



*In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!*

December 1, 2019  
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.  
First Sunday of Advent

## GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, **please silence your cell phone.** The nursery is available downstairs during both services. Consult an usher if you need a personal hearing device, large-print bulletin or large-print hymnal.

The congregation is invited to speak or sing the liturgy in **bold** type.

### Greeting

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

### Prelude

*Savior of the Nations, Come* Johann Sebastian Bach

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad, making note of new and old friends, and check in on Facebook.

### Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

### Congregational Response

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

### 8:45 a.m.

Ben Ness and Family

Rob Haire,  
Confirmation Mentor

### 11:00 a.m.

Rachel Huff and Family

Carol Robinson,  
Confirmation Mentor

### Call to Worship

We wait in hope,

**The Lord is our righteousness!**

We wait for a savior,

**The Lord is our righteousness!**

We trust in the promise:

**The Lord is our righteousness!**

Hymn 9 is made up of antiphons or responses originally meant to be sung at Vespers in the week before Christmas. Each one addresses the Messiah with one of his scriptural titles, followed by a petition appropriate for each title.

### \*Hymn 9

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

VENI EMMANUEL

### Call to Confession

### \*Prayer of Confession

**Incarnate God, you are with us always, and yet we live as though you are not. We neglect to show your love and compassion to ourselves and others. We get anxious about unimportant things, and apathetic about those which truly matter. We stop looking for your presence in our lives. Forgive us and guide us back to you, for the sake of our coming savior.**

### \*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

*\*Those who are able may stand.*

At "The Peace," worshippers are invited to greet each other by saying, "The peace of Christ be with you," and responding, "And also with you."

On Communion Sundays children are invited to remain in the sanctuary.

The anthem is a setting of a hymn attributed to Ambrose of Milan. Martin Luther's German version adapted the Latin text giving the hymn its characteristically declarative Lutheran form. The prelude and postlude today are settings by J.S. Bach of this same chorale.

The flowering of English hymnody in the 19th century included the rediscovery and adaptation of ancient Christian hymns, such as Hymn 5, from one of the earliest Christian liturgies. The text is set to an adaptation of a 17th-century French melody.

## \*Assurance of Pardon

### \*Congregational Response

Hymn 3, Stanza 1

**Comfort, comfort you my people,  
tell of peace, thus says our God;  
comfort those who sit in darkness  
bowed beneath oppression's load.  
Speak you to Jerusalem  
of the peace that waits for them;  
tell them that their sins I cover,  
and their warfare now is over.**

### \*The Peace

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.  
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you.

## HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

### Congregational Prayer for Illumination

Hymn 68, Stanza 3

**O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,  
let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.**

### First Lesson

Mark 8:27-29, page 921

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

### 11:00 a.m. Anthem *Savior of the Nations, Come* Georgiann H. Toole

Savior of the nations, come, virgin's son, make earth your home,  
marvel now, O heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.  
From the Godhead forth you came, and return unto the same,  
captive leading death and hell. High the song of triumph swell!  
You, the chosen Holy One, have o'er death victory won.  
Boundless shall your kingdom be; when shall we its glories see?  
Brightly does your manger shine, glorious is its light divine.  
Let not hate o'er-cloud this light; ever be our faith so bright.

### Second Lesson

Jeremiah 33:14-18, page 724

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

### Sermon

*The Days Are Surely Coming*

Dr. Carol Strickland

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

### \*Hymn 5

*Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*

PICARDY

### \*Affirmation of Faith

*Philippians 2:5b-11*

**Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.**

**Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend, (cont.)**

**in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

### **Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory**      *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*      Charles Callahan

**\*Doxology**      Hymn 592

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

### **Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**Invitation to the Lord's Table**

**Prayer of Great Thanksgiving**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise...**

“...with all the company of heaven and earth we praise your holy name singing:”

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, reign-ing God of pow'r and  
might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, all cre - a - tion  
seeks your light! Bles - sed is the one who  
comes in your name. Bles-sed is the Lord most high!

“...Great is the mystery of faith:”

Christ has died, Christ is ri - sen,  
Christ the Lord will come a - gain.

“...all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, forever and ever.”

A - men, a - men.  
men. A - men, a - men.

During Advent we will recite this portion of one the best known and most influential passages Paul wrote. This “hymn” beautifully presents the story of Christ’s incarnation.

The musical setting of the communion liturgy is based on the hymn tune PICARDY, arranged by Kimberly Bracken Long.

**The Lord's Prayer**

Hymnal, p. 16

. . . and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. . .

**Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup**

**Communion of the People**

**Prayer after Communion**

## SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

**\*Hymn 11**      *O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?*  
VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

**\*Benediction**

**\*Congregational Response**      VENI EMMANUEL, refrain  
**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**\*Postlude**      *Savior of the Nations, Come*      Johann Sebastian Bach

*Following worship, all are invited for a time of fellowship and refreshments in the Atrium.*

*Texts and music for hymns and sung responses reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714861*

**A special word of welcome to our guests:** thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Please fill out the fellowship pad so that we may be in touch. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

**Nurseries for infants and toddlers,** available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., are located next to the Children's Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

**Children's Church** is an important developmental time for children, but there are times when children remaining in worship, watching and learning from their parents, is even more valuable. Children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on Communion Sundays. Children's Church will resume next Sunday.

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## NOTES ON THE SERVICE

### WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor*  
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate*  
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

### *Acolytes*

Jennings Holloway, Teninait Ness

### *Lay Readers*

**8:45 a.m.** Lisa Oelke

**11:00 a.m.** Allen Crowell

### USHERS

**8:45 a.m.** John Simpson, Mary Ben Woolbright

**11:00 a.m.** Jimbo LaBoon (head),  
Steve Covington, Ed Ferguson, Chuck Toney, Jeffery Trapnell

### GREETERS

**8:45 a.m.** Grace Lu, Faye Marshall,  
Terry Nestor, Lisa Oelke

**11:00 a.m.** Carol McKay,  
Dan Nadenicek, Pat Wilson

### FELLOWSHIP HOST

Madie Fischetti

### SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Rebecca Carlton

### FLOWERS

The poinsettias in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of Walter Whitener, Sr. and Ophelia Avery Wilfong by the Wilfong family.

### TO AID IN WORSHIP

**If you need to leave the sanctuary** during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium and at 11:00 a.m. is on Facebook.

### **Available in the Narthex or from an usher:**

- **Personal hearing receivers** usable anywhere in the sanctuary
- **Large-print** hymnals, Bibles, bulletins, and hymnsheets
- **Sermons** from the previous six weeks

### CONGREGATIONAL CARE

**Prayer requests** can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, by the Prayer Request link on our church website ([firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org)) or on the prayer cards in the Fellowship Pads.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LOVE NOTES FOR THE KIPPS

Blank cards are in your bulletin for those wishing to write encouraging notes to John and Sara Kipp, which will be delivered to them. Baskets to collect the cards are in the Narthex and in the Atrium. If you would like to send a card, please mail it to: 180 Keese Ln, Fair Play, SC 29643. Please keep the Kipps in your prayers.

The Congregational Care Commission has a Meal Train scheduled through **December 21**. If you would like to volunteer, please access this link: [www.mealtrain.com/trains/rk2zyl](http://www.mealtrain.com/trains/rk2zyl)

### PARADE OF LIGHTS HOSPITALITY

**December 5, 4:30 p.m.**

We will provide hospitality for participants in the Downtown Athens Parade of Lights. We will serve refreshments in the Atrium and our restrooms will be open to the public.

### CASA DE AMISTAD BOXES

Please help provide low-income Latino and Hispanic families with food for a special Christmas meal. You may write a check to FPC for \$40.00 marked, "Casa Boxes" **by December 2** and the shopping will be done for you! Or fill a box, a laundry basket, a large bucket, or another reusable container with the items listed on our website. Boxes are due to the church **by December 8**. Gracias!

### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND DINNER Sunday, December 8, 5:00 p.m.

Everyone is invited to embrace the true meaning of Christmas as told by our children. The pageant will begin at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary and will be followed by dinner in Fellowship Hall. There is no charge for dinner (donations gratefully accepted). Reservations for dinner are requested and can be made on the fellowship pad, via website, or by calling the church office.

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### Advent + Christmas @ FPC

Please visit our website, [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org), for a list of Advent and Christmas services and activities as we prepare for the coming of our Savior.

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### 8th Annual Live Nativity

**Tuesday, December 10, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

All are invited to this hands on experience of the birth of our savior. Bring your friends and neighbors to enjoy our congregation members and Weekday School families as the Holy Family and Wisemen, Shepherds, as well as a camel and 20 other live animals!!! There will be live Christmas music (handbells, guitar and more) the ESP Joyristas Hot Chocolate, and a Christmas ornament to make in the WDS classrooms! There is "Room in the Inn" for YOU! COME, LET US ADORE HIM!!!

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### Festival of Lessons and Carols

**Sunday, December 15, 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.**

This special service will include Advent and Christmas carols led by the Chancel Choir and Celebration Singers, with music by John Bertalot, Donald Pearson, John Rutter, Mark Schweizer, Richard Shephard.

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### Service of the Longest Night

**Sunday, December 15, 7:00 p.m.**

Join us in the Sanctuary for a service of worship called Service of the Longest Night. The service takes its name from the fact that in the Northern Hemisphere in December, there are more hours of darkness than light, and this service acknowledges that many in our community do not find this to be "the most wonderful time of the year." We will pray with and for those in our community who may be hurting and grieving, while remembering that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

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### Financial Peace University Begins January 5

Financial Peace University is a proven, biblical plan for getting out of debt and building a secure financial future. Ryan and Amy Baer applied the principles they learned in this video-based course to pay off their student loans, car notes, medical bills, and credit cards, to build an emergency fund, and to begin saving for the future. They will facilitate this nine-week series on Sunday afternoons from 1:00-2:30 p.m. beginning January 5. *Nursery will be provided upon request. To learn more and to register, go to <http://fpu.com/1104430>.*

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School Classes are available for all ages and meet 9:45-10:40 a.m.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

Children's Ministry Suite • Infants - 5th Grade

Director of Children's Ministries: Natalie Bishop

Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

**Infants** • Nursery Baby Room

Room Lead: Rita Raines

**Toddlers - Preschoolers** • Nursery Playroom

Room Lead: Mary Smith

Our toddler and preschooler curriculum is Group Publishing's *Play-n-Worship*. It is filled with music, activities, and storyboards that encourage little ones to interact with Bible stories.

**Pre-Kindergarten - 5th Grade**

Our elementary aged children will experience Godly Play during Sunday School. Godly Play helps children to explore their faith through story, to gain religious language, and to grow their spiritual experience through wonder and play.

**Pre-Kindergarten - 1st Grade** • Godly Play Room 127

**2nd - 3rd Grade** • Godly Play Room 126

**4th - 5th Grade** • Godly Play Room 124

*Godly Play Guides: Jennifer Abbott, Carol Ashmore, Natalie Bishop, Charlotte Chromiak, Jody Corry, Greta Covington, Jill Crim, Margaret Davis, Susan Ferguson, Madie Fischetti, Julie Hayes, Denise Horton, Sydney Jackson, Matt Jones, Paul Lee, Carmen Meadows, Lisa Oelke, Heather Roberts, Carol Strickland, Dan Trier, Gail Wilfong*

## SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

**Christian Issues** • Room 308

Study of *The Story - The Bible as One Continuing Story of God and His People* (NIV version). The Bible in chronological order, related as a story.

Coordinator: Sandy Boyles

**Inquirers** • Moses Waddel Room

Thoughtful introspection and lively group discussion covering contemporary issues and daily Christian living, with guest speakers or DVD studies.

- December 1: Don Mosely from Jubilee Partners
- Facilitators: Carl Bergmann, Carla Buss, Larry Jones

**Living on a Prayer** • Room 303

Devotionals based on scripture, led by different class members. Monthly community engagement project.

Coordinator: Karen Burg

**New Voices** • Room 310

Study of the book, *Holy Envy - Finding God in the Faith of Others* by Barbara Brown Taylor.

Led by: Lewis Hudgins

**W. D. Hooper** • Room 309

Study of the New Testament book of Revelation.

Led by: Jerris Hayes

**Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class**

Bride's Room, Tinsley-Stern

Study of *The Wired Word*. A lively discussion of current events through the lens of faith.

Led by: Jim Scanlon

**Women's Bible Class** • Room 301

Study of Exodus in our verse-by-verse approach.

Teacher: Wanda Wilcox

## SUNDAYS FOR YOUTH

Director of Youth Ministries: Kim Ness

College Interns: Kathryn Kent, Jordan Osborne, Leighton Parker, Natalie Siegman

Youth in grades 6-12 are fortunate to have their own special space, lovingly called "The PIT," located on the basement level. The PIT features small group break-out rooms, a kitchen, pool tables, and comfortable couches to just hang out.

SUNDAY MORNINGS 9:45-10:40 a.m.

This year Youth Sunday School will follow the Narrative Lectionary. After a time of fellowship and donuts, we will read the day's scripture and talk about how it applies to our lives today. Rotating leadership by: Kathy Bangle, Meghan Bawcum, Susan Boatright, Robbie Bryan, Jean Martin-Williams, and Erik Ness. TODAY: *A Righteous Branch from David*

CONFIRMATION CLASS

There are thirteen 8th and 9th graders in this year's confirmation class. Through lessons and service opportunities, youth are given an opportunity to deepen and confirm their faith in Jesus Christ, learn the basic theology of the Christian faith, and what it means to identify with the PC(USA). Led by Ryan Baer, Kim Ness and Leighton Parker. *Confirmation class resumes on 1/12/20.*

SUNDAY EVENINGS 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Youth Group is held 2-3/month (visit [www.fpcathenspit.com](http://www.fpcathenspit.com) for full calendar). We first gather for dinner in Fellowship Hall provided by volunteers before moving to the PIT for middle school and high school small groups. TONIGHT: *1st Sunday in Advent, In Light & Darkness. Deadline to sign up for Montreat and Charlotte Mission trip is 12/3.*

## THIS WEEK

### **Sunday, December 1 - First Sunday of Advent, Communion Sunday, Food Bag Sunday**

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Carol Strickland preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 4:30 p.m. Cherub Choir, Room 203
- 4:30 p.m. St. Andrews Choir, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Celebration Singers, Room 202
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Dinner and Fellowship, Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 p.m. Youth Group, Fellowship Hall

### **Monday, December 2**

- 10:00 a.m. Circle Two, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Room 205

### **Tuesday, December 3**

- 10:00 a.m. Project Safe Work Day
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Room 304
- 2:00 p.m. Circle 3/4, Home of Carol Dolson, 567 Fortson Road
- 6:00 p.m. Stephen Ministry Training and Supervision, Moses Waddel Room
- 7:00 p.m. Circle 6, Home of Ann Dunn, 425 Southview Drive

### **Wednesday, December 4**

- 12:00 p.m. Our Daily Bread, First Baptist Church
- 12:00 p.m. Weekday School Ballet, Atrium
- 12:00 p.m. Weekday School Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 12:30 p.m. Prayers for Healing, Sanctuary
- 2:00 p.m. Bridge, Room 302
- 2:00 p.m. Senior Adult Christmas Tea, Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

### **Thursday, December 5**

- 10:00 a.m. Congregational Care Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 12:30 p.m. Family Promise (formerly IHNA) Volunteer Training, First Baptist Church
- 3:30 p.m. **Church Office Closed for Parade**
- 4:30 p.m. Parade Hospitality, Atrium

### **Friday, December 6**

- 9:05 a.m. Weekday School Combined Chapel, Sanctuary

### **Saturday, December 7**

- 9:00 a.m. Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary

### **Sunday, December 8, Second Sunday of Advent, Christmas Pageant and Dinner**

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 5:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary
- 5:30 p.m. Christmas Dinner, Fellowship Hall (RSVP requested)
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group Christmas Party, Fellowship Hall

## LOOKING AHEAD

**December 10** - Live Nativity, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

**December 15** - Holiday Benevolence Market, 9:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Adult Sunday School Christmas Social  
Festival of Lessons and Carols, 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.  
Service of the Longest Night, 7:00 p.m.

**December 22** - Christmas Joy Offering

**December 24** - Christmas Eve Services:  
Family Christmas Eve Service, 4:00 p.m.; Candlelight Services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m.

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*  
Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor*  
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate*  
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*  
Mrs. Kim Ness, *Director of Youth Ministries*  
Mrs. Natalie Bishop, *Director of Children's Ministries*  
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School*  
Mr. Roger Burbage, *Church Administrator*  
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Administrative Assistant for  
Congregational Care & Membership*  
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Communications Specialist*  
Mrs. Jennifer Sunderlin, *Receptionist/Administrative Assistant*  
Mrs. Laura McHugh, *Accountant*  
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant*  
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*  
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant*  
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*

### STUDENT INTERNS

Ms. Pavani Gadde, *Website Technician*  
Ms. Kathryn Kent, *Middle School Ministry*  
Ms. Jordan Osborne, *Middle School Ministry*  
Ms. Natalie Siegman, *High School Ministry*

### WADDEL FELLOWS

Ms. Emmaline Michael, *Mission & Outreach*  
Ms. Leighton Parker, *High School Ministry*

**PLEASE SEE [FIRSTPRESATHENS.ORG](http://FIRSTPRESATHENS.ORG)**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH.**

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### Poinsettia Dedication

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Tuesday, December 17**. Each dedication is \$12. You may place your completed form and check in a pew pad envelope and drop it in the offering plate, mail it to the church office, or contact the church at 706-543-4338 or [frontdesk@firstpresathens.org](mailto:frontdesk@firstpresathens.org) with your dedications.

Each dedication will be listed in the December 22 worship service bulletin.

**In Memory of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In Honor of**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Given by**

\_\_\_\_\_