

# EVEN STRANGER THINGS

*December 14, 2025  
9:00AM*

## OUR INVITATION

Because we believe that every person is a beloved child of God, on a journey to God, with God, we welcome ALL people, *without exception*, to participate fully in the life of this church.

## OUR MISSION

First United Methodist Church exists to build a community where all people are invited to know God's love and sent to join God in transforming the world.

## OUR VALUES

*Justice.* Working to eradicate injustice for the excluded and marginalized. *Bridge-Building.* Nurturing multigenerational friendships and community partnerships. *Storytelling.* Sharing our stories of faith and of growth. *Active Learning.* Pursuing knowledge and understanding of God. *Service.* Seeking mutually empowering service opportunities. *Constructive Disruption.* Disrupting systems of power to create positive change.

## OUR FAMILIES

We love children in worship. Activity clipboards and other materials for children are available at the back of the Sanctuary. Our Family Room in the balcony offers rockers, books, toys, and a diaper change station for parents with infants and toddlers. Childcare is available from 8:45AM-12:15PM for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in EDU Room 102.

# GATHERING AS THE CHURCH

*Asterisks (\*) indicate an invitation to stand as you are able.*

## GATHERING VOLUNTARY

### GREETING

*As you prepare for worship, please greet your neighbors and fill out a Connections Card. You can find the printed version in the pew in front of you or you can use the QR code on the front page of the FUMC Weekly. To let our pastors know about a prayer request for you or someone you love, you can use the printed Connections Card that will be placed in the offering basket when it is passed or you can use the QR code found on the front of the FUMC Weekly.*

*Response: I was glad when they said to me,*

**“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”**

Psalm 122:1

## ENTERING THE HOLY

### INTROIT

Fling Wide the Door

Fling wide the door, unbar the gate;  
the King of glory comes in state;  
the Lord of lords and King of kings,  
the Savior of the world  
who brings his great salvation to the earth.

So raise a shout of holy mirth  
and praise our God and Lord,  
Creator, Spirit, Word.

Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ;  
our hearts are open wide in trust.  
Oh, show us now your lovely grace,  
upon our sorrows shine your face,  
and let your Holy Spirit guide our journey  
in your grace so wide.

We praise your holy name,  
from age to age the same!

Words: Georg Weissel; Trans. Garcia Grindal

Music: *Macht hoch die tür*; J. A. Freylinghausen

## **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

God's messenger came to Mary with a startling word.

**We are here,**

**ready to hear God's surprising voice.**

"Do not be afraid," the angel said.

**We lay down our fear**

**and lift up our faith.**

God invited Mary into a story beyond her imagining.

**We open our lives**

**to God's unexpected work.**

Mary answered, "Let it be with me according to your word."

**May her courage shape our courage,**

**and her "yes" become ours.**

Come, Holy Spirit—

  speak, disrupt, and lead us into your hope.

**\* HYMN 202**

People, Look East

## **LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES**

We move from one task to another,

  from one responsibility to another.

The holidays may wear us out with worries about preparations,

  about family relationships,

  about money,

  about presents!

**We are scattered and busy**

**about too many things.**

We call out in our fatigue:

**Where is your joy, O God?**

**Where is your gift of presence in our lives?**

We remind ourselves of Paul's ancient advice:

Celebrate God all day....revel in God!

Help everyone see that the Master is about to arrive!...

Don't fret or worry.

Instead of worrying, pray.

Let petitions and praises

shape your worries into prayers,  
letting God know your concerns.

Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness,  
everything coming together for good,  
will come and settle you down.

It is wonderful what happens  
when Christ displaces worry  
at the center of your life.

**Let us light this third candle of Advent,  
a candle of Joy.**

In its light, let us turn our worries into prayers:

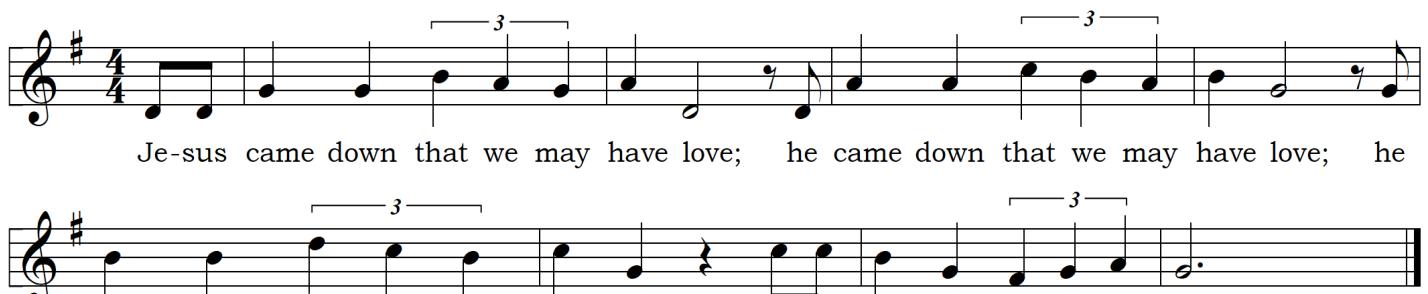
**May God be present to us now,  
as we prepare for the coming of Christ.**

Let this candle of Advent Joy  
shine in our hearts all week  
to remind us to pray and praise  
and place Christ at the center this season.

**Amen.**

## SUNG RESPONSE

## Jesus Came Down



Je-sus came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he  
came down that we may have love, hal-le - lu - jah for ev - er - more.

Words: Cameroon Traditional

Music: Cameroon Traditional; Trans. and Arr. John L. Bell

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## ANTHEM

## Once In Royal David's City

Alleluia!

Once in royal David's city  
stood a lowly cattle shed  
where a mother laid her baby  
in a manger for his bed.

Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from Heaven,  
he is God and Lord of all.

And his shelter was a stable  
and his cradle was a stall.

With the poor and meek and lowly lived  
on earth our Savior Holy.

Alleluia!

And our eyes at last shall see him  
through his own redeeming love.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
but with God in heaven above.

When like stars his children crowned  
all in white shall gather round.

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander

Music: *Irby*, Henry J. Gauntlett; Arr. Alan Schlichting © 2014 Alan Schlichting

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## HEARING GOD'S WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Speak to us, Lord.

Speak to us in the waiting, the watching,  
the hoping, the longing,  
the sorrow, the sighing, the rejoicing.

Speak to us by your Word in these Advent days,  
and walk with us until the day of your coming.

Amen.

Reverend Andy James

### SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-38

New Testament, page 53

## **RESPONDING IN FAITH**

### **INVITATION TO THE FAITH JOURNEY**

*Are you interested in what it means to be a member of First Church? First Steps is an informal gathering where you can meet the pastors and staff, learn about United Methodist beliefs, hear more about our many ministry opportunities, ask questions about this community of faith, and explore whether membership at First Church is your next step in faith. The next First Steps Class is Sunday, February 22, at 12:15PM in the FLC Garrison Chapel. Lunch is provided and childcare is available in EDU Room 102. To sign up, fill out a Connections Card and place it in the offering basket or go online at [fumcaustin.org/first-steps](http://fumcaustin.org/first-steps).*

### **OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS TO GOD**

#### **OFFERTORY**

The First Nowell

The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star  
shining in the East beyond them far,  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night.

Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heavenly Lord  
that hath made heaven and earth of nought,  
and with his blood mankind hath bought.

Nowell! Born is the King of Israel.

Words: Trad. English Carol

Music: *The First Nowell*, Trad. English Carol; Arr. Mack Wilberg © 2001 Oxford University Press, Inc.; assigned Oxford University Press 2010  
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## **\* PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;  
 Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Creator, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Isra-el.

Words: Thomas Ken, alt.

Music: *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*, plainsong, Mode 1, Processionale, 15th cent.

# FEASTING AT THE TABLE OF GRACE

## \* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*Celebrant*

The Lord be with you.

*All*

And also with you.

*Celebrant*

Lift up your hearts.

*All*

We lift them up to the Lord.

*Celebrant*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*All*

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

*Pastor gives thanks, recalling God's story of abundance.*

...And so with saints,  
with angels,  
and with the whole creation,  
we join the ancient and eternal hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of power and might. might.

Heav - en and earth are full, full in the name of your glo - ry.  
Blest is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Final

*Please be seated. Pastor continues leading the prayer, recalling the acts of Christ.*

...With thanks and praise  
we offer ourselves to you,  
sharing this holy meal,  
remembering Christ's dying and rising,  
and proclaiming the mystery of faith:

Christ has died, Christ is ris - en, Christ will come a - gain. gain.

*Pastor continues leading the prayer, asking God to pour out God's Holy Spirit on us and this meal.*

...Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor are yours, almighty God,  
now and forever.

A - men, a - men, a - men, a - - - - men.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our God in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For yours is the kingdom,

the power,

and the glory, forever.

Amen.

## RECEIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

### HYMN DURING RECEIVING

What Feast of Love



2. What feast of truth is of-fered here, what cov - e - nant from heav - en?

3. What wine of love is of-fered here, what crim-son drink from heav - en?



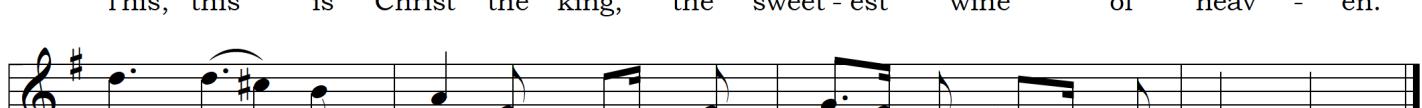
What hope of ev - er - last-ing life, what won - drous word is giv - en?

What stream of ev - er - last-ing life, what pre - cious blood is giv - en?



This, this is Christ the king, the sun come down from heav - en.

This, this is Christ the king, the sweet - est wine of heav - en.



Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv - en!

Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!

Words: Delores Dufner, OSB © 1986, 1991, The Sisters of St. Benedict; Admin. OCP

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Music: *Greensleeves*, 16th Century English Melody

## PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING

In gratitude,  
in deep gratitude  
for this moment,  
this meal,  
these people,  
we give ourselves to you.

**Send us out to live as changed people  
because we have shared the Living Bread  
and cannot remain the same.**

Ask much of us,  
expect much from us,  
enable much by us,  
encourage many through us.  
So, Lord, may we live to your glory,  
both as inhabitants of earth  
and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven.

Amen.

# GOING OUT TO SERVE

## \* BENEDICTION

\* HYMN

## Blest Be the King Whose Coming

See Page 11

## VOLUNTARY

## Are You Coming Now, Jesus, Down from Heaven?

## Johann Sebastian Bach, BWV 650

+

## CHANCEL FLOWERS

The flowers are placed on the chancel by Rob and Leslie Ivey in honor of their daughter, Peyton, who is graduating with her master's degree in education from Texas State University and celebrates her birthday on December 22.

## WORSHIP LEADERS

*Preacher:* Reverend Taylor Fuerst

*Liturgist:* Reverend Cathy Stone

*Music:* Scott Davis

## GREAT THANKSGIVING MUSICAL RESPONSES

From *Deutsche Messe*, Franz Schubert; Adapt. Richard Proulx © 1985 GIA Publications, Inc.

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# BLEST BE THE KING WHOSE COMING

1. Blest be the King whose com - ing is in the name of God!  
 2. Blest be the King whose com - ing is in the name of God!  
 3. Blest be the King whose com - ing is in the name of God!  
 4. Blest be the King whose com - ing is in the name of God!

For him let doors be o - pened, no hearts a - gainst him barred!  
 By those who tru - ly lis - ten his voice is tru - ly heard;  
 He of - fers to the bur - dened the rest and grace they need.  
 He on - ly to the hum - ble re - veals the face of God.

Not robed in roy - al splen - dor, in power and pomp, comes he;  
 pi - ty the proud and haugh - ty, who have not learned to heed  
 Gen - tle is he and hum - ble! And light his yoke shall be,  
 All power is his, all glo - ry! All things are in his hand,

but clad as are the poor - est, such his hu - mil - i - ty.  
 the Christ who is the Prom - ise, who has a - tone - ment made.  
 for he would have us bear it so he can make us free.  
 all a - ges and all peo - ples, till time it - self shall end!

Words: Frederico F. Pagura; Trans. Fred Pratt Green © 1974 Hope Publishing Co.  
 Music: *Valet will ich dir geben*, Melchior Teschner, alt; Harm. and Desc. Ronald Arnatt © 1984  
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## ***SUNDAY PARKING***

The church parking lot is reserved for mobility-impaired individuals. All able-bodied members are asked to use the free parking available on Sundays in the Peak Parking Garage (owned by the Texas Trial Lawyers Association) at the southwest corner of 13th and Lavaca Streets or at open meters around the church. The garage is open from 7:00AM-2:30PM.

## ***SUNDAY SCHOOL***

**10:00-10:45AM**

### **ADULTS**

Our classes offer adults a wide selection of age groups, study topics, and learning styles. Many classes are meeting in person and online. To find class contact information, visit [fumcaustin.org/sundayschool](http://fumcaustin.org/sundayschool).

### **YOUTH**

Sunday School for 6th through 12th grade begins in the Great Hall of the Family Life Center. We gather for announcements and then split into middle school and high school groups. Learn more at [fumcaustin.org/youth](http://fumcaustin.org/youth).

### **CHILDREN**

Sunday School for preschool through 5th grade is located on the first floor of the Sanctuary Building. Check in at one of our welcome stations for a name tag and guardian sticker before dropping children off in their classrooms. Childcare is also available for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers from 8:45AM-12:15PM. Learn more at [fumcaustin.org/children](http://fumcaustin.org/children).

## ***GIFTS MAKE TRANSFORMATION POSSIBLE***

Cash or checks will be received during the offertory. We also have three convenient ways to give online: (1) use your smartphone to scan the QR code provided on the front page of the FUMC Weekly and follow the prompts; (2) use the FUMC App on your smart phone; and/or (3) make an online donation at [fumcaustin.org/giving](http://fumcaustin.org/giving).