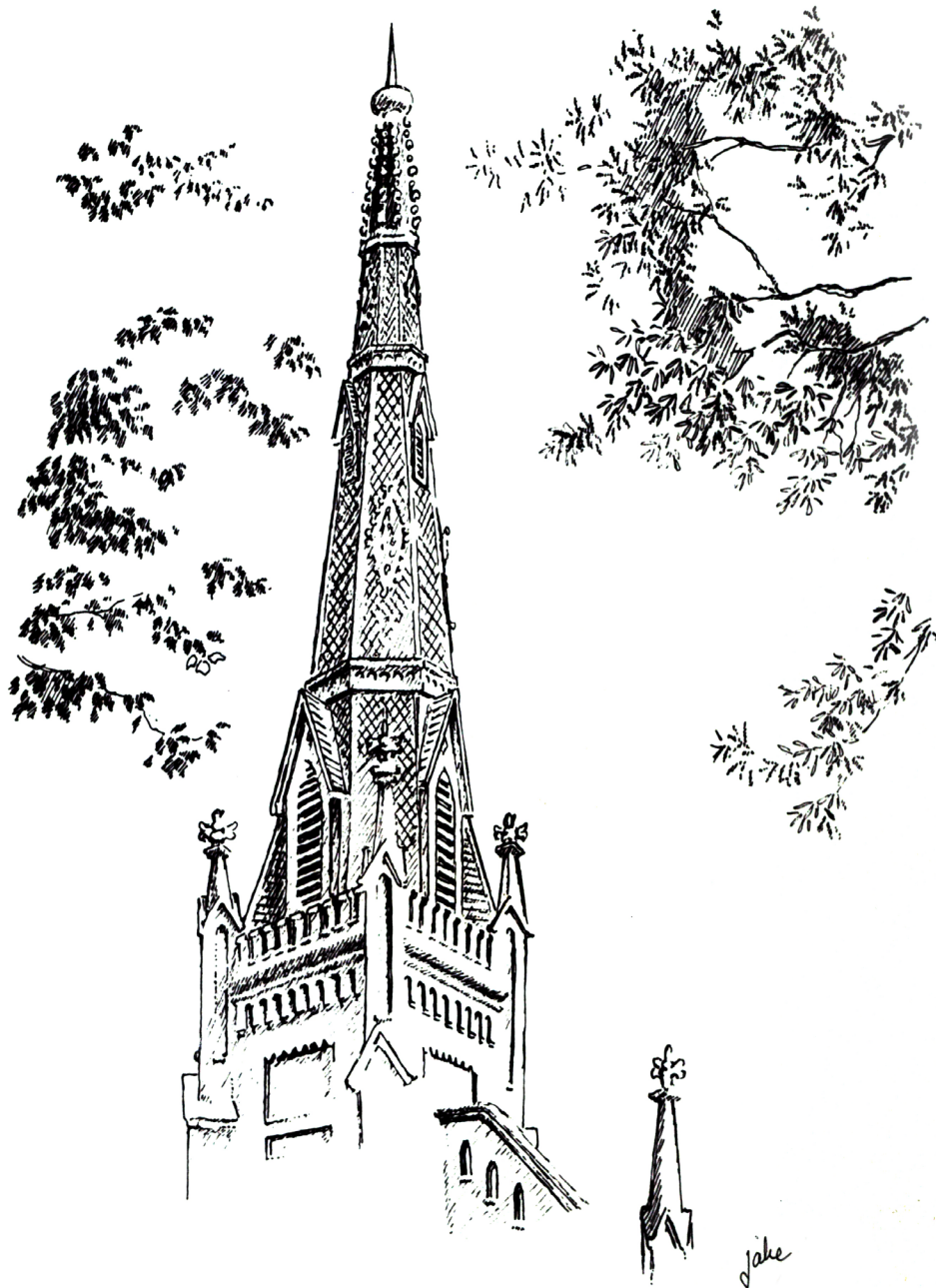


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | DECEMBER 8, 2024
SECOND 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 New Zealand Prayer Book*

O God, the soles of Your feet have touched the Earth. The back street, the forgotten places have been laid up with significance. The households of earth welcome the King of heaven. For You have come among us, You are one of us. So may our praises rise to surround Your throne as our knees bend to salute Your cradle.

Yet, we confess that we are not always ready to meet You in the ways that You come to us. We have ideas about how You should show up.

Yet, You wait patiently for us, even when we fail to wait and watch for You.

Embrace us with tender mercy this morning as we name the sins, hurts, disappointments, and troubles that can separate us from You. Let us give them to You so we can receive what You have for us in this time of worship.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

Come in healing, O Christ.

Come as forgiveness, O Christ.

Come in truth and grace, O Christ.

Meditative Music | “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent” | Anna Kennedy

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,
and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded,
for, with blessing in His hand,
Christ our God to earth descendeth,
our full homage to demand.
King of kings, yet born of Mary,
as of old on earth He stood,
Lord of lords, in human vesture,
in the body and the blood.
He will give to all the faithful
His own self for heav'nly food.
Rank on rank the host of heaven
spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth
from the realms of endless day,
that the pow'rs of hell may vanish
as the darkness clears away.
At His feet the six-winged seraph,
cherubim with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the Presence,
as with ceaseless voice they cry,
“Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord Most High!”

Prayer for Illumination | Selina Malherbe

First Reading | Colossians 1:15-23 | The Message

We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank after rank of angels—everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. And when it comes to the church, He organizes and holds it together, like a head does a body.

He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—He is supreme in the end. From beginning

to end He's there, towering far above everything, everyone. So spacious is He, so expansive, that everything of God finds its proper place in Him without crowding. Not only that, but all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe—people and things, animals and atoms—get properly fixed and fit together in vibrant harmonies, all because of His death, His blood that poured down from the cross.

You yourselves are a case study of what He does. At one time you all had your backs turned to God, thinking rebellious thoughts of Him, giving Him trouble every chance you got. But now, by giving Himself completely at the Cross, actually dying for you, Christ brought you over to God's side and put your lives together, whole and holy in His presence. You don't walk away from a gift like that! You stay grounded and steady in that bond of trust, constantly tuned in to the Message, careful not to be distracted or diverted. There is no other Message—just this one. Every creature under heaven gets this same Message. I, Paul, am a messenger of this Message.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Second Reading | John 1:1-14 | Susan Krebs

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 a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Christmas at John'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 | 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

Holy God, we give thanks for the cup and bread that are given to us through Your sacrificial love. Allow them to nourish us to do Your will. Let these tastes of grace remind us to remain hopeful for the promise that is to come. As we wait for our Savior and the new creation, we will be Your disciples who show the world Your divine love freely given to all. In Christ's holy name. 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

Martha W. Mallory, August 31, 1940 - December 2, 2024

The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to Hal Clarke upon the death of his mother, Mary Louise Clarke; and to Laura Short upon the death of her mother, Barbara Mann Hart.



VIRTUAL
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PRAYER
REQUESTS



TEXT
TO GIVE



GIVE
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