

November 28, 2021



**First Presbyterian  
Church**  
of Pittsburgh

### Thankful For the Mess

A consumer reporter for one of the morning talk shows got in a bit of trouble last week. The reporter said that because everything is more expensive these days, one way to save money was to not serve turkey for Thanksgiving. The reporter said that might have an added benefit: some guests might not show up.

The reporter's advice wasn't well received.

Does anyone need a reporter to tell us that we can save money by buying cheaper entrees?

Isn't the point of Thanksgiving to give thanks *together*?

Aren't the ones we get together *with* the ones we're most thankful *for*?

In the movie *Christmas Vacation*, Chevy Chase as Clark Griswold drove his family crazy trying to have a "Fun, old-fashioned family Christmas." He nearly destroyed his house in the process.

But we all know *from experience* that things would have been a mess even if Clark had not been trying way, way too hard.

Relationships are messy, especially family relationships, and most especially when family relationships are combined with high stress and high expectations.

And yet long ago, when God walked the earth, Jesus was always eating with his friends in high stress situations:

A wedding where the wine had run out.

In the home of a man he'd just raised from the dead.

In a locked upper room with disciples afraid they were next to be crucified.

The Apostle Paul said that God demonstrated his love for us this way: While we were *still sinners*, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Let's be thankful for the mess.

Maybe we can even spot Jesus there too.

Tom's Blog



## WORSHIP SERVICE – 10:45 am

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**Prelude:** "Variations on 'Veni Creator Spiritus'" (Come, Holy Spirit)  
Maurice Duruflé

Ryan Croyle, *Organ*

**Time of Welcome**

Rev. Tom Hall, *Senior Pastor*

**Moment For Mission**

Judy Shipley, *Missions Chair*

**Advent Introit**

**\*Responsive Call to Worship**

Camilla Helenkamp, *Student Pastor*

Leader:

In the last days  
the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established  
as the highest of mountains;  
it will be raised above the hills,  
and all nations will stream to it.

Many peoples will come and say,

**People:**

**"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
To the temple of the God of Jacob."**

Leader:

"He will teach us his ways,  
so that we may walk in his paths."

He will judge between the nations

And will settle disputes for many peoples.

They will beat their swords into plowshares

And their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not take up sword against nation,

Nor will they train for war anymore.

**All: Come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.**

**\*Hymn #72: "Imagine"** (located in this bulletin)

**Unison Prayer of Confession**

Gracious and loving God, you are a God of justice and might, tenderness and mercy. We know of your promise to come again to set all things right. Yet we confess that we often live as people without hope. God of Hope, forgive us. Teach us to speak and sing once more of the coming of your great day of justice. *Amen.*

**Silent Confession**

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Hymn:** “*Child of Blessing, Child of Promise*”, vs. 1 & 2

Child of blessing, child of promise,  
Baptized with the Spirit’s sign,  
With this water God has sealed you  
Unto love and grace divine.

Child of love, our love’s expression,  
Love’s creation, love indeed!  
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,  
Into joy and laughter lead

**Sacrament of Baptism**

Rev. Tom Hall

*Amari Sulemana Ayebo*

Son of *Daniel Sulemana Ayebo* and *Michele Denice Claudon Ayebo*

**Hymn:** “*Child of Blessing, Child of Promise*”, vs. 3 & 4

Child of joy, our dearest treasure,  
God’s you are, from God’s you came.  
Back to God we humbly give you:  
Live as one who bears Christ’s name.

Child of God, our loving Parent,  
Learn to listen for God’s call.  
Grow to laugh and sing and worship,  
Trust and love God more than all

**Children in Worship**

*Children ages preschool – 1<sup>st</sup> grade are invited to attend Children in Worship on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony at this time. Children are to be picked up immediately after service in the chapel behind the high pulpit.*

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 11:1-9

Camilla Helenkamp

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup>The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of  
the LORD—

<sup>3</sup>and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.  
He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,  
or decide by what he hears with his ears;

<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he will judge the needy,  
with justice he will give decisions for the  
poor of the earth.

He will strike the earth with the rod of his  
mouth;  
with the breath of his lips he will slay the  
wicked.

<sup>5</sup>Righteousness will be his belt  
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat,  
the calf and the lion and the yearling together;  
and a little child will lead them.

<sup>7</sup>The cow will feed with the bear,  
their young will lie down together,  
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup>The infant will play near the cobra’s den,  
and the young child will put its hand into the  
viper’s nest.

<sup>9</sup>They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be filled with the  
knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

**Scripture Reading:** John 20:19-31

Rev. Dan Turis, *Associate Pastor*

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

<sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon - "Helping Unbelief"**

Rev. Dan Turis

### **Pastoral Prayer and The Lord's Prayer**

**O**ur 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; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. *Amen.*

### **\*Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles' Creed**

Rev. Tom Hall

**I** believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

### **Call for the Offering**



Online giving available through GivePlus.

**Anthem: "We Believe"**

Hooper/Fike/Ryan arr. Dan Galbraith

ÄAnna Bencivenga, *Alto*  
Dwayne Dolphin, *Bass Guitar*

*In this time of desperation, when all we know is doubt and fear  
There is only one foundation, we believe, we believe.  
In this broken generation, when all is dark, You help us see  
There is only one salvation, we believe, we believe.*

*(Chorus) We believe in God the Father, we believe in Jesus Christ.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, and He's given us new life.  
We believe in the crucifixion; we believe that He conquered death.  
We believe in the resurrection, and He's coming back again.*

*So, let our faith be more than anthems, greater than the songs we sing  
And in our weakness and temptations, we believe, we believe (Chorus)*

*Let the lost be found and the dead be raised, in the here and now, let love invade.  
Let the church live loud, our God we'll say "we believe, we believe."  
And the gates of hell will not prevail, for the power of God, has torn the veil,  
Now we know Your love will never fail, we believe, we believe (Chorus)*

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below. Alleluia, alleluia!  
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

Rev. Tom Hall

**\*Hymn #32: "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"** (located in this bulletin)

**\*Invitation and Charge**

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude: "Toccata on Veni Emmanuel"**

Adolphus Hailstork

Ryan Croyle

*\*Please stand as you are able*

## Imagine

F Fsus F F/A B<sup>b</sup> Am

1 Who hears? Who hears the voice of the hun - gry, the  
 2 Who knows? who knows the hopes that lie hid - den, for -

Gm C F Gm F/A

thir - got - sty? Who sees? Who sees the  
 got - ten? Who comes? Who comes to

F B<sup>b</sup> C F

tears of the suf - fer - ing ones?  
 lead all the chil - dren home?

*Refrain* Am Dm Gm7 C

I - mag - ine a King who would come through the

Am Dm7 Gm7 C Am

dark - ness and walk, where I walk, full of great

Dm7 Gm7 A Gm7 C7 F

ness, and call me to his side, just like a fa - ther and child.

# 32 I Sing the Mighty Power of God



1 I sing the might - y power of God that made the moun-tains rise,  
2 I sing the good-ness of the Lord who filled the earth with food.  
3 There's not a plant or flower be - low but makes thy glo - ries known.



that spread the flow - ing seas a - broad and built the loft - y  
God formed the crea-tures through the Word, and then pro-nounced them  
And clouds a - rise, and tem-pests blow, by or - der from thy



skies. I sing the wis-dom that or - dained the sun to rule the day.  
good. Lord, how thy won-ders are dis-played, wher-e'er I turn my eye,  
throne, while all that bor-rows life from thee is ev - er in thy care,



The moon shines full at God's com-mand, and all the stars o - bey.  
if I sur - vey the ground I tread, or gaze up - on the sky!  
and ev - ery-where that we can be, thou, God, art pres-ent there.



## Ongoing/Upcoming Opportunities . . .

### Children in Worship is Back TODAY!

TODAY we begin Children in Worship for children ages 3 through 1st grade. Children ages preschool – 1<sup>st</sup> grade are invited to attend Children in Worship on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor balcony during the service. Today is the first day of the church year so it seems very appropriate to restart Children in Worship on the first Sunday of Advent. The season of Advent is the time we get ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas. Children in Worship is designed to introduce three to seven year-olds to the wonder of worship. For their part, children will be led to experience God using all their senses. Worship leaders (storytellers) are Mia Swann, Jana Hall, Leslie Turis, and Jen Fleming. Helpers are Ben Williams, Ava Connor, and Morgan Swann.

### Hospitality Hour

Join us after worship this morning for a time of refreshments and fellowship in the chapel. If you're visiting with us, we would especially like to get to know you!

### It's Poinsettia Time!

We are again planning to decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias for Christmas Eve worship. **Each plant is in a 6" pot and costs \$10.** An announcement will appear in the Christmas Eve bulletin, and/or on the screen (during virtual worship) listing the donors and the individual(s) being honored or memorialized. **The deadline for ordering is Friday, December 10.** To order, please contact Hannah at **412-471-3436** or [hdurant@fpcp.org](mailto:hdurant@fpcp.org).

If emailing your order, please indicate:

- Number of plants desired,
- How you would like the "in memory of" or "in honor of" information to read,
- How you would like your donor name to read, and
- Whether you want to take the plants with you after the Christmas Eve service.

You can then place your check (payable to the church) in the offering plate or send it to the church office (320 Sixth Ave, Pittsburgh, 15222). (Please indicate "*poinsettias*" in the memo field).

### Join us for prayer

- **Each Sunday at 9 am** – meet with Rev. Dan Turis and others for one hour before worship. To join this prayer meeting, contact Pastor Dan at [dturis@fpcp.org](mailto:dturis@fpcp.org) and he will send you the link.
- **Each Thursday at 7:30 am** – meet with Judy Shipley and others for one hour of prayer and spiritual care. To join this prayer meeting, contact Judy at [j.shipley.j17@gmail.com](mailto:j.shipley.j17@gmail.com) and she will send you the link.
- **Each Wednesday at 10:30 am** - meet with Rev. Tom Hall or Rev. Dan Turis and others for a time of informal prayer for the needs of our church members and our world. To join this prayer meeting, contact Pastor Dan at [dturis@fpcp.org](mailto:dturis@fpcp.org) and he will send you the link. We hope you can join us for any or all of these prayer meetings.



## **Cold Weather Clothing, Shoes and Blankets Needed!**

As it continues to get colder, we are still seeking **new** or **gently used** clothes (especially hooded sweatshirts) and shoes (of all sizes - - men's and women's) and large blankets to distribute to our neighbors in need. Casual clothing in all sizes is needed especially in Men's and Women's Sizes (L-XXXL)

Please drop items off anytime during church office hours throughout the week or on Sundays before or after worship. **Thank you** in advance for your generosity!

## **December 5, 2021 – 2021 FPCP Special Missions Offering – Refuge for Women Pittsburgh • Garden Home Ministries**

In keeping with FPCP's centuries' long faithfulness to mission and outreach, the Missions Committee, with Session approval, is asking members and friends to support the annual special offering to missions. This year, your gifts will be allocated equally between Refuge for Women and Garden Home Ministries. As our awareness of human trafficking in the Pittsburgh region grows, we welcome the opportunity to respond by supporting organizations that are meeting the needs of those who have been exploited and kept in dangerous conditions.



Since March, members of the Missions Committee, Rev. Dan Turis and others have been talking with Theresa Golden, Director of Refuge for Women and Sharlene Dominick, Director of Garden Home Ministries. We have listened to their visions and visited the residences they operate. We find their personal statements of faith and sense of mission to be outstanding. These two organizations



embody the full spectrum of care for trafficked women. Refuge for Women currently focuses on providing immediate access to temporary housing, crisis intervention and other forms of support for female survivors of trafficking. Garden Home Ministries provides stability, resources, and accountability in a home setting for women who desire to break the cycle of homelessness, addiction, exploitation, and trafficking.

You are invited to help by designating your gifts to “2021 Special Missions Offering,” either through the Give+ app or your preferred manner of giving. On Sunday, December 5, all offering designated to “Mission” will be given to Refuge for Women Pittsburgh and Garden Home Ministries. Please consider a generous gift! You can visit these websites to learn more: [refugeforwomen.org/Pittsburgh](http://refugeforwomen.org/Pittsburgh) and [gardenhomeministries.org](http://gardenhomeministries.org)

## Under The Tree

It's time once again to help one of our key mission partners. Over the past three years, FPCP members and friends have generously purchased, wrapped, and delivered gifts to international students who find themselves isolated and far from home during the holiday semester breaks. Through PRISM (Pittsburgh Region International Student Ministries), we have been able to give personal items and treats to residents of PRISM's Hospitality House. Since last year, PRISM has moved its hospitality to a smaller home, and no longer houses long term residents. However, the opportunities for hospitality have expanded greatly! (You can read more below.)



This year, the Missions Committee is inviting you to contribute to a new 'Under the Tree' Fund. The money will be used to purchase a generous array of holiday treats, coffee and serving items, as well as winter 'must haves' for internationals who are not used to our Pittsburgh weather. We know that our gifts have been deeply appreciated over the years.

We hope that you will want to continue what is now a strong tradition of offering hospitality to those who feel lonely and far from home during the coldest and darkest part of the year. To give, please designate your gift to "Under the Tree" – in the Give+ app or through the giving method you prefer. Thank you!

## A Note about This Morning's Music by Ryan Croyle

This week we observe the first Sunday of Advent, and so we introduce our Advent Introit that will serve as a musical theme throughout the season. Throughout Advent, the postlude will be various settings of "O Come O Come Emmanuel." This first installment is an aggressive setting by the American composer Adolphus Hailstork (b. 1941). In music, rhythm is very important, and we often divide songs into groups of beats called "measures." Most commonly you'll find that music is grouped in sets of 4 (and sometimes 3 or 6) - try counting to 4 along with the beat to any song you hear, and there's a strong chance that it will fit. However, Hailstork's setting puts 5 beats to each measure, giving the music a sense of forward motion and a sense of anticipation that is very fitting for the Advent season.

Our anthem this week is titled "*We Believe*" and is a contemporary interpretation of the Apostles' Creed that affirms our confession of faith. I felt this was a fitting subject for this week's John 20 scripture on the doubting disciples and the purpose of John's Gospel that we may believe and may have life in His name. To help us bring this piece to life, we welcome back Dwayne Dolphin on bass guitar as well.



## First Church Staff

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### VOLUNTEER SOUND/ VIDEO TECHNICIANS

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Dan Conner  
Ava Conner  
Bill Branning  
Keith and Amy Burris  
David Charlton

**Church Office** hours are **Monday – Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, 412-471-3436, www.fpcp.org.**  
Staff is sometimes working remotely, but phone messages are being retrieved and answered.

### Need Validated Parking?

Sundays only, get your parking ticket stamped at the FPCP Welcome Center in the Narthex (front lobby). See the person in the payment booth at Mellon Square, Oliver Avenue or Smithfield Street garage to pay \$1 for parking.