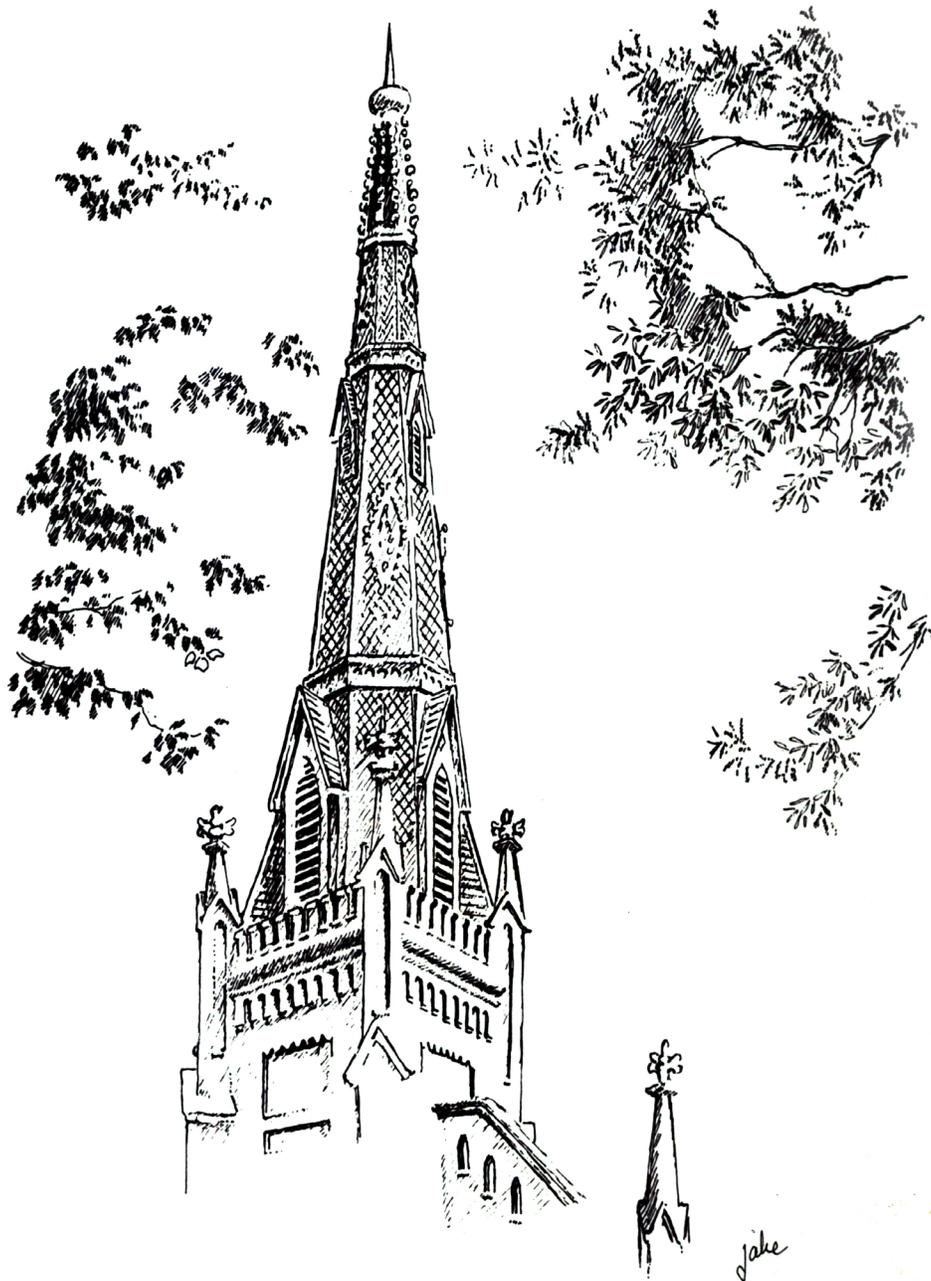


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | MARCH 22, 2026
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT



We invite you, whoever you are and whoever God is helping you to become, to join First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte in our journey of faith. God is love, and that love is for you. You belong as a child of God, and we welcome you. Come experience how that belonging might change you and our world as we seek to be for Christ in the heart of Charlotte.



First Presbyterian
Church of Charlotte

Time of Quiet Meditation and Reflection | Silence begins in the Chapel at 8:50 a.m.

Words of Welcome | Chuck Williamson

Opening Prayer

As we journey with Jesus toward Holy Week, let us remember all those in our world today who carry heavy crosses of poverty, homelessness, and hunger. Let us pray.

Loving God, it is so hard to love the world sometimes, and to love it the way Jesus did seems impossible. Help us to be inspired by his love and guided by his example. Remind us that we cannot do it alone. We need you, dear God, to give us support and guidance on this journey. Show us how to unlock our hearts so that we may be less selfish. Let us experience with joy the transforming power of your love.

Meditative Music | “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” | Jamie Thietten

Sacred Head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighed down;
 Now scornfully surrounded with thorns, Thine only crown.
 How pale Thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn.
 How does that visage languish, which once was bright as morn.
 What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered, T'was all for sinners' gain.
 Mine, mine was the transgression, but Thine the deadly pain.
 Lo, here I fall, my Savior, 'tis I deserve Thy place.
 Look on me with Thy favor; vouchsafe to me Thy grace.
 What language shall I borrow, to thank Thee, dearest friend?
 For this Thy dying sorrow; Thy pity without end.
 O make me Thine forever and should I fainting be.
 Lord let me never, never outlive my love to Thee.

Prayer for Illumination | Addison Ayer

First Reading | Mark 15:33-39

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.” And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God's Son!”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Meditation | “My God, My God” | Chuck Williamson

Meditative Music | “Now Thank We All Our God” | Nathan Drake

Now thank we all our God,
 With heart and hands and voices,
 Who wondrous things has done,
 In whom his world rejoices.
 Who from our mothers' arms,
 Has blessed us on our way,
 With countless gifts of love,
 And still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God,
 Through all our life be near us,
 With ever joyful hearts,
 And blessed peace to cheer us.

To keep us in his grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ill,
Of this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God,
The Father be given,
The Son and Spirit blest,
Who reign in highest heaven.
The one eternal God,
Whom heaven and earth adore,
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

Offering

The Christian life is marked by the offering of one's self to God to be shaped, empowered, directed, and changed by God. In worship, God presents us with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ. We are claimed by Christ and set free. In response to God's love in Jesus Christ we offer God our lives, our gifts, our abilities, and our material goods for God's service. The offering plates are located at the back of the chapel if you are interested in giving regularly as a spiritual practice.

Invitation to the Table

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

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.

Sacrament of Communion

All are welcome to participate in communion. To receive the gluten-free bread and the cup, come forward, take a piece of bread, and then dip the bread into the cup. It is still communion if you prefer to take only the bread. Please do not drink out of the cup directly. If for any reason you prefer not to come forward, please raise your hand and the officers will be glad to serve you in your pew.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy sacrament in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Charge and Blessing

We have been fed by the presence of God in the silence, by the Word, and through communion. Please feel free to greet one another in a warm and quiet way that allows an easing out of the silence. The minister is available for prayer or conversation after the service. Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m. If you would like to visit longer with other members, you are invited to gather in the Welcome Center.

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my
groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night but find no rest.

Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and not human,
scorned by others and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me;
they sneer at me; they shake their heads;
“Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.

On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;

it is melted within my breast;
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they bound my hands and feet.

I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O LORD, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion!

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;

in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
You who fear the LORD, praise him!

All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

For he did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me
but heard when I cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.

May your hearts live forever!
All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and I shall live for him.

Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying that he has done it.

This service is now available via livestream. You can access the recording of the service or an audio or written version of the sermon at: <https://firstpres-charlotte.org/sermons/>



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