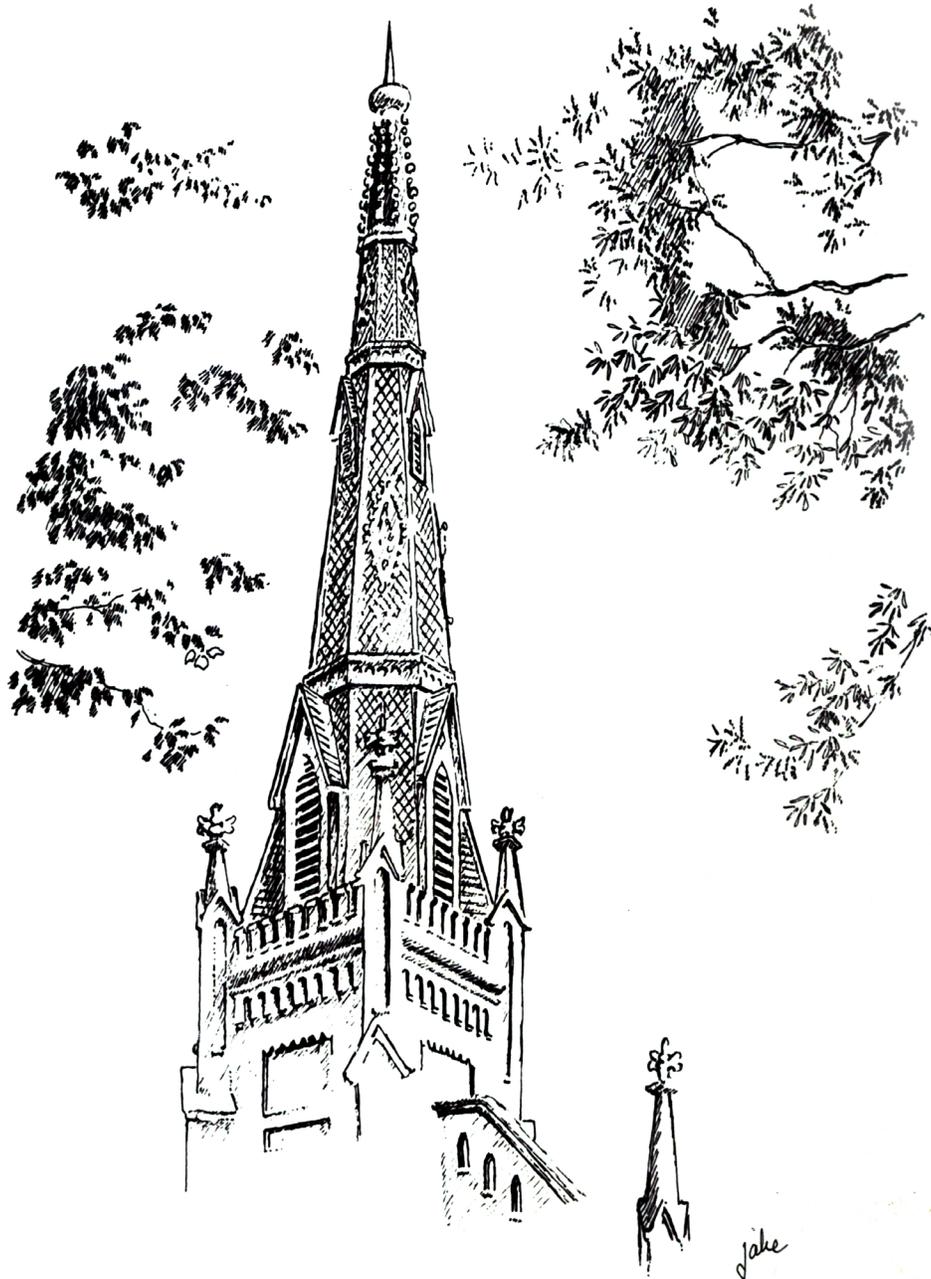


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | MARCH 1, 2026
SECOND 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 | Rob Spach

Opening Prayer | Adapted from Julie M. Hulme

O Gracious and Holy God,

As we continue on this Lenten journey, we place before you the ways that we are distracted or feel distant. We name the pain from being sinned against and we confess the pain of having sinned against others. We are grateful to be able to share and lament our suffering with you and with our community.

We acknowledge that we have questions about our lives and your movement in them. We confess that we have concerns about the world and where you might be working. We know that our awareness can be self-oriented and we long to see beyond ourselves to your movements and to hear your living word to us.

As we pause in reflective prayer, help us to release what is not of you and to receive anew the love and grace that you offer – so we may embrace your gifts and share them with your world.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

Forgive us and heal us, O God.

Help us to follow you more closely, O Christ.

Hold us close, O Spirit.

Amen.

Meditative Music | “God So Loved the World” | The University of Utah Singers

God so loved the world, so loved the world,
 God so loved the world, so loved the world
 that He gave His only begotten Son,
 that whoso believeth, believeth in Him
 should not perish, but have everlasting life, everlasting life. *Repeated.*

Prayer for Illumination | Scott Wallace

Old Testament Reading | Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | John 3:1-17 | Elise Barksdale

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

“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.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | “Born from Above, by Water and the Spirit” | Rob Spach

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 | Mary Bowman

Meditative Music | “This Fragile Vessel” | Praise and Harmony Singers

This fragile vessel You have made
No hand on earth can fill
For the waters of this world have failed
And I am thirsty still.

*We can be worthy of His love, wisdom and mercy
Take this bread and wine
As we share His cross and crown
Receive the grace sent down.*

I seek the treasures of Your love
It’s not that far to see
I heard a melody above
A gift from You to me. *Refrain*

To save what’s lost from heaven He came
His presence still remain
Open our eyes to His precious blood
Because it’s not in vain. *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.

Prayer of Thanksgiving | Adapted from *The Book of Common Worship*

God of compassion, we praise you that you look upon our frail lives with love and understanding, and that you desire for us all new life in Jesus Christ. We are overwhelmed by your love, which goes to the cross for us, endures the grave, and leads us to new life. By your Spirit, strengthen our souls to be brave and bold in Christ's service. Take our lives, and use them and us for your purposes, in the name of Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen 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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**PRAYER
REQUESTS**



**TEXT
TO GIVE**



**GIVE
ONLINE**