

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

First Sunday after Christmas

December 28, 2025

**A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD**

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

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS**

John Weicher

**PRELUDE**

Ben Maxwell, cello

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

John Weicher

Leader: We gather to worship the Word made flesh,  
who fled from the wrath of human powers into Egypt.

**People: The God we worship was a refugee.**

Leader: We remember the children, from the time of Christ to today,  
caught in the cross-fires of fear and greed.

**People: The God we worship was a refugee.**

Leader: We gather to dream and build a better world  
where all children grow up and know the gift of home.

**All: The God we worship was a refugee. Let us worship God.**

**\*HYMN NO. 141**

*On This Day Earth Shall Ring*

*Personent Hodie*

**\*CONFESSION OF SIN**

John Weicher

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

**Merciful God, in great love you have claimed us as your children.**

**We confess that we have not loved you as we should.**

**We have not participated fully in your purposes and plans;  
we grow weary and give up when the way is hard.**

**We have not loved our siblings as you intend.**

**Complacent in the presence of injustice and violence,  
we fail to recognize our own complicity.**

**Forgive us, especially when we fail to protect children  
so vulnerable and precious in your sight.**

**Forgive our misuse of power against people, and against your creation.**

**Help us to praise you by living in harmony and peace.**

**Do not be ashamed of us, we pray,  
but strengthen us in our time of testing.**

**Set us free from fear  
that we may wholly trust in you.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus Christ,  
who shared our flesh and blood.**

*\*Those who are able, please stand.*

Silent Confession  
Assurance of Pardon

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

### \*REGATHERING HYMN NO. 447

*We Are Forgiven*

*We Are Forgiven*

Three staves of music in G major, 3/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. Chords are indicated above the notes: G, Am, D7, Gsus, G, C, G, Am7, Dsus, D, G, Am, D7, Gsus, G, C, G, Am7, D, G.

We are for - giv - en. We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to  
God. Thanks be to God. We are for - giv - en.  
We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Michael Honeycutt

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

All: **Holy One, your Word comes to us: Jesus Christ, Immanuel.**

**Holy Word, you cross every border meant to shut you out.**

**Holy Wisdom, speak to us in the word read and proclaimed.**

**Hearing, may we dream your dreams and faithfully follow wherever you lead.**

**In your triune name we pray. Amen.**

### HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Jeremiah 31:15-17

(Pew Bible, OT Page 734)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Michael Honeycutt

People: **Thanks be to God!**

### EPISTLE READING

I John 4:1-3, 7-8

(Pew Bible, NT Page 240)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Wilson Gunn

People: **Thanks be to God!**

### GOSPEL READING

Matthew 2:13-23

(Pew Bible, NT Page 2)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Wilson Gunn

People: **Thanks be to God!**

### SERMON

*"Tyranny, Inc."*

Wilson Gunn

*(silent reflection)*

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *A Declaration of Faith*

John Weicher

**God sent the promised Deliverer to God's people.**

**Jesus, the long expected Savior,**

**came into the world as a child, descended from David,**

**conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin.**

**He lived as a Jew among Jews.**

**He announced to God's people**

**the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth.**

**We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child,**

**yet born of God's power as was no other child.**

**In the person and work of Jesus,**

**God's very being and a human life are united but not confused,**

**distinguished but not separated.**

**The coming of Jesus was itself the coming of God's promised rule.**

**Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection,**

**he brings about the relationship between God and humanity that God always intended.**

**\*HYMN NO. 153** (*see pg. 7*)

*In Bethlehem a Newborn Boy*

*(sung to Deo Gracias)*

## TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

John Weicher

## DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Invitation to Give

John Weicher

Offertory Music

*Sarabande (Cello Suite in d minor)*

J.S. Bach

***The Hunger for Change*** offering will be received.

\*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!***

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

John Weicher

**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.**



Sign In

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.



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.

We welcome to the pulpit **Dr. G. Wilson Gunn, Jr.** Dr. Gunn grew up in Arkansas, matriculated at Davidson College (BA), Duke University (MDiv and ThM) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (PhD). He served pastorates in North Carolina and Virginia for 20 years before entering executive service in Grace Presbytery (NE Texas area). From March 2004 until retiring in October 2018, he served National Capital Presbytery as General Presbyter. Presently Dr. Gunn is an International Coaching Federation Certified coach, consults with Church Judicatories and he serves as the Coordinator of the Presbytery Leader Formation Program. He and his wife Pam have four children (Lisa, Daniel, Ben, and Jasper), three grandsons (Jacob, Josh, and JJ) and a granddaughter, Penelope.

The ***poinsettias*** are a gift in memory of ***Arthur and Mary Clark***, and with love for all who have passed and continue to pass through this congregation, and with love for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who made, and still make, it all possible.

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

***Our special cello music*** this morning is made possible through gifts to the restricted music fund. ***Ben Maxwell*** is a child of this church and is the principal cellist of the Ann Arbor Symphony.

***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 *A Call to Worship* and *Feasting on the Word*. 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/>



The next **Racial Equity Task Force** meeting is Sunday, January 4, 2026 following worship in Wilson Parlor. Anyone interested in how FPC can foster racial equity is welcome to join us.

Join the **Men of Faith** breakfast for calories, conversation and caffeine on January 2 at 8:00am located at Mad Hatter's.

**“Things That Matter” book group** meets on Tuesday, January 13 at 4:00pm. Dale Gaddis will be our host. Hendrika will lead us through “Grace Disguised” by Sittser. We look forward to seeing you there! For more information contact *Kathy Parkins* at [k.parkins@firstpres-durham.org](mailto:k.parkins@firstpres-durham.org).

**Rev. Julio Ramirez-Eve** was blessed with a Clergy Renewal grant which enabled him and his wife to spend six weeks travelling in Australia this summer. Julio was inspired by Australian Aboriginal art and rekindled his interest in drawing and painting. He will be sharing for a second time his recent artwork, along with photos from their travels. If you missed his first exhibit last month, please join us, Sunday, January 25 at 1 pm in the multi-purpose room on the first floor of our education wing, 2504 N. Roxboro St.

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**Year End Giving:** Please remember that the church must receive your charitable contributions by 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 31, 2025 if dropped off at the church; or the gift must be postmarked by December 31, 2025, if mailed, to be deductible on your 2025 taxes.

If you wish to make a donation through a gift of stock, please notify Tom Bloom at [t.bloom@firstpres-durham.org](mailto:t.bloom@firstpres-durham.org) as soon as possible.

Members aged 70 ½ + who own an IRA may be able to make a tax-excludable gift directly to First Presbyterian and have that gift satisfy any required minimum distribution for this year. Please contact your IRA administrator ASAP if you wish to consider this giving option for tax year 2025.

## *~Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~*

### **We remember in prayer:**

*Tony Brown*

*Susan Cyr*

*Jeanne Hervey*

*Harriett Mitchell*

*Phyllis Verhey*

*Jean Cary*

*Barbara Gerwe*

*Kerry Holbrook*

*Karen Romines*

*David Verner*

*Paul Cornsweet*

*Peggy Hammond*

*Lee House*

*Franzi Rokoske*

*Sam Crabtree*

*Joe Harvard*

*Ann Huff*

*Alfred Tisdale*

### **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**

*Julia Allen*, grandmother of Amy Wilson

*Steve Blackwood*, father of Jeff Blackwood

*Evan Breyer*, grandson of friends of Jo Ann Moore

*Francisca Cristobal*, relative of Al and Judy Arrowood

*Kim Cummings*, father of Drew Cummings

*Denise Duffy*, sister of Andy Henry

*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

*Marie Maly*, sister of Barbara Fish

*Sandra Mikush*, mother of Katie Fogleman

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

*Kelly Nelson*, daughter of Conrad and Linda Carter

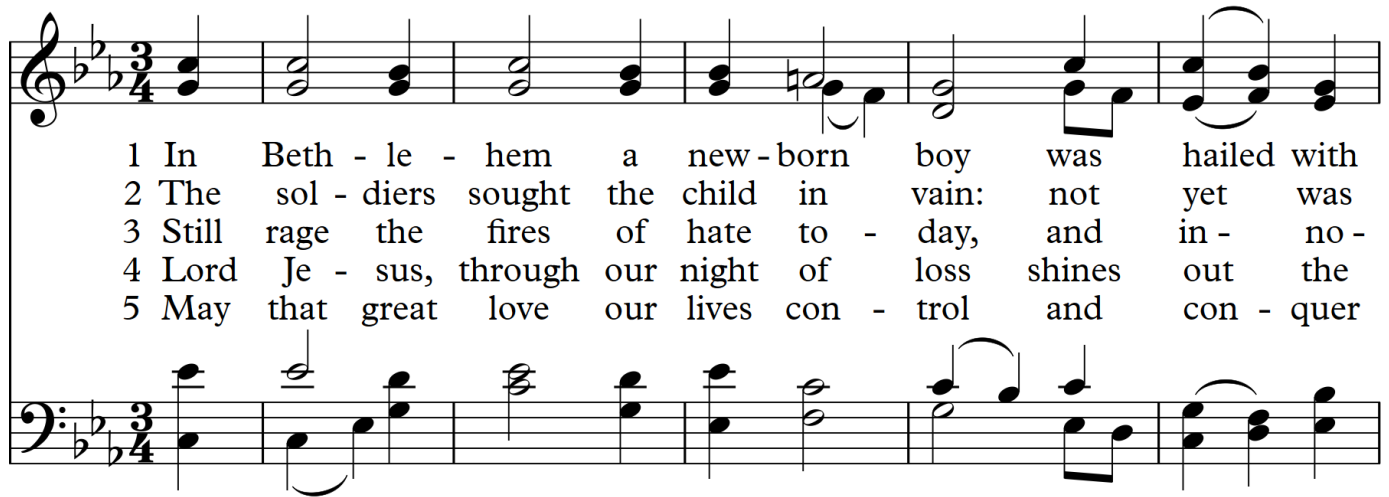
*Bill Prochaska*, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood

*Wu-Chou Su*, father of Claire Su

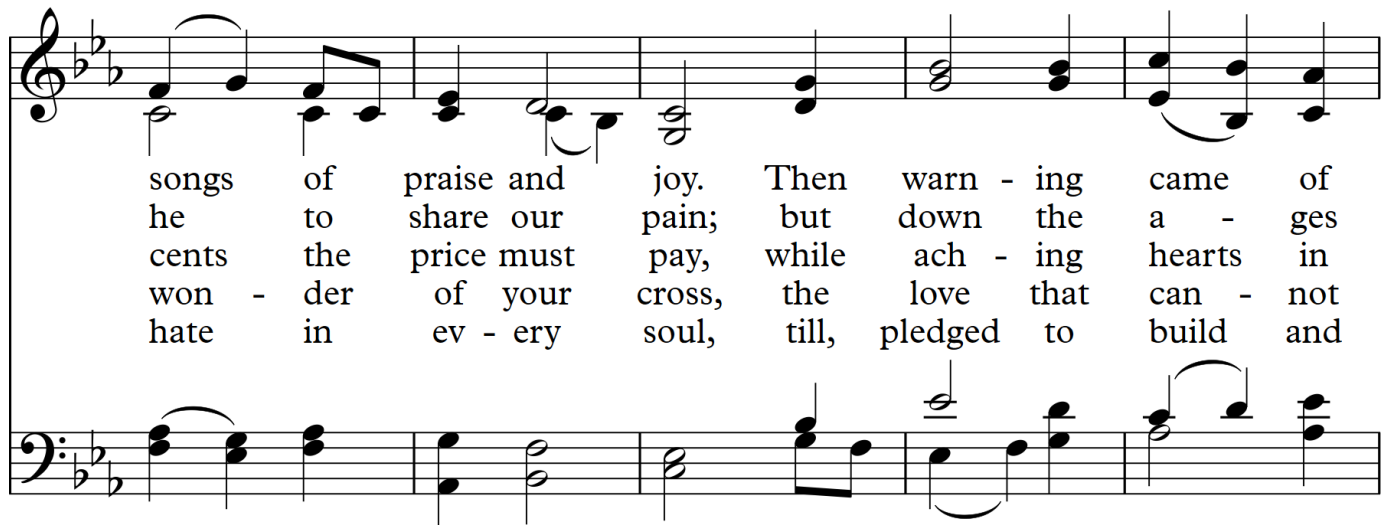
*Jim Vacca*, father of Jamie Chambliss

# In Bethlehem a Newborn Boy

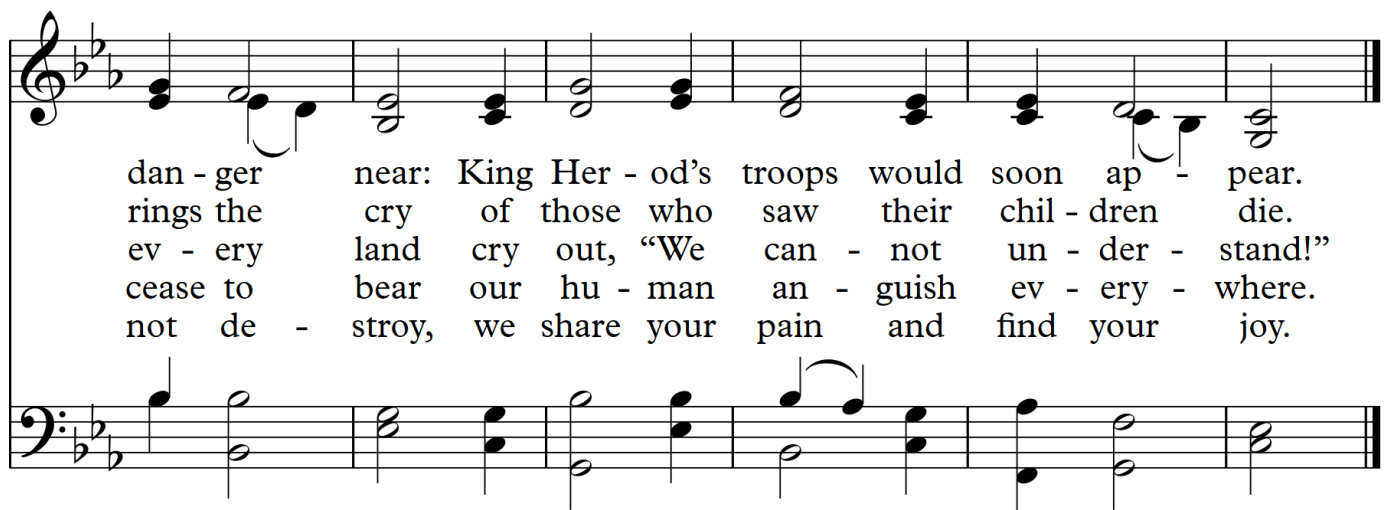
DEO GRACIAS



1 In Beth - le - hem a new - born boy was hailed with  
2 The sol - diers sought the child in vain: not yet was  
3 Still rage the fires of hate to - day, and in - no -  
4 Lord Je - sus, through our night of loss shines out the  
5 May that great love our lives con - trol and con - quer



songs of praise and joy. Then warn - ing came of  
he to share our pain; but down the a - ges  
cents the price must pay, while ach - ing hearts in  
won - der of your cross, the love that can - not  
hate in ev - ery soul, till, pledged to build and

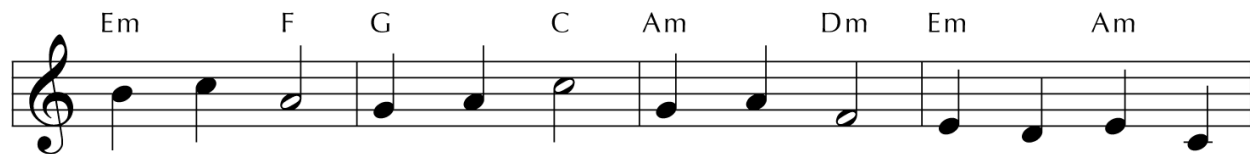


dan - ger near: King Her - od's troops would soon ap - pear.  
rings the cry of those who saw their chil - dren die.  
ev - every land cry out, "We can - not un - der - stand!"  
cease to bear our hu - man an - guish ev - every - where.  
not de - stroy, we share your pain and find your joy.

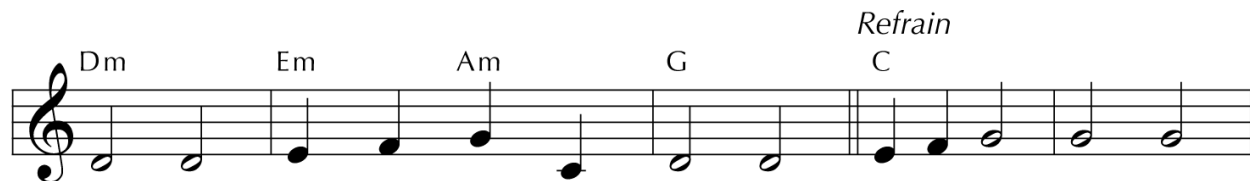
# 141 On This Day Earth Shall Ring



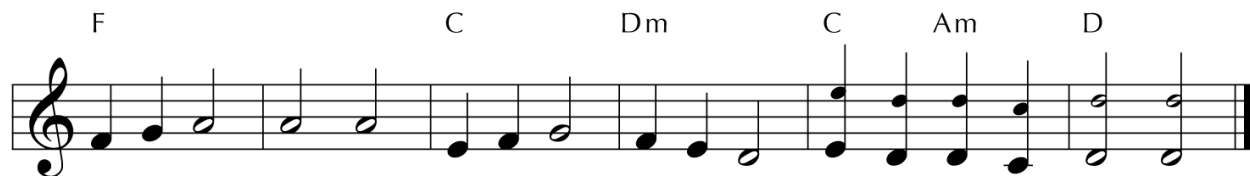
1 On this day earth shall ring with the song  
 2 His the doom, ours the mirth; when he came  
 3 God's bright star, o'er his head, wise men three  
 4 On this day an - gels sing; with their song



chil - dren sing to the Lord, Christ our King, born on earth to  
 down to earth Beth - le - hem saw his birth; ox and ass be -  
 to him led; kneel they low by his bed, lay their gifts be -  
 earth shall ring, prais - ing Christ, heav - en's King, born on earth to



save us; him the Fa - ther gave us.  
 side him from the cold would hide him.  
 fore him, praise him and a - dore him. \*Id - e - o - o - o,  
 save us; peace and love he gave us.



id - e - o - o - o, id - e - o glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

\*Therefore, glory to God in the highest.

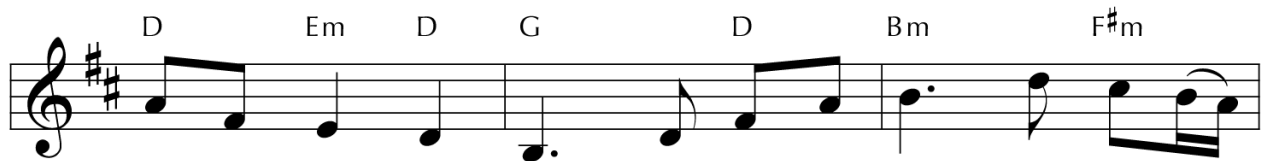


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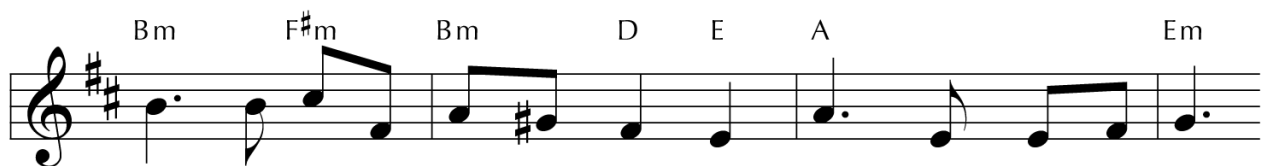
## O Day of Peace



1 O day of peace that dim - ly shines through all our  
 2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the



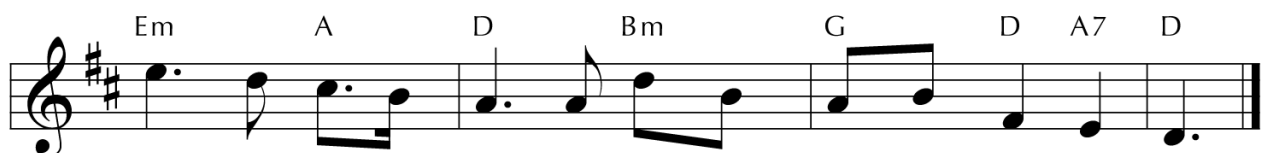
hopes and prayers and dreams, guide us to jus - tice, truth, and  
 fierce de - vour the small; as beasts and cat - tle calm - ly



love, de - liv - ered from our self - ish schemes. May swords of hate  
 graze, a lit - tle child shall lead them all. Then en - e - mies




fall from our hands, our hearts from en - vy find re - lease, till by God's  
 shall learn to love, all crea - tures find their true ac - cord; the hope of



grace our war - ring world shall see Christ's prom - ised reign of peace.  
 peace shall be ful - filled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.

## This Week at a Glance!

<b>Later Today</b> No Children's Choir	<b>Monday, December 29</b> <b>4:30 PM</b> Yoga (Watts-Hill Hall)	<b>Tuesday, December 30</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 31</b> No Chancel Choir	<b>Friday, January 2</b> <b>8:00 AM</b> Men of Faith Breakfast (Mad Hatter's Cafe) <b>10:30 AM</b> Yoga (Room 201)	
<b>Thursday, January 1</b> <i>New Year's Day</i>	<b>Saturday, January 3</b>	
	<b>Sunday, January 4</b> <i>Second Sunday of Christmas: Epiphany Celebrated</i> <b>11:00 AM</b> Worship with Holy Communion: John Weicher, preaching <b>Following Worship</b> Racial Equity Task Force (Wilson Parlor) <b>5:00 PM</b> Something New (offsite)	

### 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](mailto:office@firstpres-durham.org) or visit our website: <https://firstpres-durham.org>.

**305 EAST MAIN STREET    DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27701    919.682.5511    ORGANIZED 1871**