GATHERING MUSIC  
*Vom Himmel Hoch, da Komm’ Ich Her*  
J. Pachelbel

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS  
Mindy Douglas

PRELUDE  
*Vom Himmel Hoch, da Komm’ Ich Her*  
J. Pachelbel

CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 126)  
John Weicher

Leader: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
then were we like those who dream.  

All: Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy.  

Leader: Then they said among the nations,  
the Lord has done great things for them.  

All: The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we are glad indeed.  

Leader: Restore our fortunes, O Lord,  
like the watercourses of the Negeb.  

All: Those who sowed with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.  

Leader: Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.  

All: Let us worship God.

ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY  
Tony and Teddie Brown

Response (Hymn No. 93, verses 1-2)  
*Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*  
Truro

*Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the King of glory waits;  
the King of kings is drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.*  

*Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a temple, set apart  
from earthly use for heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.*

CONFESSION OF SIN  
Susan Dunlap

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (in unison)  
Merciful God, you love justice;  
why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing  
and every form of evil?  
You have given us the gift of your Spirit;  
why, then do we quench the Spirit among us?
You have given us the words of the prophets and the Word himself; why, then, do we despise and ignore what we have heard from you? You have sent the light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light? Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Response (Hymn No. 93, verse 3)

_redeemer, come! I open wide
my heart to thee; here, Lord, abide.
let me thy inner presence feel;
thy grace and love in me reveal._

**Prayer for Illumination**

Leader: The Lord be with you.
All: And also with you.
Leader: Let us pray.
All: Creator God,

.Scripture is flooded with dream-like images:
justice rolling like a mighty river,
the prisoner being set free,
good news to the oppressed,
the whole world rejoicing.

To our human ears, there are times when these words can sound like nothing more than a far-off dream. However, what we know is that to dream is to hope, and to hope is to imagine, and to imagine is to wonder, and to wonder is to believe, and to believe is to live and breathe for your promised day. So give us the strength to listen as we dream, O God. Amen.

**Hebrew Scripture Reading** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God!


Leader: The Word of the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God!

**Sermon** “Dreams of Change”

Mitzi Lesher-Thomas
HYMN No. 100 (verses 1-2)  *My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout*  
*Star of County Down*

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain:  *My heart shall sing of the day you bring.*  
*Let the fires of your justice burn.*  
*Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,*  
*and the world is about to turn.*

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn.  
(Refrain)

**A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN**  
John Weicher

**INVITATION TO GIVE AND DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING**  
John Weicher

**NEW MEMBERS SERVICE OF WELCOME**  
Mindy Douglas

Words of Welcome and Introduction

**Affirmation of Faith** (All, in unison)  
*The Apostles’ Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows**

**Prayer**

**CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS, PASTORAL PRAYER, AND THE LORD’S PRAYER**  
Mindy Douglas

**The Lord’s Prayer** (in unison)  
*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.*
HYMN NO. 100 (verses 3-4)  My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout  Star of County Down

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice, tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn.

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God’s mercy must deliver us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. (Refrain)

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Mitzi Lesher-Thomas

POSTLUDE

Vom Himmel Hoch, da Komm’ Ich Her

Otto Dienel

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

SUNDAY, DEC. 13, 6:30 PM

Zoom link: https://zoom.us/j/93565707969?pwd=b2xndS9MTFlXYOcv0FFWT3ppaJodz09.
Want to lead a song? Contact Kathy Conner.
First Presbyterian Church welcomes all who worship with us. We honor and celebrate the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Christ. We welcome individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church. On December 6, 103 households tuned in to the 11:00 a.m. live-streamed broadcast of worship.

We welcome in worship today new members Arthur (Art) Baker and Lara Duffney. They are married and were received into membership by the FPC Session on November 23. They are joining FPC by Letter of Transfer.

Music Notes:
1) Special thanks to Gordon Campbell for his music leadership with today’s service. Gordon will serve as organist and interim music director while Kathy Parkins recovers from shoulder and bicep surgery.
2) The organ music for this Sunday is three settings of the carol, “Vom Himmel Hoch, da Komm’ Ich Her,” which translates, “From Heaven Above I Come Here.”

From Heaven Above I Come Here
From heaven above I come here to bring you good tidings.
I bring you so many good tidings that I will speak and sing about them.

Many thanks to Jody Maxwell, Pat Dillon, Keith Rokoske, and Jay Klinck for their “behind the scenes” technical assistance with our live broadcasts of worship each Sunday morning. We are also grateful to Jennie Alwood for the powerful images accompanying our online worship today.


~ Our Celebrations and Concerns ~

CONDOLENCES: The love and concern of the congregation are extended to Emily Wilkins and family on the death of her Uncle Al on December 2.

CONCERNS:
- Kathy Parkins, recovering at home following shoulder and bicep surgery
- Grace Abels, recovering from back surgery
- Harold Dunlap
- Kerry Holbrook
- Jane Rourk
- Carol Wills
- Everlyn Bass, aunt of Valerie McMillian, in hospice care at Duke Hospital
- Daniel Cheney, brother of Johanna Bernhardt, hospitalized with heart related issues
- Barbara Peck, former member, will have back surgery on December 14 in Huntsville, AL
- The many households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Those who are grieving during this holiday season
Robert Daye is Retiring!
Let’s shower him with cards!

Our sexton, Robert Daye, will be retiring at the end of 2020 after 43 years of faithful service to the church. While Robert deserves to be honored in-person with a big send-off into retirement, the pandemic has led us to plan a virtual celebration instead. On Sunday, December 20, beginning at 2:00 p.m., the congregation will meet via the church’s YouTube channel and hear stories and see photos of Robert’s time with us. Members of Robert’s family have been asked to come and share in this momentous occasion.

Thank you to those of you who submitted stories and photos for this event and sent contributions for the love offering. **We now ask that you help us with one more thing: A CARD SHOWER for Robert! Please send cards (or personal notes) to the church by December 16th.** These will be presented to Robert at the celebration, along with the love offering.

Click [here](#) to access FPC’s Advent resources and activities
LEADERS: Mitzi Lesher-Thomas and Susan Dunlap

TIME: Sundays, December 6, 13, 20 from 4:00-5:00 p.m.

ZOOM LINK: https://zoom.us/j/99260154711

The holidays can be a difficult time for people who have experienced the loss of a loved one or the loss of anything else close to the heart. These three Zoom gatherings offer a time of prayer and reflection to mourn, remember, and honor our losses. Each gathering is different, and you are invited to all three or to just one or two. Whether you have lost someone recently or decades ago, we'll make room to come together in both sorrow and hope during this season of light shining in the darkness.
Support for Those who Mourn
Growing thru Grief offers year-round support to people who have lost a loved one. Currently we are meeting on zoom each week. Here is a preview of our coming speakers:

- December 15  Andrea Bowen  Care for the Grieving Self through the Holidays
- December 22  Janet Stolp  To be determined
- December 29  Vivian Harris  The Ugly Shoes Club
If you would like to attend any or all of these sessions, please send your request to admin@growingthrugrief.org. Then we can send you the information. Everyone must register every week. We need to receive your inquiry by 8 am on Monday for Tuesday’s session.

We meet each Tuesday from 4:15-6, with a presentation plus small group discussion. For more information about Growing thru Grief, check out our website, growingthrugrief.org.

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Friday, December 18, 12 noon-1:00 p.m. (Online)

Join NC Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green for a Zoom discussion on one of James Baldwin's essays, *Equal in Paris*, written shortly before Christmas 1949. Green is the first African American and third woman to be appointed as a North Carolina Poet Laureate. This presentation will provide a different perspective and lens for reimagining Christmas this holiday season. Registration is free, but donations are encouraged. [Click here](#) to register.

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**HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS . . .**

**From Iglesia Emanuel:** Here's a little thank you video we made to show our gratitude to all our partners in ministry who have so generously supported the food bank all this time. THANK YOU AND BLESS YOU, and happy holidays! - Julio and Marty Ramirez-Eve

[Click here](#) to watch the video.

**Iglesia Emanuel Food Bank Thank You**

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Please remember that the church must receive your charitable contributions by midnight on Monday, December 31, 2020; or the gift must be postmarked by December 31, 2020, if mailed, to be deductible on your 2020 taxes.
If you wish to make a contribution by credit card, this may be done through the church’s website (https://firstpres-durham.org) at any time. **To be deductible on your 2020 taxes, please initiate the gift by Tuesday, December 29. On-line contributions scheduled for December 31 will not reach us in time.**

If you wish to make a donation through a gift of stock, please notify Tom Bloom, Business Administrator (t.bloom@firstpres-durham.org) **as soon as possible.**

Members aged 70 ½ + who own an IRA may be able to make a tax-excludable gift directly to First Presbyterian and have that gift satisfy any required minimum distribution for this year. Please contact your IRA administrator ASAP if you wish to consider this giving option for tax year 2020.

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**CHURCH STAFF**

*Tom Bloom,* Business Administrator  
*Lenore Champion,* Children’s Ministry Director  
*Robert Daye,* Sexton  
*Mindy Douglas,* Pastor/Head of Staff  
*Susan Dunlap,* Parish Associate

*Sybil King,* Administrative Assistant  
*Mitzi Lesher-Thomas,* Associate Pastor  
*Valerie McMillian,* Parish Administrator  
*Kathy Parkins,* Minister of Music  
*John Weicher,* Associate Pastor

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For more information about First Presbyterian Church, email the church office: info@firstpres-durham.org or visit our website: https://firstpres-durham.org.

305 EAST MAIN STREET  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27701  
919.682.5511
Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates; behold the
2 Fling wide the portals of your heart; make it a
3 Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to

King of glory waits; the King of kings is
temple, set apart from earthly use for
thee; here, Lord, abide. Let me thy inner

drawing near; the Savior of the world is here.
heaven’s employ, adorned with prayer and love and joy.
presence feel; thy grace and love in me reveal.
1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my God, my all, you
3 From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a
4 Though the nations rage from age to age, we re-

God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the
work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the
stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your
member who holds us fast: God’s mercy must de-

wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
liv-er us from the conqueror’s crushing grasp.

You fixed your sight on your servant’s plight, and my
Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the
This saving word that our forebears heard is the

weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every
promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be
name be blest. Could the world be a-bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a-bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a-bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn-ing the world a-round.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the
fires of your jus-tice burn. Wipe a-way all tears, for the
dawn draws near, and the world is a-bout to turn.