



This Week @ First



Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 AM, connect with us on [YouTube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#))!

There will be one worship service on Christmas Eve at 5:30 PM, and it will be available on [YouTube](#). The bulletin will be posted in advance to be downloaded from the website.

Compassion and Social Justice

Our Snack Pack and Laundry ministries will not be offered on Christmas Day, but **will resume on January 1st**.

Second Harvest of the Big Bend will be closed on our regularly scheduled date for bread boxing in January so, just for the month of January, we will gather at Second Harvest on January 10 at 9:45 (the second Friday). You can sign up to join the fun with us [here](#).

Office Volunteers

We are in need of additional office volunteers to check mail, relay messages, and assist with other routine office tasks. If you can help for two to four hours on a weekday, fill out this [form](#) or email Glenn Hodges, glenn@oldfirstchurch.org, and indicate what day(s) you would like to volunteer.

To submit information to be included in the newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin (as space permits), please use [this link](#), which will take you to an online form. Thank you!

Please note there will be no newsletter next week; the next newsletter will be dated Friday, January 3.

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Spiritual Formation

Sunday School—Youth

All youth are invited at 9:30 AM each week! Grades K–5 in room 306. Middle and High School Students in room 301. A nursery will be available starting at 9:15 AM. Please note the Elementary/Youth classes will meet this Sunday, December 22, and then will not meet again until January 12.

“Feasting on the Word” Lectionary-Based Bible Study

Calvin Room and via [Zoom](#), 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM.

Each week this class will gather to engage and discuss selected texts from our Lectionary readings. The class will meet this Sunday, December 22, but not on December 29.

Guided Meditation continues on Sunday mornings at 10:30 in the Calvin Room.

The Spiritual Formation Team is in need of volunteers to assist our teachers in the Elementary and Middle/High School classes, and to assist in our nursery. You can volunteer to help weekly, monthly or occasionally. Please contact Mary Kutter at mykutter@gmail.com to find out more.

Chili and Caroling

A dedicated group of carol singers gathered at Westminster Oaks last Sunday to enjoy some musical fellowship.

If you weren't able to join us, or if you just really love Christmas songs, Emily Bruno will be helping to lead a Christmas sing-along at Amicus Brewing, 717 S. Gadsden St., on December 21st, starting at 1 PM.





Pastoral Note

The fourth Sunday of Advent is a day to celebrate love. It is marked by lighting the fourth and final candle on the Advent wreath. The Lord brings the light of love to God's people by sending God's only Son to earth for our salvation. We await the child's birth, whose name is Emanuel. While we await the day of the final reign of God, God is with us in our midst.

God is love, and Christ exemplifies God's divine love for us. The Son of God embraced our nature and demonstrated His teachings through both words and deeds, even unto death, inviting us to Himself through love. Our relationship with Christ signifies an encounter with God's gracious love and forgiveness of sins. God grants the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit so that we, as God's people, can love and serve God and live for God's glory. The entirety of the Christian life is rooted in the Spirit, who dwells within and among the Christian community. (Gal. 5:25) God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.

The Confession of 1967 states, "God has created the peoples of the earth to be one universal family in God's reconciling love." (BC 9.44) As we light the fourth candle of Advent, we celebrate God's love in sending Jesus and remember that love as we look forward to Christ's second coming.

Rev. Glenn Hodges

“So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.” 1 John 4:16