



## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FENTON

To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people know Jesus Christ and grow, share and serve as his disciples.

3rd Sunday of Advent

December 15th, 2024 10:00 a.m.

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### GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

#### PRELUDE

#### WELCOME

#### INTROIT

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

“Teacher,” the crowd asked, “What should we do?”

**If you have two shirts, give one away.**

**Hold onto hope.**

**Live like we belong to one another.**

**Speak the truth.**

**Look for God.**

**Do the good that is yours to do.**

It's all that easy, and it's all that hard.

**Let us worship our present and active God.**

#### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

One: In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

**All: Let us start small.**

**Let us begin with what is right in front of us.**

**Let us do the good that is ours to do,  
and let us do it with joy!**

One: Yes, let us begin with joy.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace,  
and joy. (Lit the Candles)

**All: May these lights remind us of what could be.**

**May these lights inspire action.**

**May the warmth of these lights fill us with joy.**

One: May it be so! Amen.

#### HYMN PH #82 BH #2

“Come thou long expected Jesus”

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

Friends, there are times when the weight of the world can feel so heavy on us.  
 Fortunately, when we come before God in confession, God removes that weight.  
 God sees our shame, our guilt, our sin, and offers us grace.  
 So join me in the prayer of confession.  
 Come and allow yourself to be freed.  
 Come and allow yourself to begin again.  
 Let us pray:

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (In Unison)

**Liberating God,  
 There are days when the world can feel like it's crumbling.  
 There are days when I doubt that I can make a difference.  
 I ask myself,  
 What could these two hands do?  
 What could this one voice say?  
 Shake me free of my own paralysis and self-doubt.  
 Remind me that I am not called to fix everything.  
 I am simply called to do the good that is mine to do.  
 With hope in my heart and a fire in my bones, I pray.  
 Amen.**

**DECLARATION OF PARDON**

Friends, no matter how many times  
 we lose momentum,  
 doubt our own ability,  
 or tell ourselves that the problems of the world are simply too big,  
 God sees what we cannot.  
 God calls us by name,  
 surrounds us in grace,  
 and invites us to begin again.  
 Trusting in this good news, join me in proclaiming these words of forgiveness:  
**We are loved. We are forgiven. We are invited to do the good that is ours to do. Thanks be to  
 God for this new beginning. Amen.**

## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Listening God,  
 We know that you are constantly speaking to us.  
 Through music, scripture, nature, and relationships,  
 you make yourself known again and again.  
 In gratitude, we long to return the favor.  
 In gratitude, we long to meet you halfway.

So in this moment,  
 We are quieting the noise in our heads.  
 We are closing our eyes.  
 We are leaning in.  
 We are listening.  
 We are doing the good that is ours to do.  
 Speak to us through the chaos.  
 Speak to us as only you can.  
 With hope in our hearts  
 we listen, we pray,  
 Amen.

**OLD TESTAMENT LESSON:** Isaiah 58:9b-12

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**9** Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
 you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."  
 If you remove the yoke from among you,  
 the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,  
**10** if you offer your food to the hungry  
 and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
 then your light shall rise in the darkness  
 and your gloom be like the noonday.  
**11** The LORD will guide you continually  
 and satisfy your needs in parched places  
 and make your bones strong,  
 and you shall be like a watered garden,  
 like a spring of water  
 whose waters never fail.  
**12** Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
 you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
 you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
 the restorer of streets to live in.

**ANTHEM** 1st Noel/Pacabel's Canon

**NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:** Luke 3:7-16

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**7** John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? **8** Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. **9** Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

**10** And the crowds asked him, "What, then, should we do?" **11** In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do

likewise.” **12** Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” **13** He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” **14** Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

**15** As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, **16** John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

**SERMON**                      Do the Good That is Yours to Do

### RESPONDING TO THE WORD

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

John the Baptist’s followers once asked him, “What shall we do?” Church, knowing the state of the world, what is your answer?

**In the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we say:**

**Do not be discouraged by the weight of the world.**

**Instead, hold fast to hope.**

**Roll up your sleeves.**

**Feed the hungry.**

**Tend the garden.**

**If you have two coats, give one away.**

**Do the good that is yours to do.**

**In doing so, you will see God.**

**For this we believe: small acts of love can make a difference.**

**Amen.**

### BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

#### OFFERING

When we give to the church we don’t simple give to provide for the utility bills, employee salaries and benevolences. We give ultimately to please our Creator, Redeemer and Friend. Let us pray:

We pray, Lord, that all that is given is do so freely and with joy. May these gifts be blessed to your use to further the ministries of this church and support the proclamation of the Gospel in our community. Amen.

*(If you would like a written prayer request included in our prayers today, please indicate that and an usher will collect them)*

*Will the Ushers Please come forward.*

**OFFERTORY**

Fanfare and Alleluia

Bell Choir

**DOXOLOGY**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

Loving Creator,

There are days when the world feels like it's on fire.

There are days when we are inundated with bad news,

days when we are up to our eyes in grief,

days when we have reached the end of our rope.

On those days, loving God, we reach for you.

On those days, we return to this sanctuary.

On those days, we light candles.

On those days, we sing.

On those days, we fight tooth and nail to hold onto hope.

So in an effort to release the fears that trap us, we name them aloud and give them to you.

God, hear our prayers:

Feel free to adapt this to name prayers that resonate specifically with the needs of your community.

For wars that cannot find an end,

for children who cannot find food,

for teenagers who cannot find peace—

Holy God, draw near.

For people who are lonely,

for people spending their holidays in the hospital,

for the tender challenge of every new beginning—

Loving God, draw near.

And as you draw near, remind us that we too can make a difference.

When the weight of the world overwhelms us,

remind us that faith looks like giving your second coat away.

Infuse us with hope.

Swat away our insecurities.

Drown out our doubts.

Silence the fears that cage us and remind us that change always come from “small acts of great love.”

So with hope in our hearts, we roll up our sleeves.

With hope in our hearts, we strive to do the good that is ours to do.

With hope in our hearts, we unite our voices in prayer, saying the words your son taught us to pray.

**LORD'S PRAYER**

*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.*

**CHRISTMAS PLAY**

Why the Chimes Rang

**HYMN PH #144 BH #36**

“In the Bleak MidWinter”

**CHARGE**—Romans 13:11-12, NRSV

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

**BENEDICTION**

“O’ Come All Ye Faithful”

**POSTLUDE**

Peace be with you!...and also with you!