

Epiphany Sunday

January 4, 2026

10:30 a.m. Worship



"And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road." —Matthew 2:12

First Presbyterian Church

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www.fpcsb.net

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

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, February 1st.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Nancy Horstmann

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

"This is not any map you know. Forget longitude. Forget latitude. Do not think of distances or of plotting the most direct route. Astrolabe, sextant, compass: these will not help you here. This is the map that begins with a star. This is the chart that starts with fire, with blazing, with an ancient light that has outlasted generations, empires, cultures, wars. Look toward once, then look away. Close your eyes and see how the map begins to blossom behind your lids, how it constellates, its lines stretching out from where you stand. You cannot see it all, cannot divine the way it will turn and spiral, cannot perceive how the road you walk will lead you finally inside, through the labyrinth of your own heart and belly and lungs. But step out and you will know what the wise who traveled this path before you knew: the treasure in this map is buried not at journey's end but at its beginning."

- Jan Richardson, *Where the Map Begins*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE *All Beautiful the March of Days* G. Lutkin (1963-)
Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

*** CALL TO WORSHIP** (*based on Jeremiah 31*)

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,

✠ **and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;**

Give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people."

✠ **They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion;**

They shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord,

✠ **their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall
never languish again.**

With expectation and joy as we begin a new year, let us worship the living God!

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

*** Stand if you are able** **✠ The congregation will read.**

PRAYER of CONFESSION

“If we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us.” And yet, we know that we need to begin again for we have fallen short of the glory of God. So, we come to the baptismal font seeking a fresh start. With confidence that God hears our prayers and has adopted us as beloved children, let us confess our sins.. *(based on 1 John 1:8)*

(Take a moment to silently name your longing.)

✠ We cry out: “Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel,” for we are a people in need of saving. You promise to gather your people, but we confess that we want to put limitations on who is saved. We want you to save those we define as strong and beautiful and wise; You call the blind and the lame, the children and those in labor. Forgive us, O Holy God, for our prejudice and narrow vision. Forgive us for our lack of faith. Forgive us for doubting your promise and declining your invitation. By your Spirit, renew us. Turn our mourning into joy and our sorrow into gladness that we might return to you and your way.

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. According to the riches of Christ’s grace, we are redeemed. Hear and believe this good news:

✠ In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Amen.

(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, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

TIME with the CHILDREN

[After Time with the Children, our children are encouraged to worship with us. There are activity bags and books in the Narthex.]

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 60:1-6

Arise, shine, for your light has come,

and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.
Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.
A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.
They shall bring gold and frankincense
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Matthew 2:1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means the least among the rulers of Judah,
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the

house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Stephen W. Smith

ANTHEM

DEACONS' MINUTE for MISSION

Kyle Smith

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

***PRAYER OF THANKS**

We give you thanks, O God, for the many blessings that you have bestowed upon us. As you have chosen us for a purpose and praise, may the gifts we bring be a symbol of our dedication to you. Bless our tithes, gifts and offerings. Bless us that we might be ever more faithful in your work of reconciliation, love and joy. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

✠ **Amen.**

CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION to the LORD'S TABLE

SURSUM CORDA

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.**

GREAT PRAYER of THANKSGIVING

(When the congregation hears “God, in your mercy”, please respond:)

✠ Hear our prayer.

SANCTUS

James C. Huffstutler

✠ Holy, holy, Lord Almighty, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Glory in the highest.
Blessed, blessed,
blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna,
Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, OUR 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.

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

THE WORDS of INSTITUTION

WE SHARE GOD’S GIFTS

*As you return to your seats,
we invite you to take a star to pray with this year.*

(Communion will be served by intinction at two stations. As you feel ready, please come up the center aisle to a station, receive a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, eat it, and return to your seat by the side aisle. The cup is non-alcoholic. Gluten-free bread can be found at the station by the pulpit. There will be rovers to bring the elements to you if you do not wish to come forward. We sing as we commune.)

HYMN 88

O Come, O Come, 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.

VENI EMMANUEL

O come, thou Wisdom from on high,
who orderest all things mightily;
to us the path of knowledge show;
and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Root of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save
and give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.

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.

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
 the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
 but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
 I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
 and stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
 close by me forever and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
 and fit us for heaven to live with thee there.

PRAYER after COMMUNION

✠ Here we have tasted your goodness and grace,
 felt the nearness of your Spirit and the power of Community.
 Help us to follow wherever you lead
 And share the gifts we've been given. Amen.

*HYMN 136

Go, Tell It on the Mountain

GO TELL IT

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE

POSTLUDE

(

GREETERS: Mindy Rueda, Amy Rueda

USHERS: John-Paul Fletcher, *Lead Usher*

Marilyn Kraft, Jim Siegmund, *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

Marianna Fowles, Sandy Garza, Debora Holk

Elders: **Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams**

Deacons: **Rebecca Allen, Brent Nord, Chris Thomas**

This Weeks' Celebrations

Jan 4 **Alex Rueda**

Jan 5 **Sheila Cimino**

Jan 6 **Rachel Garvin**

Jan 9 **Cole Charles Jones**

Alternative Christmas. The Presbyterian Women extend their heartfelt gratitude to the congregation for their remarkable generosity during this year's Alternative Christmas. Your donations reached a total of \$1285, which will support our Church's missions as follows: \$805 for the Food Ministry, \$740 for Life Skillz, and \$640 for the Intern Program. ***Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.***

Annual Reports. Committee Chairs, project leaders, and all others who serve and lead our congregation: It is that time again, when we ask you to write a (brief!) report on where you saw God at work in your organization in 2025. **All reports must be submitted to Amy Smith amymys952@aol.com and/or Mimi Lange pres.first@gmail.com NO LATER THAN Friday, January 16th, so they can be included in the Annual Report to the Congregation.** Presbyterian Women must include a financial report. If you have any questions or need help, contact Amy or Mimi.

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**

2026 Companions on the Inner Way Retreat Opportunity.

This spring, *Companions on the Inner Way* will once again offer a safe communal place to explore deep longings for the Holy. Grounded in the Christian tradition, the guided retreats incorporate body, mind, and soul through presentations, dialogue, spiritual practices, art, music, movement, and worship with Eucharist. The retreats strive to create an environment that is theologically curious, radically welcoming, and liturgically vibrant.

The retreat will take place from Sunday, March 8, 2026 to Friday, March 13, 2026 at Serra Retreat Center in Malibu, California.

Registration information can be accessed at www.cotiway.org
Please contact Christa Wallis chriwallis@aol.com if you'd like to apply for a scholarship to help defray the cost of attending.

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 cans or bags of beans (pinto, navy, red, etc.).**

Winter Camp will take place on the weekend of March 13th-15th. Registration begins now. We're inviting you to an awesome winter camp weekend designed just for 6th thru 12th graders! Our theme this year is ***Warm Hearts, Renewed Spirits***, and it's all about experiencing God's life-giving warmth in the middle of a cold, crazy season. You can look forward to powerful worship & messages, winter fun & chill time, real community and so much more. Call (877)285-0199 or email registration@bblccc.com for more information. Cost is \$165 per camper. Financial help is available.

Music Box

It was not a talent Lysa was born with. It was acquired, the way one acquires a scar or a limp — by necessity.

As a child, her parents had expected her to become a concert musician. She knew no other path. She was offered no other options. She came to know how conservatory rooms smelled faintly of dust and ambition. She knew all too well how the electric silence before an audition felt far longer than the audition itself.

There was one recital she never forgot. Not because it was disastrous, but because it was so — nondescript. She simply could

not give herself to the music. Her fingers were there, but not her heart.

When it was over, the audience smiled. And yawned. And left. She did not quit music. She stepped sideways.

Criticism proved safer. A way to remain near music without standing naked inside it. Words that kept emotion at arm's length came easily. Her reviews were precise, admired. Editors trusted her bland restraint.

On a Tuesday afternoon, she passed a street musician on her way back from a small chamber concert — technically immaculate, emotionally underwhelming. She had already composed half the review in her head.

The street musician's attire and instrument were unremarkable. Old. The kind you noticed only because they seemed so inconsequential.

She slowed despite herself.

He was not playing for the street. He was playing as though the street had wandered into something already underway. The music neither invited nor resisted attention. It moved forward at its own pace, leaving small, inexplicable gaps — rests that felt less like intention than breath.

Lysa waited for the hook. It never came.

She wrote him off and went home.

But the next week, she found herself adjusting her route.

She continued reviewing concerts. Yet afterward, she drifted back to the same corner.

She tried listening harder. Didn't help.

She tried listening analytically. Worse.

One afternoon she approached him, notebook in hand, and asked an easy question about his training.

He smiled — kindly, without warmth — and said he preferred not to talk while the music was still nearby

What does that mean? she wondered. But she did not ask him to explain.

Over time, she noticed patterns. He packed up and left without ceremony whenever anyone applauded. He never acknowledged praise. A few people lingered after he left, as though waiting for a sentence to complete itself.

Once, she brought a colleague. “Pleasant enough,” he shrugged, already walking away.

That night, Lysa dreamed of her failed performance — not as it had been, but as it had felt. The forward-leaning hope that couldn’t find its footing. The terrible generosity of trying to offer something unarmored — and falling flat.

Weeks passed. Her reviews grew shorter. Adjectives began to feel excessive. She began leaving white space in her drafts, then deleting entire paragraphs. No one complained.

One day, standing at the corner, she realized he was playing a piece she herself had played at her last recital. The notes were the same, but the spacing was different. The rests were longer. Almost inconvenient.

She recognized them.

They were the places she had rushed through, years ago, afraid.

Without quite deciding to, she stopped writing reviews.

Deadlines passed. The world did not end.

The street musician disappeared soon after, without announcement or explanation.

Then, one evening, after years of neglect, she took out her instrument and played — slowly, leaving all the room in the world for what might arrive — or not.

Nothing remarkable happened.

-- 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:

Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams,
Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jon Horstmann, Lynda Savage,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

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