

EVEN STRANGER THINGS

December 21, 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 Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella

French Carol; Arr. Richard Ellsasser © 1967 Harold Flammer, Inc.

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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

Stop. Listen. Pay attention. Love is coming near.
We wait in the love of the coming Messiah that transforms us.

The Hope Bringer, Peace Maker, Joy Sustainer grows in a womb,
preparing to be born among us.
We wait in the love of the coming Messiah that transforms us.

With Mary, we long for the coming of the Child who will transform the world,
 bringing justice where injustice reigns,
 fullness where hunger persists,
 and favor to the ones the world calls lowly.
We wait in the love of the coming Messiah that transforms us.

So let us join our voices and our lives in magnifying God, our Savior!

*** HYMN**

Angels from the Realms of Glory

1. An - gels from the realms of glo - ry wing with Christ their flight to earth;
 2. Pro - phets, sa - ges, all God's peo - ple, watch - ing long in hope and fear,
 3. Yes! A - men! Let us a - dore you! Great De - sire of na - tions come!

now as this old world is shak - en they shall sing the new world's birth.
 sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing, shall with right - eous - ness ap - pear.
 Crowns and em - pires fall be - fore you. Live with - in our hearts al - ways!

Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! Sing of Je - sus, God's own Son!
 Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! E - vil's judg - ment now draws near.
 Come, Lord Je - sus! Come, Lord Je - sus! Ev - er - liv - ing Christ, come down!

Words: James Montgomery, alt.

Music: *Regent Square*, Henry T. Smart

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLES

Who listens to the voices of the poor?
 Who shares strength with the powerless?
 Who surprises with forgiveness and makes all things new?
Our Hope is fragile as an infant.

We call out in our longing:
Where is your Power, O God?
Where is the Love that transforms our world?

We remind ourselves of Mary's ancient song:

Sing out my soul,
sing of the holiness of God
who has delighted in a woman,
lifted up the poor,
satisfied the hungry,
given voice to the silent,
grounded the oppressor
who has desired the darkness of the womb
and inhabited our flesh
sing of the longing of God,
sing out, my soul!

**Let us light this fourth candle of Advent,
a candle of Love.**

In its light, let us think about our world,
about wherever our God is longing to be born
in peace, in joy, in freedom, and in wholeness.

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

Let it remind us to be midwives to Christ's birth
in our work for justice,
our practice of peace,
our offering of forgiveness.

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:8-12

HYMN 216

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
Stanza 1 sung seated as children come forward

TIME WITH YOUNG DISCIPLES

HYMN 216

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
Stanzas 2 and 3 sung seated as children return to their seats

SERMON

He's Waiting for You

RESPONDING IN FAITH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As we pray, please join in the response:
God of waiting and wonder,
hold us close.

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.

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.

MISSION EMPHASIS MOMENT

Christmas Offering: Impacto Comunitario

OFFERING OUR TITHES AND GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY

Sussex Carol

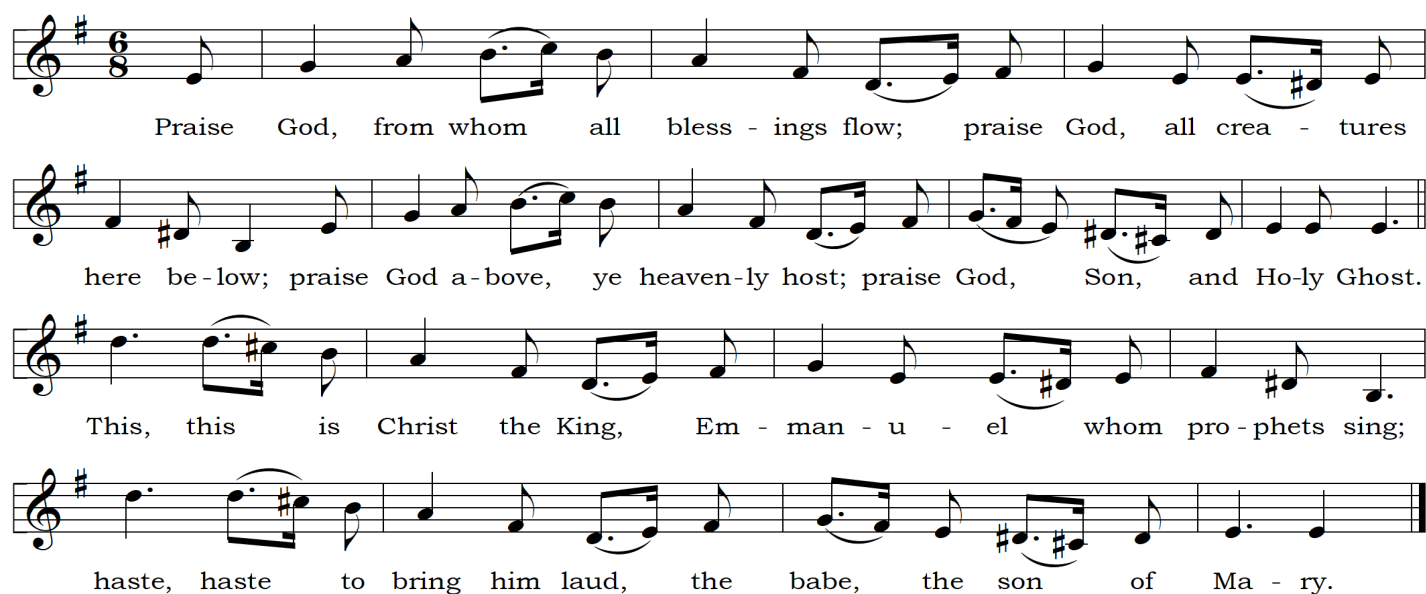
On Christmas night all Christians will sing the news the angels bring;
news of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.
Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer will make us glad;
when from our sin he sets us free, all for to gain our liberty.
When sin departs before his grace then life and health come in its place;
angels and all with joy will sing, now for to see the newborn King.
All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing that night;
“Glory to God in highest heaven, now and for evermore,” Amen.

Words and Music: Trad. English Carol; Arr. Elaine Hagenburg

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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 heaven - ly host; praise God, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.
This, this is Christ the King, Em - man - u - el whom pro - phets sing;
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Ma - ry.

Words: Thomas Ken and William C. Dix, alt.

Music: Greensleeves, 16th Cent. English Melody

GOING OUT TO SERVE

BIRTHDAY BLESSING

Let us pray:

God, our gracious Creator,
we give you thanks for the gift of life
to these who celebrate their birthdays in December.
Grant that they may make this new year in their lives
an offering that will enrich your world and give you glory.
Cause them to grow in wisdom and grace
and strengthen their trust in your goodness
all the days of their lives;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer, 1979, alt.

* BENEDICTION

* HYMN 209

Blessed Be the God of Israel

VOLUNTARY

God Rest Ye Merry Christians

God Rest Ye Merry; Arr. Tim Wilborn © 2025 Tim Wilborn

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CHANCEL FLOWERS

The flowers are placed on the chancel by Ken and Elizabeth Lerner in celebration of Katherine Lerner's 31st birthday.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Preacher

Reverend Taylor Fuerst

Liturgist

Reverend John Hathaway

Music

Scott Davis

Voluntary

Tim Wilborn

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.