December 15, 2019                     3rd Sunday of Advent                     10:45 a.m.
Prelude               Noel des Ausels                       Raymond Haan
*Processional          Brandon Bowles & Alex Maddux
Introit               Movement I (from Gloria)       John Rutter
                         Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.
                         We praise You, we bless You, we adore You, we glorify You,
                         We thank You because of Your great glory.
*Call to Worship       Leader:   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.
                         People: Let us worship God.
*Hymn                 Hark, the Harold Angels Sing       No. 31
Lighting of the Advent Candle
       Today is the third Sunday of Advent.... (Light the third purple candle)

Let us pray:  O God of Advent, give us patience this time of year when it
seems that we have too much to do to get ready for Christmas. Help us to
sort out the truly important from the trivial from the perspective of
eternity. Give us grace and permission to drop old traditions to start new
ones if they connect us more deeply with You and the Good News. Amen.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession
     Lord, have mercy upon us. We are not ready for your coming. We live in sin,
as though there were no justice. We live in fear, as though there were no
grace. Forgive us, Lord. Show us your mercy and steadfast love. Lead us in
your truth and teach us your paths, for you are the God of our salvation.
Amen.
Silence
Choral Response

Assurance of Pardon
*Song of Thanksgiving*  
*Gloria Patri*  
No. 579

*The Peace*
Leader: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**People: And also with you.**

First Reading
Isaiah 35:1-10

Anthem
**Movement II** (from *Gloria*)  
John Rutter

Lord God, Heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, begotten Son Jesus Christ;  
Lord God, Lamb of God, O God the Father who takes away the sin of the world;

Second Reading
Matthew 11:2-11

Sermon:  
“A Person Plagued by Doubts Yet a Person of Faith:  
The Greatness of John the Baptist”  
The Rev. Dr. Brent O. Johnston

*Affirmation of Faith-Excerpt from *Brief Statement of Faith*

In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of the People and Lord’s Prayer

Call to Stewardship

Offertory
**Movement III** (from *Gloria*)  
John Rutter

For You alone are Holy, You alone are Lord,  
You alone are Most High With the Spirit of God the Father, Amen.

Trumpets: Dana Hamant, Allen Laramore, Gary Leopold, Todd Shults  
Trombones: Joe Clements, Mike Porter, Jeff Yearout  
Tuba: Anthony Pressnell
*Doxology

No. 592

*Prayer of Dedication

Hymn  
*Angels We Have Heard on High  No. 23

*Charge and Benediction

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.

*Recessional

*Postlude  
*Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding  Raymond Haan

*signifies congregation standing (for those able)

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Worship Leaders

Pastor  
Brent Johnston

Liturgist  
Russ Davisson

Director of Music  
Steve Bixler

Organist  
Mark Sweeney
PLEDGE CAMPAIGN!

Our “Grace and Gratitude” campaign continues. The Stewardship Committee thanks you and wants to remind you that if you are still planning to pledge it is not too late. To date we have received 92 pledges for a total of $364,891. You can find pledge cards on the table outside of the office. Thank you.

UPCOMING YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

- Saturday, December 21 - Young Adult Gathering @ Botanica from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. *Young Adult events are for ages 18-35*
- Sunday, December 22 - FPC Youth Event @ Chicken N Pickle from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Friday, December 27 - Youth Christmas Party and Lock-In at FPC. The party and lock-in will be from 6 p.m. on Friday through 10 a.m. on Saturday. If you are able, please bring an appetizer or a snack to share. We will also have an optional gift exchange for those who want to participate. The limit for the gift exchange is $7.

Upcoming Adult Education Classes

Please join me beginning January 8, 2020 on Wednesday nights from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. to discuss what those in academia and those in the pew are talking about, John Robinson’s book *Honest to God*. Bishop Robinson sensed that Christianity needed to be made relevant to the modern world. And he found inspiration in that task in two twentieth century theologians - Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This book spawned in the academy the “Death of God” movement. It spawned in laity, a lay renewal, liturgical renewal, and what we now know as progressive Christianity.

This class promises to generate stimulating discussion as we seek to do in the words of Anselm, “faith seeking understanding.” The book may be bought at the Church Office for $20.00 dollars or on Amazon. I hope to see you in class in *The Well* January 8 at 6 p.m. ~ Pastor Brent

Seasonal items needed for Yellow Bag Ministry

With cold weather and flu season on us items in the Yellow Bag Ministry need to adjust accordingly. Products especially needed are facial and toilet tissue, lip balm, Mentholatum or Vicks vapor rub, cough drops, hand and body soap. Also, greatly appreciated by the refugee families is laundry detergent. These simple items help them stretch their limited income and use their cash to pay rent and utilities. Donations can be placed in the basket in the hall outside the office any time.
Welcome, Visitors!

We extend a special welcome to those who are visiting First Presbyterian Church this morning. We are glad you are here! Large print bulletins and hymnals are available from an usher. Transistor hearing aids are also available for your use. Please ask any usher for one and feel free to sit wherever you wish in the Sanctuary while using one. All persons are encouraged to sign the Ritual of Friendship Pads as they are passed to you in the pews. Please include your address, email address, and telephone number. Please remember to turn off your cell phone before worship this morning.

Children’s Information—Children are welcome in worship. We do not mind a little fidgeting and fussing in the pew. We offer children’s worship bags with various quiet activities in cloth bags located just outside the Sanctuary doors. But if you feel that your child is having a difficult time sitting through church, you are welcome to worship in The Well. Remember, quiet play in The Well is appropriate so as not to disturb others who are trying to worship. Also, the McComb room is available as a Cry room. If we need to contact you during worship, just give us your cell number and we will text you. You and your child’s (spiritual, emotional, and social) needs are important to us. (Liz Norris—Director of Children’s Ministry)

A quick reminder: Under the Child Protection Policy children are not allowed to leave the Sanctuary or The Well without an adult escort. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sympathy—Please keep Tom and Peggy Church in your prayers as they grieve the recent loss of Tom’s mother.

Flowers—The beautiful poinsettias this morning are donated by the congregation in honor of or in memory of friends and relatives.

Praying for the Church Family—As a congregation we weekly focus our personal and corporate prayers upon a selection of church members and friends. Let us remember in prayer this week the following: Michael & Kristin Caradine, Charles Hoke, Silvia Landers, J. D. Page, Stephen & Nancy Perry.

If you need a Stephen Minister, or would like more information about the Stephen Ministry, please contact Dr. Brent Johnston at 263-0248 or Louise Farmer at lfarmer4164@gmail.com.

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**Calendar**

**Sunday, December 15**
- Prayers of the People
- Journeys Class (Parlor)
- Coffee Fellowship (The Well)
- Blood Pressure Check (The Well)
- Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
- Worship (Sanctuary)
- Refugee Worship (C204)
- Children’s Parent Mtg (The Well)

**Tuesday, December 17**
- Pastoral Staff Mtg (Hobbs)
- Staff Mtg – Christmas Luncheon (Hobbs)

**Wednesday, December 18**
- Dorcas Circle (C105)
- Bell Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)

**Thursday, December 19**
- Book Chat (C109)

**Friday, December 20**
- Lectionary Bible Study (C109)

**Saturday, December 21**
- Brent’s Bible Study w/WRCC (Hobbs)
- Young Adults (Offsite)

**Sunday, December 22**
- Coffee Fellowship (The Well)
- Choir Rehearsal (The Well)
- Worship (Sanctuary)
- Refugee Worship (C204)
- Sr. High Youth Event (Offsite)

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**Epiphany BINGO!**

......and the not so Silent Auction

Sunday, January 5
12 Noon – 3 P.M.

FREE Soup Dinner with a Bingo Card
Small charge for a dauber and extra Bingo Cards

Camels are on the RUN to get to the celebration of the Christ Child on January 5th at FPC. Join your church family for a fabulous afternoon of fellowship with soup & salad, playing Bingo for prizes, and making bids on Silent Auction baskets. BRING FRIENDS!! All proceeds of the Silent Auction will go to support spiritual growth and renewal of our congregation as we approach FPC’s 150th Anniversary!! Contact Cynthia Rekoske at 992-9595 if you have any concerns or would love to assist!