, in the darkness, we know that you are with us, O God,
yet still we await your coming.

**ALL: In the darkness that contains both our hopelessness and our hope,
we watch for a sign of God's hope.**

For you are with us, O God, in darkness and in light.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Nicene Creed

ALL: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE OFFERING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY "In Sweet Rejoicing"
 Marcel Dupre(1886-1971)

Offering plates are located in the back of the sanctuary. You may also give online at fpchelena.org/giving or by mailing a check to First Presbyterian Church 535 N. Ewing St., Helena, MT 59601.

*DOXOLOGY "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" GtG #606

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.

*OFFERING PRAYER

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

GREAT THANKSGIVING

One: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

SANCTUS

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

GtG #552

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full
of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest,
hosanna in the highest.

One: Great is the mystery of faith:

ALL: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**ALL: 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.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

COMMUNION

One: The gifts of God for the people of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As with gladness men of old
did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light,
leading onward, beaming bright;
so, most gracious Lord, may we
evermore be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped,
Savior, to thy lowly bed, there to
bend the knee before thee,
whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet
ever seek thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare
at thy manger, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy,
pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.

Holy Jesus, every day
keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past,

bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide,
where no clouds thy glory hide.

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star"
 Marcel Dupre

Announcements

Welcome!

A special welcome to visitors joining us for worship today. If you have children with you, feel free to hand them one of the cloth bags hanging in the back of the sanctuary — they are filled with books and toys! Hymns are found in the "Glory to God" (GtG) hymnal in the pews, as well as on the screen. Please sign the red fellowship pad in your pew and pass it to your neighbor. It is our tradition to remain seated during the Postlude at the conclusion of the service. After the service, please join us for refreshments and conversation!

Doors Locked During Service

Session decided to lock the main entrance doors during the worship service. The doors are locked from 10:15 to 11 a.m., and unlocked again between 11 a.m. and noon.

Warm Hearts Drive

The Warm Hearts drive has begun and will conclude at the end of January, to be gifted on Valentine's Day. The drive collects new blankets (bedding), new towels (washcloths, hand towels & bath towels.) Your donations will serve Family Promise, God's Love, Good Samaritan Ministries, Helena Community Offender Reentry Program, Rocky Mountain Development Center, The Friendship Center, and YWCA. Warm Hearts is an ecumenical ministry of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Associates of Helena "to witness and share the mission of Jesus who calls us to love God with our whole hearts and love our neighbor even as God loves us."

Help Undecorate the Church January 11

Please plan to stay after the service on January 11 to help take down the holiday decorations. We'll grab cookies and coffee, and share some good fellowship!

You're Invited!

Monday, Jan. 5 Personnel Committee 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 7 Choir 2 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 8	Sarah & Rebekah Bible Study 10 a.m.
Friday, Jan. 9	Hand & Foot Cards 1:30 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 11	Worship Service 10 a.m. Social Time & Undecorating 11 a.m. Deacons 11:15 a.m.

Staff

Ministers—Every Member	Organist—Ann Swisher
Pastor—Rev. Emily Cowser	Treasurer—Leo Potter
Director of Music & Media—Les Cramer	Office Coordinator—Julie Young

FPC Elders

Patti Borsberry (Worship Chair)	John Bryan (Christian Ed Chair)	Jim Meyer (Administration Chair)
Jeff Chaffee (Personnel Chair)		Butch Plowman (Building & Grounds Chair)
Barb Leland (Friendship Chair)		Carol Gneckow (Mission & Outreach Chair)

John Gneckow, Clerk of Session

FPC Deacons

BJ Burns	Bonnie Anderson	Vicky Bryan
Kathy Chambers	Ward Stiles, Vice-Moderator	Art Bumgardner, Moderator
Jill Cook		Rena Bumgardner

		Ria Caussyn
		Carole Massman



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Pastor Emily Cowser

Phone: 406-442-4775 **Email:** pastor@fpchelena.org

Weekly Sermon on HCTV Cable Channel 189, Wednesdays 6 p.m. & Saturdays 9 a.m.