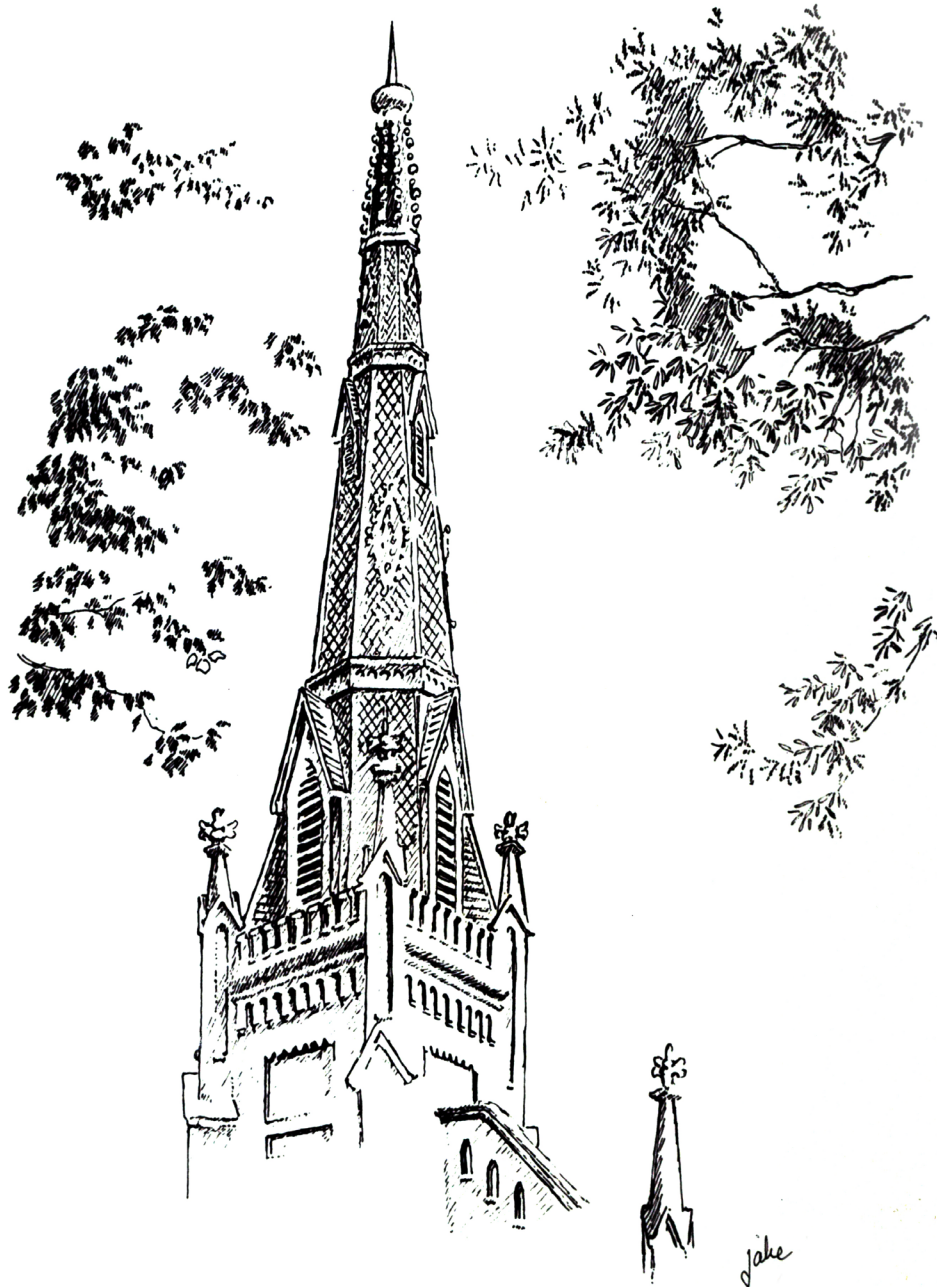


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | FEBRUARY 9, 2025
FIFTH 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

*“The revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and not delay.” - Habakkuk 2:3*

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

O Gracious and Holy God, we are grateful to be gathered in this place and to receive the gift of worship and your presence. We place before you the ways that we are distracted or feel distant. We confess the hurts of those who have sinned against us and the pain of having sinned against others. We acknowledge that we have questions about our lives and your movement in them. We confess that we have concerns about the world and where you might be working. We know that our awareness can be self-oriented and we long to see beyond ourselves to your movements and to hear your living word to us. As we pause in reflective prayer, help us to release what is not of you and to receive anew the love and grace that you offer – so we may embrace your gifts and share them with your world.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

**Forgive us and heal us, O God.
 Help us to wait and to yield to you, O Christ.
 Open us to you, O Spirit.
 Amen.**

Meditative Music | “O Christ, Surround Me” | Richard Bruxvoort Colligan and the River’s Voice

God be the love to search and keep me
 God be the prayer to move my voice;
 God be the strength to now uphold me
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Bind to myself the name of Holy
 Great cloud of witnesses enfold;
 Prophets, apostles, angels witness
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Brightness of sun and glow of moonlight
 Flashing of lightning, strength of wind;
 Depth of the sea to soil of planet
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Walking behind to hem my journey
 Going ahead to light my way;
 And from beneath, above, and all ways
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Christ in the eyes of all who see me
 Christ in the ears that hear my voice;
 Christ in the hearts of all who know me
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Prayer for Illumination | Claire Tate

First Scripture Reading | Mark 8:34-37 | The Message

Calling the crowd to join his disciples, Jesus said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Second Scripture Reading | Philippians 2:1-11 | Joan Wright

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Seeking the Sacred Unseen - Through Yielding" | 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 | "Cradle Me" | Bernadette Farrell

God eternal, cradle me, love me till the end;
 Give me now your understanding.
 Let me be, let me be, let me be your good friend.
 Lord Jesus, cradle me, walk with me always;
 Let me know true love and justice.
 Love me through, love me through, love me through all my days.
 Holy Spirit, cradle me, guide me from above;
 Let me see you, see your power.
 Cradle me, cradle me, cradle me in your love.

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 Blue Book: A Devotional Guide to Every Season of Your Life* | Jim Branch

Father, thank You for the gift of communion with You through worship and through the table. Forgive us when we think that life is more about what we are doing, then about who we are becoming. Help us to remember that more than anything else You want our hearts. Allow us to give them to You fully, that we might receive Yours in return, changing us more into the likeness of Your Son Jesus. In His name 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 Teresa Woods upon the death of her sister, Delores Matthews; and to Linda Hunter upon the death of her sister, Pat Glover.

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



VIRTUAL
CONNECT
CARD



PRAYER
REQUESTS



TEXT
TO GIVE



GIVE
ONLINE