

December 17 Sermon Notes - Third Week of Advent
9 and 11:30 a.m. Worship Services

Preacher: Rev. Henry Coates
Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25, 2:13-15 (*New Testament, pp. 1, 2*)
Title: Joseph: Radical Obedience

Advent Series: Lessons from the Characters of Christmas

The season of Advent and Christmas gives the church space to ponder the people whose lives intersected the miracle of Messiah's birth. Even though our culture is removed from theirs by some 2,000 years, what lessons might the lives of these people teach us?

Big Idea: The word decide, or decision, means to cut off or to kill. Making a decision leads one into making a choice that closes off other options. Joseph had to make a decision between socially acceptable norms (quietly divorcing his pregnant betrothed) and radically obeying God's will and risking shame from his culture.

Next Week - Fourth Week of Advent - Christmas Eve
10 a.m. Worship Service

Preacher: Rev. Raymond Hylton
Scripture: Luke 2:8-20 (*New Testament, p. 8-20*)
Title: Shepherds: Outcasts are Welcome

Big Idea: The fact that shepherds heard the most important announcement ever, says nothing about them and everything about God. The culture in which Jesus was born did not give any honor or respect to shepherds. So why did the announcement come to them at all? Why not to priests and kings? Who were they that they should be eyewitnesses of God's glory and receive history's greatest birth announcement? In Christ's day, shepherds stood on the bottom rung of the Palestinian social ladder. They shared the same unenviable status as tax collectors and dung sweepers. By the way, only Luke mentions them.

11 p.m. Candlelight Service

Preacher: Rev. Henry Coates
Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12 (*New Testament, pp. 1-2*)
Title: Wise men: Seeking and Finding

Big Idea: When captivated by desire one will go to any sacrifice to find what one is searching for. The Magi saw a star were drawn to Jerusalem by a strong desire to see and worship the king.

Listen to Sunday Sermons on the FPCE website or via the "First Presbyterian Church of Evanston" iTunes podcast. Sermons are usually uploaded by Tuesday evenings.

First Presbyterian Evanston

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Highlights

Next Sunday is Christmas Eve. We will be holding a 10 am Worship Service, a 4 pm Family Christmas Pageant, and an 11 pm Candlelight Service. All will be held in the Sanctuary. Outreach cards are still available at the front desk as a way of inviting your family, friends and neighbors to FPCE. All are welcome!

The Christmas Eve offering next week will benefit Good News Partners at the 4 pm service, and local refugees for the 11 pm service. Please come with open hearts to share with all that God has blessed us with this Christmas.

We hope to open the warming center for our homeless neighbors, between 3 pm and 6 pm on Christmas Day, Monday, December 25. If you can serve for even an hour of that time, please contact Julie Lewis at juliefsc1@gmail.com and/or Kelly Levander at Klevander@firstprevevanston.org. You are also welcome to donate a plate of cookies to share with our guests. They will be collected after the 10 am service, on Sunday, December 24, to be stored in Caryl Weinberg's office until Monday evening (please wrap them appropriately).

FPCE will once again serve as a primary location for First Night Evanston, Evanston's New Years Eve family & community celebration. Activities at the church include many musical and creative performances. The event is alcohol-free, and suitable for all ages. We need volunteers to welcome visitors into First Pres. Be the warm, friendly face from our church to the community for this one-night only volunteer opportunity. Volunteers receive a free pass to all performances. Sign-up at the front desk or online at <http://www.firstprevevanston.org/events/event-registration!>

Worth Noting

For those who got their photos taken for the church directory and did not order a package, your free 8x10 photo is available to be picked up at the front desk.

Altar Guild volunteers are needed for the preparation of the elements of the Lord's Supper for each of our Sunday communion services. If you are interested in serving this way, please contact Elda McGinty at emcginty@firstprevevanston.org for more information on this important behind-the-scenes role in the life of our church community.

Book Club will meet again on January 9, 2018, from 1:30-3 pm in the Parlor. We will be reading *News of the World* by Paulette Jiles. According to the Amazon.com summary, "In the aftermath of the Civil War, an aging itinerant news reader agrees to transport a young captive of the Kiowa back to her people in this exquisitely rendered, morally complex, multilayered novel of historical fiction from the author of *Enemy Women* that explores the boundaries of family, responsibility, honor, and trust." All are welcome!



Missions

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Pray for Our

Mission Partners

Pray for our mission partner, the Langham Partnership (USA), from pages 60 and 61 of *52 Weeks of Prayer for Missions*. Pray for their efforts to work with the global church to equip leaders and pastors to multiply disciples for Christ. Pray for their three key points of ministry: Equipping scholars, training pastors and publishing books. Ask God to bless their provision for the coming year and to guide their leaders.

First Friends is a ministry centered on refugees that have come to the Chicago/Skokie/Evanston in the past year. Have an ongoing relationship with a refugee family along with others from First Presbyterian; or you can get involved with one-off events with our church and those families! All are welcome. Contact Sally Ivaska at sallyivaska1@gmail.com, or Caryl Weinberg at cweinberg@firstpresevanston.org.

As a sequel to their previous “Repurposed Art” project, The Institute for Therapy Through the Arts and FPCE Volunteers are embarking on another art adventure created by the Saturday guests at First Pres. The project, which is supported by the Institute for Therapy in the Arts, involves weaving with disposable plastic bags. Many colorful plastic bags will be needed for the final creation. Donations of the bags should be made in the box outside the church library. Those feeling led to support the team with your prayer or your presence are most welcome! Call Linda at 847-420-1289 for information about taking part.

<http://www.firstpresevanston.org/serve/in-the-world/>

Christmas Photo Display

A range of photos of many past FPCE Christmas pageants are on display on the first floor (near the elevator), as well in the Dining Room. They illustrate a variety of ways the Christmas story has been enacted. Pageant tradition has been to include a member family along with their recently newborn baby to represent the Holy Family. Installed by the Arts Ministry, the photo exhibit is part of the First Pres 150th Anniversary celebration. The exhibit will be on display through Dec. 31. Our special thanks to Bill Floyd, photographer.

Children and Families

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As part of our Christmas Pageant at First Pres, we are inviting all children in our Sunday School and Children’s Worship classes to memorize Christmas carols and sing them along with our choir. We’d like to have the children who regularly attend worship with us on Sunday morning to have a special role in the Pageant! During the 4 pm worship service on Christmas Eve, there will be different times when our younger and older Sunday morning children are invited forward. All your child needs to do is memorize the carol(s), listen for the opportunity to come forward in the service, and then join us as we sing. For specific instructions on what words to memorize, please request a letter from your child’s Sunday morning teacher or pick one up on the table outside the church library.

Children’s Ministry will be selling concessions at First Night Evanston to raise funds for the Connie Floyd Memorial Church Camp Scholarship. We invite families to sign up and volunteer in our Family Food Court on Sunday, December 31! Shifts will be from 6:30-8:30 pm and from 8:30-10:30 pm, and families should sign up as one unit to serve together. Those who volunteer will also receive wristbands to attend First Night when you aren’t working! Sign up to participate at <http://www.firstpresevanston.org/events/event-registration/>.

Can’t volunteer at First Night? Children’s Ministry is seeking donations of pop and water for our concession stand that evening. If you are able, please bring a 12-pack of pop cans (Coke, Diet Coke, or Sprite) or a pack of 16 oz/500 ml water bottles to church by Tues, Dec 26. Sign up to donate at <http://www.firstpresevanston.org/events/event-registration/>.

New sign-ups have gone out for volunteer helpers in our childcare & Children’s Worship on Sunday mornings. We ask every family who uses these rooms on a regular basis to help out once per quarter. If you don’t have a child but are looking to serve, we’d love to get to know you & help you get involved! For more information contact Kristin Mueller.

<http://www.firstpresevanston.org/learn/children/>

Employment at FPCE

First Presbyterian Church of Evanston is looking to fill the position of Director of Youth Ministries (full-time). For the full job description and how to apply, please go to <http://www.firstpresevanston.org/about-us/employment>.

Youth and Families

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NUBS meets each Friday, from 7-9 pm, in the NUBS lounge. Students from grades 6-8 are invited. We will meet this Friday the 22nd and then be on break until January 12.

PYGS meets from 4-6 pm each Sunday afternoon. Dinner is served and a \$5 donation is requested to cover costs. Today will be our PYGS Christmas Party at the Hood Family home from 5:30-8 pm. . It’s a potluck. Last names a-M bring an appetizer or a side. Last names n-z bring a salad or a dessert. We are doing a white elephant gift exchange. Bring something silly and preferably pre-owned to pass on (valued at \$5 or less). We will also be decorating cookies and doing a service project. *We will then be on break until after the New Year.*

January 26-28 the High School will be traveling to Phantom Ranch to participate in their winter camp. The cost is \$150 for the weekend. Scholarships are available. Registration details can be found on the Sunday School table, in email, or online.

Summer 2018 we’re heading to The Great Escape. Rising 7th graders through graduating 8th graders are invited to go to the longest running middle school conference in the country July 9-14th. It’s a huge high energy Jesus filled week of fun! Registration is \$475. Scholarships are available. Registration details can be found on the Sunday School table, in email, or online.

High School Mission Trip will be July 22-27th in Benton Harbor Michigan. We will be serving the communities youngest and oldest residents alongside other churches. Registration fee is \$450 with an early registration discount of \$25 for participants registered before February 14th. Part of our preparation will involve fundraising to defray costs and raise scholarships. Registration details can be found on the Sunday School table, in email, or online.

Our next service Saturday will be held January 13th from 10-noon. We will be assisting the deacons in organizing the clothes closet. Service Saturdays are on the second Saturday of every month.

More details about Youth events can be found in our weekly email. Text YOUTHGROUP to 42828 to subscribe!

<http://www.firstpresevanston.org/learn/students/>

Young Adults and Families

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Family Open Gym

Thursdays, 4-7 pm, Roy Hall
Open for parents and their children to come run around, shoot some baskets, play some games. No need to RSVP; just show up and have a great time!

<http://www.firstpresevanston.org/learn/adults/young-adults/>

Prayer in the Parlor

The Parlor on the second floor is open each Wednesday for prayer and meditation from 9 am to 9 pm. All are welcome to come and spend time in prayer and praise in the space set aside for a holy time with God.

2018 Stewardship Campaign Update

Our total pledges to date (12/04/2017) for the 2018 Stewardship Campaign are as follows:

Goal (2018 Budget): \$1,050,000
Funds pledged: \$1,058,662

Pledges: 206
Faith Commitments: 26
Total Giving Unit Commitments to date: 232
Last Year’s Total Giving Unit Commitments: 292

Thank you for your support.

Pledge Cards are still available in the FPCE Lobby or online at <http://www.firstpresevanston.org/giving/giving-campaign/>.