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Sunday Stories

December 19, 2021

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

First Presbyterian Church will host two 'Lessons and Carols' services on Christmas Eve. A contemporary family service (right) will be held at 4 p.m. in the fellowship hall with a traditional service at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.



Christ has come, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Contributed

First Presbyterian Church on Church Circle invites you to celebrate with us the arrival of Christ our King – and join us in anticipation of His sure return.

Join us as we share in a Christian community tradition of Advent and “Lessons and Carols” services. At our 11 a.m. service today, on this last Sunday of Advent, our youth perform the pageant of Christmas, the birth of the Christ child. During Advent, the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of our Lord Jesus and look with hope for the return of Christ the King.

The four Sundays of Advent, symbolized by lighting candles representing hope, peace, joy and love, prepare us for the culmination of welcoming the arrival of the Christ child in our “Lessons and Carols” services on Christmas eve.

Advent means “arrival” or “coming.” This centuries-old tradition celebrates Christ’s coming into the world and watches with expectant hope for His coming again. This tension between having come and yet coming can also be symbolized by the Aramaic word “maranatha,” which can be translated either “Our Lord has come” or “Come, our Lord.”

Christmas Eve “Lessons and Carols” services are also an old Christian community tradition. The first formal service of “Nine Lessons and Carols” was held on Christmas Eve 1880 in Canterbury, England.

We will have two “Lessons and Carols” services on Christmas Eve.

A contemporary service at 4 p.m. in the fellowship hall will focus on families and especially children and youth. We’ll sing familiar songs led by our youth group and hear readings led by our children. We will also have a



special candle lighting that lasts throughout our worship.

And then we have the more traditional “Lessons and Carols” service at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. This service will focus on the telling of the Christmas story through readings of scripture interspersed with the congregation singing the carols that relate to that part of the scripture as the story unfolds.

The 5:30 p.m. Christmas eve service has the added dimension of not only the organ arrangements of the great carols, but we’ll have a brass choir, a brass quartet of trumpets, trom-

bones, tubas and horns. And it concludes with a very intimate singing of “Silent Night” as the Chancel goes dark and we pass the candlelight among the congregation. Everyone will be given a personal candle with their program as they come in; those won’t be lighted until the very last when we pass the candlelight during the singing of “Silent Night.”

“Our joy is trying to bring all elements of human expression, the written word, and poetry, and hymns and music, and movement and dance drama, all into the complete telling and experiencing of this miracle,” said Director of Music Mark Davis. “We bring all our arts and all of our powers into the experience and therefore let it affect us more so that we might serve Him better.”

So please join us Christmas Eve at 100 Church Circle for a traditional welcoming and eager anticipation of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you can’t join us in person, join us online. Both Christmas Eve services will be live-streamed on YouTube. And you can view the previous Advent services on our website at www.fpckpt.org under Resources, Sermon Archives.

Christ has come! Christ is coming! Maranatha!