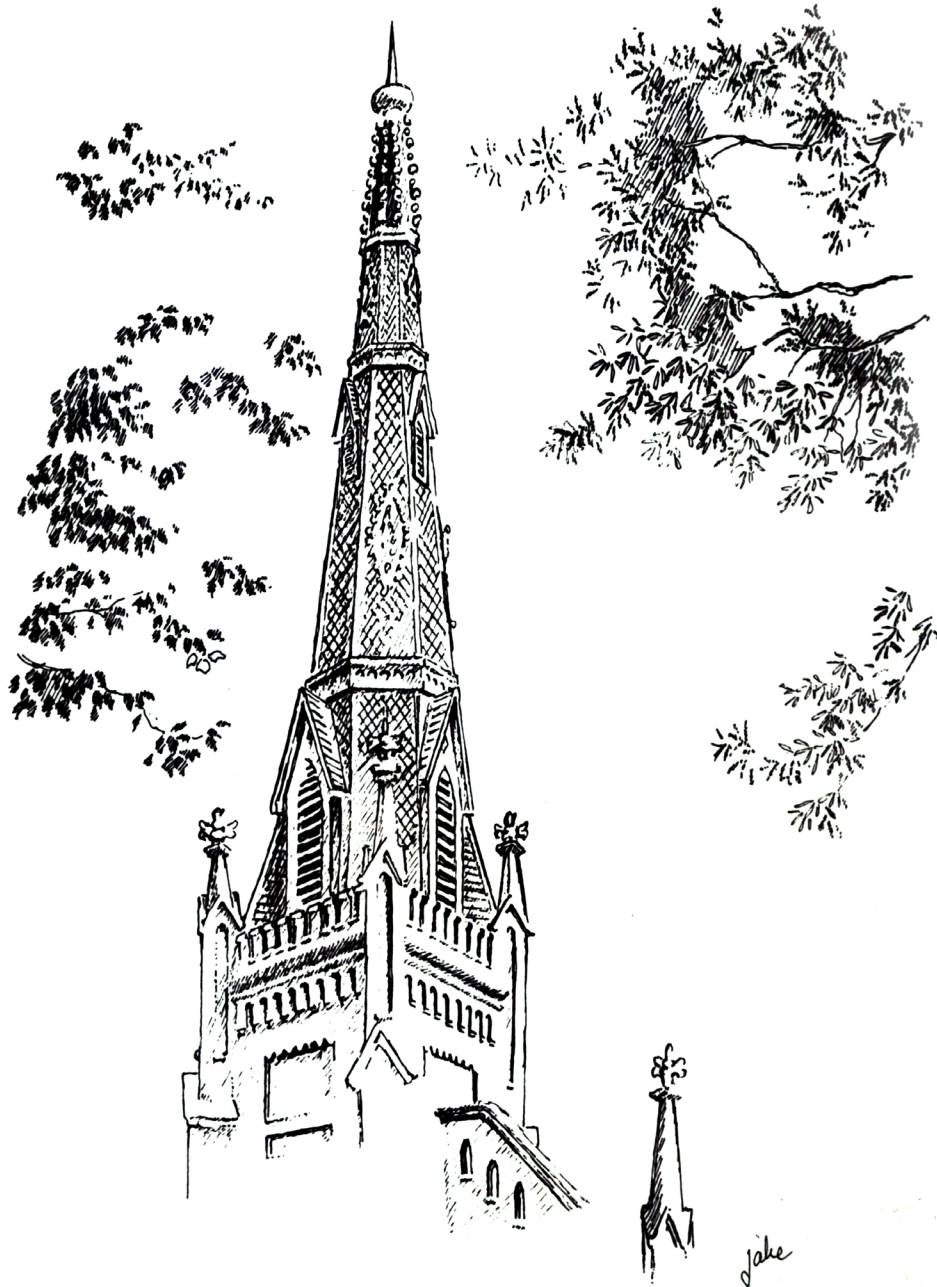


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | JANUARY 11, 2026
BAPTISM OF THE LORD



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 Bowman

Opening Prayer | Adapted from “Furnace” | Gerard Kelly

O God, in whose furnace, faith is forged
In whose being, beauty breathes
From whose dawning, darkness flees
Shine on us.

O Father, whose love for us
Beats with a rhythm time itself can't stop
Whose presence in our exile, is the promise of home
Whose certainties are deeper. than the cellars of our city
Whose breath is life
Shine on us.

O Son, whose story is a mirror of our own
Who has journeyed into darkness, to find a key to our prison
Who has dived the deepest oceans, to find pearls for our wisdom
Who has looked into our hearts and found a beauty worth the battle
Who has written our names on a white stone carved in secret
Hold us.

O Spirit, who has waited millennia to fill us
Who shaped the word that moved the wind of the morning that conceived us
Who holds the earth on which we stand, as a midwife holds a newborn
Who fully knows us
Wholly own us.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

So may God
The faithful Father save us
God the scarred Son forgive us
God the sculpting Spirit journey with us.
Now and forever. Amen.

Meditative Music | “Cradle Me” | Bernadette Farrell

God eternal, cradle me, love me till the end;
Give me now your understanding.
Let me be, let me be, let me be your good friend.

Lord Jesus, cradle me, walk with me always;
Let me know true love and justice.
Love me through, love me through, love me through all my days.

Holy Spirit, cradle me, guide me from above;
Let me see you, see your power.
Cradle me, cradle me, cradle me in your love.

Sacrament of Baptism | Reverend Rob Spach | Elders Gene and Jean Cochrane

Baptism of Cooper James Christiansen

+Affirmation of Faith | Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe

in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination | Lisa Dillard

Old Testament Reading | Isaiah 35:1-10 | The Message

Wilderness and desert will sing joyously, the badlands will celebrate and flower — Like the crocus in spring, bursting into blossom, a symphony of song and color. Mountain glories of Lebanon—a gift. Awesome Carmel, stunning Sharon—gifts. God’s resplendent glory, fully on display. God awesome, God majestic. Energize the limp hands, strengthen the rubbery knees. Tell fearful souls, “Courage! Take heart! God is here, right here, on his way to put things right and redress all wrongs. He’s on his way! He’ll save you!” Blind eyes will be opened, deaf ears unstopped; lame men and women will leap like deer, the voiceless break into song. Springs of water will burst out in the wilderness, streams flow in the desert. Hot sands will become a cool oasis, thirsty ground a splashing fountain. Even lowly jackals will have water to drink, and barren grasslands flourish richly. There will be a highway called the Holy Road. No one rude or rebellious is permitted on this road. It’s for God’s people exclusively — impossible to get lost on this road. Not even fools can get lost on it. No lions on this road, no dangerous wild animals — Nothing and no one dangerous or threatening. Only the redeemed will walk on it. The people God has ransomed will come back on this road. They’ll sing as they make their way home to Zion, unfading halos of joy encircling their heads, welcomed home with gifts of joy and gladness as all sorrows and sighs scurry into the night.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | John 3:16-21 | David Dillard

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | Book of Isaiah: Learning Trust | “The God of Saving Love” | 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

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 | Adapted from The Book of Common Worship

O God, we give you our deep gratitude for the exquisite gifts of your Spirit, of the sacraments, and of being your beloved children. Give us the power to walk in your ways, to show your love, to do your work, and to live holy and joyful lives. Keep us faithful in your service until Christ comes in final victory. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, we pray. 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

Marie C. Porter, March 25, 1938 - January 3, 2026.

The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to:

Jeannie Burleson Hyde upon the death of her mother, Jerelyn Burleson, on December 28, 2025;

Rev. Chuck Williamson upon the death of his brother-in-law, Bryan Almand, on December 30, 2025;

Kim Bowman upon the death of her mother, Sandra Luss, on December 30, 2025; and

Scott Bryan upon the death of her father, Bob Cole, on January 1, 2026.

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/>



**VIRTUAL
CONNECT
CARD**



**PRAYER
REQUESTS**



**TEXT
TO GIVE**



**GIVE
ONLINE**