



## First Presbyterian Church

Las Cruces, New Mexico

First Sunday of Christmas

December 28, 2025 - 10:30 AM

*Enter to worship – Leave to serve*

### PRELUDE

"The Babe of Bethlehem" (early American carol from *Southern harmony*, 1854)

Van Denman Thompson (1890-1969)

"The Son of Mary" (Catalan carol)  
(1983)

Derek Branscombe

"How Brightly Shines the Morning Star"  
1887)

Frederick Wilhelm Markull (1816-1887)

\*\*The Prelude functions like a curtain that separates our world from the worship place of peace and sanctuary. We enter prayerfully. We wait expectantly, listening for God's Spirit and truth, which challenges us to return to the world equipped for faithful and useful Christian service.

**\* Those who are able, please stand**

**Please turn off all cell phones**

### WELCOME, GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MEDITATION IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Isreal that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love, For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. Isaiah 63:7-9 (NSRV)

CHORAL INTROIT

"Away in a Manger"

CRADLE SONG

### ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S NAME

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Marconi

Donna

Leader: We recount the gracious deeds of God, all the praiseworthy acts the Lord has

done for us.

**People: Praise God for coming to dwell among us, Immanuel.**

Leader: Praise God for the good news of Jesus, the pioneer of our salvation.

**People: Praise God for making us brothers and sisters in Christ.**

\*HYMN OF PRAISE #123 "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

CAROL

\*PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THE LORDS PRAYER (unison)

God of steadfast love, we thank you in this joyful Christmastide for all the blessings we enjoy: the shelter of home and the comfort of family and friends; the company of the faithful with whom we share Christ's coming; and for your love which shines as a light in the darkness. For what you have done in history, recorded in scripture, and enfleshed in Jesus Christ is truly the Good News and the content of our hope, peace, joy, and love. We pray in his name, saying...**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.**

**PLEASE BE SEATED**

CALL TO CONFESSiON

"In the Bleak Midwinter"  
Chancel Choir

CRANHAM

PRAYER OF CONFESSiON (unison)

O God, we have been so busy with things that do not satisfy! We have tried to fill our emptiness with activities and possessions that drain our energies rather than give life meaning. We do not know how to live, and we are afraid to die. We excuse our own sin at the same time that we deplore the abuse and violence we see in others. We deny the witness of the One who shared our common lot, for we are not willing to take the risks of genuine love. O God, save us from ourselves.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSiON AND REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE AND MERCY

Leader: Christ identified with us to show us whose we are.

**People: Christ suffered for us to help us in our times of testing.**

Leader: Christ died to lead us to life in all its fullness.

**People: We are forgiven, we are redeemed, we are lifted up to a life of true freedom.**

HYMN OF ASSURANCE  
JEUNEPUCELLE

#142 "Twas in the Moon of Wintertime"

UNE

GOOD NEWS TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

Erin Taylor

- Children are asked to sit on the carpet squares in the front.

CALL TO PRAYER

#128 "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"

W ZLOBIE LEZY

PASTORAL PRAYER

ANTHEM

"There's a Star in the East"  
Bryan Berard, Solo

FOLLOW

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Matthew 2:13-23 Hebrew 2:10-18

Dr. Catherine Brewer

Matthew 2:13-23 (NSRV)

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.' When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

Hebrew 2:10-18 (NRSV)

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.' Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

"The Suffering Priest"

Rev. Nick Koontz

CLOSING HYMN

#136 "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

GO TELL IT

BENEDICTION

\*CONGREGATIONAL BENEDICTION

"Angels We Have Heard On High"  
Gloria in Excelsis! Deo! Gloria in Excelsis!

GLORIA

\*POSTLUDE

Hymn Tune Improvisation

Howard A. Smolleck

---

*Liturgist-Donna Marconi      Deacon Captain-Donna Marconi  
Sound System-Rusty Smith      Video-Brent Brewer*

*Greeting before the Worship Service:  
Donna Marconi-E      Donna Phillips-W      Linda Pearson-S*

*Greeting after the Worship Service:  
Erin Taylor-E      Rev. Nick Koontz-W      Donna Marconi-S*

|                        |                           |                 |                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Rev. Pyong San Yu      | Korean Congregation       | Dr. Janet Loman | Comm. Pastor, College Ministry  |
| Dr. Howard A. Smolleck | Organist                  | Ada Castle      | Commissioned Pastor, Visitation |
| Veronica Giron         | Salt & Light Coord.       | Dr. Paul Deason | Commissioned Pastor             |
| Beth Borchert-Thomas   | Dir. of Music & Bells     | Veronica Giron  | Office Manager                  |
| Rev. Nick Koontz       | Dir. of Family Ministries | Pang Baker      | Bookkeeper                      |

---

## **Members of Session**

|                   |                                   |                  |                          |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Steve Loman       | Moderator of the Session          | Dr. Paul Deason  | Moderator, Missions      |
| Alice Distlehorst | Music & Worship                   | Dinah Jentgen    | Clerk of Session         |
| Roni Hardin       | Moderator, Music & Worship        | Patrick Cummings | Moderator, Christian Ed. |
| Diana Howard      | Co-Moderator, Congregational Life | Yolanda Koontz   | Christian Education      |
| Bruce Pearson     | Congregational Life               | Jerry Moser      | Buildings & Grounds      |
| Stephen Taylor    | Co-Moderator, Congregational Life | Jimmy O'Neal     | Administration & Finance |
| Linda Ward        | Moderator, Buildings & Grounds    | Jim Parks        | President, Foundation    |
| *Mary Maley       | Moderator, Administration         |                  |                          |

---

## **After-Worship Fellowship**

Join us for a time of fellowship and refreshments immediately following Worship this morning in the Jones Hall Fellowship area. This is a great time to visit with old and new friends alike. Fellowship this morning is being hosted by Carl & Bea Connor in honor of their 66<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

## ***Please Remember in Your Prayers***

- *Those to whom the Christmas season is difficult. Those who have lost loved ones, who are not close to their families, many of our veterans and active-duty members, our students and international families.*
- *Our youth, here and across Las Cruces. May God guide minds and hearts!*
- *Everyone traveling this holiday season.*
- *Doug Muscanell, Brian Stewart, James Leyba, Scott Sherman, Marty Pope, Randy Granger and Johnny Montenegro.*
- *Gilbert (Alex) Lucero as he awaits surgery.*
- *Tre, the daughter-in-law of Nancy Cowan, as she awaits surgery.*

## Continued Prayer List

Jacque Parks; Jim Pace; Ed Mathis; Barb Wolflick; Amber Nolan; Sherry Lindsey; Sandra Valencia; Florence Hamilton; Rev. Dave Schrueder; Sara Kay; Jack Curry; Arnold McMillan; Millie Conrad; Dorris Hamilton, Don Niewold, and Joanne Kersting at The Heritage.

Welcome

**Mission Statement:** *A place where Christian love is modeled*

Our Worship services are available:

- 1.) In-person, with Covid19 precautions
- 2.) Live-stream on YouTube, First Presbyterian Church Las Cruces, NM
- 3.) Video archive on the church website, our Facebook site, or YouTube

### CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS:

- Seating in the West and South sections of the Sanctuary is unrestricted.
- The East section is reserved for those wishing to wear masks and social-distance. Hand-sanitizer and wipes are located in each aisle.
- Please register your presence with contact information and any prayer requests on the small slip of paper in your Bulletin, and place it in the purple offering box in the aisle, so that if we need to do contact tracing later, we can contact those who were present.

\*Contributions to support your church can be done in a variety of ways



1. Cash or check in the purple offering box.
2. Check sent by mail.
3. Online at [fpc.lc/giving](http://fpc.lc/giving) or via the QR code on the right.
4. Using the app “Church Center”.

CCLI License

No. 540727



FPC.LC  
FPC.LC/Sermons



FPC.LC/News



FPC.LC/Calendar



Website  
and/or  
Services

Newsletter Sign-Up

Online Church Calendar

Livestream

Replay Worship

More information can be found on our website [fpc.lc](http://fpc.lc)

**Thank you for your continued generosity and faithful giving.**

200 E. Boutz Rd., Las Cruces, NM 88005  
575.526.5559

Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

*In the Life of the Church*

### Sunday School

Larry Hicks will lead a new eight Sunday study on “The Sermon on the Mount” beginning next Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, at 9:00 in the library.



12/28 Diana Davidson

12/29 Bill Atkins

12/30 Janet Green

12/30 Pam Briggs

1/1 Stephanie Benaway

1/1 Cecilia Mboh 1/2 Esther Smolleck



Sunday, December 28th

9:00 AM Adult Sunday School in Jones Hall Library, "Parables in the Bible," led by Rev. Larry Hicks  
9-11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall  
9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Branigan Hall  
9:30 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Reeves Hall  
9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal  
10:30 AM Worship together in the Sanctuary  
11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Fellowship Hall (see announcement)

Monday, December 29th

12:00 PM Deadline for submissions for The Good News  
7:00 PM Bells Rehearsal in the Choir Room

Tuesday, December 30th

Wednesday, December 31st

12:00 PM Deadline for submissions for the Sunday Bulletin

Thursday, January 1st

Office Closed in Observance of New Years

Friday, January 2nd

Office Closed

Saturday, January 4th

Sunday, th

9:00 AM Adult Sunday School in Jones Hall Library, "The Sermon on the Mount"  
led by Rev. Larry Hicks

9-11:45 AM Childcare in Branigan Hall

9:00 AM Sunday School for grades K-5 in Branigan Hall

9:30 AM Sunday School for grades 6-12 in Reeves Hall

9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal

10:30 AM Worship together in the Sanctuary

11:45 AM After-Worship Fellowship in Jones Hall



It's  
beginning  
to look a lot