



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH *of*
CHATTANOOGA

The Lord's Day

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

9:00 AM

At First Presbyterian, we seek to be a healthy church exhibiting all the fullness of Christ as we disciple believers who develop spiritually, connect relationally, and engage missionally to reach Chattanooga and the world with the gospel.

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

WORSHIP REFLECTION

Isaiah, the prophet of Christmas,
leads us to see the ministry of Jesus,
Whose coming brought light to a land
enshrouded in darkness.

This light is not merely physical but spiritual,
illuminating hearts and restoring hope
through the presence of the divine King.

— *adapted from Alec Motyer*

God has set a Savior against sin,
a heaven against a hell,
light against darkness, good against evil,
and the breadth, length, depth, and height of grace
that is in Himself for my good,
against all the power, strength, and subtlety
of every enemy.

— *John Bunyan*

Back in the 8th century B.C., the prophet Isaiah
looks outward at the world in which he lives
and inward at his own heart
and sees a menacing darkness
that is not just imaginary,
but incredibly real and perilous.
Into this terrifying darkness,
He prophesies about God's rescue plan—
how God's light would conquer the darkness.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Merciful God,
You sent Your messengers the prophets
to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation.
Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins,
that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE PRAISE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

GATHERING SONG

Youth Choir

*“Tell It on the Mountain” arr. Lloyd Larson
Please sing bold text as directed.*

Chorus:

**Go, tell it on the mountain
Over the hills and ev'rywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born**

1 While shepherds kept their watching
O'er silent flocks by night
Behold, throughout the heavens
There shone a holy light

Chorus

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
When, lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth

Go, tell it!
Tell it on the mountain

Chorus

Tell it! Jesus Christ is born!
Go now and tell it
Jesus Christ is born!

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING & PRAYER OF INVOCATION

† *Please stand as you are able.*

† SONG OF PRAISE

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

1 **O come, all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him
Born the King of angels**

Chorus:

**O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord**

2 **Sing, choirs of angels
Sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above
Glory to God!
Glory in the highest!**

Chorus

3 **Yea, Lord we greet Thee
Born this happy morning
Jesus to Thee be all glory giv'n
Word of the Father
Late in flesh appearing**

Chorus

1 Angels, from the realms of glory
Wing your flight o’er all the earth
Ye who sang creation’s story
Now proclaim Messiah’s birth

Chorus:

**Come and worship, come and worship
Worship Christ, the newborn King**

2 Shepherds in the fields abiding
Watching o’er your flocks by night
God with us is now residing
Yonder shines the infant Light

Chorus

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 34

Pastor: Why do we call Jesus “our Lord”?

**People: Because not with gold or silver, but with His precious blood,
He has set us free from the darkness of sin and from the tyranny of the devil,
and has bought us, body and soul, to be His very own.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

**O God, Whose glory it is always to have mercy,
be gracious to us for we have gone astray in our hearts.
Blessed are the poor in spirit,
but in our pride we exalt ourselves.
Blessed are those who mourn,
but in our envy we recoil from others’ happiness.
Blessed are the meek and the peacemakers,
but in our wrath we lash out in revenge.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
but in our sloth we despair of virtue.
Blessed are the merciful,
but in our greed we demand to possess and fail to give.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
but in our lust we sacrifice others to serve ourselves.
Forgive us for all the ways that we have loved the darkness.
We ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

3 Sages, leave your contemplations
Brighter visions beam afar
Seek the great Desire of nations
Ye have seen His natal star

Chorus

4 Saints, before the altar bending,
Watching long in hope and fear;
Suddenly the Lord, descending,
In His temple shall appear.

Chorus

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Luke 1:78-79 ESV

Because of the tender mercy of our God,
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

† SONG OF ASSURANCE

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

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| <p>1 Let all mortal flesh keep silence
And with fear and trembling stand
Ponder nothing worldly minded
For with blessing in His hand
Christ our God to earth descendeth
Our full homage to demand</p> <p>2 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 heav'nly food</p> | <p>3 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 pow'rs of hell may vanish
As the darkness clears away</p> <p>Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Lord Most High!</p> |
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PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

More news and other resources are located on pages 8-10.

GREETING & DISMISSAL TO CHILDREN'S CHURCH

*Please take your PreK-1st grade children to the check-in station
at the 1st – 3rd grade Children's Wing on the first floor behind the Sanctuary.*

† DOXOLOGY

**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
Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel**

THE WORD FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

SERMON

“A Salvation Like No Other”

Isaiah 9:1-2 (p. 573)

The Prophet of Christmas: Advent Studies in Isaiah

Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer

SERMON OUTLINE

1. The Reach of God's Salvation (v.1)

2. The Reality of God's Salvation (v.2)

†SONG OF RESPONSE

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight
- 2 For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love
O morning stars together
Proclaim thy holy birth
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to men on earth
- 3 O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

THE SENDING OF GOD’S PEOPLE

†BENEDICTION

based on John 1:5

May the light of Christ, which shines in the darkness
and can never be overcome,
illuminate your heart and fill you with peace.
May His presence dispel every shadow,
and His power sustain you in every trial
until the day breaks and the shadows flee away! Amen.

Worship Leader

West Breedlove, *Assistant Director of Worship*

Presiding Minister

Ron Brown, *Pastor of Congregational Care*

Minister of the Word

Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer, *Senior Pastor*

Sanctuary Flowers Dedication

The flowers today are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Edgar J. Jolley, Sr., and in celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Nancy Jolley and family. The flowers will be arranged by the Flower Committee and delivered by volunteers to our homebound and hospitalized on Monday, December 9.

RESOURCES

Connect with Us

New to 1st Pres? Scan the QR code with your phone camera to fill out a connect card, and one of our pastors will get in touch with you.



Sunday School

Scan the QR code, or go to 1stPresbyterian.com/SundaySchool to view a list of Sunday School offerings for adults, youth, and children. Flyers with adult classes are also available in the Connector and posted around the building.



Stay Up-to-Date

Sign up for our newsletter to receive a comprehensive email each Friday on all things First Pres and the occasional letter from our pastors with important updates. Scan the QR code, or go to 1stPresbyterian.com under the “Resources” tab.



Giving Update

as of 12/1

Fiscal year runs April 1 - March 1

	<u>Deacons (General Fund)</u>	<u>World Missions</u>
Annual Budget	\$3,460,000	\$900,000
Budgeted Giving	\$2,328,846	\$605,769
Raised	\$2,158,048	\$518,166



To make a secure contribution to 1st Pres, scan the QR code or go to 1stPresbyterian.com/Give.

NOTE: Donations to First Presbyterian Church are tax-deductible. In accordance with IRS regulations, donors agree that ultimate control over donated funds lies with the church.

NEW & UPCOMING AT FIRST PRES

New Member Correction

Please welcome new members Frank and Nicole May, who joined Sunday, November 24, and their covenant children Elise, Thomas, Ani, Sophie, Kai, Eden, River, and Bryce!

It's a Wonderful Life! Senior Fellowship & Program – December 12

We will celebrate Christmas with composer, arranger, jazz pianist, and educator Prakash Wright. Prakash will bring us some of our Christmas favorites, with songs from his album “In the City of David.” Fellowship begins at 10:30am, followed by the program at 11:00am and lunch (\$8) at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Reservations are required; please email Janette.Barnes@Gmail.com or Rwrenn@Epbf.com.

Honor Roll Christmas Cakes

Christmas cakes will be ready downstairs outside of the Fellowship Hall for delivery to our Honor Roll and Honor Friends on Thursday, December 12, during and after *It's a Wonderful Life!* We appreciate any volunteers who are able to come help deliver cakes.

Kids Playgroup – December 13

Families are invited every second Friday of the month from 9:00am - 11:00am to the Student Center for fellowship and connection with other parents while your kids (ages 0-5) play in a safe and fun environment!

“Joy to the World” – December 15

Join us for our free annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 15 at 6:00pm in the Sanctuary, as we contemplate the birth of Christ through Scripture and song. Friends and family are invited! Childcare is available for ages 5 and under upon request; please email our Nursery Coordinator Mary Campbell Harris at MC@1stPresbyterian.com by December 13.

Patten Towers Chili-Cornbreak-Cookies Cook-Off – December 19

We're looking for volunteers to help us make food for the Patten Towers Christmas Party on Thursday, December 19. This is a wonderful opportunity to show the love of Christ to our neighbors and bring them some holiday joy! Residents will cast their votes during the party on their favorite dishes. To participate, contact our Director of Community Outreach Shad Guinn at Shad@1stPresbyterian.com.

December 24 & 29 Worship Schedules

Please take note of our worship schedules during the holidays. On Christmas Eve, we will have two identical communion services at 4:00pm and 6:00pm, and on Sunday, December 29 we will have our usual worship at 9:00am and 11:00am, but Sunday School will only be available for children; youth and adults are invited to a time of fellowship at 10:15am in the Fellowship Hall!

NEW & UPCOMING AT FIRST PRES, CONTINUED

New Children's Ministry Director

We are excited to announce the hiring of a new Director of Children's Ministry, Jessica Livermore! Jessica spent most of her growing up years in Florida and Indiana, in a family where the Gospel was central, and she came to trust in Jesus at an early age. She studied Elementary Education at Ball State University, then spent two years sharing the Gospel with college students in East Asia as an intern with Cru. After returning to the states, the Lord led her to serve as a children's ministry director for the last five years in Carmel, Indiana. We will welcome her to First Pres starting mid-February.

News from the Capital Campaign

The Capital Campaign Committee is working on producing a Case Statement, a central repository of information regarding the project, which will answer questions like what the project is and how it was developed, including rough timelines and action plans. Please pray for our leaders as they work through the various challenges of capacity concerns, facility upgrades, and future capital needs, and that they may be able to answer these and more questions to put an accurate Case Statement together for the congregation. For questions, please email CapitalCampaign@1stPresbyterian.com.

Connect Team & Event Usher Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers to join our Connect Team and/or to help with event ushering. As part of these teams, you will be helping us build a warm and inviting atmosphere for newcomers by greeting people at various church entrances on Sunday mornings and assisting with directions and general information. These are both great ways to volunteer without a huge time commitment! You can volunteer once a month, once a quarter, or even once a year. Anything helps! If you're interested in joining our Connect Team, please contact Elder Jim Lyon at JimLyon1@Gmail.com. If you're interested in being an event Usher, please contact Deacon Dale [Granberry DaleG13@Gmail.com](mailto:GranberryDaleG13@Gmail.com).

"First Takes," a Podcast from First Pres

What is the difference, if any, between the Bible being inerrant and infallible? If there is a difference, what is the significance? Pastor Gabe Fluhrer has the answers in the latest release from our podcast, *First Takes*, available on Apple, Spotify, and anywhere you get your podcasts! Got a question? Submit it for consideration for our "Ask a Pastor" segment to our Director of Media Arts Dylan Thomas at Dylan@1stPresbyterian.com.

Recently Bereaved

Please be in prayer for those in our congregation who have recently lost a loved one: The Spangler family, in the passing of First Pres member Margaret Spangler on November 26; First Pres member Jan Hardy Fanslow, Kay Baker, and family in the passing of their father, First Pres member Warren Hardy on November 28; the Franklin family, in the passing of First Pres member Betty Franklin on November 30.

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