



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH *of*
CHATTANOOGA

The Lord's Day

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024

11:00 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 REFLECTIONS

We will never worship God with a sincere heart,
or be roused to fear and obey Him with sufficient zeal,
until we properly understand
how much we are indebted to His mercy. . . .
The faithful, in the darkest moments of their lives,
ought to cheer themselves with this one consolation—
that God does not cease to care for us,
even when He seems to have forgotten us.

—*John Calvin*

Every morning renews the instance of His mercy.
We are under fresh obligations to Him daily,
and therefore ought to offer Him fresh praise.
Herein we are taught to exercise daily dependence
upon Him and expectation from Him.

—*Matthew Henry*

Hope is not found in the absence of trouble
but in the character of God.
The steadfast love and new mercies of God
create hope where despair once ruled.

—*Philip Ryken*

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God,
You have poured upon us
the new light of your incarnate Word.
Grant that this light, enkindled in our hearts,
may shine forth in our lives.
We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Who lives and reigns with You,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

PRELUDE

Sigrid Luther, piano

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past” arr. S. Luther

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

THE PRAISE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

CHORAL INTROIT

Sanctuary Choir

*“My Hope Is in the Lord” by Clayton & James
Please sing bold text.*

**My hope is in the Lord, Who gave Himself for me
And paid the price of all my sin at Calvary.**

Chorus:

**For me He died, for me He lives,
And everlasting life and light He freely gives.**

(Choir) For me He died, for me He lives,
And everlasting life and light He freely gives.

† *Please stand as you are able.*

† CALL TO WORSHIP

Lamentations 3:21-24 ESV

Pastor: But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;
His mercies never come to an end;

**People: They are new every morning;
great is Your faithfulness.
“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,
“therefore I will hope in Him.”**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

† 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.**

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, my Father;
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
 Thou changest not; Thy compassions they fail not;
 As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Chorus

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
 Morning by morning new mercies I see.
 All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
 Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
 Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside! *Chorus*

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
 Naught be all else to me save that Thou art—
 Thou my best thought by day or by night,
 Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom and Thou my true Word;
 I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord,
 Thou my great Father, I Thy true son,
 Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battleshield, sword for my fight;
 Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight,
 Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tow'r,
 Raise Thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
 May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!
 Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
 Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Pastor: Christian, what do you believe concerning the faithfulness of our God?

People: We believe and declare

that the Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made (*Psalm 145:13*).

We affirm that His steadfast love never ceases;

His mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning; great is His faithfulness (*Lamentations 3:22-23*).

We trust in the One who has promised,

for He who promised is faithful (*Hebrews 10:23*).

We rejoice that even when we are faithless,

He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself (*2 Timothy 2:13*).

Our hope rests in this truth: The Lord is faithful,

and He will strengthen and protect us from the evil one (*2 Thessalonians 3:3*).

We proclaim the faithfulness of our God,

Who keeps His covenant of love

to a thousand generations of those who love Him

and keep His commandments (*Deuteronomy 7:9*).

CONFESSION OF SIN

Holy Father,

You are a faithful God Who keeps Your promises.

Yet we are those who tend to go astray in our hearts and who do not guard our spirits.

We ask Your forgiveness for not keeping our promises

and following too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.

Dissolve our hard hearts and make us repentant and contrite

by assuring us of Your unfailing love and Your great compassion

so that we might cultivate faithfulness

and live for Your praise during this upcoming year.

We make our prayer in the name of the One

Who is the fulfillment of all of Your promises,

Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 1:9, 2:1 ESV

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. . . .

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father,

Jesus Christ the righteous.

**Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.**

**Thro’ many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come.
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.**

**The Lord has promised good to me; His Word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.**

**When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we’ve first begun.**

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

OFFERTORY

*“A Mighty Fortress” arr. Mark Hayes**Sanctuary Choir*

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

A mighty fortress is our God! So mighty!
He’s my rock, He’s my fortress, He is my deliverer, my Savior!

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God’s own choosing.
Dost ask Who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He, Lord Sabaoth, His name,
From age to age the same, and He must win the battle.

A mighty fortress is our God, our refuge, our tower, our fortress, our rock,
our deliv’rer, our provider, our Savior, our God!

That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also. The body they may kill;
God’s truth abideth still; His kingdom is forever!

A mighty fortress is our God; a mighty fortress is the Lord, our God!

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

THE WORD FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

SERMON

“Renewal in Daily Life”

Nehemiah 10:1-39 (p. 406)

A City that Lasts; Seeing Christ in the Book of Nehemiah

Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer

SERMON OUTLINE

1. God's Covenant Is the Basis for Renewal (vv. 1-29)

2. Living by God's Covenant Renews All of Life (vv. 30-39)

“How Firm a Foundation”

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with you, O be not dismayed,
For I am your God, and will still give you aid;
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.”

“When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply.
The flame shall not hurt you; I only design
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.”

“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”

THE SENDING OF GOD’S PEOPLE

†BENEDICTION

As you go, may the Word of the Lord
be your firm foundation and unshakable anchor.
And may the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,
so that by the power of His Word and Spirit,
you may abound in hope. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Patrick Rice, organ

*“Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend” by Georg Böhm
(Lord Jesus, turn to us)*

Worship Leader

Carlene Kidwell

Presiding Minister

Joshua Adair, *Pastor of Discipleship*

Minister of the Word

Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer, *Senior Pastor*

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 12/22

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	\$2,528,462	\$657,692
Raised	\$2,425,499	\$660,002



To make a secure contribution to 1st Pres, scan the QR code or go to [1st Presbyterian.com/Give](http://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

Today's Flowers

The flowers today are given to the glory of God: “To Him Who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious Presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen.” *Jude 24-25*

The flowers will be arranged by the Flower Committee and delivered by volunteers to our home-bound and hospitalized on Monday, December 30.

First Cup – January 7

Please join us for our First Cup Men's Breakfast on the first Tuesday of each month from 7:00am - 8:00am in the Nell Davis room. We'll continue our study “The Marks of an Emotionally Healthy Disciple of Jesus,” and enjoy delicious egg & cheese biscuits from Bluegrass Grill (\$5) and lots of coffee.

It's a Wonderful Life! Senior Fellowship & Program – January 9

This month, Todd Morgan of Preserve Chattanooga will speak on “The Power of Preservation.” He'll give us an overview of local preservation efforts, explain why historic preservation is important to our lives and communities, and touch on some recent initiatives. 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@Epbfi.com.

Women's Winter/Spring Bible Studies – Starting January 10 & 14

Women's Bible Studies start January 10th & 14th and we'd love you to join us! Our women's studies offer a place to grow spiritually and connect with friends. There are 7 options to choose from in a variety of formats and meeting days/times and frequencies. For details on times and study topics and to register, go to 1stPresbyterian.com/Women. If you registered for a study in the fall, you do NOT need to re-register unless you are joining a different study. **Childcare** is available upon registration for the morning studies only.

High School Winter Retreat – January 17-20

Our High School students will be going to Pigeon Mountain Crossing in Lafayette, Georgia, for a weekend away. Gunther Griffin, 1st Pres College Ministry Director, will be our speaker! We will have times of fellowship, worship, games, hiking, teaching, prayer, and frisbee golf all on the beautiful 80-acre retreat center! Sign up today at 1stPresbyterian.com/Events.

Inquirer's Class – February 22

Are you interested in learning more about 1st Pres, or would you like to become a member? Come hear about our church's vision for the city, what we believe, and discipleship and ministry opportunities at our next Inquirer's Class on Saturday, February 22, in the Nell Davis Room from 8:30am - 12:00pm! A light breakfast will be provided. Register at 1stPresbyterian.com/Events by Friday, February 14.

NEW & UPCOMING AT FIRST PRES, CONTINUED

Capital Campaign Update

A major update was released from the Capital Campaign recently via email to those subscribe to our announcements. If you didn't receive this letter, or you do not use email, there are hard copies available in the Connector at the literature table (just through the double-doors to the Connector on the right.)

Nursery Coordinator

Our Interim Nursery Coordinator Mary Campbell Harris will be stepping away at the end of this month. We are so thankful for the time and love she has poured into our Children's Ministry during her time with us. If you, or someone you know, may be interested in this part-time position, please email Pastor of Discipleship Joshua Adair at Josh@1stPresbyterian.com.

Hospitality Coordinator Hire

We are excited to announce the hiring of a new staff member, Hospitality Coordinator Nicky Lewin! Nicky grew up in Tacoma, Washington, and inherited a passion for cooking, particularly baking, from her parents; her dad was a restaurant manager and her mom a pastry chef and wedding cake maker. Nicky is also a musician, having graduated with a degree in vocal performance from Covenant College, and has participated in several music events at First Pres. She and her husband, whom she met while studying abroad in France, have been happily married for 23 years here in Chattanooga and have five children—four sons and a daughter. As Hospitality Coordinator, Nicky will manage our kitchen, oversee midweek meals, organize hospitality supplies, and assist ministry teams with hospitality needs. She will begin full-time with us in January!

“First Takes,” a Podcast from First Pres

What is the most impactful thing we can do as members of First Pres (or any local church) to further the Gospel? Pastor Gabe Fluhrer has the answers in the latest release from *First Takes*, available on Apple, Spotify, and anywhere you get your podcasts! Got a question? Submit it for our “Ask a Pastor” segment to our Director of Media Arts Dylan Thomas at Dylan@1stPresbyterian.com.

First Pres Sermons Podcast

Our sermons are available to listen to on your favorite podcast platform! Just search “First Presbyterian Church Chattanooga.”

Church Office Holiday Closure

Our offices will be closed December 31 - January 1 in observation of the New Year.

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