

# EVEN STRANGER THINGS

**December 14, 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](http://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

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

O Come, O Come Emmanuel



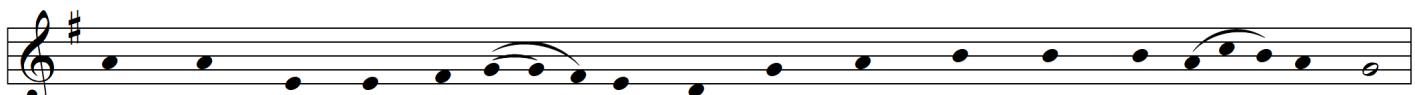
**All** 1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el,

**All** 2. O come, thou Root of Jes - se's tree, an en - sign of thy peo - ple be;

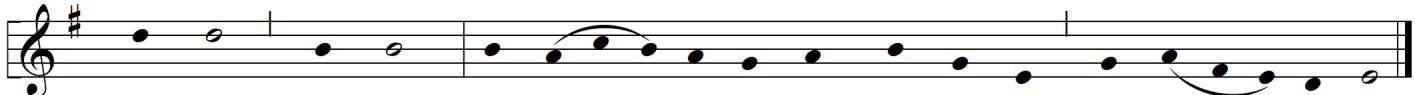
**Women** 3. O come, thou Day-spring, come and cheer our spir - its by thy jus - tice here;

**Men** 4. O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our heav - 'nly home.

**All** 5. O come, thou wis - dom from on high, and or - der all things far and nigh;



that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
be - fore thee ru - lers si - lent fall; all peo - ples on thy mer - cy call.  
dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night, and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
The cap - tives from their pri - son free, and con - quer death's deep mis - er - y.  
to us the path of knowl - edge show and cause us in her ways to go.



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

Words: 9th cent. Latin, trans. The Hymnal 1940, Henry Sloane Coffin, Laurence Hull Stookey

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

## **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

## TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

### SERMON

Everything You've Hoped For Is True

### CAROL 202

People, Look East

Stanzas 1 and 2

### ANTHEM

In Bethlehem

Though the road was long, the time drew near,  
Heaven's King on earth would soon appear.  
Yet, no bed prepared; no waiting crown.  
Just a stable near the edge of town.  
Here the Child was born so far from home  
to those humble travelers all alone.  
So they whispered low their soft amen,  
on that lonely night in Bethlehem.  
Come behold the shepherds, oft unseen,  
chosen first to look though rough, unclean.  
'Tis the Christ! Now peace on earth begins:  
he will save his people from their sins.  
See our Mighty God has done great things!  
Hear the angel hosts his glories sing: "Alleluia!"  
You are worthy, Jesus, Lord of all,  
stooping down to grace that cattle stall.  
You did not recoil to meet us there,  
all our weakness, shame, and grief to share.

So bring down the mighty from their seat;  
gently lift the humble to their feet,  
that we all would at your manger bend  
to behold that sight in Bethlehem.

See our Mighty God has done great things!  
Alleluia, hear the angel hosts his glories sing,  
and repeat the sounding joy again  
on that holy night in Bethlehem.

Words and Music: Erik Dewar; Arr. Erik Dewar and Dan Forrest

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## **ANTHEM**

### **O Nata Lux (Sung in Latin)**

O Light born of Light, Jesus, redeemer of the world,  
mercifully deign to accept the praises and prayers of your suppliants.  
O you who once deigned to be hidden in flesh on behalf of the lost,  
grant us to be made members of your blessed body.

Words: Trad. Latin

Music: Douglas Byler © 2025 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.

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## **ANTHEM**

### **This Child Shall Be Our Peace**

This child shall be our peace.  
A hush upon the stable, a humble manger bed.  
A weary mother stroking her sleeping baby's head.  
An echo in her memory of ancient prophecies:  
    this Child of Mary's labor, this Child shall be our peace.  
A flock of sheep awakened, a flood of glorious light,  
    a band of fearful shepherds illumined in the night.  
The angel voices swelling, their message to release:  
    the Lamb will be our Shepherd, this Child will be our peace.  
This earthborn Child of Heaven, this fleshbound Son of God,  
    this Man who bore our sorrows, this Lamb who shed his blood,  
    he stills our raging anger, he heals our hopeless grief,  
    he calms our frantic worry, he helps our unbelief.  
Beneath his righteous scepter he makes all war to cease.  
Come bow the knee before him, this Christ shall be our peace.

Words: Eileen Berry

Music: Molly Ijames

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## PASTORAL PRAYER

### 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.

**CAROL 202**

People, Look East

Stanzas 3 and 4

## 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 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.

## 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

+ + +

# CHANEL 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

# 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).