

First Sunday of Advent
November 30, 2025 10:30 a.m. Worship



“He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged
and who was expecting a child.”

—*Luke 2:5*

First Presbyterian Church

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MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: REV. BRIAN S. SYMONDS

COMMISSIONED LOCAL PASTOR: DR. WENDY L. LAMB

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN W. SMITH

MINISTRY OF VISITATION: LAURIE STAFFORD

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being livestreamed and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available **from the ushers**.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are welcome in worship.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Sunday, December 7th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: The French family

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

The nature of humanity seems to point to the need for a “savior,” especially when we feel things are out of control. People in the time of Jesus’ birth were no different. They hoped for a new reality of communal wellbeing in the midst of corruption and violence. Peace only existed by definition of the empire. The collaboration of religious and state authorities for the sake of the rich and the demise of the poor was a hard reality for most. For what do we hope in our time that will be “good news for all people?”

- Rev. Dr. Marcia McFee

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Of the Father's Love Begotten

E. Waine

Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

* CALL TO WORSHIP / CANDLE LIGHTING

In 1865, William Chatterton Dix penned a poem...

✠ What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?

The nature of humanity seems to point to the need for a “savior,” ...

We light this candle of Hope for those who need it most.

For all who search for a place to belong.

For all who are frightened by imposing forces.

For all whose future seems uncertain.

Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this: “For what do we hope in our time that will be ‘good news for ALL people?’”

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

* Stand if you are able

✠ The congregation will read.

What child IS this? This, this, is Christ the King who reigns with hope forever.

✠ This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

***HYMN 263**

All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!

CORONATION

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Let us honestly examine our lives and our hearts before Christ comes. Let us turn to God in prayer to confess our sins.

(Take a moment to silently name your longing.)

✠ Prince of Peace, the wars and rumors of wars feed our addiction to violence, our destructive and dehumanizing ways. We deserve your judgement and condemnation. Yet, you remain faithful, a steadfast source of peace amid our warring madness. Holy God, turn us from evil. Return us to Christ and his path of peace. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Amen.

“Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun.” Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

✠ Amen.

(2 Corinthians 5:17; Book of Common Worship)

(We stand and sing Alleluia)

*ALLELUIA

William Zeitler

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia

lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. There is KidSpace today in Room 10 following the Time with the Children.]

ANTHEM

*Prepare Thyself, Zion*¹

Johann Sebastian Bach

Prepare thyself, Zion, with tender affection, The purest, the fairest, this day to receive.

SCRIPTURE

Lamentations 3:46-57

"All of our enemies open their mouths and speak against us. We have been frightened and fearful, ruined and destroyed." Streams of tears flow from my eyes, because my people are destroyed. My tears flow continually, without stopping, until the LORD looks down and sees from heaven. I am sad when I see what has happened to all the women of my city. Those who are my enemies for no reason hunted me like a bird. They tried to kill me in a pit; they threw stones at me. Water came up over my head, and I said, "I am going to die." I called out to you, LORD, from the bottom of the pit. You heard me calling, "Do not close your ears and ignore my gasps and shouts." You came near when I called to you; you said, "Don't be afraid."

Luke 2:1-5

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

King of Kings (Hope)

Rev. Brian S. Symonds

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, OUR LORD'S PRAYER

✠ **Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

In this moment of silent contemplation, we lift up our hopes for the world, for its people, for the kind of kingdom embodied by the child who became the Christ.

¹ Text: Rev. J. Troutbeck, D.D.. Music: Johann Sebastian Bach; arr. Douglas E. Wagner. ©1977 Shawnee Press, Inc. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-706254. All rights reserved.

TIME of SILENT CONTEMPLATION

Hidden one, how can we find you,
when our world is filled with pain,
and our praying is in vain?
If we knock and get no answer,
and we cannot cope, help us still to hope.

✠ **Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Holy Living One,
Child of Hope,
Spirit of Benevolence,
we come to you today weary of the rulers of history,
weary of continued misguided power,
and the tenuous peace heralded through control
and perpetrated by violence.
We know you are with us,
for you came to our human story when we needed your message so
much.
We still do.

We ask, "what child is this that we follow, and who are we
in the scene of this unfolding story?"

As the manger waits for your arrival surrounded by the daily needs of
family and flock,
we again plead for your presence to break into our lives
and show us the light of hope.
And we ask for the courage to step into the scene,
preparing the way for your reign.

We give you thanks, O God, this day for...

We name our sorrow this day for...

We ask for your forgiveness this day for...

Be with us as we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world.
We pray this in the way you taught us, saying...

✠ **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.

✠ Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our tithes and gifts to be part of God's purposes in the world, and we invite you to take part. You may place your offering in the basket in front or give it to the usher. You may always send gifts by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDREDTH

✠ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost, Amen.

*PRAYER OF THANKS

Christ calls us to live generous and grateful lives. Take these gifts we offer today, O God, and use them to the fulfillment of Christ's ministry. May these gifts help to free the captives, heal the sick, comfort the lonely, feed the hungry, heal the wounded. As Christ's hands and feet, use us too, in service to building your beloved community.

✠ Amen.

*HYMN 82

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

HYFRYDOL

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR

✠ This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

POSTLUDE

GREETER: Susan Skoglund

USHERS: Brad Smith, *Lead Usher*

Chris Thomas, Al Rueda, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Lorraine Bishop, Noé Falconi, Marianna Fowles

Elders: Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis, Pat Morris

Deacons: Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith, Steve Smith

This Weeks' Celebrations

Nov 30 Sanai Wright

Dec 1 Elaine Saenz

Dec 2 Sarah Godby

Dec 3 Cindi Pringle

Dec 5 Bobbie Terrell

Curtiss & Rebecca Allen

GIVE YOUR BLOOD. Our second blood drive in association with Lifestream is **TODAY**. If you are a regular donor, a reminder: you can only give every 60 days. ***Remember your iron!***

A-Caroling we will go! Everyone-of any age- is invited to join the Annual Intergenerational Car Caravan Christmas Caroling mission. **We will meet after church on December 7th** for a light lunch and a little bit of practice before we take the show on the road. Two or three different teams will then caravan to some of the homes of our homebound members and friends. You may have the energy for only a couple of stops or you may feel able to go to everyone on your team's list---you will be appreciated for whatever you are able to do! **Please let Mary Bolaños or Robin Edwards know if you are able to join the fun so that there will be enough lunch.**

A Memorial Service for Jim Babcock will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 13 at Bobbitt's Memorial Chapel.

Leonard Scholarship Applications for Fall 2026 are available in the church office and on the church website. All applications must be in the church office by February 28, 2026. Any questions can be emailed to Lynda Savage. LKSavage3@gmail.com

The Celebration of Life for Curtis Webster will be held at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 23, 2026. People from all chapters of his life are invited. 2200 San Joaquin Hills Road, Newport Beach, CA 92660

Thank you for your generous support of our food participants. Thank you for your generous donations of shelf-stable foods. A suggestion list is available at reception, and on our website. We encourage bargain shopping since all donations can be put to good use. **Currently we would especially appreciate both regular & pop-top cans of fruit.**

News and announcements are available in your Friday *Keeping in Touch* emails. If you are not receiving these, and you would like to, contact Mimi in the church office.

Music Box

The people of Brindleford walked past the old shrine every day without giving it much thought. It had once been the pride of the village, but generations had passed since anyone visited it except the caretakers who dutifully polished its threshold and swept its steps of fallen leaves. Inside hung a brass lantern, blackened with age, its glass chimney warped by centuries of weather. According to village lore, it would ignite only in the hour of great danger. According to everyone under the age of sixty, it was a charming relic from a superstitious age.

Keren, apprentice to the lampwright, found the whole thing unbearable. It wasn't the superstition he objected to; it was the imprecision. If the lantern was meant to warn the village, why hadn't it ever lit? Was danger truly absent, or had they simply clung to a false comfort? These questions threaded through his thoughts like briars. The elders offered only placid smiles, which irritated him more than a scolding would have.

His apprenticeship gave him just enough expertise to be dangerous. He knew how lanterns were built — how they breathed, how they fed their flames. He could not accept that this soot-choked artifact held any real power. And beneath his irritation was something quieter: a faint, persistent unease he refused to name. So, late one night, after too much stewing and not enough sleep, he stole it.

The shrine door protested with a long sigh as he pushed it open. The lantern was heavier than he expected, almost stubborn in his hands, but he carried it through the sleeping village to his workshop. He intended to disassemble it, reveal its emptiness, and finally quiet the itch in his mind.

Under lamplight he examined every inch of it. No flint. No wick. No oil. No secret compartments. Just metal and glass. He felt vindicated. “Nothing but old stories,” he murmured, touching the frame as if to console it.

The flame burst to life the instant his fingers brushed the brass.

Keren yelped and nearly toppled from his stool. The fire burned clear and steady, impossibly bright. It gave off no heat, no smoke. When he waved his hand through it, the flame flowed around his fingers like cool water.

He tried to snuff it out with cloth, then sand, then by plunging the whole lantern into his water barrel. The flame persisted, flickering almost playfully. Near dawn he surrendered, too exhausted to think. He left the lantern on his workbench and stumbled to bed.

Sleep offered no refuge. Through the cracks beneath his door the strange light seeped into his room, not illuminating objects but truths. In the corner where he tossed broken lamps he would "fix later," he saw the face of his first teacher — the one he'd abandoned without farewell when he found a better apprenticeship. At the foot of his bed he saw Mara, the friend whose trust he had betrayed for ambition's sake. And overhead, in the rafters, he saw all the little evasions, the timid gestures, the shabby choices that had quietly shaped his days.

By sunrise his heart felt scraped raw. Panicked, he carried the lantern back to the shrine and shoved it inside. "Take it," he whispered, as if the old walls might swallow it. But when he turned to leave, the lantern stood at his heels, steady and patient.

It was then he realized the truth: the lantern had not flared to warn the village. It had flared to warn him. Not of disaster in the sky, but of the quiet catastrophe of drifting through a life of moral poverty. The unexpected hour had come, not as doom, but as a summons.

Keren sat on the shrine steps, lantern beside him, morning light soft on the stones. He closed his eyes, took a trembling breath, and asked the question he had avoided for years.

"What must I see?"

The lantern flickered once, as if in answer, and began its quiet work of illumination. And Keren understood that the danger had never been "outside" at all, but in the dark recesses of his own soul.

-- William Zeidler



The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames.

As a church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), our congregational life is governed by the Ruling Elders of our current Session:

Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough,
Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Rebecca Allen, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas, Chris Wright-Thomas,
Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda, Rick
Rodriguez, Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith, and Christian Usher.