

December 24 Sermon Notes - Fourth Week of Advent
10 a.m. Worship Service

Preacher: Rev. Raymond Hylton
Scripture: Luke 2:8-20 (*New Testament, p. 55*)
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.

4 p.m. Family Christmas Pageant

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.

December 31
10 a.m. Worship Service

Preacher: John Ng
Scripture: Matthew 2:1-8 (*New Testament, pp. 1-2*)
Title: Herod: Poisoned by Fear

Big Idea: Fear shrinks the capacity of the heart to rejoice and be glad. The inquiry of the Magi provoked fear and deceit in the heart of King Herod. Instead of rejoicing in the birth of the child, his poisoned, sinful heart led him to commit atrocious acts.

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

This evening, we will be holding our annual 4 pm Family Christmas Pageant, and our 11 pm Candlelight Service. All will be held in the Sanctuary. All are welcome!

An extended Prelude for tonight's Candlelight Service will begin at 10:45 p.m. Please arrive early to enjoy these lovely sounds of Christmas!

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

Except for the Warming Center, the FPCE offices and church building will be closed on Christmas Day.

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.firstpresevanston.org/events/event-registration>!

Worth Noting

We welcome for the sacrament of baptism this morning, Jacob Alexander and Zachary Ryan, sons of Scott Stover and Michelle Solone.

Sunday Worship services will be held at 10 a.m. on December 31 and January 7. There will be no Adult or Children's Education Classes those days. Our regular Sunday schedule will resume on January 14.

2018 offering envelopes will be available for pick-up this morning through January 14 across from the library.

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.

If you would like to participate in the preparation of the elements of the Lord's Supper for each of our Sunday communion services, please contact Elda McGinty at emcginty@firstpresevanston.org.

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 FPCE First Friends ministry. Pray for First Friends as we reach out in love to refugee families. Ask God to provide people to commit to visiting new Syrian families who want to be involved. Pray for both boldness and sensitivity as we share the gospel of Jesus with these friends.

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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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. NUBS is on break until January 12.

PYGS meets from 4-6 pm each Sunday afternoon. *We are 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 though 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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Save the date for our Super Bowl Sunday Chili Cookoff, to be held February 4 after the second service! More info to come!

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/>.