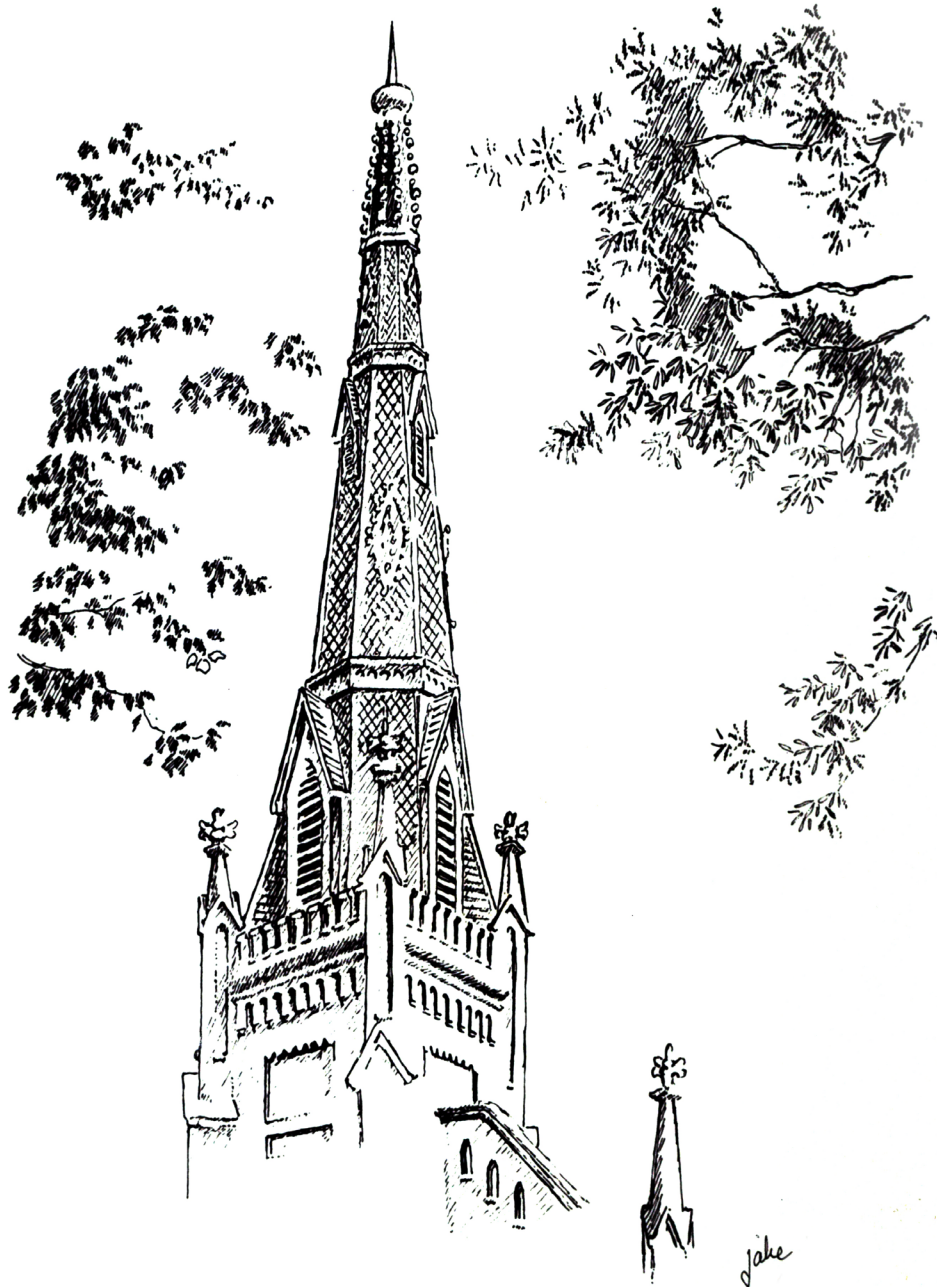


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | FEBRUARY 23, 2025
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY



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

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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

During our series “Seeking the Sacred Unseen,” you may like to begin your worship with this breath prayer as you breathe in and out in the silence. Written by Christine Valters Paintner.

Breathe in: *What you seek*
 Breathe out: *also seeks you.*
 Breathe in: *Rest*
 Breathe out: *and let it find you.*

Words of Welcome | Reverend Mary Bowman

Opening Prayer | Adapted from Christine Sine

O Gracious God, we lift your name above every other name, and as we move into worship with you, we ask for your help so we may be fully awake and open to your loving presence. May you help us to let go of all that distracts us, discourages us, weighs us down, and holds us captive. May you help us attune our ears and hearts to your words so they may echo in the depths of our being. May we allow you to transform all that we are and all that we do so we can live life freely and to the fullest in your resurrection and created world. As we take time to silently name what we are carrying, help us to release them or give them to you so we can be open to what you have for us in this space.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

**Meet us, O Christ, in the stillness of morning worship.
 Move us, O Spirit, to awaken our hearts.
 Mend and forgive us, O Father, from past harms.
 Amen.**

Meditative Music | “Let Me Find Thee” | Indelible Grace Music

Behold me here, in grief draw near, pleading at Thy throne O King.
 To Thee each tear, each trembling fear, Jesus Son of Man, I bring.
 Let me find Thee, let me find Thee.
 Let me find Thee, Lord of mercy, King of grace.
 Look down in love, and from above, with Thy Spirit satisfy.
 Thou hast sought me, Thou hast bought me, and Thy purchase, Lord, am I.
 Let me find Thee, let me find Thee.
 Let me find Thee, here on earth and then on high.
 Hear the broken, scarcely spoken, longings of my heart to Thee.
 All the crying, all the sighing, of Thy child accepted be.
 Let me find Thee, let me find Thee.
 Let me find Thee, wounded healer, suffering Lord.

Prayer for Illumination | Ann Temple

First Scripture Reading | Matthew 6:6-13 | The Message

Here’s what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won’t be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They’re full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don’t fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what’s best— as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You’re in charge! You can do anything you want! You’re ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Second Scripture Reading | Matthew 6:6-13 | The Message | Ruth Ellen Gill

Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.

The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They're full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don't fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what's best— as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You're in charge! You can do anything you want! You're ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Seeking the Sacred Unseen - Through Prayer" | Reverend Mary Bowman

Moment of Reflection**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

Meditative Music | "A Living Prayer" | Alison Krauss

In this world, I walk alone; With no place to call my home;
But there's One who holds my hand; The rugged road through barren lands.
The way is dark, the road is steep; but He's become my eyes to see.
The strength to climb, my griefs to bear; the Savior lives inside me there.

In your love, I find release; a haven from my unbelief.
Take my life and let me be; a living prayer, my God to Thee.

In these trials of life, I find; another voice inside my mind.
He comforts me and bids me live; inside the love the Father gives.

In your love, I find release; a haven from my unbelief.
Take my life and let me be; a living prayer, my God to Thee.
Take my life and let me be; a living prayer, my God to Thee.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer (Centering Prayer Version)

Our Father, who is in heaven, Holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our sins, as we forgive the sins of others, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and forever. Amen.

Sacrament of 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

Holy and Eternal God, thank you for your nourishing presence in our worship and at your table. Help us to live our lives as listeners and as responders to your generous and active presence in our lives and in the world. May we always carry your light. In Christ's name. 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.

IN LOVING MEMORY

The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to Shelly Chi upon the death of her mother, Judy Tu; to Zack Spratt upon the death of his father, Mike Spratt; and to Drew Ludeke upon the death of his mother, Denise Ludeke.

Transcripts for the Contemplative Service can be found here: <https://firstpres-charlotte.org/sermons/>



**VIRTUAL
CONNECT
CARD**



**PRAYER
REQUESTS**



**TEXT
TO GIVE**



**GIVE
ONLINE**