



## **WORSHIP for December 20, 2020**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 1) To watch **sermons recorded** on Zoom on our YouTube Channel, go to the FPCP website: <https://www.fpcpataskala.com/> and click on WORSHIP or follow us on Facebook from the homepage. To potentially increase subscribers & views,  like and  share!
- 2) Please invite family or friends, who want to join us for live worship on Sundays @10:45am, to request access by emailing their name, email, & phone number to [fpcofpataskala@gmail.com](mailto:fpcofpataskala@gmail.com)

**Zoom live worship** attendance: 10/4 50, 10/11 58, 10/18 46, and 10/25 58.

- 3) If you need a COVID-19 **cloth mask** call 740-901-1232 for the Johnsons, who lead the CRT. Thank you to Gage Marcum and Katie Slaymaker, who have been making masks available.
- 4) **Give to FPCP** while shopping for Christmas or for any time at smile.amazon.com. .5% of purchases go to FPCP, when you register for FPCP by going to this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/31-1143651>

**When shop thru smile.amazon.com**, donations work like Kroger points.

But for the church to get credit, you have to enter thru the link the first time, before shopping under your amazon account.

**5) A memorial fund for Sally Seiberling** has been established for the purpose of handicapped accessibility. To contribute in memory, denote Seiberling memorial in the memo area of your check and/or on your envelope.

**7) Blue Christmas & Communion service** 7pm on the longest night Monday 12/21 for those grieving the loss of loved ones & other losses in 2020.

**8) Bring baby Jesus from your manger scene to share on camera at the start of Christmas Eve 7pm worship.**

Also bring a candle (real or battery operated) for your neighbors to see during "Silent Night" and the postlude. Be prepared to stand at a window or even to step outdoors to sing out loud, sharing the joyful news of Jesus' birth!

### **4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Lighting Candle of Love:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOJPkirhDil>

***Light a candle and meditate on the Advent Candle of Love***

**Call to Worship:** Lamentations 3:22-26 *Responsively*

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

**They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.

**The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord..."**

Opening Hymn: **"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPxxgQsnzJA&list=TLPQMDEwNTlwMjDawnz6aEwPSA&index=1>

**Prayer of Confession:** *Unison*

The greatest commandment is to love the Lord, whose steadfast love endures forever, with our heart, mind, soul and strength. But our love is spent on others and other things, we confess. Forgive our neglect we pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen

*(Pause now for a time of silent confession.)*

**Assurance of Forgiveness:** Psalm 78:38a *Responsively*

*"Yet he was merciful; he forgive their iniquities." We believe the good news of the gospel.*

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

**"The Gloria Patri"**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgcYD\\_m4OhU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgcYD_m4OhU)

**Hymn of Preparation: "Once in Royal David's City"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRIZ22dn-XY>

**Call to God's Word:** *Unison*

**"Scripture cannot be set aside... What does Scripture say?"** John 10:35 & Romans 4:3.

**Prayer for Illumination:** *Unison*

**Lord, through your Spirit enable us to consider your Word, and to enact it in our lives to bring you glory and praise. Amen.**

**Anthem played and sung by Brent Miller, "Love was Born for Us to Share"**

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[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkHVFJOPaC0&list=PLAdy2hvW6PL8\\_1itXDbTRrCeI331DmVVU&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkHVFJOPaC0&list=PLAdy2hvW6PL8_1itXDbTRrCeI331DmVVU&index=2)

**Scripture Readings: Philippians 2**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2&version=NIV>

**SERMON: "Having the Same Love"** by *The Reverend Dr. Janet Hufford*

Watch sermon on: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAdy2hvW6PL93B6hbgswTxf93Evs575yd>

We repeat our introduction for Advent. Advent is the time we consciously wait in hope for Jesus to come again. In the meantime, Advent has as its themes: hope, peace, joy, and love, words which we long to hear in a year such as 2020. Yet Paul's letter to Philippi with all these hopeful themes was written while he was confined to prison in Rome. The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent focuses on and all of Advent corresponds to the theme of hope. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent focuses on peace. As we have already seen how chapters 3&4 of Paul's letter to the Philippians bears witness to hope and peace. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent, with a focus on joy echoed through the entire letter, took its message from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Philippians.

Now the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent focuses on love from Philippians 2. Love is the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 from which joy, peace, & other attributes come. Love is key. Love is the foundation. Love is the root from which all our maturity in Christ grows. As 1 Corinthians

13 states, "Love never fails." Without love we are only clanging gongs and sounds cymbals. Thus, Paul wrote this prayer in Philippians 1:9-11: "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more & more in knowledge & depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best & may be pure & blameless for the day of Christ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes thru Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God."

Philippians 2:1 immediately reveals love as the core of his message in chapter 2. Love is that which spurs encouragement and comfort, which we so need now and always. "Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion," Paul next directs readers like us what to do out of love in vv. 2-5.

Verse 5 identifies whose mindset we should have, "as Christ Jesus." But what does Jesus' mindset, grounded in love look like? This was explained generally in verses 3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of the others."

The model of this unselfish and humble mindset is Christ himself. His model is unfolded in verses 6-11, which are said to be the oldest of all Christian hymns. Think of this after this reading. The Son of the living God sits alongside the Father in the throne room of heaven. No relationship or place is more filled with love, joy, and peace! This Father and Son relationship is absolutely perfect. They have enjoyed everything together. The Son has worked side by side with the Father from the beginning. They created everything together. Yet their perfect work was marred by sin, which they knew would come. Therefore, the plan from the beginning for the created world was for the to give his Son, as the world's first Christmas gift, "that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" from John 3:16. Without any hesitation, the Son agreed to the Father's plan, even though he would have to temporarily give up everything. Would have to give up his equal place on the throne at the Father's side. Though one in nature with the Father, he had to take on human limits. Further, the royal heir on the heavenly throne was born less than a pauper servant, laid in a manger from which animals ate. He made himself nothing. He allowed himself to be emptied of all divine power. And he agreed to surrender to the most humbling and shameful of all deaths on the cross.

Paul again exhort the followers of Jesus to have his same love and mind in vv. 12-18. In the last portion of Phil 2, Paul gives other disciples of Christ as models of love.

Paul offers as model of love Timothy in vv. 19-24. Paul commends Timothy in v 22, "But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel." Paul does not expand on particular ways that Timothy proved himself, but the Philippians likely know of them. In Acts 16 Timothy's father is identified as Greek in and Timothy's mother, on the other hand, as Jewish. One of the ways that Timothy proved himself also described in Acts 16:3 was his being circumcised, "because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was Greek." Talk about an act of love. Timothy then joined Paul & Silas on carrying the Gospel to Jews & Gentiles from town to town. In Acts 16:5, the result was "so the churches were strengthened in the faith & grew daily in numbers." Another showing of love was that as a fellow worker, Timothy was under threat of the same persecutions as Paul & Silas. When Paul goes to Rome, Timothy still works

alongside Paul, but also takes Paul's letters to the churches to which Paul writes. So in Phil 2:23 Paul writes, "I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me." Like Jesus, Timothy is a humble & committed servant. In fact, after Paul is temporarily released from jail in Rome, he assigns Timothy as bishop over Ephesus & writes 2 letters to instruct Timothy in his work there. These letters were preached thru October & November at FPCP to prepare for the installation of 2021 officers and to carry on in godliness & loyalty the work of the church founded by Christ.

Paul also offers as a model of love Epaphroditus, who is only mentioned in Scripture in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Hear vv. 25-30. Whereas Paul intends to send Timothy to Philippi, apparently Philippi sent Epaphroditus to Rome to take care of Paul's needs. At the end of his letter to the Philippians in 4:18 Paul indicates, "I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you send. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God." Apparently, sacrificial giving was a standard for Epaphroditus and the Philippians as a whole, for in 4:15-16 Paul credits, "Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only, for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need."

Generous giving is denoted in Scripture as a sign of both love and an outpouring of joy. The church of Philippi, as shown in Paul's letter, bear this fruit abundantly well. Another way that Epaphroditus acted in sacrificial love as a humble servant, like Jesus, is expressed in 2:26-27: "For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. Indeed, he was ill, and almost died..." Like Jesus and Paul, Epaphroditus was humbly willing to serve in love, even to the point of death.

Between the example of Jesus, Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Paul himself, Paul exhorts the continuing example of the Philippians themselves. Take special note of Paul's assurance to the Philippians and likewise to us in vv. 12-18 that if we continue to obey and "act to order to fulfill his good purposes," we will "shine... like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life." Like stars in the sky can guide those who journey at night, we are shine like stars in the sky holding firmly to the word of life to be guides of truth in the world.

These verses remind us, too, of the blessing spoken to Abraham promised that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. These verses remind of how the shepherds, who tended their sheep under the starry sky, soon saw the sky filled by a great company of the heavenly host to announce the Good News of the birth of the long-awaited Messiah. These verses remind of how the brightest star in the sky shined to mark the site of Jesus' birth. And these verses remind that Jesus' birth was not the end, but the start of the New Covenant. How Jesus' making himself nothing, raised him upon the cross. But his death was not the end, for Jesus was raised from the grave. Neither was his resurrection the end, for Jesus was taken back into heaven from where we wait for him to return, that the Gospel message may be fully completed. In conclusion, listen again to Philippians 2:9-11. In this great love, we say together, "Alleluia and Amen!"

**Hymn of Response: "Of the Father's Love Begotten"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQ-TO6ypUWM>

**PRAYERS of Joy and Concern**, followed by:

**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.**

**Please Continue to Give in Dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus**

**Prayer Of Dedication: *Unison***

In view of your mercy help us to offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to you, O God. Amen. *Romans 12:1*

**Doxology**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqpXWF15avU>

**Closing Hymn: "O Thou Joyful, O Thou Wonderful"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=he0HUNu2tUk>

**Benediction: *Responsively***

Go forth with love into the world to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**