

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Pastor: Emily Cowser

Liturgist: Vic Reiman

Organist: Ann Swisher

"And in fact, if we look with the elevated gaze of our mind at the condition wherein the heavenly and supernal virtues that are truly in the kingdom of God make their home, what else should it be thought to be than perpetual and continual joy? For what belongs so much to true blessedness and so befits it as continual tranquility and everlasting joy?"

- John Cassian, fourth century monk and theologian

**Please stand if you are able*

PRELUDE

"Light Dawns on a Weary World"

David M. Cherwien (b. 1957)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Joe & Susan Steffens

One: Let us pray:

O Lord, our redeemer,

you lead us from languishing in sorrow's shadows

into laughter's joy over your abundant restoration.

Thank you that you are coming for us

to lead us home along your way, Jesus Christ.

ALL: Amen.

HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

GtG #88

(Verse 3)

O come, O come,

thou Lord of might,

who to thy tribes on Sinai's height

in ancient times didst give the law

in cloud and majesty and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

shall come to thee, O Israel.

*HYMN

"Creator of the Stars of Night"

GtG #84

Creator of the stars of night,
your people's everlasting light,
O Christ, redeemer of us all,
we pray you, hear us when we call.

When this old world drew on
toward night,
you came; but not in
splendor bright,
not as a monarch, but the child
of Mary, blameless mother mild.

At your great name, O Jesus, now
all knees must bend,
all hearts must bow:
all things on earth with one accord,
like those in heaven,
shall call you Lord.

To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit,
Three in One,
praise, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age eternally.
Amen.

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ALL: God of majesty and glory, we are thirsty for your grace. You made a way for us in the wilderness, and still, in our foolishness, we go astray. We hide our eyes from your presence. We do not listen to your word. We are lifeless when we

ought to dance and speechless when we ought to sing. Forgive us, O Lord. Speak peace to our fearful hearts, strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees as we seek to follow in your holy way. Amen.

(a moment of silent confession)

***DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

One: Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness. Sing a song of redemption! Let sorrow and sighing be no more. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

***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.

PSALM READING

Psalm 146

Page 980

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 11:2-19

Page 1512

One: The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ!

NEW TESTAMENT READING

James 5:7-12

Page 1885

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM

“I Shall Know Him When He Comes”

Douglas E. Wagner

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 35:1-10

Page 1111

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON

While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel,
while we are waiting, come.

While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.

With power and glory, come;
with power and glory, come.

While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.

Come, Savior, quickly come;
come, Savior, quickly come.

While we are waiting, come;
while we are waiting, come.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

From A Brief Statement of Faith

ALL: In a broken and fearful world, the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE and THE LORD’S PRAYER

THE OFFERING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

Paul Manz (1919-2009)

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

*HYMN

"People, Look East"

GtG #105

People, look east.
The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair
as you are able;

Trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Guest,
is on the way.

Furrows, be glad.
Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength
the seed to nourish,

That in course the flower
may flourish.

People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Rose,
is on the way.

Birds, though you long
have ceased to build,
guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings
are frozen

God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Bird,
is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch.
When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,

Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Star,
is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts
of mirth
Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming

With the word,
the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Lord,
is on the way.

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Postlude on "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"
Robert J. Powell (1932-2025)

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.

Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Gifts Due Today

Thanks to all who have taken a Christmas pull card for gifting to the families in the Angel Tree Program. A gentle reminder the gifts need to be wrapped, returned with the gift card attached, no later than today. Again, thank you for participating!

Music for Christmas Next Sunday!

Join us next Sunday for worship and a musical celebration of the Christmas season, featuring a variety of musicians offering music over the centuries from around the world!

Christmas Joy Special Offering

The Christmas Joy Special Offering, one of four annual special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA), continues until Dec. 21. Half of your gifts help current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need, and the other half prepares students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Questions? Call Carol Gneckow, (406) 422-9914.

You're Invited!

Tuesday, Dec. 16	Session 1 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 17	Nominating Committee 1:15 p.m. Choir 2 p.m. Handbell Ringers 3:30 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 18	Advent Study 11 a.m.
Friday, Dec. 19	Friday Bible Study 12/noon Hand & Foot Cards 1:30 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 21 <i>"Music for Christmas"</i>	Worship Service 10 a.m. Social Time 11 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
Kathy Chambers
Jill Cook

Bonnie Anderson
Ward Stiles, Vice-Moderator

Vicky Bryan
Art Bumgardner, Moderator
Rena Bumgardner
Ria Caussyn
Carole Massman



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PC(USA)

535 North Ewing Street ~ Helena, MT 59601

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: 406-442-4775 **Email:** admin@fpchelena.org **Website:** www.fpchelena.org

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.