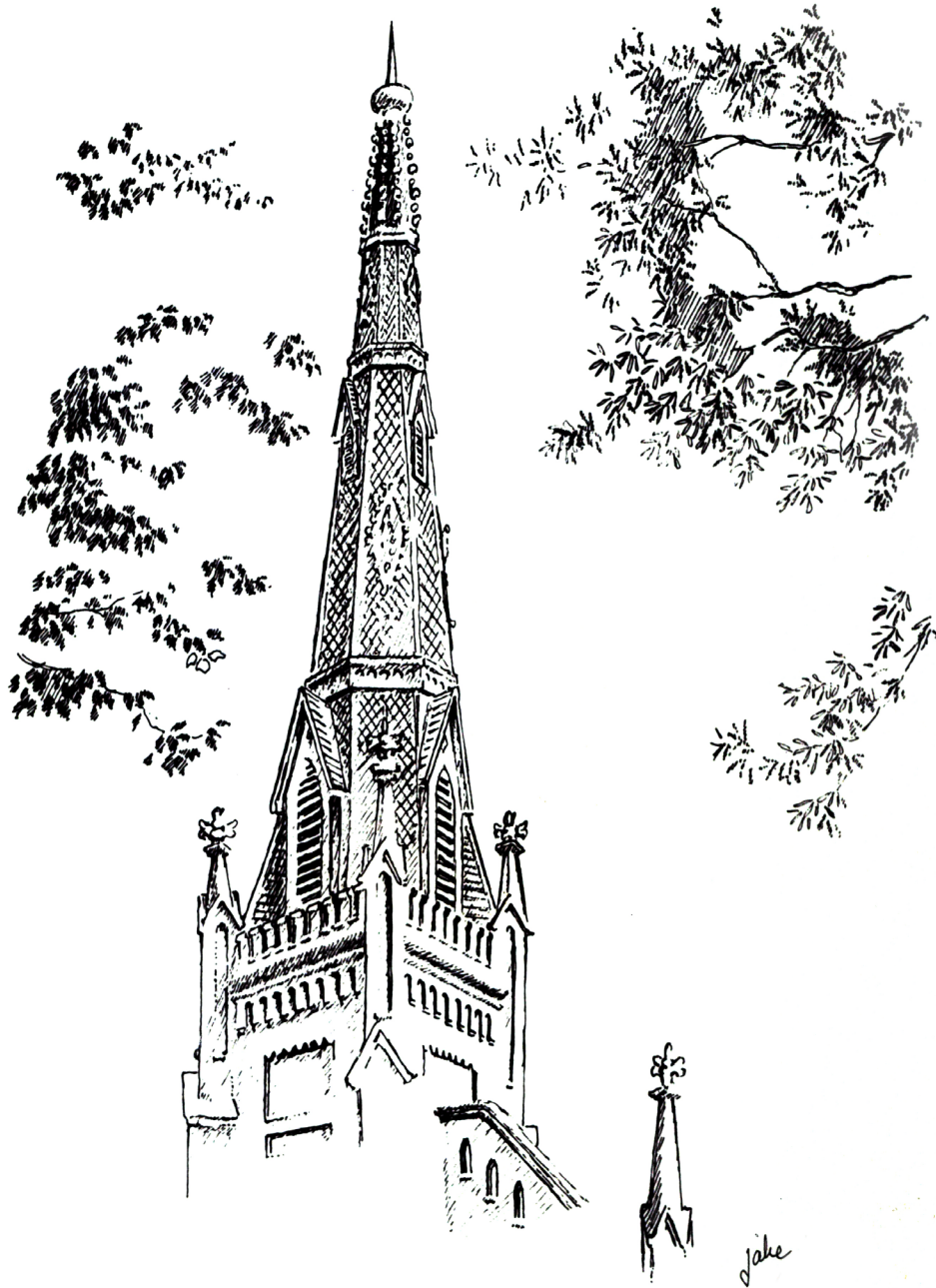


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | JANUARY 4, 2026
SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS | 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

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

Words of Welcome | Reverend Mary Margaret Porter

Opening Prayer

God of holy love, you are the fire that warms before it refines, the light that reveals without wounding. You know the restlessness of our hearts and the many ways we guard ourselves from the truth that asks something of us and from a love that would change us.

In this hour, draw us inward, away from noise and hurry, that we may become attentive to your presence. Quiet our minds and open our ears, soften what has grown hard, and awaken what longs for your grace. Let your Word dwell in us as a gentle flame—not to consume, but to purify; not to scatter, but to gather; not to divide us from one another, but to align our hearts with yours.

Moment of Silence

As your holiness fills this place, speak a Word that restores us. As your mercy touches us, shape us for your purposes. Then, having heard your call, make us ready to answer—not in our own strength, but in trust and obedience: *Here am I; send me.* Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Meditative Music | “Great is Thy Faithfulness” | Kathy Troccoli

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; as Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Refrain:

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided:

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow: blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain (repeated)

Prayer for Illumination | Scott Wallace

Old Testament Reading | Isaiah 5:1-7

I will sing for my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded rotten grapes. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield rotten grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a wasteland; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his cherished garden; he expected justice but saw bloodshed; righteousness but heard a cry!

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | Luke 12:49-56 | Marcia Dixon

“I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain,' and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "No Peace" | Mary Margaret Porter

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 | "Here I Am, Lord" | John Michael Talbot | Table of Plenty

I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry,
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.

I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if You lead me
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of wind and flame
I will tend the poor and lame
I will set a feast for them
My hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

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.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, having heard your Word, give us grace to bear good fruit, courage to discern this present time, and faithfulness to live what you have revealed; through 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.

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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TO GIVE**



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