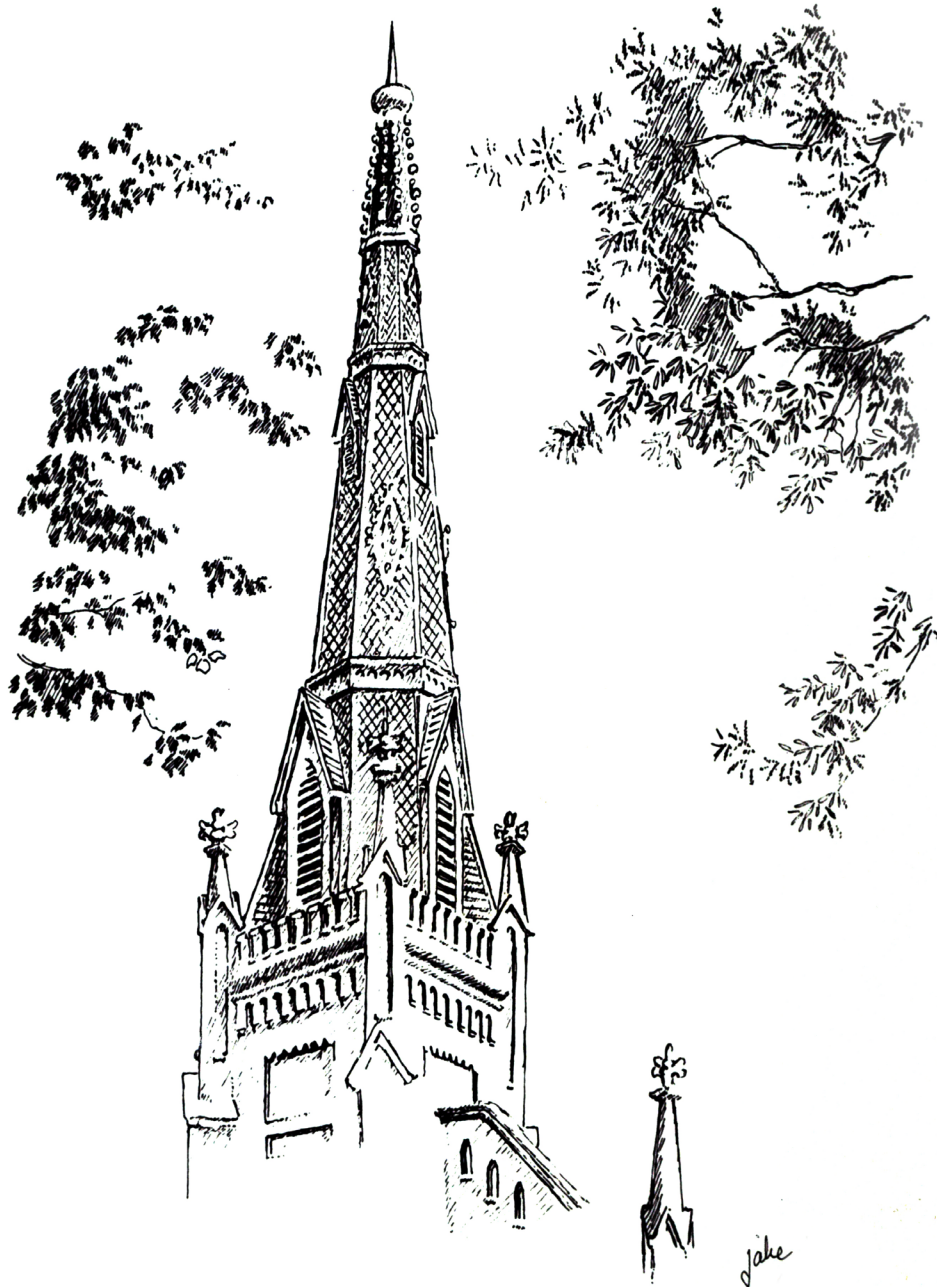


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | MARCH 15, 2026
FOURTH 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 | Mary Bowman

Opening Prayer | Adapted from Howard Thurman

Dear Lord, as we come into this place for worship, open unto us . . .

Open unto us—light for our darkness.

Open unto us—courage for our fear.

Open unto us—hope for our despair.

Open unto us—peace for our turmoil.

Open unto us—joy for our sorrow.

Open unto us—strength for our weakness.

Open unto us—wisdom for our confusion.

Open unto us—forgiveness for our sins.

Open unto us— love for our hates.

Open unto us— hearts for our neighbors.

Open unto us—thy Self for ourselves.

Lord, as we pause to name those things that have pulled our gaze from you, we ask that you would open us anew to your love, your forgiveness, and your active presence in our lives.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

Lord, grant us your peace, resurrect our hope, and mend us with your forgiveness. Amen.

Meditative Music | “Love One Another” | The Cathedral Singers

Love one another, for love is of God; Those who live in love, God lives in them.

Love one another, for love is of God; Those who live in love, God lives in them.

Those who show love are the children of God. Father and Mother is God to each of them.

Refrain

God showed His love in the face of the Son; Christ lives in us so that we might live through Him.

Refrain

Love has no place for the menace of fear; fear is abandoned where love is found.

Refrain

Love has its purpose in God’s holy will; we learn to love from the One who loved us first.

Refrain

Prayer for Illumination | David Dillard

Old Testament Reading | Deuteronomy 24:17-22 | NIV

Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | Matthew 18:1-5; 19:13-15 | Lisa Dillard

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Then children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them, but Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Meditative Music | "The Summons" | Composer John L. Bell | Soloist Robert Kochis

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known? Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same? Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare? Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name? Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same? Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen, and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Lord, Your summons echoes true when You but call my name. Let me turn and follow You and never be the same. In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show. Thus I'll move and live and grow in You and You in me.

Meditation | The Good News: "The Least of These" | 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

O Gracious God, thank you for meeting us in worship, for drawing us closer to you, and for filling us with your Spirit. May we go out into the world with fresh eyes and hearts, for ourselves and for our neighbors, and may the way we live this week help earth to be as it is in heaven. All praise to you - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 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 Jeff Brown upon the death of his mother, Hontas Bidgood, on March 2, 2026.

It is meaningful when members help lead worship. If you would like to be a reader or help with the music for the Contemplative Service, please sign up using this link: fpc.tiny.us/contemplative-readers

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



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TO GIVE



GIVE
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