



*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 22, 2019  
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.  
Fourth 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** O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Robert J. Powell

**Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church**

**Moment for Mission** Christmas Joy Offering Bertis Downs

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

**Congregational Response** VENI EMMANUEL  
**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lowly exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**Call to Worship**

God has looked on us with favor,  
**Blessed be the Lord of Israel!**  
God has given us a savior,  
**Blessed be the Lord of Israel!**  
God restores the covenant,  
**Blessed be the Lord of Israel!**

**\*Hymn 8** *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* TRURO

**\*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.*

*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.**

Thadd Pruitt and Family  
Lawton Stephens,  
Confirmation Mentor

**11:00 a.m.**

Isabelle Seward and  
Family  
Meghan Bawcum,  
Confirmation Mentor

*During the hymn at the 11:00 a.m. service, children ages 4 - grade 5 are invited to Children's Church with Natalie Bishop held in the Children's Ministry Suite located down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.*

*Beginning as a paraphrase of Psalm 24:7-10, the text of Hymn 8 then applies the door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to a very effective anonymous 18th-century English tune that has served many texts.*

**\*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.**

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

**\*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**

Luke 2:25-32, page 936

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

The anthem is an English paraphrase of the Magnificat, set to music by Michael Praetorius with interludes by American composer Roland E. Martin.

**11:00 a.m. Anthem**

*My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord*

Michael Praetorius

My soul doth magnify the Lord, in God my Savior shall rejoice; he raises me from low estate, and gives a hundred blessings voice. All generations call me blest, yes, God has done great things for me; and holy is his righteous name, to those who know his majesty. His arm is strong to all who fear, the proud he scatters in their greed; he casts the mighty from their thrones, and lifts the lowly from their need. He fills the hungry with good things, the rich he sends away in shame; the humble he has lifted high, to magnify his holy name. Remembering his mercy sure, his servants, Israel, embrace; as prophesied in days of old, to Abraham and all his race. All glory to the Father God, and to the Son, whom we adore; the Holy Spirit, three in one, forever and forever more.

Hymn 13 was written by Frans Mikael Franzen, who served with Archbishop Wallin in the preparation of the masterful Swedish Psalmbook of 1819. The fine Advent text with echoes of Psalm 24:7-10 is graced with an ingratiating tune from another Swedish collection.

**Second Lesson**

Ezra 1:1-4, 3:1-4, 10-13, page 415

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

**Sermon**

*Home for the Holidays*

Dr. Ryan Baer

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

**\*Hymn 13**

*Prepare the Way*

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

**\*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 (cont.)**

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.

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** *Noël* Nicolas Lebègue

**\*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 38** *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* CAROL

**\*Benediction**

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

**\*Postlude** *In dulci jubilo* Johann Sebastian Bach

The Unitarian minister who wrote Hymn 38 was deeply involved in the “social gospel,” and his hymn is the first to include the social dimensions of what it means to work for “peace on earth and good will to all.” Based on Luke 2:13-14, it is a call for us to respond to the song of the angels and to send back to heaven the message that we will make peace on earth.

*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 Ministry Suite, which is down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

## 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

Daniel and Nathan Baer

### Lay Readers

**8:45 a.m.** Jean Martin-Williams

**11:00 a.m.** Sharon Logan

### USHERS

**8:45 a.m.** John Simpson, (head),  
Jim Dove, Randy Dudley

**11:00 a.m.** Jimbo LaBoon (head),  
Steve Covington, Dick Ferguson,  
Ed Ferguson, Bo Thurston, Chuck Toney

### GREETERS

**8:45 a.m.** Diane Hartzell,  
Faye Marshall, Mary Peace

**11:00 a.m.** Jayne Bailey, Ben Davis,  
Bob Glasscock, Brenda Glasscock

### FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

The Strickland-Palmer family

### SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Rebecca Carlton

### FLOWERS

The poinsettias and flowers in the Sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of Robert Adam Sides given by the Adams and Ramsey families.

We have a rosebud in honor of the birth of Frederick Monroe Lee on September 17, 2019. His parents are Lucy and Allen Lee, and his grandmother is Terry Nestor.

### 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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## THIS WEEK

### Sunday, December 22 - 4th Sunday of Advent, Christmas Joy Offering

8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching  
9:45 a.m. Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. A Very Merry Children's Church, Children's Ministry Suite

### Tuesday, December 24

8:00 a.m. **Church Office Closed**  
4:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary  
5:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202  
6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Candlelight Communion Services, Sanctuary

### Wednesday, December 25

8:00 a.m. **Christmas Day, Church Office Closed**, Meals on Wheels Delivery

### Thursday, December 26

12:00 p.m. **Church Office Closed**

### Friday, December 27

12:00 p.m. **Church Office Closed**

### Sunday, December 29, First Sunday after Christmas, No Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Service, Dr. Carol Strickland preaching

## LOOKING AHEAD

**December 30 - Church Office Closes at noon**

**December 31 - Church Office Closed**

**4 January 1 - Church Office Closed**, Our Daily Bread, Meals on Wheels Delivery

**Poinsettias are placed in the sanctuary  
to the glory of God and in memory of:**

Ruth & Joseph Barnish  
Mr. Robert Barrett  
Ada & Frank Barton  
Anne & Gregory Bateman  
Dr. M. Bernard Bergh  
Conrad D. Bergmann  
Catherine Avret Berrie  
Bob Bossert  
Hazel Boyles  
James Boyles, Sr.  
Evelyn & Earl Canfield  
Eve Marie Carson  
Clara & Clyde Childers  
Courtney Shumaker Cloer  
Leita Cobb  
Ruth & George Coker  
William J. & Hilda M. Corry  
Barbara Bergmann Coulter  
Mr. Julius Phillip Covington  
Allen & Nan Jo Crowell  
Glenn D. Crowell  
Jack M. Crowell  
Grace Agnes DeRosa  
David H. Donnan  
Bolling & Mary Neil DuBose  
Joanne & Carmine Fischetti  
Ruby C. McDonald Freeman  
Mary Alma Graves  
Mr. Buck Griffin  
Frances & Howard Guest  
Robert R. Gunn  
Uly S. Gunn  
Sanders Hale  
Allison Bishop Hays  
Herbert Irwin Hughes  
Ida Helen Hughes  
Andrew Jones  
Everett Jones, Jr.  
Kate Jones  
Rev. James Renwick Kennedy, Jr.  
Dr. John Kipp  
Rev. Dorothy M. Kipp  
Olin Walter Knight, Jr.  
Jack & Judy Koetzle  
Chuck Laughlin  
Shannon Laughlin  
Mr. & Mrs. Roscoe LeCroy  
Jim Lindsey

Bob & Sue Marion  
Dr. Harold Maxwell  
James E. McDonald, Sr.  
Mary Gilbert Mell  
Dorothy Matson Merry  
Kate Middendorf  
Mike Nicholson  
John & Shirley Noland  
John Alexander Oates III  
James T. O'Brien  
Merritt & Be Oelke  
Marcia Pierson  
Mr. & Mrs. James Poole  
Sylva & Glendyn Price  
Bill Prokasy  
Herman F. Quante  
Isabelle W. Quante  
Jack E. Razor  
John Wesley Reed  
Michael Warren Reed  
Mary Emma Gunn Rogers  
Grace Hancock Rowland  
Cornelia W. Scanlon  
Merideth Sheskey  
John E. Simpson  
John E. Simpson, Jr.  
Grace & Bob Stephens  
Eric & JoAnne Swanson  
Elinor & John Terrell  
Nancy Crowell Thames  
Alice Early Thompson  
Claude Astor Thompson  
Mr. Harold Tighe  
Mrs. Christine Tighe  
Louise & Tom Tillman  
Jack & Mary Lawson Vandiver  
Fred & Helen Wallace  
Charles & Evelyn Ward  
Lance J. Wilder  
Joseph Avery Wilfong, Sr.  
Genevieve Wilfong  
Joseph Avery Wilfong, III  
Joseph Avery Wilfong, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. William Sidney Wilfong  
Margaret Gunn Wilson  
Nancy Conley Wilson  
Gwen & Jim Wines  
C. Frank Wright, Jr.

## **Poinsettias are placed in the sanctuary to the glory of God and in honor of:**

Ansley Boyles  
Britt Boyles  
Chastain Boyles  
Crystal Boyles  
Travis Boyles  
John, Kate & Aiden Coble  
Edwina & Dick Ferguson  
Mrs. Gwen Griffin  
Hayward & Owen Guest  
Dot Handley  
James T. & Gerrye S. Jenkins  
Elaine Johnson

Jim McDonald  
Laura McHugh  
Carol Robinson  
Kathleen H. Wilfong  
Margaret Williamson  
Tom Williamson  
Carl Wilson  
Evangeline P. Wright  
Athens Teachers & Students  
The Baer Family  
First Presbyterian Ministers & Staff

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## **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*

### **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: *The Birth of John the Baptist*.

### **CONFIRMATION CLASS**

Confirmation resumes on 1/12.

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

TONIGHT: There is no youth group tonight.

### **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 22: study of the next chapter of the dvd series, *The Other Side of History*.
- *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*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

*A very special invitation to join us on Christmas Eve:*

**Tuesday, December 24**

Family Christmas Eve Service, 4:00 p.m.

Candlelight Communion Services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m.

Nursery will be provided at 6:00 p.m.

*Please plan to join us on this most holy of nights as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.*

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### ONE SERVICE, 10:00 A.M.

#### December 29

On Sunday, December 29 we will have one service at 10:00 a.m. and Sunday School will not meet.

### COMMITMENT REMINDER

Thank you to all who have made a financial commitment for 2020. We depend on the generosity of everyone to support our ministries and missions. If you have not yet made your commitment, please do so by **December 30 at noon** so the Session can plan the 2020 budget. You may turn in your pledge in the offering plate, in the church office, or online at [firstpresathens.org/home/giving](http://firstpresathens.org/home/giving).

### 2020-21 WEEKDAY SCHOOL

Heads up! Weekday School Registration begins on January 13th for Fall 2020! Email for a tour today: [elaine@firstpresathens.org](mailto:elaine@firstpresathens.org)!"

### MLK DAY OF SERVICE

As part of our Bicentennial celebration, we have an initiative each month in 2020 to recognize our 200 years as a church. We will kick off these initiatives in January by looking to our congregation to collectively pledge 200 hours of work during the month towards service projects in honor of both Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and our bicentennial. There are several ways to help us reach our goal of 200 pledged hours. We will be partnering with the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia and Project Safe Thrift Store, and you can also find ACC sponsored projects ([www.givepulse.com/group/118913-Athens-MLK-Day-of-Service](http://www.givepulse.com/group/118913-Athens-MLK-Day-of-Service)).

Once you have a project and your pledge hours established, please use this link ([www.firstpresathens.org/hours-of-service/](http://www.firstpresathens.org/hours-of-service/)) and fill out the form that will be used to track hours being pledged. For more information, please contact Rob Haire at [hairer@gmail.com](mailto:hairer@gmail.com) or (706) 201-6530.

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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>.

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## Death of John Kipp

In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, we give thanks to God for the life of Dr. John Lewis Kipp, who died and joined the Church Triumphant on Tuesday, December 17, 2019. A Service of Witness to the Resurrection in John's honor will be held on Friday, December 27, 2019, at 1:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church, with a reception to follow in Fellowship Hall. Dr. Ryan Baer and Dr. Carol Strickland will preside.

The family will receive family and friends at Bernstein Funeral Home, 3195 Atlanta Hwy., Athens, GA on Thursday, December 26, 2019 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Bernstein Funeral Home is charge of arrangements.

Words of condolence may be sent to Mrs. Sara Kipp, 180 Keese Lane, Fair Play, SC 29643-2339, to Dr. Katherine Kipp, 1110 Jeremy Drive, Watkinsville, GA 30677, and to Rachel Hollifield, 2466 Foxy Drive, Bethlehem, GA 30620.

Please keep the Kipp family in your prayers during their time of loss.

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator    Richard Lane, Clerk of Session  
Carol Strickland, Associate Pastor

### CLASS OF 2019

Robbie Bryan  
Greta Terrell Covington  
DeeAnn Cox  
Bob Glasscock  
Mary Havick  
Joe Hermanowicz  
Richard Lane  
Mary Peace  
Lawton Stephens  
Dan Trier

### CLASS OF 2020

Jeff Bangle  
Meghan Bawcum  
Bob Burton  
Julie Hayes  
Sydney Jackson  
Avery McLean  
Jeanne Nadenicek  
Carl Nichols  
Tom Reigle  
Judy Scanlon

### CLASS OF 2021

Jennifer Walden Abbott  
Sandy Boyles  
Michelle Clendenen-Shaw  
Elizabeth Earl  
Ed Ferguson  
Rob Haire  
Grace Lu  
Chris Pope  
Mixon Robinson  
Rosemary Stancil

## 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*  
Ms. Katherine Worsham, *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.**