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CHRISTMAS EVE

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

DECEMBER 24, 2023

A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD WITH THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

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

WELCOME

Mindy Douglas

PRELUDE

*Concerto Grosso No. 8 ("Christmas")
Vivace – Grave – Allegro*

Arcangelo Corelli

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

The Crabtree Family

Leader: Throughout this season we have lived, waited, and remembered the hope, peace, joy, and love of God found in Christ. Tonight, we gather together and light our candle in honor of the Christ Child.

The candle is lit.

Leader: With the birth of Christ, salvation has drawn near. The God who ordered the chaos of the universe has come down into the chaos of our world. The Word which was with God at the beginning came down and lived with us. While we were yet living in the valley of the shadow of death, the light of new life burst forth. We light this candle for Christ.

People: **On this night, we remember God has come in the Christ Child.**

*HYMN NO. 133

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Adeste Fideles

*O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

*True God from true God, light from light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Very God, begotten, not created!
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

*Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation!
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

*Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Amy Heit

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

* Those who are able, please stand.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: **Gracious God,**
by the gift of your Holy Spirit
show us the Word made flesh—
good news of great joy for all —
so that we may sing with the angels;
glory in the highest and peace on earth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

Amy Heit

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Luke 2:1-20

Mindy Douglas

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

MEDITATION

"Nativity among the Ruins"

Mindy Douglas

***HYMN NO. 112**

On Christmas Night All Christians Sing

Sussex Carol

*On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring;
On Christmas night all Christians sing, to hear the news the angels bring,
News of great joy, news of great mirth, news of our merciful King's birth.*

*Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad;
Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Redeemer made us glad,
When from our sin he set us free, all for to gain our liberty?*

*When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place;
When sin departs before his grace, then life and health come in its place;
Heaven and earth with joy may sing, all for to see the newborn King.*

*All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night;
All out of darkness we have light, which made the angels sing this night:
"Glory to God in highest heaven; peace on earth and goodwill. Amen!"*

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

John Weicher

THE OFFERING

Invitation to Give

Esther Hethcox

The *Christmas Eve offering* will be split between Welcome Baby and the Emanuel Food Pantry.

Offertory Anthem

All Praise to Thee

Elaine Hagenberg

*All praise to Thee, eternal God, who, clothed in garb of flesh and blood,
Dost take a manger for Thy throne, while worlds on worlds are Thine alone. Alleluia.
Thou comest in the darksome night to make us children of the light,
To make us in the realms divine, like Thine own angels, round Thee shine. Alleluia.
A little Child, Thou art our guest that weary ones in Thee may rest;
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth that we may rise to heaven from earth. Alleluia.*

*Response (Hymn No. 150, verse 3)

Dix

*As they offered gifts most rare at thy manger, rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly king.*

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Esther Hethcox

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Mindy Douglas, John Weicher

Leader: God is with us.

People: We are not alone.

Leader: Christ is present here.

People: The Spirit moves within us.

Leader: Let us give thanks to God,

People: in memory and in hope.

Leader: Blessings be to you, Creator God,
who in the beginning brought light and life to the world,
and who continues to bring love and light everlasting.

**People: Your song of wisdom echoes through the ages;
your ancient promise still brings us hope.**

Leader: Over the ages, you sent prophets and messengers to your people,
reminding them of the promised time
of peace and justice that would surround the world.

People: They came in the middle of our despair and filled us with hope.

Leader: And then you came to a young woman named Mary
and laid out the promise in a new way.

**People: You promised her a son who would be called Jesus.
You promised that in her son the world would be changed.**

Leader: Now as we celebrate that child, we lift our voices in song,
singing together the praises of ages:

All: (sung) (Sung to *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*)

*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God of Hosts, by all adored!
Heaven and earth cannot contain all the glory of your name!
Hail, hosanna, God most high! Blest is he who now draws nigh,
In the name of God the King! Hallelujah glad we sing:
Hail, hosanna! Praises due be forever, Lord to you!*

Leader: Yet even now, as we prepare to celebrate his birth,
we remember the life this baby will live.

**People: We remember how he broke the bonds of human tradition to show all
what the Banquet of Hope could be
as he ate openly with the despised and the outcasts of his world.**

Leader: And we remember one special meal,
foretaste of the banquet that is to come,
that he ate with his closest friends.

**People: Gathering them together in an upper room to share the story of liberation,
he prepared them for liberation.**

Leader: At the end of the meal, he took bread, blessed, and broke it, then passed it to them saying:

**People: Take and eat. This bread is the body of Life, broken by the world.
Eat it in remembrance and in hope.**

Leader: After that he took the cup, blessed it and passed it to them saying:

**People: This cup is the sign of the New Covenant.
Whenever you drink it remember me,
for I shall not eat or drink again until the time of the heavenly banquet.**

Leader: Remembering the birth of the child in the stable,
we remember also his life, his death, and his resurrection.

People: We remember how he poured his love out to all he met
and we look forward to his return
and the coming reign of peace, love, and justice.

Leader: We remember, in his name, the poor and helpless,
the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed;
the lonely and the unloved;
all who have none to care for them;
all those whose lives have been torn asunder by injustice, terror and war;
the aged and little children;
and all who know not the great loving-kindness of the Lord Jesus.
And now, as beloved children of a loving parent, we pray:

All: **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.

Leader: The bread we break is the Bread of Life.
The cup we share is the Cup of Promise.
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Leader: Come and eat, the banquet awaits.

THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

(The bread is gluten free, and the elements were prepared in a gluten-free area. Servers will sanitize their hands prior to distributing the elements. If you are able, come forward to receive communion. The bread server will dip a pre-cut piece of bread in the common cup for you and then pass it to you. After eating, please return to your seat. Anyone who is unable to come forward may remain in the pew to be served by the clergy.)

Communion Anthem *Away in a Manger*

arr. Kirkpatrick

*Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

*The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
and stay by my side until morning is nigh.*

*Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.*

Instrumental Music *Concerto Grosso No. 8 ("Christmas")*
Pastorale

Arcangelo Corelli

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Esther Hethcox

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: Amen.

All: God of grace and peace,
as you have shared your life with us
through the child in the manger and this simple meal together,
let us share your life with others as the body of Christ in the world,
through Jesus, bread of heaven. Amen.

LIGHTING OF CONGREGATIONAL CANDLES

John Weicher

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

*(In passing the light, please hold your lighted candle upright
while the recipient of your light tips his or her unlit candle.)*

HYMN NO. 122 (see back cover)

Silent Night, Holy Night

Stille Nacht

(Remain seated during this hymn. Keep your candle lit through the singing of the final hymn.)

*BLESSING AND CLOSING

Mindy Douglas

Leader: Arise and shine, for your light has come!
The glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

All: Alleluia!

Leader: Go now and bear witness to the light of Christ.

All: Amen.

*HYMN NO. 134 (see back cover)

Joy to the World

Antioch

*POSTLUDE

From Heaven High to Earth, I Came

Elizabeth Krouse

(As you leave the sanctuary, please drop used candles in the large metal cans in the narthex and foyer.)

First Presbyterian Church welcomes all who worship here. We honor and celebrate the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Christ. We welcome individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church.

We are grateful to **Allison Willet**, (violin), **Tatum Eppinger** (violin), and **Ben Maxwell** (cello) for playing music during worship this evening.

This season's beautiful **Advent wreath** is given to the glory of God by **Alice Raney**.

The **poinsettias** are a loving gift from the **Arthur and Mary Clark Family Fund** in deep appreciation to the family in Christ at First Presbyterian Church.

Special thanks to **Alice Raney**, **Griffin Momsen-Hudson**, and **Vernon Cooper** for decorating the sanctuary for the season.

Advent paraments: In 2012, First Presbyterian Church commissioned internationally known fiber-artist Laurie Wohl to design and create two paraments to be hung from the pulpit and lectern during Lent and Advent. The Advent text on the pulpit parament, in Hebrew and English, is from Isaiah 12:3: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." The Advent text on the lectern parament is from Luke 1:78-79: "The dawn from on high will break upon us to give light to guide our feet into the way of peace." We are grateful that the bequest of Anne 'St. Clair' Williams made it possible to enhance our sanctuary with these beautiful works of art.

The *sanctuary table* upon which the Advent Wreath sits was made by **George Danser** and is given to the church by him and his wife, **Jean Cary**. George has drawn design features from our communion table and used oak removed from the sanctuary during our renovation and from a tree in their backyard that Jean saw get hit by lightning some years ago.

Hearing Assistance Receivers are available from the ushers. Before you leave the sanctuary, please turn off the receiver and place it in the specially marked receptacle by the door or return it to the audio/video console at the rear of the sanctuary. Receivers are sanitized after each use.

No childcare this evening: Children are welcome to attend the service with their parents/guardians.

Restroom locations: to the left and right as you exit the rear of the sanctuary; on the second floor 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 texts* were reprinted from *Call to Worship 2021-2022 Year C*, *Book of Common Worship* (2018), and *Feasting on the Word Advent Companion*.

The *bulletin cover* was created by FPC youth, **Mason Armstrong**.

The Christmas Eve Offering

Welcome Baby The mission of Welcome Baby is to strengthen Durham families with young children, ages birth – 8 years, by providing child development information and emotional and practical support through programs that help reduce Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's), improve school readiness skills, increase caregivers' knowledge of children's changing ages and stages, help to break the social isolation felt by many parents and provide families with resources that help in their children's daily care.

The Emanuel Food Pantry: The mission of The Emanuel Food Pantry is to provide fresh, nutritious food to families facing food insecurity, with a particular focus on underserved communities. By providing healthy food, we are addressing the multiple detrimental effects of food insecurity, enhancing personal dignity, and improving health outcomes.

Please join us!



December 31– First Sunday after Christmas

No Faith Formation classes for children and youth

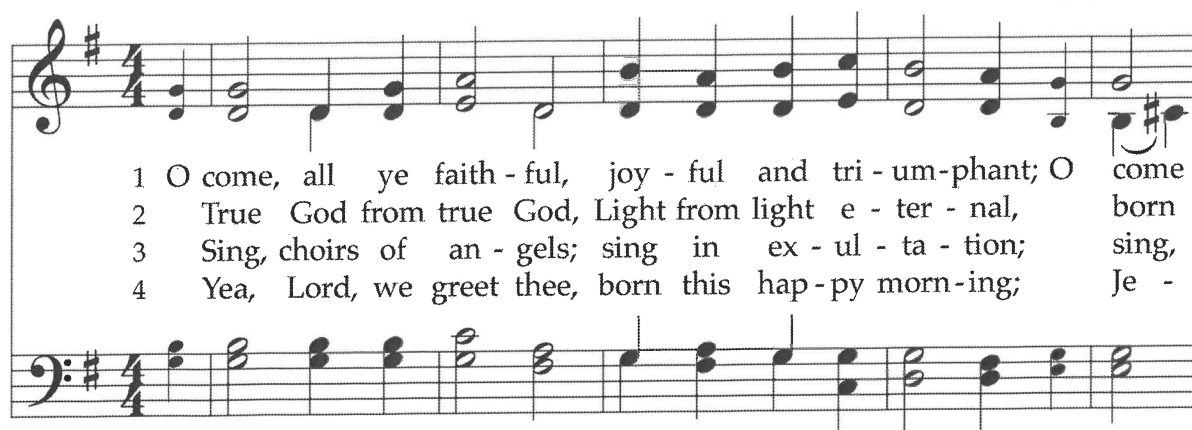
9:45 a.m. Lectionary Class

11:00 a.m. Worship in the sanctuary

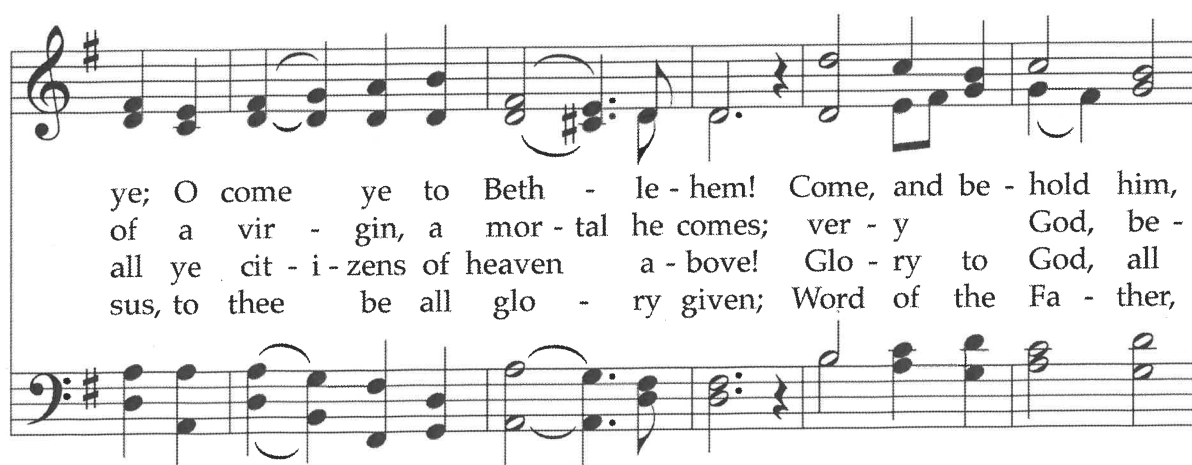
Esther Hethcox, preaching

O Come, All Ye Faithful

133

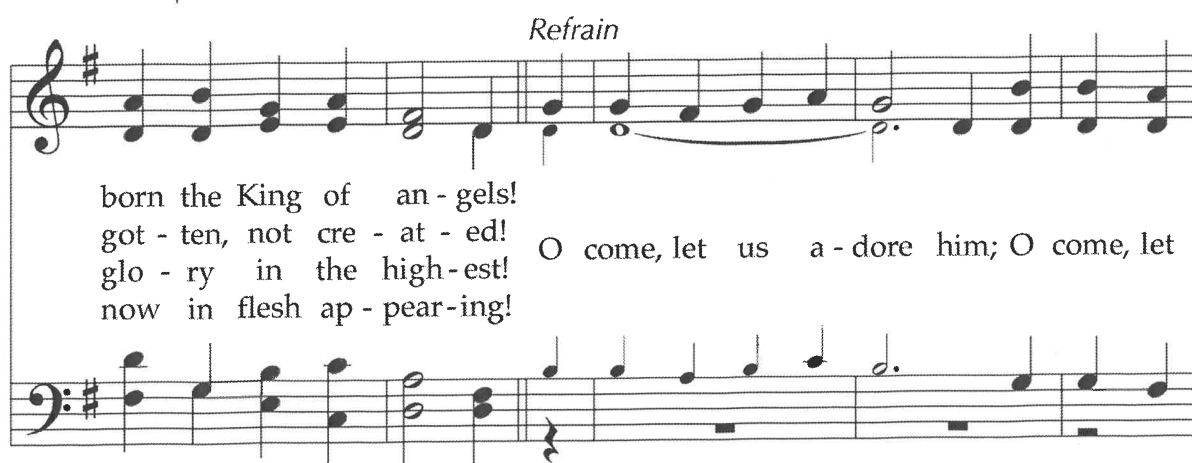


1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant; O come
 2 True God from true God, Light from light e - ter - nal, born
 3 Sing, choirs of an - gels; sing in ex - ul - ta - tion; sing,
 4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing; Je -

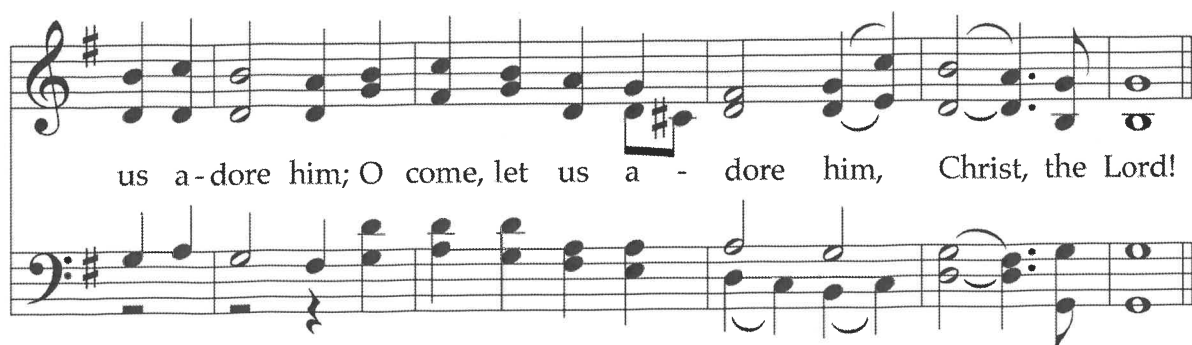


ye; O come ye to Beth - le - hem! Come, and be - hold him,
 of a vir - gin, a mor - tal he comes; ver - y God, be -
 all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove! Glo - ry to God, all
 sus, to thee be all glo - ry given; Word of the Fa - ther,

Refrain



born the King of an - gels!
 got - ten, not cre - at - ed! O come, let us a - dore him; O come, let
 glo - ry in the high - est!
 now in flesh ap - pear - ing!



us a - dore him; O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

On Christmas Night All Christians Sing 112

Capo 3: (D)

(G)

(D)

(A7)

(D)

F

B \flat

F

C7

F



1 On Christ - mas night all Chris - tians sing, to hear the
2 Then why should we on earth be sad, since our Re -
3 When sin de - parts be - fore his grace, then life and
4 All out of dark - ness we have light, which made the

(G)

(A)

(D)

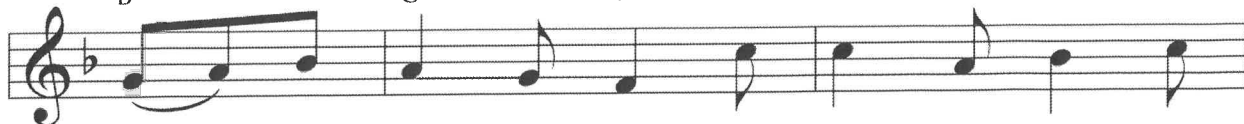
(G)

B \flat

C

F

B \flat



news the an - gels bring; on Christ - mas night all
deem - er made us glad; then why should we on
health come in its place; when sin de - parts be -
an - gels sing this night; all out of dark - ness

(D)

(A)

(D)

(G)

(A)

(D)

F

C

F

B \flat

C

F



Chris - tians sing, to hear the news the an - gels bring,
earth be sad, since our Re - deem - er made us glad,
fore his grace, then life and health comes in its place;
we have light, which made the an - gels sing this night:

(A)

(Em)

(D)

(A)

C

Gm

F

C



news of great joy, news of great mirth,
when from our sin he set us free,
heav - en and earth with joy may sing,
"Glo - ry to God in high - est heaven;

(D)

(G)

(A)

(G)

(D)

F

B \flat

C

B \flat

F



news of our mer - ci - ful King's birth.
all for to gain our lib - er - ty?
all for to see the new - born King.
peace on earth and good - will. A - men!"

Silent Night, Holy Night!

122

1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
 4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
 glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
 ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing
 with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
 ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
 grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
 King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re - ceive
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their songs
 3 No more let sins and sor - rows grow, nor thorns in - fest
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na -

her king; let ev - ery heart pre - pare him room,
 em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings flow
 tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous - ness

and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
 re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
 far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
 and heaven and na - ture sing,

and

sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound-ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heaven and na-ture sing,



Silent Night, Holy Night

***Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.***

***Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia.
Christ, the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born."***

***Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.***

***Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing Alleluia to our King.
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born.***

Joy to the World

***Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.***

***Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.***

***No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.***

***He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.***

CHURCH STAFF

***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 Sexton
Joseph Harvard, Pastor Emeritus***



***Amy Bowers Heit, Parish Associate
Esther Hethcox, Pastoral Associate
Mitzi Leshner-Thomas, Associate Pastor
Sybil King, Administrative Assistant
Valerie McMillian, Parish Administrator
Kathy Parkins, Minister of Music
John Weicher, Associate Pastor***

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

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