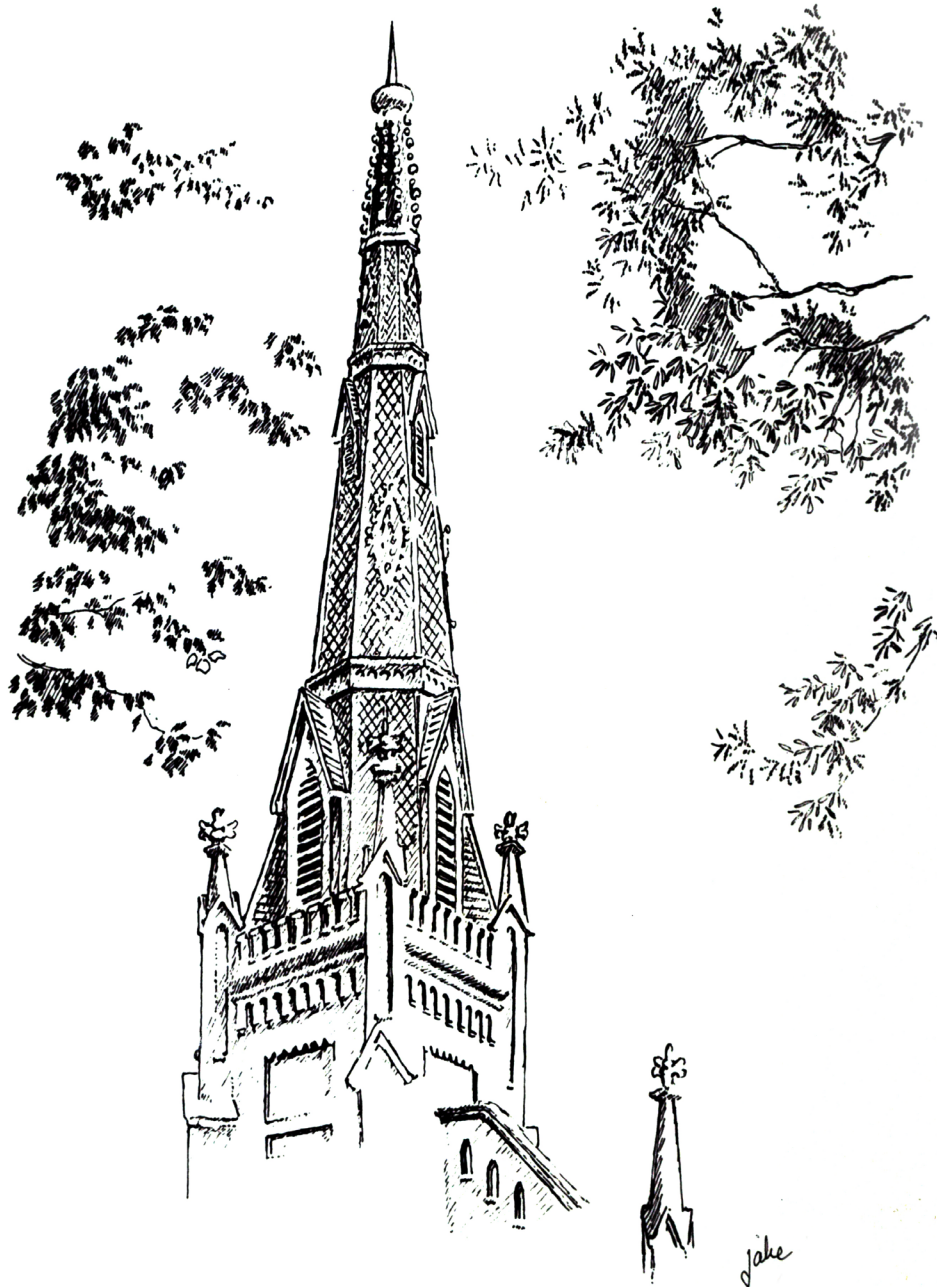


# First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | FEBRUARY 16, 2025  
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY



*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

*“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” - John 13:34-35*

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

*During our series “Seeking the Sacred Unseen,” you may like to begin your worship with this breath prayer as you breathe in and out in the silence. Written by Christine Valters Paintner.*

Breathe in:      *What you seek*  
 Breathe out:    *also seeks you.*  
 Breathe in:      *Rest*  
 Breathe out:    *and let it find you.*

**Words of Welcome** | Reverend Mary Bowman

**Opening Prayer**

**Gracious and Holy God, thank you for the gift of today and for all of the gifts that you have bestowed upon us throughout our lives! We are grateful for the gift of communal worship, and as we draw near to you, we ask that you draw near to us. As we begin our worship, we open ourselves anew to you so that we may be reminded that you are with us and for us. We are sorry for the ways that we have sinned against you and those around us. 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. As we open ourselves to you, we pause to name the things that are distracting us . . . our sins, our hurts, our fears, our jobs, our griefs, our insecurities, our concerns. In this time of prayer, help us to name these things and offer them to you so we may be free to worship and to enjoy your presence.**

**Moment of Reflective Prayer**

**Thank you for your mercy, O God.  
 Thank you for your forgiveness, O Christ.  
 Thank you for your guidance, O Spirit.  
 Amen.**

**Meditative Music** | “Love One Another” | The Cathedral Singers

Love one another, for love is of God; Those who live in love, God lives in them.  
 Love one another, for love is of God; Those who live in love, God lives in them.  
 Those who show love are the children of God. Father and Mother is God to each of them.  
*Refrain*  
 God showed His love in the face of the Son; Christ lives in us so that we might live through Him.  
*Refrain*  
 Love has no place for the menace of fear; fear is abandoned where love is found.  
*Refrain*  
 Love has its purpose in God’s holy will; we learn to love from the One who loved us first.  
*Refrain*

**Prayer for Illumination** | Claire Tate

**First Scripture Reading** | Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Second Scripture Reading** | 1 Corinthians 13:1-10, 13 | The Message | Sally Billington

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always "me first." Love doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel. Love takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Moment of Reflection**

**Meditation** | "Seeking the Sacred Unseen - Through Life with Others" | 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** | "The Servant Song" | Corpus Christi Music Ministry

Will you let me be your servant, Let me be as Christ to you;  
 Pray that I may have the grace to; Let you be my servant, too.  
 We are pilgrims on a journey, We are travelers on the road;  
 We are here to help each other; Walk the mile and bear the load.  
 I will hold the Christ-light for you; In the night-time of your fear;  
 I will hold my hand out to you, Speak the peace you long to hear.  
 I will weep when you are weeping; When you laugh I'll laugh with you.  
 I will share your joy and sorrow; 'Til we've seen this journey through.  
 When we sing to God in heaven; We will find such harmony  
 Born of all we've known together; Of Christ's love and agony.  
 Will you let me be your servant, Let me be as Christ to you;  
 Pray that I may have the grace to; Let you be my servant, too.

**Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer (Centering Prayer Version)**

**Our Father, who is in heaven, Holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our sins, as we forgive the sins of others, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and 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, we give you our deep gratitude for the exquisite gifts of your Spirit, of the sacraments, and of being your beloved children. Give us the power to walk in your ways, to show your love, to do your work, and to live holy and joyful lives. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, we pray. 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** \_\_\_\_\_

The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to Ryan Poag upon the death of his father, Thomas M. Poag; and to Laura Short upon the death of her father, Alley L. Hart, Jr.

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



VIRTUAL  
CONNECT  
CARD



PRAYER  
REQUESTS



TEXT  
TO GIVE



GIVE  
ONLINE