

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 24, 2023
6:00 and 8:00 p.m.
Nativity of the Lord

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter this holy space this evening, ***please silence your cell phone****. Consult an usher if you need a personal hearing device, large-print bulletin or large-print hymnal.*

Prelude	*Gloria*	Michael Bedford
	In dulci jubilo	Johann Sebastian Bach
	Adeste fideles	Jeanne Demessieux
	A Wreath of Carols	Margaret Vardell Sandresky
	Une Vierge pucelle	Nicolas Lebègue
	Prelude on 'Greensleeves'	Richard Purvis

Words of Welcome

Lighting of the Christ Candle

***Hymn 41** *O Come, All Ye Faithful* ADESTE FIDELES

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

Great God, we were on the journey with Mary and Joseph, afraid and nervous about what the future would bring. We were in the fields with the shepherds, shocked and astonished at the proclamation of the angels: Unto us a child is born, a Son is given, and authority rests on him. Through our fears we are learning to sing a new song, one that declares your glory, honor, and praise. Help us, O God, to be active participants in your story, that we might enact justice in a society yearning for it and share the grace offered in the person and work of Christ. In the name of the One called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Amen.

***Silent Prayer**

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Congregational Response** Hymn 28, Stanza 1

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart, and soul, and voice;
give ye heed to what we say; Jesus Christ is born today;
ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

**Those who are able may stand.*

***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

First Lesson Psalm 96:10-13, page 539

Carol *The Angel Gabriel* Richard Shephard

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
"All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady." Gloria!
"For know, a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady," Gloria!
Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!
Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Second Lesson Luke 2:1-20, page 935

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

Sermon *O Come Emmanuel* Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 23** *Angels We Have Heard on High* GLORIA

***Affirmation of Faith** *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.

Christmas Eve Offering

Our Christmas Eve offering will support Athens Nurses Clinic. Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory *In the Bleak Midwinter* Harold Darke

In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
snow had fallen snow on snow, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter, long ago.
Our God, heaven cannot hold him nor earth sustain;
heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
in the bleak midwinter a stable-place sufficed the Lord God Almighty Jesus Christ.
Enough for him, whom cherubim worship night and day, a breastful of milk and a manger
full of hay; enough for him, whom angels fall down before, the ox and ass and camel which adore.
What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,
if I were a wise man I would do my part, yet what I can I give him, give my heart.

***Hymn 53** *What Child Is This* GREENSLEEVES

***Prayer of Dedication**

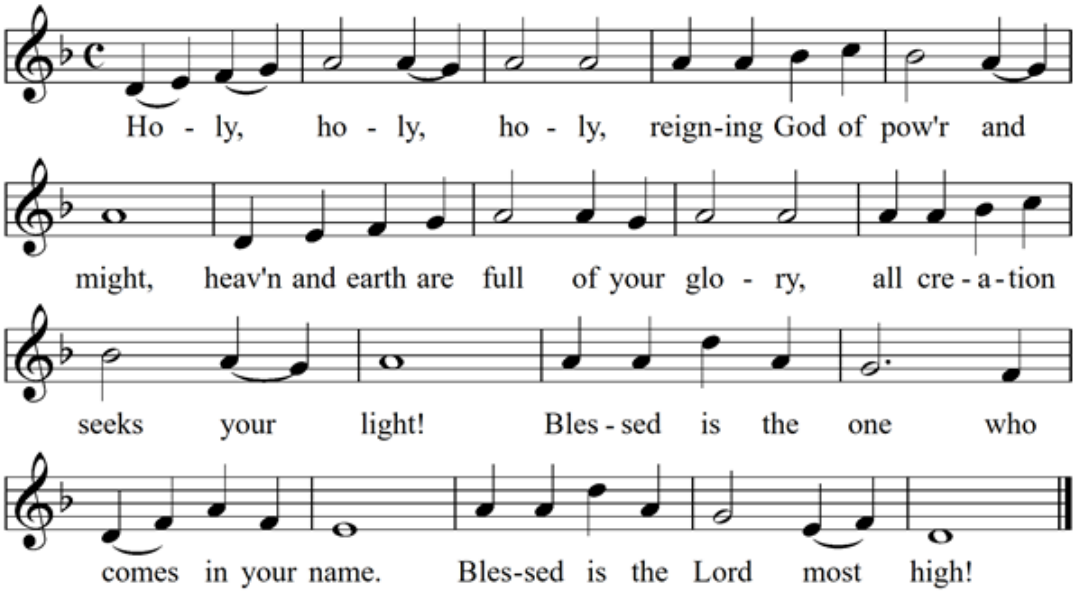
Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

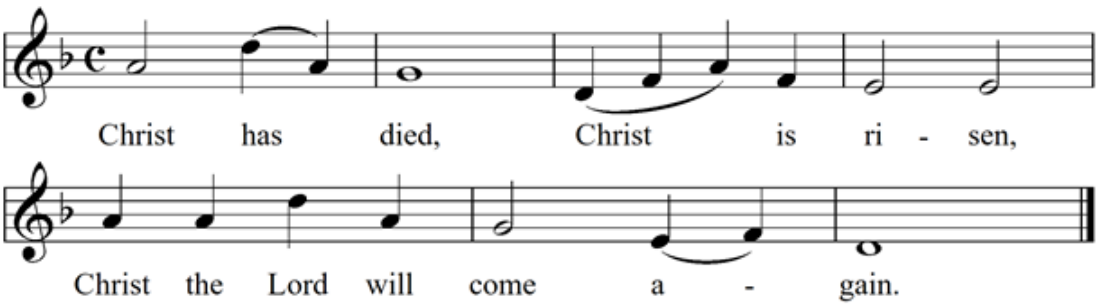
The Great Thanksgiving

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…

Sanctus



Memorial Acclamation



Great Amen



Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

The Lord's Prayer Hymnal, p. 16

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

Lighting of the Candles

When lighting your candle, please tilt the unlighted candle toward the flame of the lighted candle.

Hymn 60	*Silent Night, Holy Night*	STILLE NACHT
Benediction		
***Hymn 40**	*Joy to the World!*	ANTIOCH
***Postlude**	*Improvisation on Adeste fideles*	John Coble

As you exit the building, please extinguish your candle and place it in one of the baskets on the sanctuary porch.

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NOTES ON THE SERVICE

The poinsettias are given to the glory of God and in memory and honor of our loved ones. We thank the Flower Committee for decorating our church and sanctuary during Advent and Christmas.

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*
The Rev. Leigh Bonner, *Interim Associate Pastor*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*
Dr. Bob Burton, *Guitar*

LAY READERS

6:00 p.m. Kent Burel
8:00 p.m. Matt Crim

USHERS

6:00 p.m. John Simpson, Jimbo LaBoon III, Carl Bergmann, Randy Dudley, Ed Ferguson, Keith Oelke, Bo Thurston, Jeffrey Trapnell

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIANS

Aiden Dowling, Bryan Owens, Paulo Santos

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ESTIMATE OF GIVING REMINDER

Thank you to all who submitted an estimate of giving for 2024. 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 28 at noon** so the Session can plan the 2024 budget. You may mail your estimate of giving to the church office, or submit it online at firstpresathens.org/give. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Adams at jadams@firstpresathens.org.

ONE SERVICE ON DECEMBER 31

Reminder that on December 31 we will have one worship service at 10:00 a.m. The Rev. Leigh Bonner will be preaching.

RECEPTION FOR REV. BONNER

Please join us in Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, January 7**, after the 11:00 a.m. service for a reception in honor of Rev. Leigh Bonner. Expressions of gratitude can be mailed at 2876 Eastwood Dr, Decatur, GA 30032.

2024-25 WEEKDAY SCHOOL

First Pres Weekday School registration for Fall 2024 begins for in-house students on Tuesday, January 16. On Friday, January 19 at noon, community registration begins. Our Weekday School is a half day church preschool serving 3 months through 5 years. Questions? Call our director, Elaine Johnson, at (706) 206-8180 or e-mail elaine@firstpresathens.org.

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES 6.6.10.5.6 with refrain

John Francis Wade (c. 1740–1743)
Trans. Frederick Oakeley, 1841

John Francis Wade (c. 1740–1743)
Harm. *The English Hymnal,* 1906



**Alternate harmonization and descant for stanza 3,* 42

Angels We Have Heard on High

French carol
Trans. James Chadwick (1813–1882); alt.

GLORIA 7.7.7.7 with refrain

French carol
Arr. Edward Shippen Barnes, 1937



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What Child Is This

GREENSLEEVES 8.7.8.7 with refrain

English ballad, 16th century

William Chatterton Dix, c. 1871

Arr. *Christmas Carols New and Old,* 1871



This tune can be sung in the original mode by sharping all C's in the soprano and alto parts.

Silent Night, Holy Night

60

STILLE NACHT Irregular

Joseph Mohr, 1818
Trans. John Freeman Young, 1863

Franz Xaver Gruber, 1818



1. Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schläft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar.
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh',
Schlaf' in himmlischer Ruh'!

2. Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Hirten erst kundgemacht
Durch der Engel Alleluja,
Tönt est laut von fern und nah:
Christ der Retter ist da,
Christ der Retter ist da!

3. Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
Da uns schlägt die rettende Stund':
Christ, in deiner Geburt,
Christ, in deiner Geburt!

40 Joy to the World!

ANTIOCH CM with repeat

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Attr. George Frederick Handel, 1742
Arr. Lowell Mason, 1836



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Pat Waldrip, Clerk of Session

Class of 2023	Class of 2024	Class of 2025
Sarah Bryan	Shannon Brooks	Lindsay Griffeth
Judy Burch	Phyllis Crowell	Angela Hunt
Kent Burel	Kemp Gaskill	Dan Nadenicek
Rod Canfield	Denise Horton	Karen Phillips
Melinda DeMaria	Paul Lee	Ethelyn Simpson
Jim Dove	Sharon Logan Neff	Jeffrey Trapnell
Mark Hopkins	Bruce Middendorf	Pat Tritt
Matt Jones	Randy Riner	John Turner
Keith Oelke	Chuck Toney	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. 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*