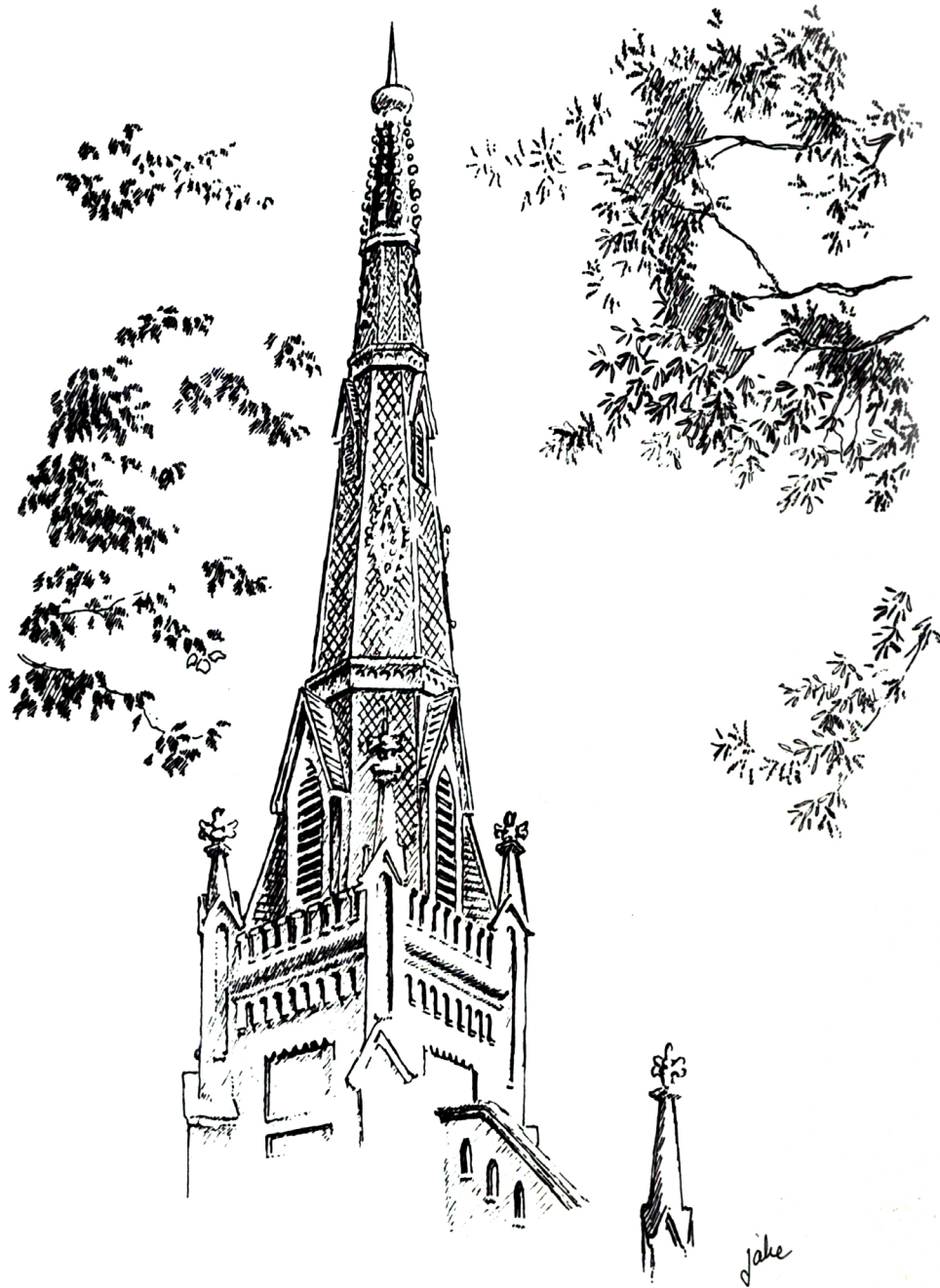


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | DECEMBER 24, 2023
CHRISTMAS EVE



We invite you, whoever you are and whoever God is helping you to become, to join First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte in our journey of faith. God is love, and that love is for you. You belong as a child of God, and we welcome you. Come experience how that belonging might change you and our world as we seek to be for Christ in the heart of Charlotte.



First Presbyterian
Church of Charlotte

Time of Quiet Meditation and Reflection | Silence begins in the Chapel at 8:50 a.m.

Words of Welcome | Reverend Mary Bowman

Invocation | Adapted from *The Book of Common Order*

Lord Jesus Christ, Your world awaits You. In the longing of the persecuted for justice; in the longing of the poor for prosperity; in the longing of those walking in darkness for the light; in the longing of our hearts for a deeper life; and in the longing of Your world for peace. O come, Lord Jesus, desire behind our greatest needs. O come, Lord Jesus, source of our richest joys. O come, Lord Jesus, Savior of humanity. O come, O come, Emmanuel. Amen.

Meditative Music | The Wexford Carol | Celtic Woman

Good people all, this Christmas time; 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 this 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.
 'Arise and go,' the angels said 'To Bethlehem, be not afraid.
 For there you'll find, this 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 angel had foretold; They did our savior Christ behold.
 Within a manger He was laid; And by His side the virgin maid.
 As long foretold upon that morn: There was a blessed Messiah born.

Prayer for Illumination | Tom Bunn

Old Testament Reading | Isaiah 9:1-7

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied exultation; You have increased its joy; they rejoice before You as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, You have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a Child has been born for us, a Son given to us; authority rests upon His shoulders, and He is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Great will be His authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and His kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

New Testament Reading | John 1:1-14 | Katherine Bunn

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through Him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, yet the world did not know Him. He came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him. But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | “The Meaning of Christmas: Through the Eyes of Our Need”

Moment of Reflection**Call to Confession****Prayer of Confession**

O Holy God, You came to us in love as a child to show us just how much You love us and desire to be in relationship with us. You created us and know our failings, and yet Your love and grace are what give us our identity as your children — not our mistakes. Speak to those parts of us that need Your healing, forgiving, and redemptive power. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Moment of Reflection

O Lord, we ask that You forgive what we have been and done, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your holy name. We receive Your forgiveness with grateful hearts, and we commit to the work of extending it to others. Amen.

Offering

The Christian life is marked by the offering of one's self to God to be shaped, empowered, directed, and changed by God. In worship, God presents us with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ. We are claimed by Christ and set free. In response to God's love in Jesus Christ we offer God our lives, our gifts, our abilities, and our material goods, for God's service. The offering plates are located at the back of the chapel if you are interested in giving regularly as a spiritual practice.

Invitation to the Table**Meditative Music** | Infant Holy, Infant Lowly | BYU Vocal Point

Infant holy, Infant lowly; For His bed a cattle stall.
Oxen lowing, little knowing;
Christ, the Babe, is Lord of all.
Swift are winging, angels singing: Noels ringing, tidings bringing.
Christ, the Babe, is Lord of all!
Flocks were sleeping: Shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new.
Saw the glory, heard the story: Tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow; Praises voicing greet the morrow.
Christ, the Babe, was born for you! Christ, the Babe, was born for you!
Stars were gleaming, shepherds dreaming;
Oh, the night was dark and chill.
Angels' story, manger glory; Shepherds heard it on the hill.
Ah, that singing, hear it ringing; Earthward winging, praises bringing.
Christ, the Babe, was born for you!
Christ, the Babe, was born for you!

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Sacrament of Communion

To receive the gluten-free bread and the cup, come forward, take a piece of bread, and then dip the bread into the cup. It is still communion if you prefer to take only the bread. Please do not drink out of the cup directly. If for any reason you prefer not to come forward, please raise your hand and the officers will be glad to serve you in your pew.

Prayer of Thanksgiving | Adapted from *The Book of Common Worship*

O God Most High, grant us a spirit of wisdom to know how rich is the glory You have made our own, and how great is the hope to which we are called in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit in the splendor of eternal life. Alleluia! Amen!

Charge and Blessing

We have been fed by the presence of God in the silence, by the Word, and through communion. Please feel free to greet one another in a warm and quiet way that allows an easing out of the silence. The minister is available for prayer or conversation after the service. Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m. If you would like to visit longer with other members, you are invited to gather in the Welcome Center.

Announcements**Today's Christmas Eve Offering**

The infant Jesus was born into an unsheltered family and yet became the savior of the world. Today, your contributions to the Christmas Eve offering will go to Roof Above to provide shelter for all God's children so that they may live into the fullness of their God-given potential. Please give generously to support the good work of our partner, Roof Above, and all they do to provide housing in our community.

Room in the Inn Volunteers Needed

Since the inception of Room in the Inn, FPC has offered overnight lodging to many unsheltered neighbors. This winter, we're providing shelter and hospitality to 10 guests every Monday night. Especially on Christmas Eve, we recognize the importance of sharing the room in our "inn." Volunteers are needed for the following positions: overnight hosts, dinner preparers/servers, breakfast, lunch, or snack providers, and hospitality hosts (new position). Scan the QR code to sign up.

Church Operating Schedule

December 25-29

The building will be closed December 25-29. Staff will work remotely December 27-29.

Save the Date for the Women's Retreat

March 3-5, Montreat Conference Center

Registration for the Women's Retreat will open on January 2.

Advocacy Spotlight: Climate Change

In his recent sermon on climate change, Pen challenged us to consider the issue using the lens of God's word. The eighth psalm teaches us that "as human beings...we have a responsibility for creation's well-being...and that responsibility is primary...even above our own desires and self-interest." The Climate Change Subcommittee invites you to join us as we seek to better understand climate change and its impacts on us and our neighbors in Charlotte and around the world. As Christ's followers, we can address this threat to the health of God's creation and the well-being of God's children. Scan the QR code below to learn more or to join our group as we study and plan for a congregation-wide event next spring.

MORE WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TODAY:

Children & Family Worship, 11 a.m., Sanctuary, Livestream, WAXN-Channel 64

Handbell Concert, 7:30 p.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

Candlelight Worship, 8 p.m., Sanctuary & Livestream

Candlelight and Communion Service, 11 p.m., Sanctuary & Livestream, WAXN-Channel 64 and WSOC-Channel 9

**There will be no services tomorrow, Christmas Day.*



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