

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY



**of Being Family
Among All of God's People**

First Presbyterian Church
Bryan, Texas

Original Charter November 24, 1867

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

November 22, 2020
10:45 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Bryan, Texas
Link to worship videos available at: www.fpcbryan.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Now Thank We All Our God

arr. Cindy Berry

WELCOME

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness, with songs offering praise from our throats!

Remember that the Lord God has made us!

We enter unto God's presence with thanksgiving! For God's steadfast love endures forever!

HYMN No. 35

Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

LOBE DEN HERREN

**Praise ye the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear; now to his temple draw near, join me in glad adoration!**

**Praise ye the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires e'er have been granted in what he ordaineth?**

**Praise ye the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again; gladly for aye we adore him.**

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*Text in **bold face type** is to be read by all.*

PRAYERS OF PRAISE AND CONFESSION

*Let us pray together . . .* **We praise you, O God, our creator, for your provision and giving in beauty and in bounty, and with generosity, love, and grace.**

Beyond our deserving or imagining, you have held forth in faithfulness when we fall short with unfaithfulness, ingratitude, indifference, fear, and self-absorption.

**Forgive us our sin and our mistrust of your call to a relationship based in trusting where we cannot see, following your invitation, coaxing, beckoning, leading, and modeling.**

Wondrous Good Shepherd, receive what we commit to you for ministry through the church and everywhere among all your people.

**Help us to be vessels and channels of your outreach near and far, today and every day, always to your glory and honor.**

Friends, let us hear and share with gladness the blessed news of the Gospel:

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and called yet again to serve as disciples. Thanks be to God!**

HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

OLD HUNDREDTH

**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.**

HYMN NO. 612

We Praise You, O God

KREMSER

**We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator; in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.  
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you; we bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.**

**We worship you, God of our fathers and mothers; through trial and tempest our guide you have been  
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us, and with your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.**

**With voices united our praises we offer and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.  
With you, Lord, beside us, your strong arm will guide us. To you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!**

PRESENTATION

Relationships at the Heart of Teamwork

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 4:9; Mark 12:28-34

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION

Four-fold Faithful Living (4) – Relationships:  
Stewardship through Relationships via Love, Grace, and Faithfulness

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING, INTERCESSION,  
AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray . . . Holy Sovereign, you know before we say it what is on our minds. Thanksgiving 2020 is no usual Thanksgiving. Large gatherings are discouraged. Disease and hardship are themes and realities we do not like or enjoy. Yet Thanksgiving does not depend on our being happy amid pain: Receive our gratitude each day for your generosity of love. And Blessed One, deliver us from illness, injury, grief, struggle, despair and from feeling lost in discouragement. As individuals, as a nation, as a world, lift us today and every day by your healing, empowering love.

Also, hear us praying, as Jesus taught the community of faith to believe and give voice:

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.

HYMN (st. 1,3,4)

In God's World

EASTER HYMN

**In God's world, the Scriptures tell, Alleluia! God creates what's good and well, Alleluia!  
Blesses with love, faith, and hope, Alleluia! Holy gifts so vast in scope, Alleluia!**

**God sees God's world all around, Alleluia! by God's love the lost are found, Alleluia!  
From God's passion, justice rolls, Alleluia! And those suff'ring God consoles, Alleluia!**

**The Lord says, "Participate," Alleluia! In this world, fling wide the gate, Alleluia!  
For a new community, Alleluia! Honor all, in Christ set free! Alleluia!**

DISMISSAL AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

"Flourish" on "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come"

arr. Michael Ryan

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***To continue worshiping safely and COVID-19 friendly, thanks to each of YOU for physical distancing and wearing face masks when you are interacting with others inside the building.***

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Session Elders have called a meeting of the congregation today following worship for the purpose of hearing and acting on a report from the Congregation's Nominating Committee (*Co-moderators Sally Kate Morse and AJ Renold, members-at-large Vickie Buenger, Melissa Gathings, Alice Hickerson, John Lee, and Bill Watson*). The committee places before you the following persons' names who have prayerfully consented to serve as Elders, Class of 2022, and Foundation Trustees, Class of 2026, if elected.

#### ELDER NOMINEES

**Rick Avery, Christy Becker, Laura Becker, Shelley Espinoza, Sherry Hinnant, David Holdredge, Cheryl Moreno, Tom Reed, Debe Shafer, Scott Shafer, Ellen Thornton, and Ernie Wright**

#### FOUNDATION TRUSTEE NOMINEES

**John Halsell, Adelle Hedleston, and Susan McGrail**

**NEW MEMBERS** may be received any Sunday by profession of faith, reaffirmation of faith, or transfer of membership. If you feel led to inquire about becoming a church member or deepening your commitment as a disciple of Jesus Christ, please indicate your desire on the fellowship folder. You may also call the church (979.823.8073) or email Pastor Ted Foote ([tfoote@fpcbryan.org](mailto:tfoote@fpcbryan.org)) or Associate Pastor Emily Béghin ([ebeghin@fpcbryan.org](mailto:ebeghin@fpcbryan.org)). They will be glad to arrange a mutually convenient Sunday when you can be received by the Elders and introduced to the congregation.

**ASSISTED LISTENING DEVICES** are available in the narthex. Please help yourself or ask an usher for assistance.

**CHILDREN ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP.** Worship related activity sheets and markers are available on the tables in the Narthex. Room 108 is available for your nursery needs. If you are unfamiliar with our building and need assistance, an usher will be pleased to help you. Also, two rocking chairs are located in the narthex, where the worship service can be heard via a ceiling speaker.



## A WARM WELCOME!

*We are delighted that you chose  
to worship with us today.*



### WORSHIP NOTES

#### PREACHER

Rev. Ted Foote

#### LITURGISTS

Rev. Emily K. Béghin  
Rev. George E. Klett

#### USHERS | GREETERS

Dave Haverland; Karon Mathews;

#### MUSICIANS

Michelle Lassiter, *piano & organ*  
David Kipp,  
*Director of Music Ministries*

#### AUDIO-VISUAL | SOUND

Nicole McKinley; Jerry Norris;  
Bill Watson

#### COVER ART

Celebrating the  
153<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of  
First Presbyterian Church  
Bryan, Texas

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### THIS WEEK AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2020

#### "Stewardship Dedication Sunday"

9:20am Church School: The Word Class-303/via Zoom  
9:20am Church School: Seekers Class-P/via Zoom  
9:30am Church School: Loose Leaf Class-via Zoom  
10:45am Worship LIVE STREAMED-S\*  
12:00pm Congregational Meeting-S  
5:30pm Youth (GR 6-12) Friendsgiving (POTLUCK)-FH

#### MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2020

#### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2020

#### WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2020

#### THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2020

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED  
CHILDREN'S CENTER CLOSED



#### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2020

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED  
CHILDREN'S CENTER CLOSED

#### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2020

9:00am Presbytery Meeting-via Zoom

#### FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT, NOVEMBER 29, 2020

9:20am Church School: The Word Class-303/via Zoom  
9:20am Church School: Seekers Class-P/via Zoom  
9:30am Church School: Loose Leaf Class-via Zoom  
10:45am Worship LIVE STREAMED-S \*

\* During COVID-19, Room 108 is available for your nursery needs

## MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

### A CAROLING INVITATION



Caroling, you say? Yes! Why yes, we can! It will look and feel a bit different this year! You are invited to record a video of you and/or your family singing and/or playing on your favorite instrument a carol of your choice. Text your video to Rev. Béghin, 832-413-3012, **by Friday, December 11**. All submissions will be compiled into a video and made available on our YouTube Channel, Facebook page, and church website for all to enjoy!



Through today (November 22), FPC's youth invite you to give to a "Thanksgiving Offering" for Brazos Church Pantry to help the hungry in our community. Make checks payable to: FPC-Bryan, MEMO: "Thanksgiving Offering." *Thank you!*

### PAPER DRIVE FOR STILL CREEK RANCH



During the month of November, Mission Committee sponsors a **PAPER DRIVE** for **STILL CREEK RANCH** welcoming your donations of **paper towels, toilet tissue, white copy paper, and Kleenex**. Place your items on the marked table in the indoor patio.

### REACHING OUT TO OUR NEIGHBORS



The first Sunday of each month, including **Sunday, December 6**, is known as FPC's "Stock the Pantry" Sunday (the **Brazos Church Pantry**, that is). If you miss this Sunday, you are invited to bring your donated goods to the Patio anytime you are at the church or to the church office on weekdays. At the top of The Pantry's needs are **toilet paper, personal hygiene products, and non-perishable foods**. **Monetary donations are also very much appreciated**. When you are out shopping this week, pick up extra items to share. Thank you for your generosity!

### THE SALVATION ARMY ANGEL TREE



Once again, FPC has the opportunity to share in providing a wonderful Christmas for families in Bryan-College Station through **THE SALVATION ARMY. ANGEL TREE**. An Angel Tree is set up on the FPC Patio. Angel ornaments on the tree provide the name, gender, age, sizes, and wish list for a child that you can help. Please consider "adopting" an ANGEL from the FPC tree and enjoy the experience of Christmas shopping at its best! Place your gifts for your "angel" near the tree in the Patio **by Friday, December 11**. *During this time of COVID-19, if you prefer not to select your Angel "in person," email Keith Halsell, [halsell@verizon.net](mailto:halsell@verizon.net), to assist you with adopting your Angel.*

**Visit us on the web!** [www.fpcbryan.org](http://www.fpcbryan.org) for the newsletter, announcements, worship bulletins, updates, etc.

**Check out "The Good Samaritan Bites the Dust" on Facebook** [www.facebook.com/FPCBryan](http://www.facebook.com/FPCBryan)

**NEW!!! on Instagram** [www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com) Search for and follow **fpcbryantx1867** and/or **fpcbryan\_youth**

**BE THE FIRST TO KNOW** when **WORSHIP** and **ACTIVITY** videos are uploaded to our **YouTube channel!**

Go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), search for First Presbyterian Church of Bryan, Texas, then click **SUBSCRIBE**

**Share prayer needs and church group news with fellow FPC participants on Church Updates!**

is FPC-Bryan's online tool for YOU to post church-related announcements, ways to serve, and your current prayer needs. While users receive a weekly reminder email on Thursdays to view new posts, this online tool is "REAL TIME." Contact Karen in the church office, 979.823.8073 or [office@fpcbryan.org](mailto:office@fpcbryan.org) to set up your account.

Then, login at <https://fpcbtch.churchupdates.org/login> to create your password-protected account.

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The deadline for our December newsletter is Noon, Sunday, December 13, and will be distributed on Wednesday, December 16. This newsletter will cover news from December 23, 2002, thru January 13, 2021.

This is the fourth Sunday in our Stewardship Emphasis season with the theme, “Four-fold Faithful Living.” The past three Sundays, we have explored being stewards and sharers of “time and talent,” being stewards and sharers of “community,” and being stewards and sharers of “financial fruits.” This morning: “stewardship through relationships.”

One of the earliest relationships mentioned in the Bible is story of the brothers, Cain and Abel. Cain was jealous of what Cain thought was God favoring his brother Abel. Cain tricked Abel and then struck him with a blow that was fatal. After the murder, God asked Cain: “Where is your brother?” Cain replied, “I do not know.” That was a lie, plain and simple. Then Cain continued with a rhetorical question: “Am I my brother’s guard (Hebrew: “shomer”)?” “Am I my brother’s body-guard?” “Am I my brother’s security keeper?” Cain is shrugging off any responsibility for a relationship with his brother, and his rhetorical question is full of irony. What we instinctively feel as hearers of the story is: “Who would want you to be their body-guard? Some fine body-guard or security-keeper you are! You are a betrayer!” Then God replies what God already knows: “Your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground.”

The clear truth to Cain’s smarty-pants rhetorical question spouted off to God, “Am I my brother’s security keeper?” is, “No, but you are your brother’s brother,” “You are your sister’s brother,” “You are your sibling’s sibling,” “You are your neighbor’s neighbor.” Often, if you’ve heard the word “stewardship,” which means “managing” or “sharing,” we may think of “time and talent” and “financial fruits” or “finances” or “money.” Less often, possibly, do we think of being stewards of “community,” as Emily led us in exploring from Jeremiah 29 two weeks ago; and perhaps we also do not instinctively think of being stewards through relationships. Let’s try doing that, though. It’s fairly easy to consider the clearly negative side of this topic. Cain betrays his brother Abel, who trusted Cain, at least enough to walk with him down the trail into the countryside. Cain was no manager or sharer or steward of that relationship. He was only jealous and coveting and consumed. What constitutes positive or healthy stewardship and sharing and managing in relationships?

In 1940, Dr. Suess wrote, “Horton Hatches the Egg.” It’s a story illustrating stewardship in a relationship about as far from Cain’s relationship with Abel as one can imagine. The story begins with Mayzie the lazy bird who sat on her egg in the nest of the rather small tree. Mayzie was tired and bored and desiring a vacation. She thought how great it would be for someone else to sit on the nest in the tree with her egg in that nest. Along comes Horton the elephant, who feels quite strange when receiving Mayzie’s request that he be the one to sit on the egg in the nest in the rather small tree. Once Mayzie convinces him, she flies away. Horton props up the tree, and takes his seat on the egg in the nest. Horton is faithful to his commitment and stays on the egg in the nest in the rather small tree. Horton is faithful even through his being captured and sold to a circus: tree and nest and egg and all. Then, who would have guessed?, on vacation in Florida, Mayzie discovers Horton in a touring circus near her beach hangout. Just as she draws near to tell Horton to leave the nest, the egg hatches – can you imagine? – a baby elephant with wings. Mayzie wants no part of the young winged elephant. Horton is thrilled. He’s released from the circus with the little winged one, and they return to the wild – happy and faithful 100 percent!

Horton was committed to this relationship with the egg in the nest in the rather small tree. Cain was only committed to getting Abel out of the way. Most of us live our days and engage in relationships somewhere between Cain and Horton. Even if we are not murderers like Cain, we may have more of Mayzie in us; and Cain himself may not be that far from Mayzie category-wise. Both Cain and Mayzie had had enough of their status quo. Both were determined to create the change they desired. Neither was going to risk staying with the status quo. One said, “Am I my brother’s security guard?” and the

other said, “Am I my egg’s security guard?” And both, at least in a crucial moment, were convinced that there are times to “create the change you feel led to change.” According to Jesus, though, there are additional considerations: “You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and your neighbor as yourself” (Deuteronomy 6:4 and Leviticus 19:18).

If you’ve ever left a job or a personal relationship, these scriptures and these stories related to the scriptures and this proclamation/ this sermon are not messaging that we should never leave a relationship, personally or professionally. Relationships and jobs, like chapters, come to an end and evolve into the next relationship or work position. The focus here, is not that there is never significant change. Rather, the focus here – appropriately – is on faithfulness being the essence of our relationships. Change in life and growing healthily in relationships are challenging and almost never easy. When there is duplicity, however, – when there is unfaithfulness – difficulty, personal hurt, and guilt only increase.

People change. Relationships change. Churches and communities of faith change. And change can yield constructive next chapters. Isn’t the healthy essence of every relationship respect for God, respect for others, and respect for self? That’s where Cain and Mayzie left the tracks. They were short on that crucial respect for God, for others, and for self. But God’s love is never inadequate to the task of creating new paths beyond failure, duplicity, betrayal, and unfaithful self-indulgence. God’s love is always adequate and capable of creating and yielding forgiveness and newness, if not in certain old relationships, then in new ones. Let us not underestimate how God’s love can change us in relationships where we once thought no change was needed, or where we realize some change might be helpful, needed, and healthy, but we’re not sure how helpful, needed, and healthy change can materialize!

In 2003, Scholastic Press published Douglas Wood’s children’s story entitled “Old Turtle and the Broken Truth.” A meteor enters earth’s atmosphere. One piece is soon found with three words in English engraved: “You are loved.” On that premise, civilizations are built, and people feel good about themselves: “You are loved.” Yet pride, jealousy, greed, prejudice, and fear enter into relationships because individuals and groups are sometimes convinced they are loved, yet that they may well be loved more than others who are different in custom, culture, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, etc. Discrimination, resentment, persecution, injustice, and war occur. Yet one – who feels empty – (a young girl) initiates a quest for what might be a greater truth even than “You are loved.” On that quest, Old Turtle gives her a broken stone. When she arrives back at the great temple where the “You are loved” stone is kept, she realizes that the stone Old Turtle gave her is a jagged edge for jagged edge match with the “You are loved” stone. It’s the other half of what broke up long ago as the meteor entered earth’s atmosphere. When placed together, seven words are seen in total: “You are loved, and so are they.”

We might be as smart-mouthed as embarrassed, guilty Cain, replying to God, “Am I my sibling’s security-keeper?” We might think, like Mayzie, that we need a life-long vacation from faithful responsibility. We might think we can do fine loving self, or loving our own preferred group. Yet Jesus, Old Turtle and the Source of Truth in the universe remind us: “You are loved, and so are they.” In 1981, David Bowie and Queen, and in 2020, Willie Nelson and Karen O, recorded a soulful duet, “Under Pressure,” including the words: “Love dares you to care for the people on the edge of the night, and love dares you to change our way of caring about ourselves. This is our last dance. This is ourselves. This is ourselves. Under pressure.”

This week – Tuesday – is the 153<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the chartering of this community of faith. For 153 years, and more years before, and yet more going forward, God’s love dares us and others “to care for the people on the edge of the night and to change our way of caring about ourselves,” because “we are loved, and so are they.” We are siblings/ brothers and sisters in the family of relationships God has given from the beginning. Stewardship through relationships grows from grace and serves from faithfulness in loving God, in loving neighbors/siblings in the world community, and in loving ourselves – healthily, no matter what pressure we are under. – All honor and praise be to God!