

*Forest Hill Church
Worship Service*

December 12, 2021 ~ 11:00 am

You may also join worship online using this link:

<https://youtu.be/5iPnYnFHYtw>

PRELUDE

“Rhythms of Merengue”

FHC Percussion Ensemble, led by Dylan Moffitt

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

Johannes Olearius

“Comfort, Comfort You My People”

Chancel Choir

Greeting Our God with Joy

CALL TO WORSHIP AND

Adam, Clementine, Kylie, and Violet Evans-Majot

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

LEADER: We have lit the first two candles, one for HOPE and one for PEACE. Today we light the third candle, the candle of JOY. This should be the easy one, because JOY is all around us--in the children, the lights, the music, the gathering together. But how often do we let our preparations--or our memories--push JOY to the side? JOY is like an underground spring that wells up within us, but JOY is also a choice, an attitude. Like a muscle, it needs to be exercised. So today we open ourselves to JOY, trusting that God has already planted it in us...all we need to do is give it care and offer to share.

ALL: Loving God, we open ourselves to you, trusting that this is how you made us: you created us for joy-filled hearts and lives. Show us the creative power of hope. Teach us the peace that comes from justice. Fill us with the kind of joy that cannot be contained, but must be shared. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by you that we may walk in the light of Christ.

HYMN NO. 82

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

1. Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel’s strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.
2. Born thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Renewing Our Relationship with God

PRAYER OF YEARNING:

Source of compassion and grace, we yearn to embody the joy of your salvation, but we are easily distracted by the demands of the season; we long to taste the wellspring of your mercy, but we are caught up in the frenzy of the holidays. Be our quiet center, that we may find your joy deep within. Be our secret heart, that we may live lives of love wherever we go. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

Affirming the Good News in Our Lives

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The one who loves us with a fierce tenderness takes away our guilt and leads us in the ways of life. The one who guides us with justice and mercy restores our fortunes and leads us home.

ADOPTING A FAMILY

Amy Wheatley

ANTHEM

Marc A. Robinson

“Prepare Ye”
Chancel Choir

Opening Our Hearts to God’s Word

THE LIVING WORD

Philippians 4:4-7 (NRSV)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

After the readings

Hear what the Holy Spirit is telling God’s people.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN NO. 106

“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

1. Prepare the way, O Zion; your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came in God’s most holy name.
2. He brings God’s rule, O Zion; he comes from heaven above.
His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth and love.
Lift high your praise resounding, for grace and joy abounding.
O blest is Christ who came in God’s most holy name.
3. Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior’s rule embrace,
and tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.
O blest is Christ who came in God’s most holy name.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr.

"What are You Going to Do?"

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

FRIENDSHIP REGISTER

To participate in our online Friendship Register, please leave a comment in the Live Chat box listing the names of those participating in this morning's Live Worship, or email the office.

OFFERING

Giving and Offering is available by texting: 216-400-5300
Or you may give online: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/form/f861d6>
You may also mail a check to the church office.

OFFERTORY

Johannes Brahms

“Intermezzo”

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Going Forth to Live as God’s People

CLOSING HYMN NO. 110

“Love Has Come”

1. Love has come: a light in the darkness!
Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it;
hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high.
2. Love is born! Come, share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of his mother;
what is the name her heart is saying?

Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Emmanuel.
3. Love has come and never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking. Love!
Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to you, God on high!

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Martha Sobaje

“Processional in D”



Today we welcome Elder Jessica Kelley as our Liturgist this morning.

Prayer Request:

To request prayers for a personal concern, please email Pastor Lentz (pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org) or Pastor Goines (pastorgoines@fhcpresb.org) no later than Thursday afternoon of each week for inclusion in next week's congregational prayer. Please direct all prayer concerns that arise between Friday and Sunday morning to the Pastor's on-call phone line (216-319-3596). The on-call phone is operational after office hours on weekdays and Saturday through Sunday morning.

Prayers are requested this week for:

Shirley Breisch, Leslie Clement, Mark Davidson, Dara Elliot, Beth Garrett, Mark Hansen, the parents of Jeannine Gury (Karen and David), Robyn Hales, Deborah Howard, Joanna Klingenstein, Ginie Mast, Elspeth Peterjohn, Ron Register, Kelly (the sister of Rob Reynolds), Grace Uhle, Doreen Underwood, Susan Way, and Sharon Wiggins.

Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:

Robert Kellermeyer, Florence and Ron Klein, Carol Hopkins-Lutz, Emelia McGuire, Margaret Sentell, Elaine Tapié, Beryl and Henrietta Williams.

Care Group: *The All Church Group* will assist our pastors with members' needs in **December**. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death.

Information will be passed on to the **Care Group leader, Elaine Turley** (deacons@fhcpresb.org).

Thank you, all office volunteers: Joan Bacon, Lynda Bernays, Nancy Grube and Cathy Ghiandoni.

The deadline for the bulletin and weekly email is Tuesday of each week at 5 pm. The next TOWER deadline is **December 16 (for the January TOWER) at 8:00 am**. Please submit your written requests to office@fhcpresb.org.