

EVEN STRANGER THINGS

*December 7, 2025
11:00AM*

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.



LEARN MORE AT
www.fumcaustin.org

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

Savior of the Nations, Come!

Savior of the nations, come!
Virgin’s Son, make here your home.
Marvel now, both heaven and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.
Wondrous birth! Oh, wondrous child
of the Virgin undefiled!
Mighty God and Mary’s son,
eager now his race to run!

Words: Martin Luther after Ambrose of Milan; Trans. William M. Reynolds and James Waring McCrady

Music: *Nun Komm der Heiden Heiland*, Johann Walther

* CALL TO WORSHIP

In the quiet routines of our days,
God breaks in.
We come expecting the unexpected.

Like Zechariah in the temple,
we are met by a word we did not see coming.
Do not be afraid.
God is at work.

The Holy Spirit moves in unseen ways,
preparing a people for the Lord.
Open our eyes, God.
Break through our ordinary.
Make us ready for you.

* HYMN

Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1. "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says your God.
 2. For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3. Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain!



Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the King - dom now is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits his ho - ly reign!



To God's peo - ple now pro - claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way!
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er!
 Let the val - leys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Words: Johann Olearius; Trans. Catherine Winkworth, alt.

Music: *Freu dich sehr*, Trente quatre psaumes de David, *Geneva*

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Our homes and our world are under siege with information:

television and telemarketing, blogs, and texting.

So much information often bearing too little wisdom.

Angry voices compelling hate;

quiet voices counseling complacency;

mechanical voices offering "deals."

Too much information!

Too little wisdom!

Confusion surrounds us;

truth gets lost.

We call out in our confusion:

Where is your Wisdom, O God?

Where is the word that leads to life?

We remind our selves of our ancient story:

John, Zechariah's son, out in the desert at the time,
received a message from God.

He went all through the country around the Jordan River
preaching a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins,
as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet:
"...prepare for God's arrival! Make God's road smooth and straight!"

**Let us light this second candle of Advent,
a candle of Peace.**

In its light, let us think, quietly and peacefully,
about what voices of true life-change and forgiveness
are speaking in our world right now.

**Let this candle of Advent Peace
shine in our hearts all week.**

Let it remind us to enter times of quiet and peace
in order to listen, through the noise of our lives,
for the call to prepare for the Holy One.

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.

The musical notation is written on two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody features several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' over a bracket) and rests. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes.

Words: Cameroon Traditional

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

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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

SERMON

Expect the Unexpected

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.

WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS**OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS TO GOD****OFFERTORY**

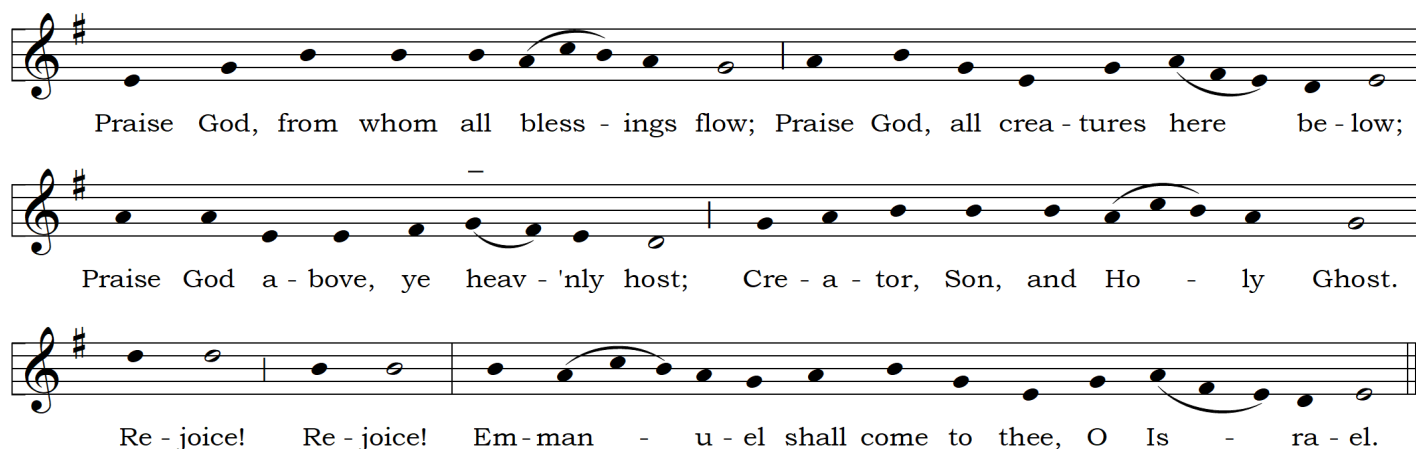
Wexford Carol

Good people all, this Christmastide,
consider well, and bear in mind,
what our good God for us has done,
in sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy, we should pray to God
with love on Christmas day;
in Bethlehem upon that morn,
there was a blessed Messiah born.
Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
their flocks of lambs, and feeding sheep;
to whom God's angels did appear,
which put the shepherds in great fear.
"Prepare and go," the angels said,
"To Bethlehem. Be not afraid.
For there you'll find that happy morn
a princely babe sweet Jesus born."
With thankful heart and joyful mind,
the shepherds went the babe to find,
and as God's angels had foretold,
they did our Savior Christ behold.
Within in a manger he was laid,
and by his side the virgin maid
attending on the Lord of Life,
who came to earth to end all strife.
With Mary holy we should pray
to God with love on Christmas day;
in Bethlehem upon that morn,
there was a blessed Messiah born.

Words and Music: Trad. Irish Carol; Arr. Elaine Hagenberg

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* PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise God, all crea - tures here be - low;

Praise God a - bove, ye heav - 'nly host; Cre - a - tor, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Words: Thomas Ken, alt.

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

FEASTING AT THE TABLE OF GRACE

* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

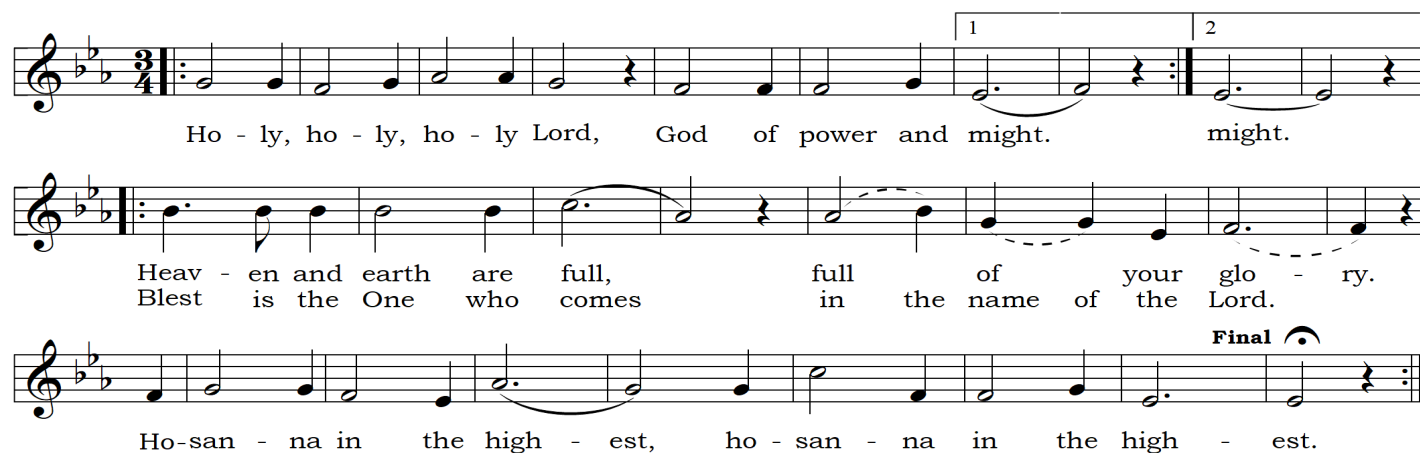
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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 of your glo - ry.
Blest is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

Ho-san - na in the high - est, ho-san - na in the high - est.

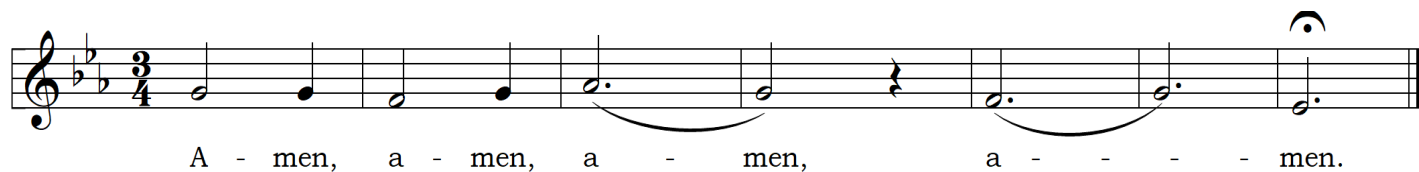
Please be seated. Pastor continues leading the prayer, recalling the acts of Christ.

...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:



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.



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

HYMNS DURING RECEIVING

All Who Hunger



1. All who hun-ger, gath - er glad - ly; ho - ly man - na is our bread.
2. All who hun-ger, nev - er stran-gers, seek - er, be a wel - come guest.
3. All who hun-ger, sing to - geth - er; Je - sus Christ is liv - ing bread.



Come from wil - der - ness and wan - d'ring. Here, in truth, we will be fed.
Come from rest - less - ness and roam - ing. Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
Come from lone - li - ness and long - ing. Here, in peace, we have been led.



You that yearn for days of full - ness, all a - round us is our food.
We that once were lost and scat - tered in com - mun - ion's love have stood.
Blest are those who from this ta - ble live their lives in grat - i - tude.



Taste and see the grace e - ter - nal. Taste and see that God is good.

Words: Sylvia G. Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Bob Moore © 1993 GIA Publications, Inc.

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What Feast of Love



1. What feast of love is of-fered here, what ban-quet come from heav - en?
 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 food of ev - er - last-ing life, what gra - cious gift is giv - 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 bread come down from heav - 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.



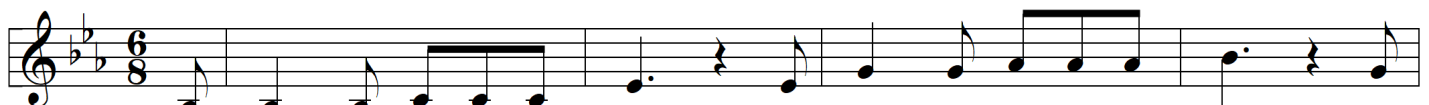
Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the man - na giv - en!
 Oh, see and hear and sing! The Word of God is giv - en!
 Oh, taste and see and sing! The Son of God is giv - en!

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

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Music: *Greensleeves*, 16th Century English Melody

Prepare the Way



Pre - pare the way of the Lord. Pre - pare the way of the Lord, and



all peo - ple will see the sal - va - tion of our God.

Words: Isaiah 40:3, 52:10

Music: Jacques Berthier and the Community of Taizé

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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 203

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Stanzas 1, 2, and 4

VOLUNTARY

+ + +

CHANCEL FLOWERS

The flowers are placed on the chancel by Shirley Derryberry in memory of Bill Derryberry and her parents, Dave and Della Ohlhausen.

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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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.

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.

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.

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.

LAST DAY FOR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA SALE

ORDER DEADLINE: TODAY



Poinsettias on the communion rails, around the trees, in the foyers... a great way to celebrate someone you love or who is now in God's hands.

Poinsettias will beautify our Sanctuary from the Third Sunday of Advent (December 14) through Christmas Eve (December 24) and may be picked up after worship on Christmas Eve or on the First Sunday after Christmas (December 28).

Each poinsettia is florist quality and great for replanting. The cost is \$20 per plant. You may order poinsettias by filling in the form below, tearing off this page, and returning it during the offering or in the church office, by contacting Tami Kellberg at tami@fumcaustin.org or 512-478-5684 (ext. 226), or using the QR code. If paying by check, please write "Poinsettias" on the memo line of your check.



Name of donor

Phone number (in case of questions)

Amount enclosed (make check payable to FUMC)

The poinsettia is in memory of _____

The poinsettia is in honor of _____
