



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 3, 2023
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.

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

Words of Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Congregational Response

VENI EMMANUEL

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

Call to Worship

We await the coming of Christ,
At his birth and at the end of time.
We await the coming of Christ.
With hope in our hearts, we wait.

*Hymn 1

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

STUTTGART

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Great God, no one knows the hour of your return, yet we await your arrival, trusting that it will come. There is a sense of urgency in our waiting. We await the birth of Jesus, but we watch for so much more, anticipating all that your incarnation means in a hurting world. Teach us to keep alert, that we may not become complacent or convinced that we have time. Show us how to hurry up and wait, to enact our expectation by sharing love, offering forgiveness, and living according to the movement of the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

**Those who are able please stand.*

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad, making note of new and old friends, check in on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram (firstpresathensga).

The lighting of the Advent wreath at 11:00 a.m. will be done by Chris, Lindsay, Sawyer, and Evan Jones.

In the ancient world, people lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. We watch and wait for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

With the opening word, *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus* sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

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."

Children are invited to remain in the Sanctuary on Communion Sundays.

11:00 a.m. Lay Reader:
Alan Merrill

Savior of the Nations, Come is attributed to Ambrose of Milan. Luther's German version (also the tune name) dropped a syllable from each line of the Latin text, giving the hymn a characteristically declarative Lutheran form.

Scholars debate whether this powerfully poetic text is an early Christian hymn which Paul is quoting or his own composition. It is one of the best-known and most influential passages in the Pauline corpus.



You may mail your check, set up an automatic payment of your estimate of giving through your bank, or donate online using this QR code or at firstpresathens.org/giving. Thank you for your generosity.

*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.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

**Come, thou Redeemer of the earth, and manifest thy virgin birth.
Let every age adoring fall: such birth befits the God of all.**

First Lesson

Mark 8:27-29, page 921

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

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 Promise

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 14

Savior of the Nations, Come

NUN KOMM DER HEIDEN HEILAND

*Affirmation of Faith

Philippians 2:5-11

**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, 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

8:45 Offertory

Picardy

Craig Phillips

11:00 Offertory

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Gustav Holst

Let all mortal flesh keep silence, and with fear and trembling stand;
ponder nothing earthly minded for with blessing in his hand,
Christ our Lord to earth descendedth our full homage to demand.
King of kings, yet born of Mary, as of old on earth he stood,
Lord of lords in human vesture in the body and the blood;
he will give to all the faithful his own self for heavenly food.
Rank on rank the host of heaven spreads its vanguard on the way,
as the Light of light descendeth from the realms of endless day;
that the powers of hell may vanish as the darkness clears away.
At his feet the dix-winged seraph, cherubim with sleepless eye,
veil their faces to the presence, as with ceaseless voice they cry,
"Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, Lord most high!" Amen.

***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

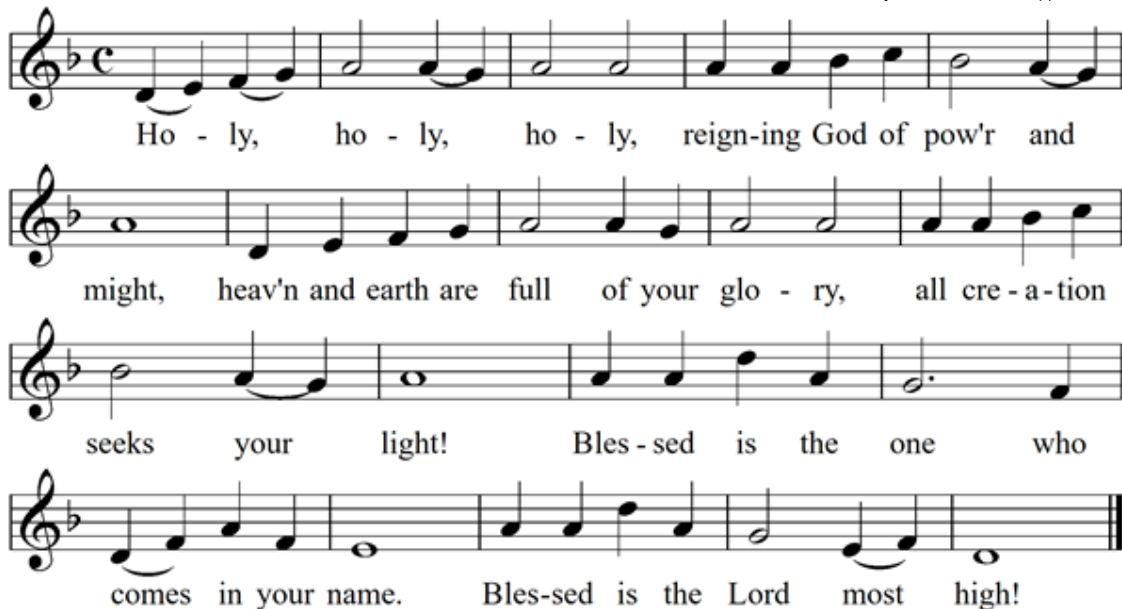
Invitation to the Lord's Table

The 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...

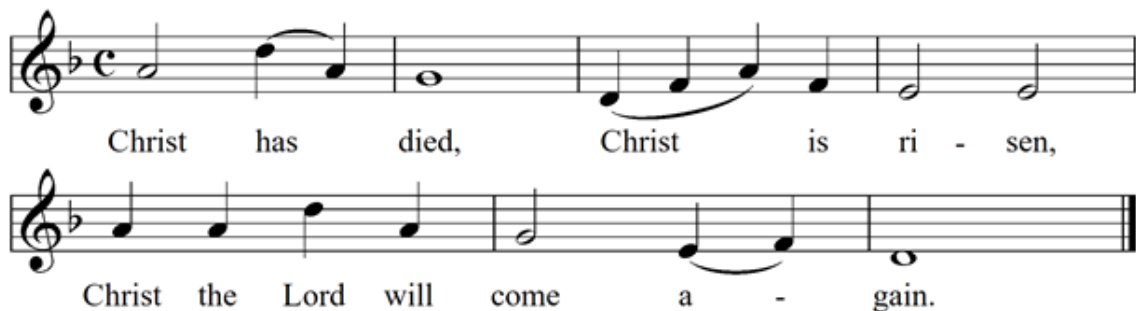
The musical setting
of the communion
liturgy is based on the
hymn tune *Picardy*,
arranged by Kimberly
Bracken Long.

Sanctus



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!

Memorial Acclamation



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

The Great Amen



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

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates begins as a paraphrase of Psalm 24, then applies door imagery to the singer's heart, and concludes with our welcoming of the approaching Savior.

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Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

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.

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

- *Hymn 8** *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* TRURO
- *Charge and Benediction**
- *Congregational Response** VENI EMMANUEL, refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!
- Postlude** *Savior of the Nations, Come* Johann Sebastian Bach

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.

Nursery Play for children 4 years old and younger is available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., are located in our Children's Playroom area 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Holidays@First - Outreach and Volunteering Opportunities

Holiday Benevolence Market – hosted this year by Covenant Presbyterian Church (1065 Gaines School Road, Athens, GA. 30605), choose meaningful and symbolic gifts on the shopping lists of 30+ non-profit mission partners. Date: **Today, December 3**, noon-3:00 p.m.

Ringling for the Salvation Army – We are in need of volunteers to fill 9 one hour slots (9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.) on **Saturday, December 9**, outside of the Walmart on Epps Bridge Pkwy. This is an easy way to give a small portion of your time to a worthy organization. Please contact Mark Hopkins to sign-up at 205-790-6499 or e-mail jshceh@aol.com.

Holiday Meals on Wheels – help cover the cost of one or more meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year's Day by making a financial contribution* **by December 31**. If you are interested in delivering meals, please contact Kitty Donnan at kittydavedonnan@gmail.com.

* For financial contributions make your check to First Presbyterian Church and note cause in memo line, or give online at FirstPresAthens.org/giving and select appropriate fund in drop-down menu.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*

The Rev. Leigh Bonner, *Interim Associate Pastor*

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

Lay Reader

11:00 a.m. Alan Merrill

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Diane Hartzell

11:00 a.m. Jimbo LaBoon III (head),

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Aiden Dowling

FLOWERS

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

DECEMBER FLOWER TEAM

Greta Covington and Susan Ferguson (co-chairs), Susan Barrett, Susan Banister, Patty Brantley, Shannon Ferguson, Wanda Neislar, Terry Nestor, Page Pate, Jennifer Poole, Jennifer Trapnell, Isabelle Wallace

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 10:00 a.m. is on Facebook and YouTube.

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) or on the prayer cards in the Fellowship Pads.

Advent: Season of Wonder Intergenerational Celebration Today, December 3, 9:45-10:45 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Join us today for this intergenerational Sunday school opportunity that will start our congregational celebration of Advent 2023. We will seat the generations of the church in concentric circles in Fellowship Hall, gathering everyone to hear the Godly Play Advent story. After that, we will do “wonder work” together, making Advent wreaths to adorn our homes and making prayer ornaments for our Atrium Christmas tree.

Festival of Lessons & Carols Sunday, December 10

Join us for A Festival of Lessons and Carols on **Sunday, December 10**, at 11:00 a.m., led by the choirs of First Presbyterian Church, accompanied by a brass quintet. The service will include music by Harold Darke, Crawford Thoburn, and David Willcocks.

Christmas Tea at FPC Thursday, December 14, 2:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the annual Christmas Tea hosted by the Senior Adult Ministry on **Thursday, December 14**, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. It will feature The Mellows leading Christmas songs and a message by Dr. Ryan Baer. Please RSVP to the church office at (706) 543-4338 by **Monday, December 11**.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 3 – First Sunday of Advent, Communion Sunday, Food Sunday

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 9:45 a.m. Advent: Season of Wonder Celebration, Fellowship Hall
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Fellowship Refreshments
- 12:00 p.m. Holiday Benevolence Market (until 3:00 p.m.), Covenant Presbyterian Church
- 3:30 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 3:30 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:20 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group, The PIT
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 p.m. High School Youth Group (with parents), The PIT

Monday, December 4

- 2:00 p.m. Circle Two, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Room 205
- 7:30 p.m. High School Girls Bible Study Group

Tuesday, December 5

- 12:00 p.m. Circle 3/4, Home of Eunice Tritt
- 12:15 p.m. Women's Small Group, Brides Room
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Parlor
- 7:00 p.m. Circle Six, Home of Ann Dunn

Wednesday, December 6

- 11:00 a.m. Our Daily Bread Lunch, First Baptist Church
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, December 7

- 2:00 p.m. Mellows, Arbor Terrace
- 5:00 p.m. Weekday School Committee Meeting, Staff Conference Room

Sunday, December 10 – Second Sunday of Advent

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Festival of Lessons & Carols
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School Christmas Social, Fellowship Hall
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Fellowship Refreshments
- 12:00 p.m. Middle School Christmas Party, The PIT
- 3:30 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 3:30 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:20 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 6:00 p.m. High School Christmas Party, Ness House

Poinsettia Dedication

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Monday, December 11**. Each dedication is \$10. You may fill out the form and pay online (please click on the link posted in the church website under FPC News & Updates for more instructions), mail it with a check to the church office, or contact the church at 706-543-4338 or frontdesk@firstpresathens.org with your dedications. Each dedication will be listed in the December 17 worship service bulletin.

In Memory of

In Honor of

Given by

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOR CHILDREN

Director of Children's Ministries: Natalie Bishop

Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

Nursery Play, 8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Children's Playroom • Infants – 4 Year Olds

Little ones are invited to Nursery Play during worship and Sunday school. Children will enjoy playtime, Bible stories, and a light snack with church friends.

Godly Play, 9:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Children's Ministry Suite • Pre-K – 5th Grade

Children are invited to Godly Play during the Sunday School hour. Godly Play is an innovative way of teaching and learning that helps children “discover” who God is rather than being “told” who God is. The structure and routine of Godly Play offer children a safe and nurturing space to explore, connect, wonder, and worship God.

Children and Worship, 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

All children are welcome to remain in worship with their families every Sunday. Children's bulletins, Bibles, and books are available at the children's tables located in the Narthex and on both sides of the choir loft.

Children's Church, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Children, Pre K – 5th Grade are invited to Children's Church after the passing of The Peace. We will continue worshipping together in the Children's Ministry Suite by listening to God's Word, singing to God, praying to God and giving to God.

**No Children's Church on the first Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday. All children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on this special Sunday to take part in worship and Communion with family.*

SUNDAYS FOR YOUTH

Director of Youth Ministries: Kim Ness

Middle School Coordinator: Erin Osborne

The PIT (basement level) • 6th – 12th Grade

Sunday School (9:45 a.m.)

Middle School class is using the Sparkhouse curriculum called Echo: The Story. Each class begins with a video, then we delve into the Bible. In just 36 weeks, we'll travel from Genesis to Revelation, through stories, games and activities!

Youth Group

Sunday night youth group is a fast hour of games, get-to-know you activities, devotionals and discussion. This year our theme is Pieces of Faith. Youth will gather in the PIT to talk about different aspects of faith and the spiritual practices we need to help our faith grow stronger.

Middle School meets 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

High School meets 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Combined Youth Dinner (6:00 p.m.)

Between MS and HS youth groups, everyone will gather in Fellowship Hall for a shared meal. If you'd like to help provide a meal for our youth, please email Kim at kness@firstpresathens.org.

For more information about youth ministry at FPC, visit www.fpcathenspit.com.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45–10:40 a.m.

IN PERSON

Builders • Moses Waddel Room

This class is an invitation for parents of children and youth to come join for a time of fellowship and support.
Coordinator: Dr. Ryan Baer (ryan@firstpresathens.org)

HYBRID (*in person and over Zoom*)

Del Dunn Sunday School Class • Room 308

An in-depth study and discussion of scripture, offering a collegial environment and welcoming all who seek to enrich their understanding of the Bible and its application to our daily lives. This fall, we will continue a chapter-by-chapter reading and discussion of the Gospel of Matthew.

Coordinator: Susan Landrum (slandrum@uga.edu)

Zoom ID: 875 216 0708, PW: 634175

New Voices • Room 310

This class explores theological and church issues. Class leaders engage participants by inviting them to share their stories and perspectives on the topics being discussed. In November, the class will be studying several works of C.S. Lewis.

Led by: Lewis Hudgins (lewisahudgins@gmail.com)

Zoom ID: 674 533 8902

Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class

Bride's Room, Tinsley Stern

Open and honest discussion in a nonjudgmental atmosphere about various aspects of Christianity. This fall, we will be watching and discussing the series *From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity* by UNC-Chapel Hill professor Bart D. Ehrman.

Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com), Jim Scanlon (jjtscanlon@yahoo.com)

Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1

STUTTGART 8.7.8.7

Charles Wesley, 1744

Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra*, 1715; alt.



1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;
2. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
3. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a King,
4. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Savior of the Nations, Come

14

NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND 7.7.7.7

Attr. Ambrose of Milan, 4th century

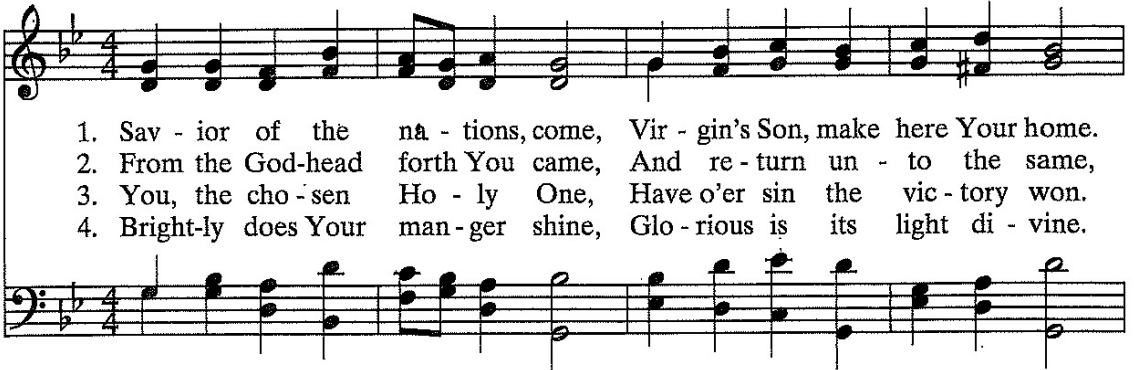
Para. Martin Luther, 1524

Trans. William Morton Reynolds, 1850

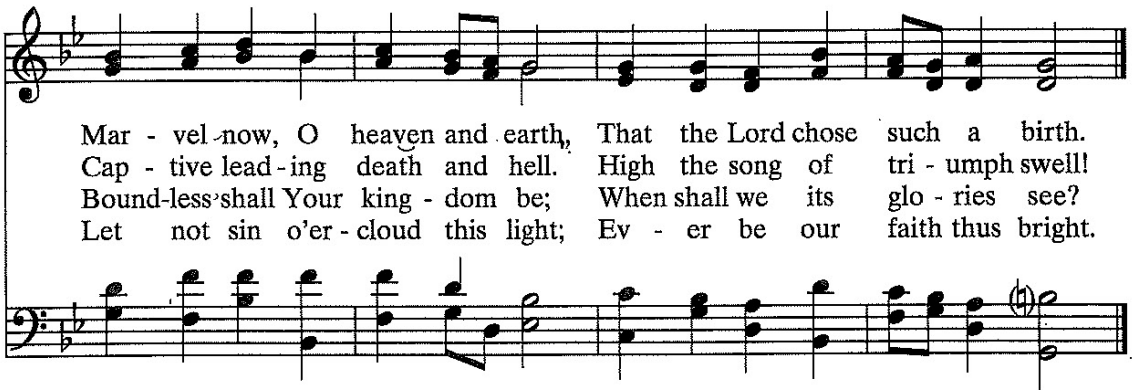
Based on plainsong melody

Eyn Enchiridion, Erfurt, 1524

As in *Songs of Syon*, 1910



1. Sav - ior of the na - tions, come, Vir - gin's Son, make here Your home.
2. From the God-head forth You came, And re - turn un - to the same,
3. You, the cho - sen Ho - ly One, Have o'er sin the vic - tory won.
4. Bright-ly does Your man-ger shine, Glo - rious is its light di - vine.



Mar - vel - now, O heaven and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.
Cap - tive lead - ing death and hell. High the song of tri - umph swell!
Bound-less shall Your king - dom be; When shall we its glo - ries see?
Let not sin o'er - cloud this light; Ev - er be our faith thus bright.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

8

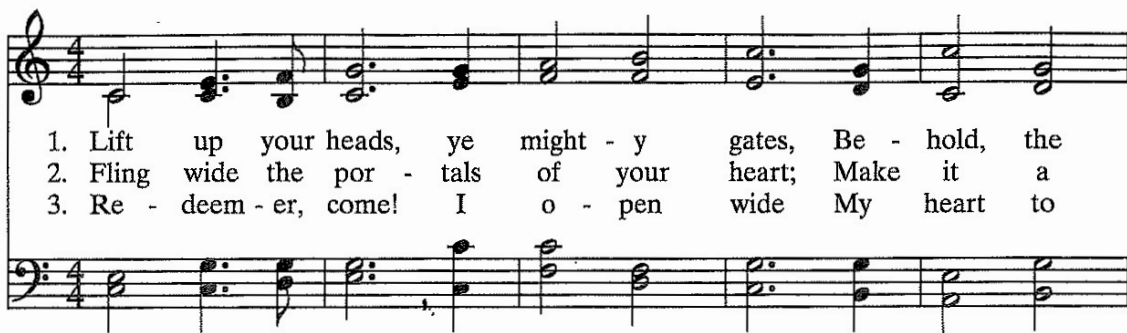
TRURO LM

Georg Weissel, 1642

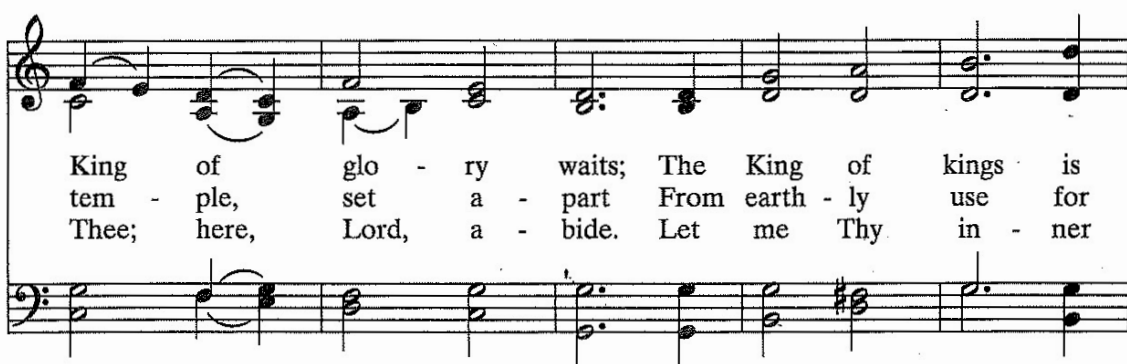
Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855

Thomas Williams, 1789

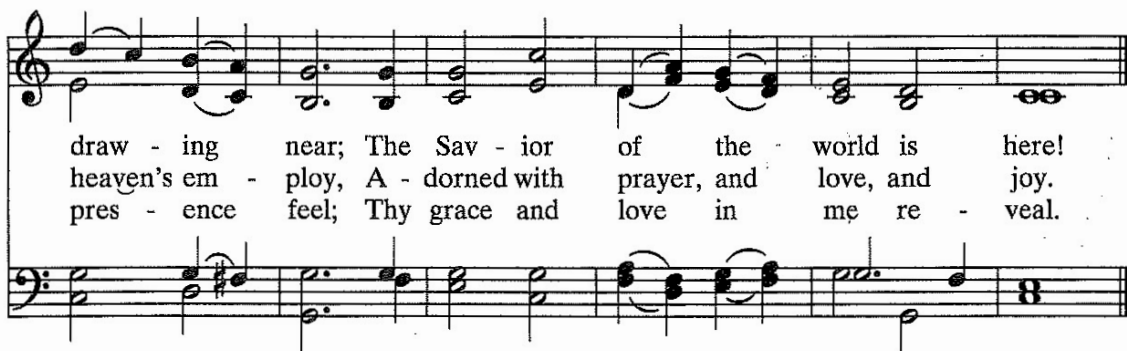
Harm. Lowell Mason (1792-1872)



1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates, Be - hold, the
2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; Make it a
3. Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide My heart to



King of glo - ry waits; The King of kings is
tem - ple, set a - part From earth - ly use for
Thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me Thy in - ner



draw - ing near; The Sav - ior of the world is here!
heaven's em - ploy, A - dorned with prayer, and love, and joy.
pres - ence feel; Thy grace and love in me re - veal.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Pat Waldrip, Clerk of Session

CLASS OF 2023

Sarah Bryan
Judy Burch
Kent Burel
Rod Canfield
Melinda DeMaria
Jim Dove
Mark Hopkins
Matt Jones
Keith Oelke

CLASS OF 2024

Shannon Brooks
Phyllis Crowell
Kemp Gaskill
Denise Horton
Paul Lee
Sharon Logan Neff
Bruce Middendorf
Randy Riner
Chuck Toney

CLASS OF 2025

Lindsay Griffeth
Angela Hunt
Dan Nadenicek
Karen Phillips
Ethelyn Simpson
Jeffrey Trapnell
Pat Tritt
John Turner
Pat Waldrip

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Leigh Bonner, *Interim Associate Pastor* (lbonner@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Kim Ness, *Director of Youth Ministries* (kness@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Natalie Bishop, *Director of Children's Ministries* (natalie@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Office Administrator* (lbell@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Director of Communications* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lacy Mims Lian, *Receptionist* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotteposs@gmail.com)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*