



© MASON ARMSTRONG, 12TH GRADER

First Presbyterian Church
Durham, North Carolina

March 8, 2026

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Third Sunday in Lent

McPherson Lectureship

March 8, 2026

A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

(As we prepare to worship, please silence all mobile devices.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

Mindy Douglas

PRELUDE

Jesus, Priceless Treasure

J.S. Bach

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (from Psalm 95)

Claire Su, Margaret Barbier

Reader: O come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**People: For the Lord is a great God
and a great King above all gods.**

Reader: We are the people of God's pasture
and the sheep of God's hand.

People: Let us listen to God.

Reader: As we extinguish the third Lenten candle, we remember that we are each called to bear the light of Christ in this broken and fearful world. We remember that our Lenten journeys are not in isolation, but are with one another as we remind the world of the greatest love there is to experience.

***HYMN NO. 637**

O, Sing to the Lord

Cantai ao Senhor

***CONFESSION OF SIN**

John Weicher

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

What have we done to you, dear God?

We dishonor you every time we treat another with disrespect.

**We shatter your heart when we find it easier to break our word,
than take the risk to keep it.**

**We fill your ears with the gossip, lies, and slander
we speak about those around us.**

You are wise enough to forgive our foolishness.

You are strong enough to overcome our weakness.

You are loving enough to heal the hurt we cause to you and others.

**And so you give us new hope and new life
in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.**

Silent Confession

Kyrie (sung by all)

Trad. Chant, arr. by John Harper



Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son. Chri - ste e-le-i-son. Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son. Ky-ri-e e-le-i-son.

Assurance of Pardon

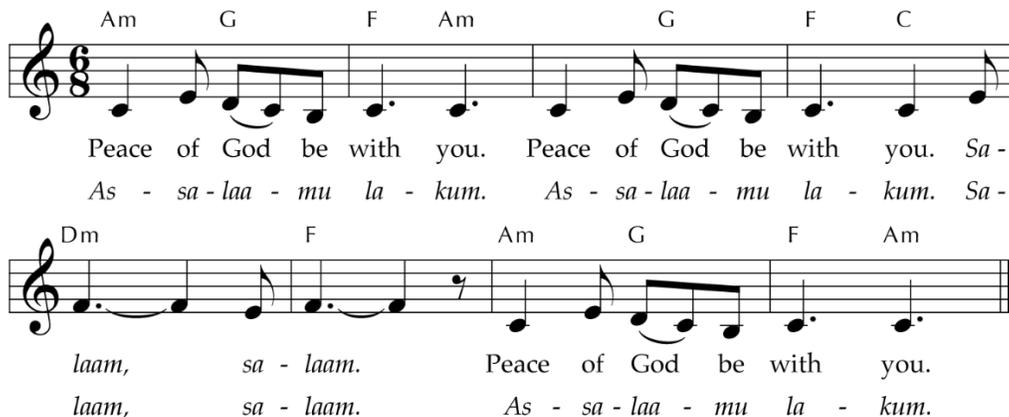
**Those who are able, please stand.*

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

***REGATHERING HYMN NO. 448**

Peace of God Be with You

As-Salaamu Lakum



Am G F Am G F C

Peace of God be with you. Peace of God be with you. Sa -
As - sa - laa - mu la - kum. As - sa - laa - mu la - kum. Sa -

Dm F Am G F Am

laam, sa - laam. Peace of God be with you.
laam, sa - laam. As - sa - laa - mu la - kum.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Colin Bethune

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

All: **O God, your servant Paul writes,**

**“For the message about the cross is foolishness
to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved
it is the power of God.”**

**Sometimes, we feel like both, perishing and saved.
Send your Holy Spirit to save us again this day,
through these old words made new. Amen.**

EPISTLE READING

I Corinthians 1:18-31

(Pew Bible, NT Page 166)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Colin Bethune

People: **Thanks be to God!**

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 5:1-12

(Pew Bible, NT Page 4)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Donyelle McCray

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

“Dear Dreamer”

Donyelle McCray

(silent reflection)

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

From A Brief Statement of Faith

Esther Hethcox

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.**

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:

**preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed and blessing the children,
healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.**

**Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal. Amen.**

***HYMN NO. 731**

Give Thanks for Those Whose Faith Is Firm

Repton

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

John Weicher

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Invitation to Give

Esther Hethcox

Offertory Music

The Beatitudes

James Biery

(text by Marilyn Biery)

*Lift up your hearts, you poor in spirit,
the kingdom of heaven is yours;
and blest are you, bent in two with mourning,
God's comfort will bear you through all.
Be still with gentle, quiet meekness,
the plenty of earth will be yours;
and blest are you, filled with aching hunger,
the satisfied heart will be yours.
With joyfulness show love and mercy,
the mercy of God will be yours;
and blest are you, pure of heart and selfless,
the vision of God will be yours.*

*With joyfulness show love and mercy,
the mercy of God will be yours;
and blest are you, pure of heart and selfless,
the vision of God will be yours.
Work tirelessly for peace and justice,
as children of God you'll be known;
and blest are you, who are persecuted,
the kingdom of heaven is yours.
Rejoice, be glad, be joyful people,
the kingdom of heaven is yours;
so blest are you – hear the words of Jesus:
The kingdom of heaven is yours!*

***Doxology**

Old Hundredth

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

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER *(in unison)*

Mindy Douglas

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

(Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession)

**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.**

*HYMN NO. 357

The Days Are Surely Coming

Llangloffan

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Donyelle McCray

POSTLUDE

Oh, Sing to the Lord

Brazilian tune, arr. Edwin Childs

Happening Today

Children's Choir will meet following worship in the Christian Education building.

Youth Group will meet at 5:00pm for Learning from Our Elders: Bread Baking, Mahjongg & Hiking Photography.

McPherson Community Lecture "Aunt Pauli" will begin at 3:00pm in Watts-Hill Hall. (see page 6 for more information)



First Presbyterian Church welcomes all who worship with us. Let us know you have joined us for worship by scanning the QR code to the left. For online giving, scan the QR code to the right.



Sign In

Donate Online

We honor and celebrate the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Jesus Christ. First Presbyterian welcomes individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church. So that you may know who is sitting nearby, please sign the *Friendship Pad*, pass it along the pew, and **then return it to the starting point**, noting the names of those sitting near you.

The *flowers* in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of *Dr. and Mrs. S. D. McPherson, Sr.* and *Dr. and Mrs. Samuel D. McPherson, Jr.* by the family.

This week we continue our practice of extinguishing candles as we move through our Lenten journey together. The Lenten "wreath" is covered in purple cloth and dried daffodils. We extinguish a purple candle which represents the calling of the disciples. Daffodils are one of the first flowers to spring forth from the dormant earth at winter's end each year, dependably marking the continuous cycle of God's glory made manifest around us. We remember how we are the latest in a long history of disciples continuously being called by Christ to carry his yoke. ***This week we invite you to ponder your own calling as a disciple—what are some ways you find yourself answering the call of your life?***

Today's bulletin cover was created by *Mason Armstrong*. Mason writes, "When I thought of the blessedness in this passage, I thought of freedom. With the warm weather this week, it became a super island/water/beachy piece."

The *Lenten Banner* was completed in 1990 and dedicated in 1991. It depicts traditional Lenten symbols. The banner was made possible by funds donated in memory of *Bess Bryant* and by the stitching of many devoted members of this congregation.

Childcare: A staffed nursery and children's playroom are available on the second floor of the education building during worship. *Activity bags and baskets* are available in the foyer for children. Please return them to the foyer at the end of worship.

Restroom locations: To the left and right as you exit the rear of the sanctuary; on the first and second floors of the education building; and on the first and second floors of the church house. There is an infant changing table in the restroom area located to the left as you exit the rear of the sanctuary.

Portions of today's worship resources were reprinted from *Lectionary Liturgies*. The Call to Worship was written by Esther Hethcox. The Prelude is from Neumeister Collection, uncovered 1984. Music is reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926.

Upcoming Community Events

Many of our events are posted in the bi-weekly newsletter. You may read past newsletters and join our mailing list at <https://firstpres-durham.org/weekly-newsletter/>



Yoga is offered at FPC on Mondays at 4:30pm (vinyasa flow class), and Fridays at 10:30am (chair yoga class). Contact **Karen McPhaul** for more information at mcphaul@gmail.com.

First Friends: Save the date for First Friends in March & April! Join us on **March 21**, at the home of Barbara Buckley and Scott Randell. More details coming soon. Then, on **April 25** join us at the home of Jane Wettach and Paul Baldasare. First Friends is a community of 55+ individuals who gather monthly for fellowship.

Spring Workday on Saturday, **March 21** from 8:00am – 11:00am. Please bring work gloves, trash grabbers, weed-eaters, and weeding tools. We will: clean out sump pumps, pick up trash on the grounds, tidy up the area outside of the playground. For more information contact Barbara Buckley at barbjbuckley@gmail.com.

“Wilmington on Fire,” a documentary about the 1898 Wilmington Massacre, will be screened at FPC on Sunday, **April 12** at 3:00-5:30PM. All are invited. Historians David and Vera Cecelski will attend and facilitate a discussion following the viewing. Racial Equity Task Force is sponsoring the event.

Job Listings

Minister of Music Search: As we begin our search for FPC's next Minister of Music, the search committee wants to hear from you! Please take a few minutes to complete the following survey (QR code) which invites you to reflect on your experience of music at First Pres and share your hopes for its future. Your responses will guide and inform our search, conversations, and decisions. Thanks in advance for your participation.



Seeking a Communications Associate: FPC is now seeking a skilled addition to our administrative team whose primary duty will be to support our mission by utilizing all aspects of communicating with our congregation as well as the greater community. Full benefits and salary commensurate with experience will be provided. Successful candidates will be proficient in social media/digital platforms and able to manage an array of communications for our active church. FPC members, their family members and/or close church friends should not apply but if you know of others who might be interested, encourage them to visit <http://firstpres-durham.org/2026/02/recruiting-for-church-communications-associate> for more details and send their cover letter/resume/references to adminsearch@firstpres-durham.org.

The McPherson Lectureship

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Donyelle McCray as our 2026 McPherson Lecturer, March 8-9. Dr. McCray serves as Associate Professor of Homiletics at Yale Divinity School. A teacher, writer, and Episcopal layperson, her scholarship focuses on ways African American women and lay people use the sermon to play, remember, invent, and disrupt. **Monday, March 9th** at 9:00am we will gather for our clergy breakfast “Spiritual Leadership in a Fearful World.”

McPherson Lecture - Community Gathering (3:00pm): “Aunt Pauli.” Pauli Murray was affectionately known as “Aunt Pauli” to a host of nieces and nephews. McPherson scholar Dr. Donyelle McCray’s community lecture will explore how Pauli approached this role, giving attention to (i) inherited models for aunthood and unclehood, (ii) Pauli’s role caring for aging aunts, (iii) the influence of gender identity, and (iv) the impact on Pauli’s writing agenda. Everyone is welcome to join us at 3pm in Watts-Hill Hall. Snacks are provided.

~ About Our Lecturer ~

Donyelle McCray serves as Associate Professor of Homiletics at Yale Divinity School. She is the author of *The Censored Pulpit: Julian of Norwich as Preacher* (2019) and a volume on sermon genre, *Is it a Sermon?: Art, Activism, and Genre Fluidity in African American Preaching* (2024). She is currently writing a book on the preaching and spirituality of the Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray. Before becoming a homiletics professor, Donyelle served as an attorney focusing on wills, trusts, and estates. This work raised existential questions that led her to seminary and then into ministry as a hospice chaplain. Human finitude, compassion, and interdependence remain central theological concerns in her scholarship.

~ About the McPherson Lectureship ~

The McPherson Lectureship is dedicated to enriching the faith and life of First Presbyterian Church and the Durham community. Inaugurated in the year 1999, the Lectureship is made possible through an endowment given by the McPherson family in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel D. McPherson, Sr. and Dr. and Mrs. Samuel D. McPherson, Jr.

Former lecturers have been:

- *John Kuykendall* (1999)
- *J. Barrie Shepherd* (2001)
- *Beverly Gaventa* (2002)
- *Tom Long* (2003)
- *Joanna Adams* (2004)
- *Charles Kimball* (2005)
- *Nicholas Wolterstorff* (2006)
- *Joseph L. Roberts, Jr.* (2007)
- *Richard A. Lischer* (2008)
- *Stephen A. Hayner* (2009)
- *Barbara Brown Taylor* (2010)
- *Leighton Ford* (2011)
- *Martha Moore-Keish* (2012)
- *Samuel L. Adams* (2013)
- *Emilie M. Townes* (2014)
- *Ron Cole-Turner* (2015)
- *Douglas F. Ottati* (2016)
- *Miroslav Volf* (2017)
- *Starsky D. Wilson* (2018)
- *Mary Louise Brindle* (2019)
- *Macky Alston* (2021, 2022)
- *Catherine Barsotti & Robert Johnston* (2023)
- *Willie Jennings* (2024)
- *Amy Cooper Robertson & Robert Williamson, Jr.* (2025)

~Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~

Condolences:

We extend our care and concern to *Amy Wilson and her family* upon the death of her grandmother *Julia Allen*.

We remember in prayer:

Phyllis Verhey is recovering from surgery.

Tony Brown

John Fricks

Lee House

Vickie Luboff

Peggy Needham

Linn Wakeford

Paul Cornsweet

Sue Fricks

Ann Huff

Elizabeth Manceras

Franzi Rokoske

Sam Crabtree

Joe Harvard

Kelli Hunnicut

Harriett Mitchell

Alfred Tisdale

Susan Cyr

Kerry Holbrook

Bob Lewis

Fred Moore

David Verner

Care Communities:

Croasdaile Pavilion: *Dub Gulley*

Hillcrest Convalescent: *Carol Wills*

Brookdale Senior Living: *Debbie Mathews*

Durham Ridge: *Phillip Herndon*

Pruitt Health - Durham: *Fred Callaway*

Southpoint Atria: *Ginny Widmark*

Madge McKeithen

Family and Friends of the Congregation

Amanda Briggs, friend of Mindy Douglas

John Carter, brother of Conrad Carter

Francisca Cristobal, relative of Al and Judy Arrowood

Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings

Sara Degand, cousin of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

Gera Fleming, mother of Christyn Klinck

Linda Foster-Momsen, mother of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

Cheryl Fowler, friend of Cheri Reece

Jennifer Hervey, daughter-in-law of Jeanne Hervey

Donna Holladay, friend of Jane & Robert Brawley

Katie Jackson, wife of Matthew Hirsch

Donna Johnson, mother of Ann Huff

Anthony Ketcham, brother of Wil James.

Marcia Magee, aunt of Kathryn Muchison

Marie Maly, sister of Barbara Fish

Sandra Mikush, mother of Katie Fogleman

Martha Neece, sister-in-law of Vernon & Beth Neece

Ana Sofia Ochoa, family member of Becky Martin

Bill Prochaska, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood

Wu-Chou Su, father of Claire Su

Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss

Tanya Watkins, friend of Leigh Wynkoop

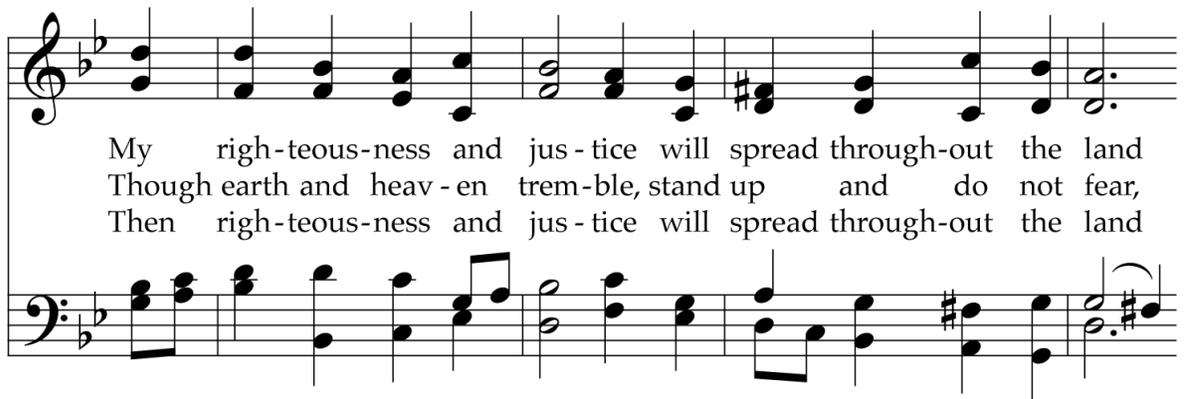
The Days Are Surely Coming 357



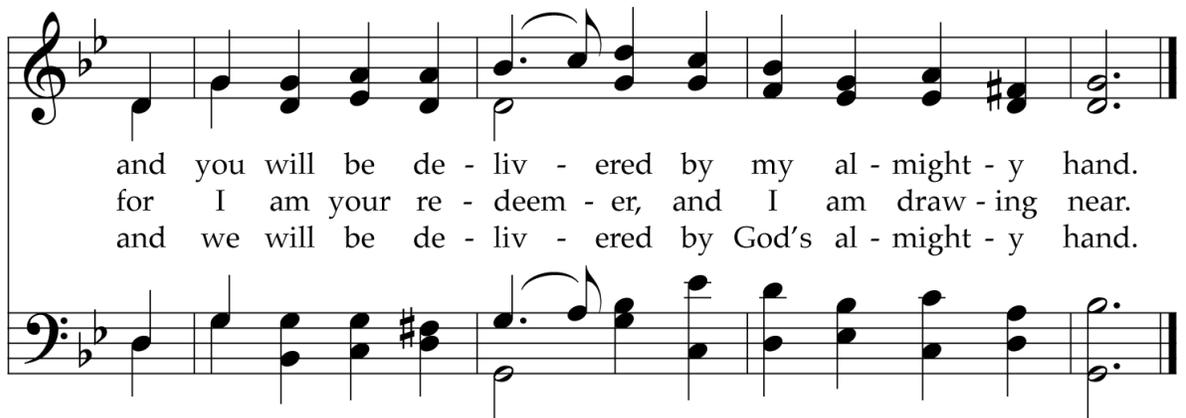
1 The days are sure - ly com - ing, says God to all the earth,
2 The days are sure - ly com - ing, says Christ, the prom - ised one,
3 The days are sure - ly com - ing when we will know at last



when you will see my prom - ise: sal - va - tion come to birth.
when you will read my warn - ing in moon and stars and sun.
the full - ness of God's pres - ence, God's prom - ise, come to pass.



My righ - teous - ness and jus - tice will spread through - out the land
Though earth and heav - en trem - ble, stand up and do not fear,
Then righ - teous - ness and jus - tice will spread through - out the land



and you will be de - liv - ered by my al - might - y hand.
for I am your re - deem - er, and I am draw - ing near.
and we will be de - liv - ered by God's al - might - y hand.

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O Sing to the Lord

Cantai ao Senhor

1 O sing to the Lord; O sing God a
 2 For God is the Lord, and God has done
 3 So dance for our God and blow all the
 4 O shout to our God, who gave us the
 5 For Je - sus is Lord! A - men! Al - le -



new song. O sing to the Lord; O sing God a
 won - ders. For God is the Lord, and God has done
 trum - pets. So dance for our God and blow all the
 Spir - it. O shout to our God, who gave us the
 lu - ia! For Je - sus is Lord! A - men! Al - le -



new song. O sing to the Lord; O sing God a new song.
 won - ders. For God is the Lord, and God has done won - ders.
 trum - pets. So dance for our God and blow all the trum - pets.
 Spir - it. O shout to our God, who gave us the Spir - it.
 lu - ia! For Je - sus is Lord! A - men! Al - le - lu - ia!



O sing to our God; O sing to our God.

731

Give Thanks for Those
Whose Faith Is Firm

Capo 1: (D) (A) (Bm) (G)
E^b B^b Cm A^b

1 Give thanks for those whose faith is firm when all a -
 2 Give thanks for those whose hope is clear, be - yond mere
 3 Give thanks for those whose love is pure, a spar - kling
 4 Give thanks for saints of a - ges past and saints a -

(D) (A) (D) (G) (Em) (A) (F#m)
E^b B^b E^b A^b Fm B^b Gm

round seems bleak: on God's good prom - ise they re - ly, so
 mor - tal sight: who seek the cit - y God has planned, the
 pre - cious stone: they show by what they say and do an
 live to - day: though of - ten by this world de - spised, their

(Bm) (G) (Em) (A7) (D)
Cm A^b Fm B^b7 E^b

while they live and when they die how force - ful -
 true, e - ter - nal prom - ised land, and steer on
 in - ward beau - ty, warm and true, for God's con -
 hearts by God are rich - ly prized. Give thanks that

(A7) (B) (Em) (G) (A7) (D)
B^b7 C Fm A^b B^b7 E^b

ly they speak: the strong, who once were weak!
 toward that light, a bea - con ev - er bright.
 cerns they own: God's love through them is known.
 we may say we share their pil - grim way.

This Week at a Glance!

Later Today
Newsletter Deadline

Following Worship

Children's Music: ages 3-5 (room 205), ages 6-11 (choir room)

3:00PM McPherson Community Lecture

5:00 PM Youth Group: Learning from Our Elders

Monday, March 9

9:00 AM

Walk in Ministry
McPherson Clergy Breakfast (Watts-Hill Hall)

1:30 PM Worship Planning (Pastor's Office)

4:30 PM Yoga (Watts-Hill Hall)

6:00 PM

Personnel Committee (Daye Meeting Room)
Property Committee (room 205)
Christian Education Committee (Zoom)

6:30 PM Service & Mission Committee (Watts-Hill Hall)

7:00 PM

Worship and the Arts (Zoom)
Welcome & Belonging (Zoom)

Tuesday, March 10

Newsletter Release

4:00 PM Things That Matter Book Group (offsite)

7:00 PM Somethings Prayer Service (Sanctuary)

Wednesday, March 11

1:00 PM Program Staff Meeting (Pastor's office)

5:00 PM Emergency Preparedness Task Force (Zoom)

6:00 PM Stewardship Committee (Daye Meeting Room)

7:00 PM Chancel Choir (choir room)

Thursday, March 12

9:00 AM Walk in Ministry

11:30 AM Legacy Society Luncheon (Croasdaile Country Club)

Friday, March 13

10:30 AM Yoga (Room 201)

Saturday, March 14

3:00 PM Officer Training (Watts-Hill Hall)

Sunday, March 15
Fourth Sunday in Lent

9:45 AM Faith Formation (Classes available for adults, youth and children)

11:00 AM Worship: Mindy Douglas, preaching.
Congregational meeting to follow.

Following Worship

Children's Music: ages 3-5 (room 205), ages 6-11 (choir room)
Congregational Luncheon (Watts-Hill Hall)
Fellowship Committee (Wilson Parlor)

5:00 PM Youth Group: Trivia Night w/Families

Congregational Luncheon - All are invited to stay after worship on March 15 for a congregational luncheon. Join us for a delicious lunch prepared by Chef Tanya and get to know other members and friends better! This is an intergenerational event led by our Fellowship Committee and the Racial Equity Team. We hope you can join us as we build community through food, conversation, laughter, and connection. RSVP here so we can ensure we have plenty for everyone!

CHURCH STAFF

Shakira Bethea, Church Administrator
Tom Bloom, Business Administrator
Lenore Champion, Children's Ministry Director
Vernon Cooper, Sexton
Mindy Douglas, Pastor/Head of Staff
Susan Dunlap, Parish Associate



Omar Guess, Sr., Sunday Morning Sexton
Joseph Harvard, Pastor Emeritus
Esther Hethcox, Associate Pastor
Sybil King, Administrative Assistant
Kathy Parkins, Minister of Music
John Weicher, Associate Pastor

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, email the church office:
office@firstpres-durham.org or visit our website: <https://firstpres-durham.org>.

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