



*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 8, 2019  
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.  
Second 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.

### Greeting

Psalm 118:24

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

### Prelude

Improvisation on PSALM 42

John Coble

### Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

### Congregational Response

VENI EMMANUEL

**O come, Desire of nations, bind  
all peoples in one heart and mind;  
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;  
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

### Call to Worship

Prepare the way of the Lord --  
**In the wilderness!**  
Make straight a highway for God --  
**In the desert!**  
Lift up the valleys,  
**And level the mountains,**  
Prepare the way of the Lord!

### \*Hymn 3

*Comfort, Comfort You My People*

PSALM 42

### \*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.**

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

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

### 8:45 a.m.

Katherine Queen and Family  
Margaret Davis,  
Confirmation Mentor

### 11:00 a.m.

Kate MacMillan and Family  
Sarah Bryan,  
Confirmation Mentor

Hymn 3, a 17th-century German paraphrase of Isaiah 40:1-5, was one of the texts translated as part of the 19th-century British interest in German religious poetry. It is set to one of the most popular Genevan Psalter tunes, which was probably derived from an earlier French folksong.

*\*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."

After the first anthem children ages 4 - grade 1, are invited to Children's Church with Natalie Bishop held in the Children's Chapel in the Tinsley Stern building.

The first anthem, sung by the St. Andrews Choir, is an arrangement of an Advent hymn based on Isaiah 40:3-5 and Psalm 24:7-10. It has been used in the Church of Sweden for almost two hundred years. It is set to an older Swedish tune, which may have come from a German folktune that spread through Scandinavia. The arrangement is by American composer Mark Schweizer, who died on November 9, 2019.

The text of the second anthem is an adaptation of Revelation 22, written by the composer's wife. The piece was written while the composer's three-year-old son John was in the hospital with double pneumonia, not expected to survive. He did recover and grew up to become a Lutheran pastor. The anthem was published and has been performed around the world.

### \*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### \*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

**11:00 a.m. Anthem** *Prepare the Way, O Zion* Mark Schweizer

Prepare the way, O Zion, the King is drawing near!  
Amid the hills and valleys, a straighter way is clear.  
Behold the King of Glory, foretold in ancient story,  
blest is the Christ who came, in God's most holy name.  
The wilderness will blossom, the desert shall rejoice;  
the blind eyes shall be opened, the speechless given voice;  
before him on the mountains, his mercy flows in fountains,  
blest is the Christ who came, in God's most holy name.  
To him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend;  
his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.  
He comes to break oppression, to take away transgression,  
blest is the Christ who came, in God's most holy name.

**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 1:1-4, page 912

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

**11:00 a.m. Anthem** *E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come* Paul Manz

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,  
who loved us all and shed his blood that we might saved be.  
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord Almighty God,  
who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!  
Rejoice in heaven, all yet that dwell therein,  
rejoice on earth ye saints below,  
for Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!  
E'en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;  
they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!

**Second Lesson** Isaiah 40:1-11, page 653

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

**Sermon** *Straightened Out* Dr. Ryan Baer

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

**\*Hymn 10**     *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*     WINCHESTER NEW

**\*Affirmation of Faith**     *from Philippians 2:5b-11*

**We trust in 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,  
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.**

**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.**

**Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings**

**Offertory**     *Comfort, Comfort You My People*     Paul Manz

**\*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**

## SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

**\*Hymn 1**     *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*     STUTTGART

**\*Benediction**

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

**\*Postlude**     *Toccata on VENI EMMANUEL*     Adolphus Hailstork

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

With its opening line, “Come,” Hymn 1 sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *Adventus* or “coming”). Its blending of memory and hope helps us to give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

*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.

**To pick up your child from Children's Church** after the 11:00 a.m. service, please go to the Children's Chapel, which is across from the Church Library on the 2nd floor of the Tinsley-Stern Building.

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## NOTES ON THE SERVICE

### WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*

Dr. Carol Strickland, *Associate Pastor*

Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

### *Acolytes*

Pat and Petch Bryan

### *Lay Readers*

**8:45 a.m.** Scott Collins

**11:00 a.m.** Johnny Carr

### USHERS

**8:45 a.m.** John Simpson, (head), Bill Woolbright Mary Ben Woolbright

**11:00 a.m.** Jimbo LaBoon (head), Reid Bangle, Kitty Donnan, Ed Ferguson, Chuck Toney, Laura Toney

### GREETERS

**8:45 a.m.** Carla Buss, Jim Dove, Diane Hartzell, Terry Nestor

**11:00 a.m.** Jayne Bailey, Susan Landrum, Tom Landrum, Dan Nadenicek

### FELLOWSHIP HOST

Terry Nestor

### SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Rebecca Carlton

### FLOWERS

The poinsettias and flowers in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God.

### 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.

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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>.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND DINNER

**Tonight, 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.

### 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 Joy-ristas 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!

### 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)

### SALVATION ARMY ANGEL TREE

If you had wanted to be someone's angel this year, you're in luck. We still have forty angels that need adopting. If you would like to participate, please contact Sandy Boyles at [sandski78@gmail.com](mailto:sandski78@gmail.com). All gifts are due **December 12**.

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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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### Holiday Benevolence Market

**Sunday, December 15, 9:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

This year's Holiday Benevolence Market will be back in our Fellowship Hall. Come visit the nearly 30 non-profit agencies that will have booths set up so you can learn more about the great work being done in our community and beyond. For 24 years, the Holiday Benevolence Market has provided a way to give symbolic gifts to friends and families while helping non-profit agencies continue their work. For those who cannot make the market, "shopping lists" will be available in the Narthex and church office. For more information please contact Denise Horton at [denisehorton@gmail.com](mailto:denisehorton@gmail.com).

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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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### 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.



# 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 8: "Children's Christmas Picture Books" class presented by Terry Nestor
- *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: *Comfort, comfort my people.*

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: *2nd Sunday of Advent, Christmas Dinner at 5pm in Fellowship Hall followed by Youth Glow-in-the-Dark Christmas Party in the PIT!*

## THIS WEEK

### **Sunday, December 8 - Second Sunday of Advent**

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 4:15 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir, Room 202
- 5:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant, Sanctuary
- 5:30 p.m. Christmas Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group Christmas Party, The PIT

### **Monday, December 9**

- 4:30 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal, Handbell Choir Room
- 6:00 p.m. Session Worship, Sanctuary
- 6:30 p.m. Stated Session Meeting, Moses Waddel Room

### **Tuesday, December 10**

- 9:00 a.m. Casa de Amistad Christmas Box Assembly, Catedral de Fe, 6425 Jefferson Road
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Room 304
- 6:00 p.m. Live Nativity, Weekday School and Parking Deck

### **Wednesday, December 11**

- 11:30 p.m. Bookless Book Group, South Kitchen + Bar, 247 E. Washington Street
- 11:30 p.m. Circle 7 Christmas Lunch, Wanda Barlow's house, 125 N. Stratford Drive
- 12:30 p.m. Prayers for Healing, Sanctuary
- 2:00 p.m. Bridge, Room 302
- 4:30 p.m. Chair Yoga, Room 310
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

### **Thursday, December 12**

- 8:00 a.m. Last day of Weekday School
- 10:00 a.m. Josephine Paine Bible Study Class, Staff Conference Room
- 10:45 a.m. Weekday School Christmas Program and Cookie Swap
- 2:00 p.m. The Mellows, Iris Place, 755 Epps Bridge Parkway

### **Friday, December 13**

- 8:30 a.m. Weekday School Teacher In-Service Day, Fellowship Hall

### **Sunday, December 15, Third Sunday of Advent**

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Festival of Lessons and Carols
- 9:45 a.m. Holiday Benevolence Market, Fellowship Hall
- 9:45 a.m. Adult Sunday School Christmas Social, Fellowship Hall Breakout Area
- 5:00 p.m. Called Session Meeting, Moses Waddel Room
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Dinner and Classic Christmas Movies, The PIT
- 7:00 p.m. Service of the Longest Night, Sanctuary

## LOOKING AHEAD

**December 22** - Christmas Joy Offering

**December 24** - Christmas Eve Services:

Family Service, 4:00 p.m.; Candlelight Communion Services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m.

**January 5** - Financial Peace University begins

## 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. 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  
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**

\_\_\_\_\_