

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ISELIN

Minds, hearts, hands and voices in Christ

Service and Message by: Rev. Chris Houtz
Liturgist: Elder Ron Stamboly

We request that you silence all electronic devices **before** service begins.

**Please rise in body or spirit*

Sunday, December 12, 2021

10:30 A.M.

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR THE PROMISE



3RD SUNDAY OF *Advent*

PRELUDE Sleepers Awake! Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (*JS Bach*)

Bishop Nikolaos Brown

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elder Ron Stamboly

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

The Deacons

Jesus says: I am coming soon.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. As the Lord has promised, in days to come the wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

Like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Amen.

CHORAL INTROIT #85 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (vs. 3)

Light 3 candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)**

Elder Ron Stamboly

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon the holy name of the most high God.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation.

Proclaim the mercy of the One who comes as one of us.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation.

Trust and do not be afraid.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of peace.

The Lord is our strength and our salvation. Hallelujah! Amen.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY (In Unison)**

Elder Ron Stamboly

Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you. Now prepare the world for your rule. Come quickly to save us, so that wars and violence shall end, and your children may live in peace, honoring one another with justice and love; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

***HYMN #83**

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Elder Ron Stamboly

As John the Baptist called the people to repent, as Jesus calls us now, we turn to the one who is both judge and savior, trusting that repentance opens the door to new life, and that peace beyond all measure has been promised to us. Let us confess our sins.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Elder Ron Stamboly

In your presence, Holy God, we confess that we need repentance. We have broken your commands against idolatry. We do not live in peace with your creation or your people. We have not trusted your word, and we are afraid. Forgive us, restore us, and turn our shame into praise, for the sake of the One who proclaims the good news and for the sake of all the world.

Merciful God, hear now our own personal confessions that we lift up to you in silence.

PERSONAL CONFESSION

Rev. Chris Houtz

In the strong name of Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Chris Houtz

In the name of the one God who lives and moves among us, we are forgiven. The Lord has taken away the judgments against you. Do not worry. Live in peace.

Thanks be to God.

THE RESPONSE #92 While We Are Waiting, Come (vs. 1)

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Elder Ron Stamboly

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you. (*Please pass the peace of Christ to one another.*)

CHILDREN'S TIME

Rev. Chris Houtz

ANTHEM

A Voice Cries Out (*Michael Joncas*)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Elder Ron Stamboly

Holy Word, you are our guide and ultimate assurance. By your Holy Spirit, open us to your promises and commands and shower us again with the fire of your love. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament Reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

Elder Ron Stamboly

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸ as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,

when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

Psalter Reading (Responsive): Psalm 126

Elder Ron Stamboly

¹ When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

² **Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”**

³ The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

⁴ **Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.**

⁵ May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

⁶ **Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.**

New Testament Reading: Luke 3:7-18

Rev. Chris Houtz

⁷ 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? ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ 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.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

***HYMN #106**

Prepare the Way, O Zion

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH—Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God,
The Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
Of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
The only Son of God,
Eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
Begotten, not made,
Of one Being with the Father;
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven,
Was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
And became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
In accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
And his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son
Is worshiped and glorified,
Who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the world to come. Amen.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE OFFERING

***THE OFFERTORY RESPONSE #652 A Grateful Heart (vs. 1)**

***THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (In Unison)**

Gracious God, in gratitude for all that you have given us, we bring our tithes, offerings, and labor to help feed a world hungry for healing and hope; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

***HYMN #500 Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread**

THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Those who come to me shall not hunger, and those who believe in me shall never thirst. No one who comes to me will ever be turned away." This is the Lord's table. Our Savior invites all those who trust in him to share the feast which he has prepared for us.

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe. You formed us in your image and set us in this world to love and serve you. When we were captives in slavery, you delivered us to freedom, and made covenant to be our sovereign God. When we were stubborn and stiff-necked, you spoke to us through prophets who looked for that day when justice shall triumph and peace shall reign over all the earth. Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the celestial choirs and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever proclaim the glory of your name:

Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever!

You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son. You sent him into this world to bring freedom to the captives of sin, and to establish justice for the oppressed.

He came among us as one of us, taking the lot of the poor, sharing human suffering, dying an unjust death.

We rejoice that in his dying and rising again, you set before us the sure promise of new life, the certain hope of a heavenly home where we will sit at table with Christ our host.

On the night before he met with death, Jesus came to the table with those he loved. He took bread, and praised you, God of all creation. He broke the bread among his disciples and said: Take this, all of you, and eat it. This is my body, given for you.

When the supper was ended, he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to you, God of all creation. He passed the cup among his disciples and said: Take this, all of you, and drink from it. This is the cup of the new covenant sealed in my blood for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this cup and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising, as we await the day of his coming. With thanksgiving we offer our very selves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

**Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

Strengthen us, O God, in the power of your Spirit, to bring good news to the poor and loose the chains that bind. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory, and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

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

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body; for it is one loaf of which we partake. When we break the bread, is it not a sharing in the body Christ? When we give thanks over the cup, is it not a sharing in the blood Christ?

Friends, these are the gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER AFTER SUPPER

Gracious and abundant God, even as we wait for the fulfillment of your creation, you meet us in Christ at this table, in this meal. We thank you for feeding us with the bread of life and quenching our thirst with the cup of salvation. Now send us out into the world by the power of your Holy Spirit to share your life and salvation with all whom we meet. Amen.

***HYMN #96**

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

***THE BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION**

Soon and Very Soon (vs. 1, 2x)

Soon and Very Soon

Rev. 22:20
Liturgical Year/Funeral/Advent

Words and Music by
Andraé Crouch



1. Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King.
2. No more cry - ing there, we are going to see the King.
3. No more dy - ing there, we are going to see the King.



Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King.
No more cry - ing there, we are going to see the King.
No more dy - ing there, we are going to see the King.



Soon and ver - y soon, we are going to see the King.
No more cry - ing there, we are going to see the King.
No more dy - ing there, we are going to see the King.



Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! We're
Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! We're
Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! We're



going to see the King!
going to see the King!
going to see the King!

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142. SOON AND VERY SOON

THE POSTLUDE **The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns**
(John Brownie and Randall DeBruyn)

Friendly Reminders!

Advent Fellowships will be held in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, 12/15 and 12/22 beginning at 6:30 pm. There will be fellowship, dessert, and advent lesson led by Rev. Chris. **We encourage you to bring your favorite dessert! A signup sheet is available in Fellowship Hall.**

CLEF Ladies Cookie Sale today after worship!

Children's Christmas program is Sunday, December 19th, during worship.

Session Meeting is Sunday, December 19th, after worship.

The Longest Night Service is Tuesday, December 21st at 6 pm.

ChildFund is the Mission Focus for December, 2021.

The Board of Deacons' Ministry of Compassion is asking for donations of whole chickens or turkeys to include in our holiday food baskets. Also needed is canned sweet potatoes, boxed stuffing mixes, cranberry sauce, canned vegetables, pasta and canned broth. Please leave all donations in the church kitchen labeled for food pantry.

Thank you everyone for your generous donations.
Your Ministry of Compassion

Office Closed 12/24, 12/27 & 1/3/2022 in observance of Christmas Day, day after Christmas and New Year's Day.

Margarita Estrada on vacation 12/22/21 to 1/5/22. Back to work 1/6/22.

Men's Breakfast is Saturday, January 8th, 2022 at 8 am.

CLEF Ladies Breakfast is Saturday, January 8th, 2022 at 9 am.

Regular Activities

Church Office open Monday-Friday, 9am to 1 pm

Prayer Shawl Ministry - Tuesdays at 12 noon

Rev. Chris' Congregational Call - Every Thursday at 11 am

Men's Breakfast - 1st Saturday of the month at 8 am.

CLEF Ladies' Breakfast - 1st Saturday of the month at 9 am

Sunday Bible Study - 9:00 am

Session meeting every 3rd Sunday of the month

Choir practice: 1st and last Sunday of the Month at 9:30 am

Divine Worship: In sanctuary and on Facebook Livestream
Sundays at 10:30 am

Per Capita Apportionment for 2021 is \$40.45

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a friendly, multi-cultural congregation that welcomes all to worship with us as we glorify our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; sing praises to God, the Father; and let the Holy Spirit guide our footsteps. As faithful witnesses to our Christian beliefs, we dedicate ourselves to worship, stewardship and discipleship. We will always endeavor to nurture the youth in our congregation to grow in their commitment to God and the Church and to become active participants in the life and work of the Church.

We commit ourselves to evangelism and mission to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to all people in a variety of ways in our community and beyond.

We will continue to be open to God's presence, leading us into new pathways of ministry and service for the betterment of the community and to the glory of Jesus Christ our Savior. -

-ratified by congregational vote, January 27, 2008

Dear Members and Guests, if you'd like to know more information about the latest news,



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