

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Pastor: Emily Cowser

Liturgist: John Coefield

Organist: Ann Swisher

"Penance is the acceptance of responsibility for repair, and it is one of the most healing things a repentant sinner can do, as well as one of the most painful....True repentance...promises us reunion with God and one another. It promises us restoration to community, and to all the responsibilities that go along with life in relationship."

-Barbara Brown Taylor, American Episcopal priest, academic, and author

**Please stand if you are able*

PRELUDE

"Savior of the Nations, Come"

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

"WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND CALL TO WORSHIP

Patti Borsberry & Cathy Kovich

One: Let us pray:

Faithful God,

you are at work to restore all of creation

in its intended harmony.

Give us your shalom that we may be reconciled to all enemies

in the peace that passes all understanding

through Christ Jesus our Lord.

ALL: God of promise, God of hope,

into our darkness come.

HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

GtG #88

(Verse 2)

O come, thou Wisdom

from on high,

who orderest all things mightily:

to us the path of knowledge show;

and teach us in her ways to go.

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

SPECIAL MUSIC

by Spanglish Students with Maestra Stacy Clement

*HYMN

“For You, O Lord, My Soul in Stillness Waits”

GtG #89

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

O Lord of Light,
our only hope of glory,
your radiance shines in all
who look to you;
come, light the hearts of all
in dark and shadow.

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

Spring of Joy, rain down
upon our spirits;
our thirsty hearts are yearning
for your word;
come, make us whole,
be comfort to our hearts.

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

O Root of Life,
implant your seed within us,
and in your advent,

draw us all to you,
our hope reborn in dying
and in rising.

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

O Key of Knowledge,
guide us in our pilgrimage;
we ever seek,
yet unfulfilled remain;
open to us the pathway
of your peace.

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

Come, let us bow
before the God who made us;
let every heart be opened
to the Lord,
for we are all the people
of God's hand.

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

Here we shall meet
the Maker of the heavens,
Creator of the mountains
and the seas,
Lord of the stars,

and present to us now.

For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

ALL: Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

(a moment of silent confession)

***DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

One: The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, that we might be dead to sin, and alive to all that is good. I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ, you 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 72

Page 908

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 15:1-13

Page 1766

One: The Word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM

“A Great Light”
by Lloyd Larson

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 3:1-12

Page 1499

One: The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON

*HYMN

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

GtG #96

On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every life
from sin;
make straight the way for
God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without your grace we waste away
like flowers that wither and decay.

Stretch forth your hand;
our health restore,
and make us rise to fall no more.
O let your face upon us shine
and fill the world with love divine.

*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 "Savior of the Nations, Come"

J.S. Bach

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.

*HYMN

“The People Who Walked in Darkness”

GtG #86

The people who walked
in darkness
awaken to see a great light.
The people who dwelt in the land
of the shadow
rise to a star shining bright.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,
Father forever, Prince of Peace.
His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,
Father forever, Prince of Peace.

For God has enlarged the nation,
and prospered the fruit of its land.
God's people are blest with the
harvest of victory,
gift from a bountiful hand.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,
Father forever, Prince of Peace.
His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,
Father forever, Prince of Peace.

The yoke of despair and bondage,
the chains of the slave master's rod
are shattered and scattered like
dust in a windstorm,

loosed by the justice of God.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

For us now a child is given,
for all the despised and forlorn.
The rule of compassion shall rest
on his shoulder.

God's own Messiah is born!

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

How vast is our God's dominion!
How far truth and mercy extend.
The zeal of the Lord will
accomplish its purpose:
justice shall reign without end.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

His name is Wonderful, Counselor,
Almighty God,

Father forever, Prince of Peace.

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Lord Christ, the Only Son of God”
J.S. Bach

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.

Thank You, Spanglish Students!

Thank you Spanglish students and Maestro Stacy Clement for providing special music today!

Christmas Caroling Today at 1 p.m.

You are invited to Christmas Carol around the Helena community today! We will meet in the Church parking lot at 1pm and carpool to our first location: Touchmark. Other locations will follow. You don't have to have a fantastic singing voice or be a member of our Choir to participate. Everyone is encouraged to come and join the fun!

Family Promise Benefit Concert Today at 4 p.m.

John Floridis will present a concert at St. Paul's Methodist Church today at 4 p.m. to benefit Family Promise. Tickets are available by donation at the door.

Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Gifts Due Dec. 14

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 Sunday, December 14. Again, thank you for participating!

Christmas Joy Special Offering

The Christmas Joy Special Offering has begun and continues until Dec. 21. This offering is one of four annual special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Your offering prepares the way for the leaders of our Church - past, present and future. 50% of your gifts smooth the path for current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need. 50% of your gifts prepare students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Questions? Call Carol Gneckow, (406) 422-9914.

Advent Study Continues

Commissioned Pastor Dianna Goodman is leading an Advent study on Thursdays, Dec. 11 and 18, at 11 a.m., in the church library. The study is using the book, "Names for the Messiah," by Walter Brueggemann. A light lunch will be provided. If you plan to participate but have not signed up yet, please let Dianna know.

You're Invited!

Monday, Dec. 8	Christian Education Committee 12/noon Mission Committee 1 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 9	Worship Committee 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 10	Building & Grounds 10 a.m. Friendship Committee 1 p.m. Choir Rehearsal 2 p.m. Handbell Ringers 3:30 p.m. Administration Committee 4 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 11	Advent Study 11 a.m.
Friday, Dec. 12	Friday Bible Study 12/noon Hand & Foot Cards 1:30 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 14	Worship Service 10 a.m. Social Time 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)

Barb Leland
(Friendship Chair)

Butch Plowman
(Building & Grounds 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



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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.