

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Pastor: Emily Cowser

Liturgist: Jim Meyer

Organist: Ann Swisher

"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

- Augustine, North African bishop, theologian, and philosopher

**Please stand if you are able*

PRELUDE

"Giga from Sonata in G Major"

Queen City Consort

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755)

CHORAL INTROIT

"Once in Royal David's City"

Chancel Choir

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Les & Louise Cramer

One: Let us pray:

God of hope, Prince of peace, Jubilee Judge, and Lord of love, your goodness is beyond our wildest imaginings. You give us more than we can think to ask, coming to us with impossible possibility in the union of flesh and spirit. Teach us to love this world and all people as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

ALL: God of promise, God of hope, into our darkness come.

HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

GtG #88

(Verse 4)

O come, thou Root of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save
and give them victory
o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

*HYMN

"Savior of the Nations, Come"

GtG #102

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.

From God's heart the
Savior speeds;
back to God his pathway leads;
out to vanquish death's command,
back to reign at God's right hand.

Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"
"A Great Light"

FPC Ringers
Chancel Choir

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ALL: God of night and day, there is no shadow that can conceal our sin from you and no secret that you will not bring to light. For our reveling and drunkenness, forgive us, O God. For our debauchery and licentiousness, forgive us, O God. For our quarreling and jealousy, forgive us, O God. O God, forgive us our sins, renew us in love, and teach us to live in a way that brings honor and glory to your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *(a moment of silent confession)*

*DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

One: You are called to belong to Jesus Christ." For the sake of the One God promised to send, named as God's Son, who died, was raised, and through whom we receive grace, God forgives you all your sins. You are God's beloved, called to be saints.

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 80

Page 919

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Christmas Child”

Chancel Choir

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 1:18-25

Page 1497

One: The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ!

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Scandinavian Christmas Carols”

FPC Ringers

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 1:1-7

Page 1746

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“All Loveliness New-Born”

Chancel Choir

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON

*HYMN

“Now the Heavens Start to Whisper”

GtG #94

Now the heavens start to whisper,
as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen
to the stirring, faint within:

Seed of promise, deeply planted,
child to spring from Jesse’s stem!

Like the soil beneath the frostline,
hearts grow soft to welcome him.

Heavy clouds that block
the moonlight
now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance
through the darkness
shines the hope of coming day.

Christ, the morning star
of splendor,
gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven's ember fans to fullness;
hearts grow warm
to welcome him.

Christ, eternal Sun of justice,
Christ, the rose of wisdom's seed,
come to bless with fire
and fragrance
hours of yearning, hurt, and need.

In the lonely, in the stranger,
in the outcast, hid from view:
child who comes to grace
the manger,
teach our hearts to welcome you.

***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

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Jesus Child"

Chancel Choir

THE OFFERING

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY "Allemanda from Sonata in G Major"

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier

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

"Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

GtG #107

Awake! Awake,
and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy,
for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.

Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,

he opens wide the heavenly door
and lives now inside us forever.

To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing;
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;

Music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of loving-kindness.
The thunder of his anthems rolls
to shatter all hatred and violence.

In darkest night his coming
shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.

Then shall the mute break forth
in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above
the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart
in the night.
Though dark the winter
and cheerless, the rising sun shall
crown you with light;
be strong and loving and fearless.

Love be our song and love
our prayer

and love our endless story;
may God fill every day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“God Rest You Merry”
Wilbur Held (1914-2015)

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.

Christmas Joy Special Offering Concludes Today

The Christmas Joy Special Offering, one of four annual special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA), concludes today. 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.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Dec. 24, at 7 p.m.

Join us for a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m., as we celebrate the birth of the Savior!

Church Office Closed Dec. 25-Jan. 2

The church office will be closed Thursday, Dec. 25, through Friday, Jan. 2. Pastor Emily will be out of town the evening of Sunday, Dec. 28, through Saturday, Jan. 3, but can be reached by cell phone in case of emergencies. You may also call Commissioned Pastor Dianna Goodman at 406-

431-8964. If she is not available, contact Butch Plowman at 406-558-9240. You may also get in touch with your shepherd.

Service of Lessons & Carols Sunday, Dec. 28, 10 a.m.

We will celebrate the First Sunday of Christmas on December 28, with a service of lessons & carols. Come ready to sing Christmas hymns and hear God's saving Word.

You're Invited!

Wednesday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 28

Worship Service 10 a.m.

Service of Lessons & Carols

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.