

**Erwin Presbyterian Church**

Third Sunday of Advent \* December 17, 2023 \* 11:00 a.m.

105 N. Elm Ave., Erwin, TN 37650 \* 423-743-3431\* erwinpresbyterianchurch.com

**Prelude**  *Carols at the Manger*arr. Lani Smith

Ethan Thomas, organist

**Welcome and Announcements** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Introit** *There’s a Song in the Air* Red Hymnbook #155

**\* Light the Advent Candle and Call to Worship** The Sewell Family

Leader: Watch and wait for Christ’s coming! Light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering the promises of God with prayer.

**All: Amen. Come Lord, Jesus!**

Leader: We light this candle in hope.

Leader: We light this candle in hope. *(Light the first candle: purple candle)*.

We light this candle for peace. *(Light the second candle: purple Candle).*

We light this candle for Joy. *(Light the third candle: pink candle).*

Leader: Rejoice! For our Lord is coming to proclaim good news to the oppressed, as we hear in Isaiah 61:1-4, 10:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,and provide for those who grieve in Zion to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations. … I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness.

**\*Hymn**  *What Child is This?* Green Hymnbook, #281

**Call to Confession (Isaiah 12:2)** Frank Gentry

Leader: Surely God is our salvation. Have faith, and do not be afraid. Trusting in God’s grace, let us confess our sins.

**Prayer of Confession** Frank Gentry

**All: God of the future, you are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule. We confess that we have not expected your kingdom, for we live causal lives, ignoring your promised judgment. We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth, and refuse your justice and peace. In your mercy, forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your way, and to seek things that will endure when Christ comes to judge the world.**

(*Please take a moment of silent confession)*

**Assurance of Pardon (Isaiah 12:3-4)** Frank Gentry

Leader: With joy, let us draw water from the springs of salvation. Give thanks to the Lord! Call on God’s name. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**\*Gloria Patri**  Red Hymnbook, #546

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the**

**Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and**

**ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen**.

**\*The Peace** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

Pastor: Jesus said, “My peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.” May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor: Please take a moment to greet one another and share the peace of Christ.

**Anthem***Breath of Heaven* by Amy Grant and Chris Eaton

Gina Husdon

**Prayer for Illumination** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Scripture Reading- Luke 2:1-7** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**2**In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. **2**(This was the first census that took place whileQuirinius was governor of Syria.) **3**And everyone went to their own town to register.

**4**So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.**5**He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. **6**While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7**and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord **All: Thanks be to God**

**Sermon** *The Birth of Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes (II): Jesus’s Birth*

The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Introduction**

**First, Contextual Challenges**

**Second, Textual Points**

**Third, The Story**

**Conclusion**

**Offering**

***Invitation to the Offering*** Frank Gentry

Leader: Let us magnify the Lord, rejoicing in the one who scatters the proud, lifts up the lowly, and fills the hungry with good things. Let us offer our lives to the Lord.

(*may the ushers move forward and collect the offering*)

***Offertory Music*** *Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*

***\*Doxology*** *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*Red Hymnbook, #544

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;**

**Praise God all creatures here below;**

**Praise God above, ye heavenly host;**

**Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

**\**Prayer of Dedication*** Frank Gentry

Leader: O God, with faith and hope, we offer these gifts. Use them, even as you use us, to

accomplish your purposes in Jesus Christ, the Head of the church and the Lord of our lives.

**All: Amen.**

**The Baptism of Gentry Douglas Longcrier**

***Presentation***

Pastor: Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Hear also these words from the holy scripture: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope of your calling,

**All: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and one father of all who is above all and through all and in all.**

Frank Gentry: Obeying the word of our Lord Jesus, and confident of his promises, we baptize those whom God has called. In baptism God claims us, and seals us to show that we belong to God. God frees us from sin and death, uniting us with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. By water and the Holy Spirit, we are made members of the church, the body of Christ, and joined to Christ’s ministry of love, peace, and justice. Let us remember with joy our own baptism, as we celebrate this sacrament.

Pastor: I would like to invite the Longcrier family to come forward.

Mary Beth Longcrier: One behalf of the session, I present Gentry Douglas Longcrier, child of Marcus and Rachel Longcrier, to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

Pastor: Do you desire Gentry to be baptized? **Parents: We do**

Pastor: Relying on God’s grace, do you promise to live the Christian faith and to teach that faith to your child? **Parents: We do**

Pastor: Will you, by your prayers and witness, help Gentry to grow into the full stature of Christ? **Sponsor(s): I/We will**

Pastor: Do you as members of the church of Christ, promise to guide and nurture Gentry by word and deed, with love and prayer? **The Congregation: We do**

Pastor: Will you encourage him, to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his church? **The Congregation: We will**

***Profession of Faith***

Frank Gentry: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we enter the covenant God established in Jesus Christ. Within this covenant God gives us new life, strengthens us to resist evil, and nurtures us in love. Through this covenant, we choose whom we will serve, by turning from evil and turning to Jesus Christ.

Pastor: Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

**Parents: We do.**

Pastor: Who is your Lord and Savior?

**Parents: Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.**

Pastor Will you be Christ’s faithful disciple, obeying his word and showing his love?

**Parents: We will, with God’s help.**

Pastor: Will you devote yourself to the church’s teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

**Parents: We will, with God’s help.**

Pastor: With the whole church, let us stand up and declare our faith.

**All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

***Thanksgiving over the Water***

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Pastor: We give you thanks, Eternal God, for you nourish and sustain all living things by the gift of water. In the beginning of time, your Spirit moved over the watery chaos, calling forth order and life. In the time of Noah, you destroyed evil by the waters of the flood, giving righteousness a new beginning. You led Israel out of slavery, through the waters of the sea, into the freedom of the promised land. In the waters of the Jordan Jesus was baptized by John and anointed with your Spirit. By the baptism of his own death and resurrection, Christ set us free from sin and death, and opened the way to eternal life. We thank you, O God, for the water of baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. From it we are raised to share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Send your Spirit to move over this water that it may be a fountain of deliverance and rebirth. Wash away the sin of all who are cleansed by it. Raise them to new life, and graft them to the body of Christ. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon Gentry, that hemay have power to do your will, and continue forever in the risen life of Christ.

To you be all praise, honor, and glory; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns forever.

**All: Amen.**

***The Baptism***

Gentry Douglas Longcrier, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

***Laying on of Hands and Anointing***

O Lord, uphold Gentry by your Holy Spirit. Give him the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever. **Amen.**

Gentry Douglas Longcrier, child of the covenant, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism, and marked as Christ’s own forever. **Amen.**

God who began a good work in youwill bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

***Welcome***

Mary Beth Longcrier: Gentry Douglas Longcrier, you have been received into the one holy catholic and apostolic church through Baptism. By the power of the Holy Spirit, you have become members of the household of God, to share with us in the ministry of Christ and the priesthood of all believers. With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you into the body of Christ.

**All: Alleluia! Amen!**

Live as a child of the lightand let your light shine before others. **Amen.**

**\*Hymn** *Away in a Manger* Red Hymnbook, #157

**\*Benediction** The Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos

**Benediction Response**  *Emmanuel*

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel,**

**His name is Called Emmanuel.**

**God with us, revealed in us,**

**His name is called Emmanuel**

**Postlude** *Good Christian Men, Rejoice* arr. Robert J Hughes

Ethan Thomas, organist

**Notes:**

***\*****Responses with an asterisk indicate standing. Please stand as you are able.*

**Sources for Worship Liturgy:** The liturgy is based on the *Book of Common Worship*.

**Welcome Visitors**: Welcome! If you are visiting please fill out one of the green visitor’s cards from the pew and put it in the offering plate. We are glad you are here! Hope to see you again soon!

**Announcements**

**The Birth of Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes**─(December 24 at 11 a.m.): In this three-week Advent series, Rev. Dr. Ramy Marcos, who grew up in the Middle East, will bring a fresh reading to the Christmas story in its original biblical context.

**Special Student Advent Class ─** (December 24 at 10 a.m): Youth will meet in the Scout Hall. There will also be one off-site lesson to observe and discuss nativity scenes. See Sarah Shults for more information.

**Candlelight Service ─** (Sunday, December 17 at 7 p.m.)

**New Members' Class**: Erwin Presbyterian Church will hold a new members' class to discuss the essential elements of our faith and church membership. If you are interested in becoming a member at EP Church, please contact Rev. Marcos.

**Directory Update ─** We will be working to update all contact information for our church members. More information to follow.

**Food Collection ─** Item for December is canned gravy.

**Elders of the Month** ─ Betty Stevens and Mary Beth Longcrier

**Contact Information**

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**Office hours** **M-Th, Sun:** 8 a.m.-4 p.m. **M-Wed:** 9 a.m. **-** 2 p.m.