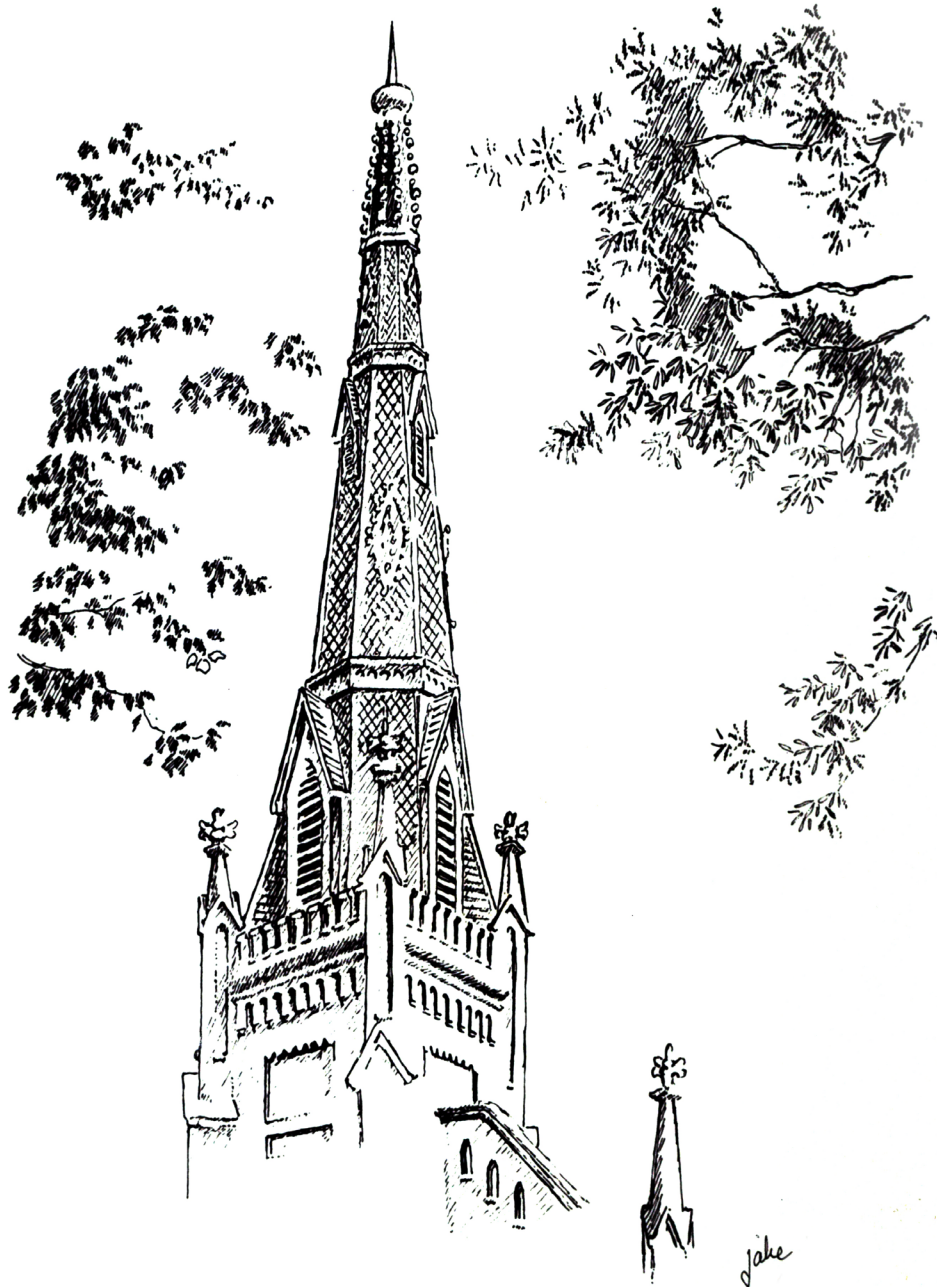


# First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | MARCH 29, 2026  
PALM SUNDAY



*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 Angela Ashwin

**O Eternal God, we come this morning to walk with you through the highs and the lows of Holy Week.**

**Jesus, Lord of the Journey, we thank you that you set your face firmly towards Jerusalem, with a single eye and pure intention, knowing what lay ahead but never turning aside.**

**Jesus, Lord of the Palms, we thank you for entering the city as God's chosen one, even though your path was not understood by those who recognized and greeted you.**

**Jesus, Lord of the Cross, we thank you that you went into the heart of our evil and pain and that you made common cause with our suffering.**

**What have you not suffered and what have you not given for us? We can never fully comprehend you, but we can love you and wonder at the depth of the darkness that you entered on the cross, and the depth of the love that held you there.**

**Gracious Lord, how do we find the words to adequately express our gratitude for the supreme gift of your life for us, that we might be forgiven, freed from the tangle of sin, and embraced wholly as God's beloved children? Give us a deeper sense of these gifts, forgive our sins, and help us to turn more readily to You for the forgiveness, healing, and love that we need.**

**Moment of Reflective Prayer**

**O God, help us to better understand the mysteries of this week.**

**O Christ, help us to stay beside you and grow in love and appreciation for all you have done.**

**O Spirit, forgive us and mend us that we might walk in truth and love and justice. Amen.**

**Prayer for Illumination** | Scott Wallace

**First Scripture Reading** | Mark 11:1-11

When Jesus and his disciples were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this: 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said, and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple, and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Meditative Music** | “Blessed and Holy” (O Great Antiphons) | Bernadette Farrell

Holy, holy, holy, O Wisdom, from on high  
 All Your works are blessed and holy  
 Sea and earth and sun and sky.  
 Adonai, O Lord of ages  
 Who appeared as burning flame  
 Come ignite the spark of justice  
 Til it burns in us again.

Holy, holy, holy, O Radiant Star of night  
 Still Your people walk in darkness  
 Come awake us to Your light.  
 O Keystone of the nations  
 Holding place of every part  
 Come and cherish Your creation  
 Til it lives within our heart.

Holy, holy, holy, O Tree uplifted high  
 In Your presence pow'r falls silent  
 In Your shade illusions die.  
 O humble Key of David  
 Hearts are known to You alone  
 Break the chains of every prison  
 Come and lead Your people home.

Holy, holy, holy, God of power, God of might  
 All the Earth and all the heavens  
 Sing Your glory day and night.  
 Blessed and holy Your creation  
 Blessed is Jesus whom You send  
 Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!  
 Sing hosanna without end!

**Second Scripture Reading** | John 19:1-6a; 16-22; 25a -30 | Claire Tate

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross by himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews read this inscription because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’ ” Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Meditative Music** | “Words From the Cross” | Joanna Forbes L'Estrange | London Voices

Come, hear the words that Jesus spoke, while on the cross He hung: Father, forgive them they do not know what it is that they have done. Ready to give His life for us, He spoke to the man by His side: Because of what you’ve said today, you will join me in paradise.

*Refrain: Greater love has no one than this: To lay down one’s life for one’s friends. The greatest, ultimate sacrifice of God shows a love that never ends.*

Offering up Himself for love, He said to His mother and John: Son, behold your mother, and, mother, behold your son. Suddenly, up to God He cried: Why have you forsaken me? Then, down to the people by the cross, said: I am thirsty.

*Refrain*

Sour wine was given to Him; thereafter, Jesus said: It is finished, for soon he would be dead. His final words upon the cross, as his breath came to its end, were: Father, into Your hands, my spirit, I commend. *Refrain*

**Meditation** | The Good News: “From Palms to the Cross” | 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 | Joseph the Visionary (a Syrian Father of eighth-century Iraq)

**Fashion in us, Lord, eyes within our eyes, so that, with new eyes, we may contemplate your divine sacrifice. Create in us a pure heart, so that, through the power of your Spirit, we may inhale your salvation. 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

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*Nancy K. Plummer, May 15, 1932 — March 22, 2026*

The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to Connie Carlson upon the death of her father, David Guy Herr, on March 21, 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