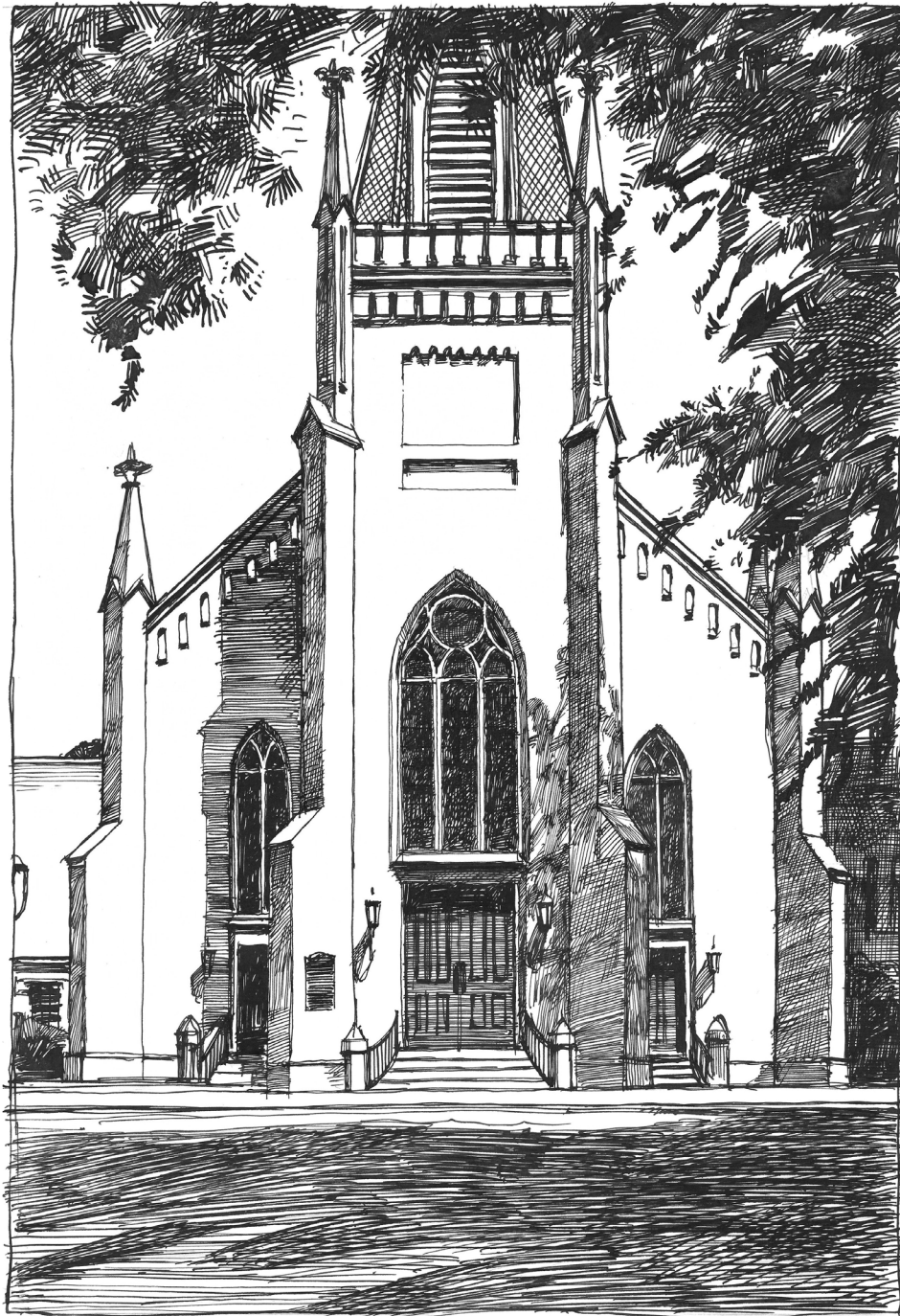


# First Presbyterian Church

11 AM WORSHIP | DECEMBER 31, 2023 | FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS



*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

VIRTUAL  
CONNECT  
CARD

Are you  
interested  
in joining  
our church?  
Contact  
Jane Ives,  
Membership  
Coordinator,  
jives@firstpres-  
charlotte.org.

**PREPARATION****Prelude** | Prelude on *Joy to the World* | Gavin Bateman**Words of Welcome** | Anna Dickson**Chiming of the Trinity****ADORATION**+ **Call to Worship** | Mary Bowman

People of God, arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you!

**The light we have been waiting has come into the world: Jesus Christ, who is Immanuel, God with us.**

Let us worship God.

+ **Opening Hymn No. 143** | "Angels from the Realms of Glory" | REGENT SQUARE**CONFESSION****Call to Confession****Prayer of Confession**

Gracious God, we are your easily distracted children, preoccupied with our own needs, reliant upon our own wisdom, consumed by our own concerns. We give our attention to the wrong things, and grow indifferent to the needs of others. We expect little from you. Forgive us for this kind of complacency, O God, and open us again to your presence, that we might recognize your closeness, and be surprised into praise.

**Response to Confession** | Hymn 115, stanza 3 | MUELLER

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me forever and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear children in thy tender care, and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, believe the good news.

**In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

+ **Response to Pardon** | Hymn 32, stanza 1 | IN DULCI JUBILO

**Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ was born today; ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now. Christ is born today! Christ is born today!**

**Time with Children** | Anna Dickson

*There is no First Church today. Children are encouraged to stay and worship with their families.*

**PROCLAMATION****Prayer for Illumination****Scripture** | Luke 2:22-40 | pew Bible p. 59

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

+ Please stand if you are able

**Anthem** | “The Work of Christmas” | Dan Forrest | Loretta Giles, soloist

*When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flock, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among brothers, to make music from the heart.*

**Sermon** | “Now What?” | Anna Dickson**+Hymn No. 377** | “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” | HOUSTON**RESPONSE** 

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**+Affirmation of Faith** | from *A Brief Statement of Faith* | Pen Peery

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”**

**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.**

**Stewardship of Life** | Presentation of Tithes and Offering**Offertory Anthem** | “Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me” | K. Lee Scott

*Gracious Spirit, dwell with me, I would gracious be; help me now Thy grace to see, I would be like Thee; and, with words that help and heal, Thy life would mine reveal; and, with actions bold and meek, for Christ, my Savior, speak. Truthful Spirit, dwell with me, I would truthful be; help me now Thy truth to see, I would be like Thee; and, with wisdom kind and clear, Thy life in mine appear; and, with actions brotherly, speak Christ’s sincerity. Holy Spirit, dwell with me, I would holy be; show Thy mercy tenderly, make me more like Thee; separate from sin, I would and cherish all things good, and whatever I can be give Him who gave me Thee. Mighty Spirit, dwell with me, I would mighty be; help me now Thy pow’r to see, I would be like Thee; ‘gainst all weapons hell can wield, be Thou my strength and shield; let Thy word my weapon be, Lord, Thine the victory. Gracious Spirit, dwell with me, I would be like Thee!*

**+Doxology** | Hymn No. 606 | OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

**+Prayer of Dedication**PRAYER  
REQUESTSGIVE  
ONLINETEXT  
TO GIVE

**SENDING FORTH**+**Hymn No. 546** | “Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing” | SICILIAN MARINERS+**Benediction**+**Benediction Response** | “God Be with You Till We Meet Again” | GOD BE WITH YOU**Postlude** | “Angels We Have Heard on High” | arr. Dale Wood**ABOUT THIS SERVICE**

If you wish to sponsor sanctuary flowers for a baptism, marriage, memorial/honorarium, or special occasion, please notify Diane Maye at [dianenmaye@hotmail.com](mailto:dianenmaye@hotmail.com).

Today's Worship Leaders:

**The Reverend Pendleton B. Peery**, Senior Pastor**The Reverend Mary Bowman**, Parish Associate**The Reverend Anna R. Dickson**, Associate Pastor for Congregational Care**Catherine Hicks**, Guest Organist**Welcome!**

We're so glad you decided to join us for worship today! Whether you are a member, a frequent visitor, or it's your first time here, keep reading for details about today's worship.

**New here?** Please fill out a Connect Card, which can be found in the seatback of the pew in front of you, or scan the “Virtual Connect Card” QR code in the front of your bulletin.



**Have children with you today?** There is no First Church today. Children of all ages are welcome to worship with their families! A nursery is available for children ages birth through two years

old in room P311.

**Announcements****Church Closure**

*New Year's Day, January 1*

**Adult Sunday School: Gospel Passages**

*January 7 – February 4, 9:45 a.m., S203 and Zoom*

Revs. Becky and John Hart lead an exploration of passages in the Gospel of John from “the Word made flesh” through life-changing encounters with Jesus that reveal who he is. Scan the QR code for more information.

**Children's Choirs and Handbells Resume**

*Rehearsals begin January 10 | Dinner available beginning at 5:15 p.m.*

New members are welcome to Carol Choir (ages 4/TK-grade 1) and Kirk Choir (grades 2-5). Scan the QR code to register.

**Wednesday Night Dinners Resume**

*January 10, 5:15-6 p.m., Wood Fellowship Hall*

Scan the QR code below to register and prepay.

**Plowshares Book Club**

*January 21, 12:15 p.m., Frances Browne Dining Room*

Join FPC's Book Club for lunch and a discussion of “Elusive Grace: Loving Your Enemies While Striving for God's Justice” by Scott Black Johnston. Books will be available for purchase (\$10) before and after worship on December 31 and January 7. Register for the discussion at the QR code below.



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