



Christmas Eve

First Presbyterian Church
Durham, North Carolina

December 24, 2025

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

5:00 PM

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2025

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

Gesu Bambino

Pietro Yon

Tatum Eppinger, violin; Ben Maxwell, cello

LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

The Shupert Family

Leader: Tonight, we gather to remember with the prophet Isaiah:
For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders, and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Great will be his authority, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

People: **We gather to once again bask in the glory that visited a stable and a manger, shepherds watching their flocks, and a young couple cradling the newborn Messiah.**

Leader: We light the Christ candle as a sign of the glory that came among us in unexpected places and to unexpected people, that we may be people who seek and follow the glory of the Christ child here and now.

The Christ candle is lit.

***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;*

**Those who are able, please stand.*

*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

John Weicher

Reader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Reader: 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.**

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

John Weicher

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:1-20

Mindy Douglas

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

MEDITATION

Mindy Douglas

***HYMN NO. 121**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

St. Louis

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.*

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

*O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us; abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Lenore Champion

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Invitation to Give

John Weicher

The *Christmas Eve offering* will be given to Welcome Baby and Families Moving Forward.

Offertory Anthem *O Magnum Mysterium (sung in Latin)*

Ivo Antognini

*O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the newborn Lord,
lying in a manger!*

*Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy to bear
the Lord, Jesus Christ. Alleluia!*

*Doxology

Greensleeves

*So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;
come, one and all, to own him.*

*The King of kings salvation brings;
let loving hearts enthrone him.*

Raise, raise the song on high.

The virgin sings her lullaby.

*Joy, joy, for Christ is born,
the babe, the son of Mary!*

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Mindy Douglas

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Esther Hethcox

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 of 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.

*COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

Mindy Douglas, Esther Hethcox

*(The bread and the elements are gluten free and were prepared in a gluten-free area. We use grape juice in the cup. Servers will sanitize their hands prior to distributing the elements. As you are able, come forward to receive communion. **The server will give you a piece of bread, which you dip in the cup. Parents, please assist children as they take bread and lightly dip it into the cup.** 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

Judah's Land

Appalachian Carol

To thee with joy I sing, sweet child that heaven did bring,

Now Judah's land shall ring with thy praises.

(Refrain) Gentle stranger, in that manger, in Judah's land we find thee, infant Savior.

I greet thee, Prince of Peace: from sin give thy release!

Nor shall my tongue e'er cease from thy praises. (Refrain)

Thy crib can scarce contain thy love, our precious gain;

may hymns new heights attain with thy praises. (Refrain)

Now twilight quietly comes: the baby lies asleep;

play softly flute and drums, to his praises.

Gentle stranger, in that manger, in Judah's land we find thee, blessed Savior.

Communion Music

What Child Is This

Greensleeves

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Esther Hethcox

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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 their unlit candle.)*

HYMN NO. 122

Silent Night, Holy Night

Stille Nacht

(Remain seated during this hymn. Keep your candle lit through the singing of the final hymn. See back page for lyrics.)

*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.

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



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Let us know you have joined us for worship by scanning the QR code
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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.

This season's beautiful ***Advent wreath*** is given to the glory of God by ***Alice Raney***. 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***. 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, Tyler Momsen-Hudson*** and ***Vernon Cooper*** for decorating the sanctuary for the season.

Our instrumentalists tonight were made possible by gifts to the Restricted Music Fund of First Presbyterian Church.

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.

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 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 *Worship Offering* (written by Gord Waldie) and the *Book of Common Worship* (2018). Music is reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926. The ***bulletin cover***, "Journey to Bethlehem" is by Rita Ford, Nashville, TN, 2007. Used with permission. Source: <https://www.ebsqart.com/Artist/Rita-C-Ford/1798/Art-Portfolio/Journey-to-Bethlehem/467730/>.



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

*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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