First Presbyterian Church

Love in the Heart of Durham

First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2026

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.

*The beautiful Advent Wreath we will be using as we journey together toward Christmas is given by **Alice Raney** in celebration of the season.*

Reach out to FPC with questions, concerns, or prayer requests by scanning this QR code.

Welcome and Announcements, Joys and Concerns — John Weicher

Moment for Stewardship — Kathy Colville

Prelude — Jacob Roege, Violin

Chorale Prelude on "Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen" — *comp. Johannes Brahms*

*Call to Worship — Kate Phillips & Levi Flair

Leader: The prophet Isaiah declares,
"From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him."
Today, we continue to wait and call out in hope
for God's restoration to meet us here,
believing that God knows our struggles
and works even now for the fulfillment of our salvation.

People: When God feels far away, and our lament feels too heavy to bear, we remember God's steadfast love. May this love empower us to wait and watch in hope for the day when God's kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

Leader: We light this candle of hope as a sign of God's promises,
that we might persevere in hope,
a hope grounded not in wishes and whims
but in the trustworthy and persistent love of God
already at work among us to save and restore all creation.

The first candle of Advent is lit.

*Hymn No. 82

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus — HYFRYDOL

**Those who are able, please stand.*

*Confession of Sin

Mindy Douglas

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

God-with-us,
even in Advent,
we confess that you can seem far away.
You are hidden when we need you near.
In our hurt, doubt, and fear,
we do not try to draw closer to you;
instead, we lash out—
against you, our neighbor, even those we love.
Forgive us, we pray, and come to save us!
Let your face shine until our tears are dried,
our sins are faded, and our hope is restored.
After all, we belong to you,
and in your hands, we can be made new.
In Jesus' name we pray.

Silent Confession

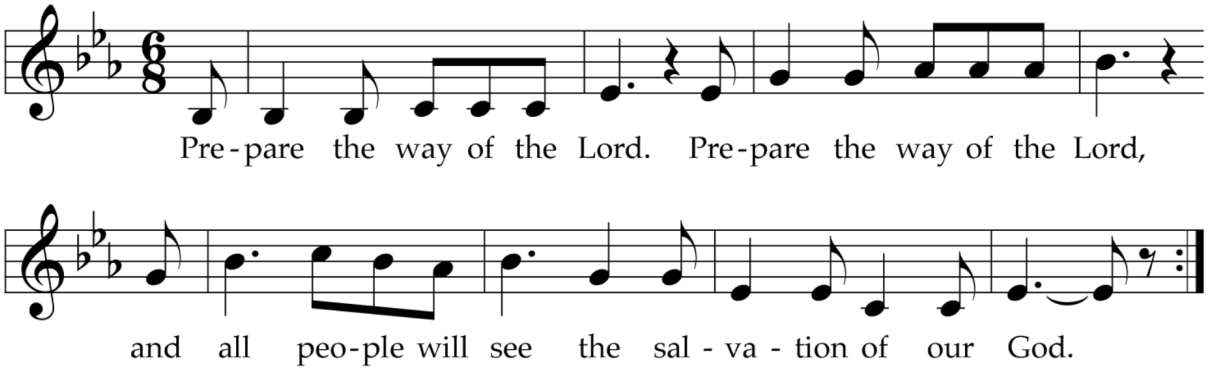
Assurance of Forgiveness

*Passing of the Peace

*Regathering Hymn No. 95

Prepare the Way of the Lord — HE IS KING

(Sung Twice)



Prayer for Illumination

Gracious God,
heaven and earth will pass away,
but your words will not pass away:
Your Word stands forever.

May our generation be attentive
so that, by the power of your Holy Spirit,
we remember your ways
and gladly do right,
meeting you wherever and whenever you appear.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Mark 13:24-37 (Pew Bible, NT Page 50)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God!

Hebrew Scripture Reading

Isaiah 64:1-9 (Pew Bible, OT Page 694)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.
People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon — Hoping in Darkness — Esther Hethcox

(silent reflection)

*Affirmation of Faith *(from A Declaration of Faith)* — Mindy Douglas

God keeps God's promises and gives us hope.
In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
God kept God's promises.
All that we can ever hope for
was present in Christ.
But the work of God in Christ is not over.
God calls us to hope for more than we have yet seen.
The hope God gives us is ultimate confidence
that supports us when lesser hopes fail us.
In Christ God gives hope for a new heaven and earth,
certainty of victory over death,
assurance of mercy and judgment beyond death.
This hope gives us courage for the present struggle.

*Hymn No. 97

Watchman, Tell Us of the Night — ABERYSTWYTH

Time with the Children — John Weicher

Dedication of Offerings

Invitation to Give

John Weicher

Offertory Anthem

No Wind at the Window — John Bell

No wind at the window, no knock on the door;
no light from the lampstand, no foot on the floor;
no dream born of tiredness, no ghost raised by fear:
just an angel and a woman and a voice in her ear.
"O Mary, O Mary, don't hide from my face.
Be glad that you're favored and filled with God's grace.
The time for redeeming the world has begun,
and you are requested to mother God's Son."
"This child must be born that the kingdom might come:
salvation for many, destruction for some;
both end and beginning, both message and sign;
both victor and victim, both yours and divine."
No payment was promised, no promises made;
no wedding was dated, no blueprint displayed.
Yet Mary, consenting to what none could guess,
replied with conviction, "Tell God I say, Yes."

GIVE ONLINE

Hunger for Change

The Hunger for Change offering will be received following the anthem.

*Response

Doxology — OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer *(in unison)*

Mindy Douglas

Leader: **Satisfy us with your love in the morning,**
People: and we will live this day in joy and praise.
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.
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
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. 350

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning — KEEP YOUR LAMPS

*Charge and Benediction

Esther Hethcox

*Postlude

Noël Suisse *(Grand jeu et Duo)* — Louis-Claude Daquin

Worship Notes

Hunger for Change: Hunger for Change supports local and international hunger relief through the Presbyterian Hunger Relief Program. Your gift helps neighbors here in Durham and around the world.

Sources for today's worship text: *Feasting on the Word* and *A Declaration of Faith*. Music is reprinted under OneLicense.net: A.713926.

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.

Church Staff

Janet Askew | Business Associate
Lenore Champion | Director of Children's Ministry
Mindy Douglas | Pastor/Head of Staff
Susan Dunlap | Parish Associate
Omar Guess, Sr. | Sunday Morning Sexton
Esther Hethcox | Associate Pastor
Brandi Kirkland | Communications Associate
Matthew Moore | Minister of Music
Donald Turner | Facilities Associate
John Weicher | Associate Pastor
Betsy Williams | Church Administrator

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

Upcoming Events

*Many of our events are posted in the weekly reminders. You may read past newsletters and join our mailing list at **https://tinyurl.com/fpc-durham-subscribe***

Seeking Nominations for Church Officers

The Nominating Committee is beginning to do its work of developing the slate of candidates for the Ruling Elders and Deacons (Class of 2030) and the 2027-2028 Nominating Committee. We would love to hear your suggestions. Ruling Elders and Deacons serve three-year terms and the Nominating Committee serves for one year. Ruling Elders, Deacons, and Nominating Committee members may serve a consecutive term. You can submit your nominations online using the QR code or you can pick up a paper nomination form in the lobby.

Advent Devotionals
Church Lobby & Social Media
In Advent, we journey together, slowly but surely, to the manger to meet the Christ child. This year, we have two faithful companions along the way, in the form of Advent devotionals. Pick up a color-along paper devotional in the church lobby and check out our social media as youth and youth volunteers share about their own family traditions all Advent long!

Advent Festival | Sunday, November 29 | 9:45 a.m.
2nd Floor, Education Building
This year the Advent Festival will take place Sunday, November 29 from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. upstairs in the children's Faith Formation classrooms. This is a multigenerational event - craft levels range from toddler to adult - including shrinky dinks, button making, tree ornaments, beading, and creating Christmas cards for the homebound. Advent candle supplies will be available. There will be refreshments for kids and adults, and we hope to see you!

Daytimers Christmas Luncheon | Tuesday, December 8 | 11:30 a.m.
Westminster Presbyterian Church - 3639 Old Chapel Hill Rd, Durham, NC 27707
Daytimers Christmas Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, December 8 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 3639 Old Chapel Hill Road at 11:30 a.m. Catered by Family Meal, Cost $20/person.

Somethings Artvent | Tuesday, December 8 & December 15 | 7:00 p.m.
Join Pastor Esther and Ashley Swavely to talk about Barbara Brown Taylor's *Learning to Walk in the Dark* and create a quilted landscape of our Advent journeys.

Durham Holiday Parade Watch Party | Saturday, December 12 | 10:00 a.m.
Cheer on hometown bands, drill teams, schools, and community groups as they make their way down Main Street for the Durham Holiday Parade. Come watch the parade from the sanctuary steps as we hand out hot chocolate!

First Friends Advent Gathering | Saturday, December 12 | 6:30 p.m.
Join First Friends for our annual Advent potluck with delicious food and engaging conversations. Our hosts are providing a main dish, but please bring a drink, side dish, or dessert to share!

Lessons and Carols | Sunday, December 13 | 11:00 a.m.
Based on the historic service from King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England, join us as we tell the Christmas story through scripture readings, choral anthems, and congregational singing.

Advent Supper & Carol Sing | Sunday, December 13 | 6:00 p.m.
St. Philip's Episcopal Church - 403 E Main St, Durham, NC 27701
The Christmas story, delightful food, and your favorite Christmas carols...what could be better? Everyone is invited to our annual Advent Supper & Carol Sing-along! Friends are welcome, so bring someone and bring a dish to share.

Christmas Pageant | Sunday, December 20 | 11:00 a.m.
Anyone who would like to participate in our Christmas Pageant is welcome! Please join us for practices during the Faith Formation hour on December 6, 13, and 20. All ages are welcome to participate as we celebrate the birth of Christ!

Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation

We Remember in Prayer:

Judy Arrowood
Tony Brown
Paul Cornsweet
Sam Crabtree
Susan Cyr
Susan Dunlap
Linda Foster Momsen
Sue Fricks
Cesar Guajardo
Joe Harvard
Kerry Holbrook
Lee House
Ann Huff
Jenni James
Jancy Johnstone
Bob Lewis
Harriett Mitchell
Beth Neece
Sydnor Patrick
Franzi Rokoske
Audrey Vallance
Sarah Wright

Care Communities:

Croasdaile Pavilion: ***Dub Gulley, Alfred Tisdale***
Hillcrest Convalescent: ***Carol Wills***
Brookdale Senior Living: ***Debbie Mathews***
Chatham Ridge Assisted Living: ***John Fricks***
Durham Ridge: ***Phillip Herndon***
Pruitt Health - Durham: ***Fred Callaway***
Southpoint Atria: ***Madge McKeithen***
Arbor Terrace, Asheville: ***Mal King***

Family and Friends of the Congregation

Ashley Alvord, colleague of Sharon Hirsch
John Carter, brother of Conrad Carter
Francisca Cristobal, relative of Al and Judy Arrowood
Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings
Debbie and Lynn Cupp, sister and brother-in-law of Dawn Shelton
Sara Degand, cousin of Deborah Momsen-Hudson
Minnie Sue Douglas, mother of Mindy Douglas
Linda Foster-Momsen, mother of Deborah Momsen-Hudson
Cheryl Fowler, friend of Cheri Reece
Jennifer Hervey, daughter-in-law of Jeanne Hervey
Larry Hethcox, father of Esther Hethcox
Susan Hoffman, niece of Mickey Velkey
Carl Holladay, friend of Jane & Robert Brawley
Katie Jackson, wife of Matthew Hirsch
Donna Johnson, mother of Ann Huff
Anthony Ketcham, brother-in-law of Wil James
Elizabeth Manceras, mother of Julio Manceras
Peter McClain, father of Erin McClain
Sandra Mikush, mother of Katie Fogleman
Ana Sofia Ochoa, family member of Becky Martin
Patrick O'Neill, father of Brianna Bennett
Janet Ouzts, sister of Celia Dickerson
Paul Pasquarella, husband of Michael Honeycutt
Rebecca Todd ("Toddie") Peters, mother of Sophie Peters
Bill Prochaska, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood
Joe Quirk, stepfather of Tim O'Brien
Annie Reaves, great-niece of Floalice and Robert Reaves
Jean Shaffer, friend of Cheri Reece
Lydia Still and Emory Grace, daughter and granddaughter of Kelli Hunnicutt
Vivian Turner, mother of Donald Turner
Doris Upchurch, cousin of Michael Honeycutt
Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss
Charlotte West, friend of Michael Honeycutt and Paul Pasquarella
Eric Wright, friend of FPC Durham

FPC Weekly Calendar

Sunday, November 29 — First Sunday of Advent | Hunger for Change Offering

9:45 AM Adult Faith Formation & Advent Festival
11:00 AM Worship: Esther Hethcox, preaching
2:00 PM *We The People* Fellowship Outing (Offsite)

Monday, November 30

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Walk-In Ministry (By Phone)
4:30 PM Yoga (Trinity United Methodist Church)
7:00 PM Session Meeting (Room 209)

Tuesday, December 1

6:00 PM Finance Committee (Room 205)
7:00 PM Somethings Book Group (Associate Pastor's Study)

Wednesday, December 2

6:00 PM FPC Racial Equity Task Force (Zoom)
7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, December 3

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Walk-In Ministry (By Phone)

Friday, December 4

8:00 AM Men of Faith Breakfast (Mad Hatter's Cafe + Bake Shop)
10:30 AM Yoga (Room 201)

Sunday, December 6 — Second Sunday of Advent | Communion

9:45 AM Adult, Youth, and Children's Faith Formation
11:00 AM Worship: Mindy Douglas, preaching
5:00 – 7:00 PM Youth Group (Lobby)