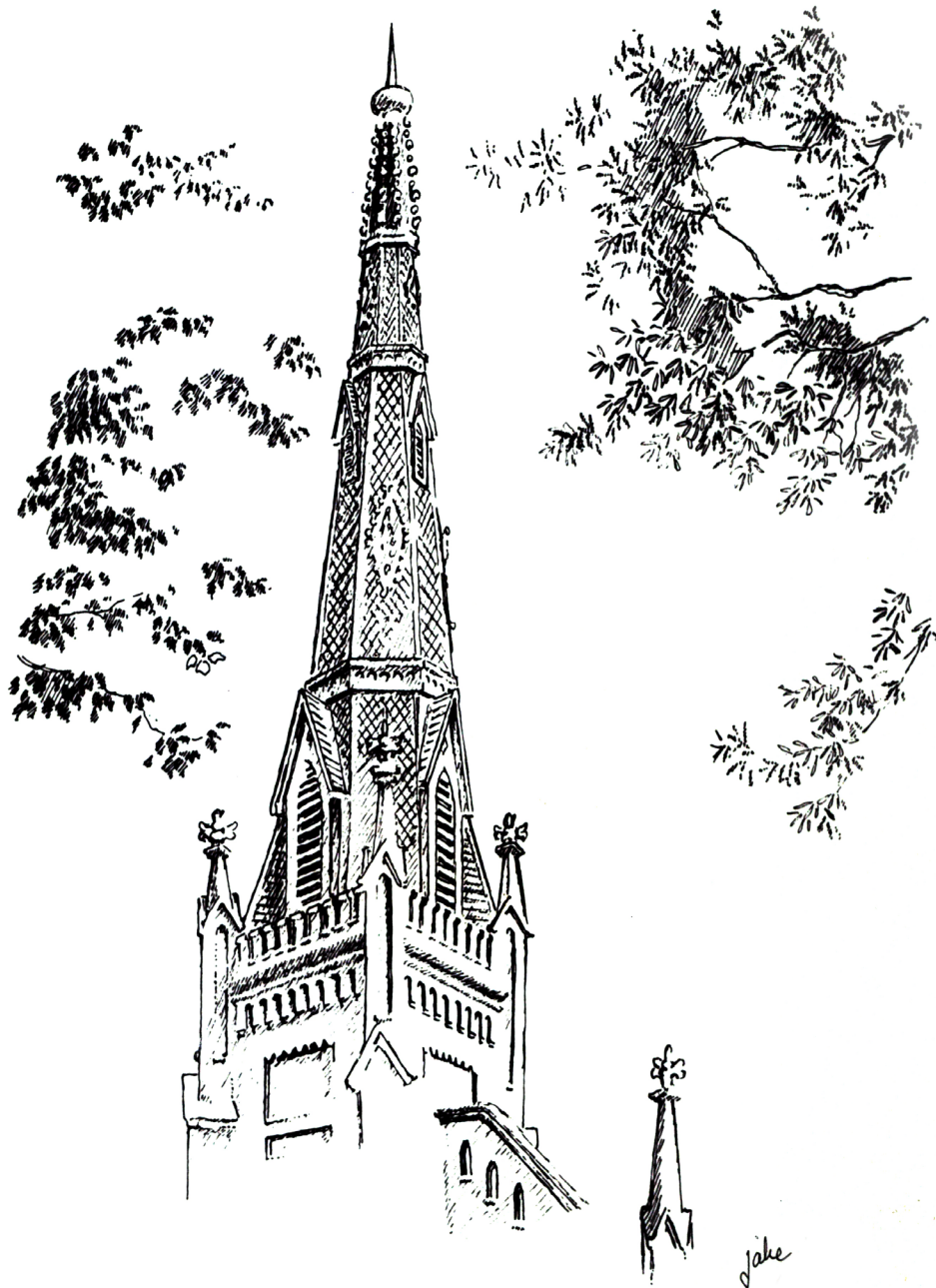


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | DECEMBER 15, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



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

Opening Prayer | Adapted from *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers & Other Servants*

Almighty God, who came to us long ago in the birth of Jesus Christ, be born in us anew today by the power of Your Holy Spirit. We offer our lives as home to You and ask for the grace and strength to live as Your faithful and loving children during this Advent season and always.

Holy Jesus, thank You for coming all the way down to us and in a form that removes our fear. We are grateful for Your love and mercy, which allow us to be honest before You about the ways that we have fallen short, about the desires we have for living a life pleasing to You, and about the things that make that hard.

Meet us in tenderness and compassion as we open our hearts to You, naming those things before You.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

**Come, O Come, Emmanuel!
Come with healing and forgiveness!
Come with joy and peace!
Come with mercy and help!
Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

Meditative Music | “Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming” | Kitty Cleveland

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming,
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flow'ret bright,
Amid the cold of winter,
When half spent was the night.
Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to us a Savior,
When half spent was the night.
The Flow'r, whose fragrance tender
With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
The darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
From sin and death He saves us,
And lightens every load.

Prayer for Illumination | Addison Ayer

Old Testament Reading | Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what His eyes see or decide by what His ears hear, but with righteousness He shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around His waist and faithfulness the belt around His loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of

the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of Him, and His dwelling shall be glorious.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | Matthew 1:18-25 | Claire Tate

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name Him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named Him Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Christmas at Matthew's House" | Reverend Mary Bowman

Moment of Reflection

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 | "Come, O Come Emmanuel" | St. Michael's Singers and the Coventry Choir

O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here, Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save, And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel
O come, Thou Dayspring, from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, Thou Key of David, come, And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, O Come, the Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
In ancient times didst give the law, In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel.

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 | *A New Zealand Prayer Book*

O Emmanuel, may we who have been Your guests at this communion reveal Your life to all the world. May we be no longer Your servants but instead be Your friends who know Your will. You give us Your life, may we be worthy of it. You give us Yourself, may we embody You. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Renna Massey, February 16, 1937 - December 12, 2024.

Transcripts for the Contemplative Service can be found here: <https://firstpres-charlotte.org/sermons/>



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REQUESTS**



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TO GIVE**



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