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## FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

### WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

#### Prelude

*Away in a Manger*

#### Welcome & Announcements

Leader: This is a day that God has made!

**All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

*Time for sharing news of the church.*

#### Crossing the Threshold

Leader: The Good News that we have proclaimed for this Advent/Christmas season ends with a second chapter of Luke that starts, “When the time came...”

**People: Indeed, the time has come for us to move from the narrative of birthing to the narrative of redemption.**

Leader: The story of Jesus’ ritual cleansing as a child contains stories of people who had been waiting for this moment.

**People: But the time of waiting is over – for us, too.**

Leader: Like Isaiah who says, “for Zion’s sake I won’t stay silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I won’t sit still,”

we will not stop our songs of resistance until justice shines out like a light for all.

#### Opening Prayer and Lighting the Peace Candle on the Advent Wreath

Leader: Holy One, we thank you for the glimpses we have caught throughout this season of Advent and Christmas of your gifts of hope, love, joy, and peace. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle – even when we have not been sure of tomorrow, you have ignited the Light within us,

**People: ...and we have glowed with its brilliance from the inside out.**

Leader: Help us continue to proclaim far and wide

that the time has come for light to be among all people.  
**People:** Amen.  
**Leader:** You are invited to light your own Christ candle of Christmas.

### Gathering Carol

**Angels from the Realms of Glory**  
*Glory to God #143, v. 1-4*

### Invitation to Confession

**Leader:** In our worship of God, there are many surprises.  
In God's presence, dreams are fulfilled.  
By God's power, lives are transformed.  
In penitence and faith let us join together in offering our confession  
before God and one another as we pray together:

### Prayer of Confession (Unison)

**Simeon and Anna were steeped in revered tradition, and yet spent their lives praying to recognize the action of God pointing to a future they could not imagine. Far from being held back by tradition, for them it was a constant stretch toward faithfulness: where is God at work? What are the signs? What needs to be let go, entrusted to a new way, new people, new and unexpected shape? Ways of being Church are changing quickly in these Covid-19 days, and "getting back to normal" may mean a "new" normal. So, in this moment, what are we clinging to? What do we need to relinquish so that we can recognize the call of God in this moment? Open our hearts and minds, we pray, through the gift of your "new thing," Jesus, our Messiah. Amen.**

### Assurance of God's Forgiveness

**Leader:** Our Scriptures promise that God will make all things new.  
As God makes the year new, may we also be made new  
by God's love and forgiveness in Jesus.  
Friends, believe the Good News:  
**People:** In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Alleluia!

### Passing the Peace

**Leader:** Since God in Christ Jesus has forgiven us,  
let us forgive one another.  
The peace of Jesus Christ be with you all.  
Please share the peace of Jesus Christ  
with those with whom you are joining us for worship.

### Carol of Praise

**Angels We Have Heard on High**  
*Glory to God #113, v. 1 and refrain*

## WE HEAR THE WORD OF GOD

### Prayer for Illumination

**Leader:** The end of the year is upon us and this morning we gather virtually to offer the strides as well as the struggles of this year to God. We gather to give to the Creator both our hopes and our fears, as we gather virtually to worship the Lord our God. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts and our lives today as we worship. Grant us each the strength to sing our song, to pray our prayer, and to listen for the Word that will drive our fears away and move us to offer praise and thanksgiving. Inspire us tonight we pray, in Jesus name, Amen.

## First Scripture Reading

Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,  
according to your word;  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

## Anthem

**Joy to the World**  
*Glory to God #134, v. 1-4*

## Second Scripture Reading

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.  
For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,  
and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest,  
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,  
and her salvation like a burning torch.  
The nations shall see your vindication,

and all the kings your glory;  
and you shall be called by a new name  
that the mouth of the Lord will give.  
You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,  
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

### Third Scripture Reading

**Psalm 148**  
read by Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.  
People: **Thanks be to God.**

Message: **“Praises in the Unknown”**

**Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt**

### WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

#### Carol of Response

**The First Nowell**  
*Glory to God #147, v 1-4*

#### Litany of Belief

Leader: In times when humanity disappoints,  
perhaps when even our own thoughts and behaviors disappoint,  
it is an important act to call out, name and claim,  
the consequences of our wrongs.  
And in times of distress, it is a prophetic act to call out,  
name and claim, our belief in the hope for tomorrow.  
Hear these statements of belief from members of our own congregation:

Leader: I believe even when so many people in our world are spewing hate

People: **that God is Love.**

Leader: I believe even when in times of bitter partisan and societal division

People: **that we are all God’s children.**

Leader: I believe that even when the world becomes crazy and unpredictable

People: **that we continue to be a rock providing a constant presence  
and reminder of God’s love and care for us.**

Leader: I believe even when a global pandemic  
has turned life as we have known it upside down

People: **that hardship brings the best learning and growth.**

Leader: I believe that even when living through difficult and challenging times

People: **that the connections we share make the hardship bearable.**

Leader: I believe that even when the Christian faith is ridiculed as lacking integrity, welcome and  
inclusivity

People: **that we are called to be a community that goes into the world,  
loves all people, grows active faith in Christ, and transforms people.**  
Amen.

#### Our Times Are in Your Hands Litany and Prayers of the People

*A time for silent prayers will be offered during the Prayers of the People.*

Leader: God of new beginnings, God of sacred endings,  
we gather virtually this morning under the shade of a foreshadowing sky,

in this in-between time and space, unsure of what the future holds  
...awaiting transformation, renewal, the chance to begin again.

**People:** **Our times are in your hands, O God; give us Hope for the journey.**

**Leader:** We have traveled through dangers seen and unseen,  
we have tiptoed through dark nights of the souls  
and wrestled against powers that should have kept us down.

**People:** **Our times are in Your hands, O God; give us Courage for the journey.**

**Leader:** Encourage us to be ever mindful of our Still Speaking Voice;  
to dance without fear when the morning has come,  
and to know that with the coming of your Light  
fear must release its death-grip on our lives.

**People:** **Our times are in your hands, O God; give us Light for the journey.**

**Leader:** We remember faithful ancestors who moved under the night sky  
to have a little talk with Jesus;  
especially enslaved African Americans who longed for freedom and liberation –  
praying and waiting for the realization of the Emancipation Proclamation  
on December 31, 1862.

**People:** **Our times are in Your hands, O God, give us Freedom for the journey.**

**Leader:** Today we stand in this present moment, frustrated by miscarriages of justice,  
angered by the lack of collective concern for black and brown bodies, exasperated with a broken  
immigration policy,  
racism, sexism, homophobia, mass incarceration,  
and we deeply grieve the continued numbers of deaths  
by gun violence in our community and country  
...can we make it through the remainder of this year  
without some form of gun violence?

**People:** **Our times are in your hands, O God; give us Justice for the journey.**

**Leader:** The future stretches out before us full of mystery and full of surprise.  
We need You, God of New Beginnings, to set the course,  
and guide our feet in the way of righteousness.

**People:** **Our times are in your hands, Triune God, give us Life.**

**Leader:** And now, God of healing and hope hear us  
as we offer our individual prayers  
from wherever we are gathered to worship this day,  
for ourselves, for our neighbors, friends and loved ones:

### ***Silent Prayer***

Thank you, Loving God, for hearing all these our prayers.  
And now let us pray together the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to say:

### **The 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.**

### **Offering**

#### **Invitation**

## Doxology Carol

**Come, All Ye Faithful**  
*Glory to God #133, v. 1 and refrain*

### Prayer of Dedication (Unison)

With joyous praise, we return to you a portion of all you have given us, Generous God. You have invited us to sacrifice befitting our blessings. You have asked us to care for those less privileged. What we offer in these moments is a beginning. We will ponder again your amazing grace in granting us life, in offering the child Jesus to bring us back to you, and in giving us the name “Christian.” Praise be to you, O God. Amen.

## WE GO FORTH TO SERVE IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

### Carol of Resistance

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**  
*Glory to God #119, v 1-3*

### Commission and Blessing

Leader: Servants of God, depart now in peace; prophets, go in power –

**People: For we have seen salvation prepared by the merciful hand of God.**

Leader: With Mary and Joseph ponder these things;  
with Anna and Simeon praise the Lord.

**People: Let us grow and be strong, that we may find wisdom.**

Leader: May God's hand and ours hold the hands of earth's children  
as we move forward into the new year and all that it may hold.

**People: May the grace of Jesus Christ,**

Leader: and the love of God,

**People: and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit**

Leader: be with us all.

**People: Amen.**

### Postlude

**Infant Lowly, Infant Holy**

### Participants in Today's Worship

**Pastor** – Marilyn Gamm

**Guest Preacher** - Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt

**Director of Music & Pianist/Organist** – Christian Hendricks

**Pianist** – Rachel Presti

**Liturgists** – George Philips and Patrick Gibbons

**Children & Youth Minister** – Hannah Peters

**Communications Coordinator** – Katie Gibbons

**Technical Support** – Dylan Voss and John Roman

**Soloist** – Madeline Black

### **The Trinity Choir:**

*Soprano – Aleta Klein, Cricket Gordon, Jenn Clodi, Madeline Black (Section Leader)*

*Alto – Connie Torretta, Margy Brown, Nancy Wagoner, Rachel Presti, Janelle Pierce (Section Leader)*

*Tenor – Brian Schroer, Pat Courtney, Evan Babel (Section Leader)*

*Bass – George Van Hare, Nigel Holloway, John Galczynski*

Contact Trinity's staff and leadership by emailing [admin@trinityucity.org](mailto:admin@trinityucity.org) or contacting the church office.

**TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**NEWS AND NOTES FOR DECEMBER 27, 2020**

*We open our doors to all persons to join in worship, fellowship, educational programs, and service.*

*We welcome into membership all who profess faith in Jesus Christ without regard to gender, race, ethnic origin, worldly conditions, sexual orientation, disability, or any other human condition.*

*We elect and ordain persons who are called by God and committed to serving the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church.*

**Our guest preacher today is the Rev. Ashley DeTar Birt, Co-Moderator of the More Light Presbyterians Board of Directors.**

Rev. DeTar Birt is a recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary where she obtained her Master of Divinity degree. She also holds degrees from Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh.

She currently serves as the Pastoral Fellow for Youth and Families at Rutgers Presbyterian Church in New York, NY working with what she calls “some of the most fun kids she’s ever met.”

Her interests include the intersections of racial justice, children and youth, interfaith communication, LGBTQ+ issues (particularly the B), and Christianity.

When she isn’t at church or doing social justice work, she enjoys writing, sound editing and theatre tech.

**The sanctuary flowers were given in loving memory of Polly Brown by her daughter, Sylvia Washington.** Polly was a long time and beloved member of Trinity who died in October of this year. She graced the presence of all those she met, and she is now one of the Saints of Trinity.

**You might think it’s a bit late to remind people of safety measures, but with the vaccine around the corner, people might lower their guard.** The Social Witness Action Team of Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery thought so and ordered and paid for 35 signs for churches around the presbytery. The cautionary message is on both sides which makes the sign ideal for the corner of Washington and Kingsland.

As Joni Mitchell might sing:

I’ve looked at the sign from both sides now

And still somehow, it’s 2020 I recall.

I really don’t want COVID at all.

**I Believe Even When....**

**The Worship Committee is excited to share that our theme for this year’s four Sundays of Advent, for framing the traditional Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols, and for the Sunday after Christmas is “I Believe Even When....”**

As the language of the soul even during these challenging times, this worship series is designed to focus upon and heighten our music appreciation “even when” we cannot be together in all the many ways we would prefer.

As such, our weekly worship format has been modified to include a time of “Threshold Music” as we from wherever we are gathering “enter” into the service, a time of appreciating the “Witness of Music” between the weekly Scripture readings and concluding each week with a “Carol of Resistance.”

Our weekly services include an original “Litany of Belief” composed from the one-liners you have submitted that capture what we as a worshipping Christian community believe through which we will name and claim our belief in the hope for tomorrow.

**Working for justice means keeping the issues in the forefront of people's minds.** Every Wednesday, members of First Presbyterian Church stand at their busy corner of Midland and Delmar, holding signs acknowledging that Black Lives Matter and demanding Justice for those who have been murdered.

They welcome us to join them each week. Currently they meet from 5:30-6:30pm each Wednesday, but will probably switch to 5-6pm once we have the time change. Please contact Liz Nelson for more details (314-359-2478; leithskye@gmail.com), or show up on the front lawn if First Pres with a sign and a desire for justice!

**Trinity is “broadcasting” our Sunday morning 10 a.m. worship service via our Facebook page or you can watch the recording on YouTube later on Sundays.** Those who participate in this way on home computers or mobile devices can even type messages to one another during the live service, such as doing a virtual passing of the peace. Also, Facebook has captions! While watching the service, find the gear icon at the bottom of the video and click on it. When you do, an option pops up to turn on closed captioning!

Kids and parents probably already know about this, but if you are not a parent of a young person and have **wondered what goes on in “Children’s Church,” now you can experience it!** Hannah Peters has taped a YouTube video, and updated links will be posted regularly on the “Sundays at Trinity” section of our website homepage.

**As we live in this challenging time, Trinity continues to be available to all those who need us.**

Members desiring pastoral care are encouraged to call the church office at 314-725-3840 or to reach out to Deacons Margy Brown, 314-452-7241, or Cathy Smith, 314-725-0586. Your need will be shared confidentially with our Transitional Pastor the Reverend Marilyn Gamm. You also can email her directly at [Marilyn.Gamm@TrinityUCity.org](mailto:Marilyn.Gamm@TrinityUCity.org)

**Supporting the church through your financial gifts continues to be encouraged!** Please mail your contributions to Trinity Presbyterian Church, Att’n: Linde, 6800 Washington Ave., University City, MO 63130, or check out the online giving instructions below.

1) Text the code TPCDONATE \$[your gift] to 73256. You'll receive a text back with a link that lets you complete your online donation.

2) Log in to your Realm account and click on the "Giving" tab.

#### **Session**

Gordon Brown, Dayna Early, Nigel Holloway, Kris Kerr, Mary Klingensmith, Mike Krivonak, Mary McKown, Brian Muegge (Clerk), Rachel Presti, John Roman, Jan Schulte-Glad, George Van Hare

#### **Deacons**

Margy Brown, Bill Cahoon, Kathie Cahoon, Anna Gardner-Andrews, Jennifer Higginbotham, Corie Merker, Jim Person, Art Platt, Diana Regan, Joanne Roman, Cathy Smith, Spirit Sorensen