



First Presbyterian Church

of Raleigh, North Carolina

Serving Christ from the heart of the city to the ends of the earth with love, faith, and action.

November 30, 2025

1st Sunday of Advent

We Gather in God's Presence

Gathering Music

Chiming of the Trinity

Welcome and Announcements

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger

Introit *Schwingt freudig euch empor* from BWV 36 J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Soar in your joy up to the lofty stars, you tongues, which are now joyful
in Zion! But stay! The sound need not spread so far, for he himself
draws near to you, the Lord of glory.

Lighting of the Advent Candle and Call to Worship

(8:30) The Beal Family (11:00) The Kesterson Family

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, days of justice and righteousness
for God's people. The days are surely coming, and until then, we join with
the faithful of God and hope.



Sing the hope of Ad - vent, see the com - ing light: through the clouds and



shad - ows, hope is shin - ing bright. In Je - sus Christ our



God has come to dwell; sing the hope of Ad - vent: come, Em - man - u - el!

We light this candle as a sign of hope and an act of trust, even as we pray,
Come, Lord Jesus, come!

*Hymn 827

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

WIE SCHON
LEUCHETET

Welcome to Worship!
Some notes about the
service:

*An asterisk denotes
standing, in body or
spirit.

**Words in bold are
read aloud by the
congregation.**

Advent is the period
of time, just prior to
Christmas, set aside
for preparing
for the birth of Christ.
Advent marks the
beginning of the
Christian year, and
the Biblical texts of
the season speak of
promise and hope.
The liturgical
color of the season is
blue, which evokes
the hope that we have
as we await the
coming of the Lord.

We welcome a
number of wonderful
musicians into our
service today:
Margaret Garriss and
Owen Beal on the
violin, Martin
Brinkley on the oboe
d'amore, Lisa Liske
on the cello, soprano
Lindsey Bruner
Woodcock,
countertenor Dietmar
Szymanowski, and
bass Alex Smith.

At the Prayer of
Confession we
remember that all
things have their
beginning and their
end in the love of God.
In the light of that
truth, we are free to
confess our weariness
and our worry,
knowing that God is
with us.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, always with us, always coming: we confess that we do not know how to prepare for your Advent. We have forgotten how to hope in miracles; we have ignored the promise of your kingdom; we get distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God. Grant us the simple wonder of this season. Make us ready for your coming into the world.

(Let us continue our confession in silence)

Assurance of Pardon

Response to Pardon

Friends in Christ, in response to this gift of God's grace, how then shall we live?

With gratitude, following after the Lord Jesus Christ, who calls us to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves.

This is the way of Jesus, in whom we find life!

*Response of Gratitude | Refrain from Angels We Have Heard on High

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

Gloria in excelsis Deo!

GLORIA

We Listen and Respond to God's Word

Children's Moment (11:00)

Beth Thaxton

After the Children's Moment, children ages 4 - 2nd gr. are invited to the Library for Children's Church and will return to their pews during the hymn following the sermon.

Prayer for Illumination

Ian McCaslin (8:30) and Hope Carmichael (11:00)

Scripture Reading

Romans 13: 11-14

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Anthem

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland from BWV 36

J.S. Bach

Come now, Savior of the Gentiles known as the child of a virgin,
all the world is amazed that God ordained such a birth for him.

Scripture Reading

Isaiah 2: 1-5

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

His Ways and His Paths

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger

Silent Reflection

*Hymn 86

The People Who Walked in Darkness

ISAIAH 9

We pray the Prayer for
Illumination before
reading scripture
because we recognize
that, without the work
of the Spirit, it's
impossible for us truly
to hear the good news,
especially when that
good news includes a
challenging word
within it.

During our time of
Silent Reflection ask
yourself, "Given what I
have heard and
experienced today, is
God calling me to
change or grow in any
way?"

Joys and Concerns of the Church Family

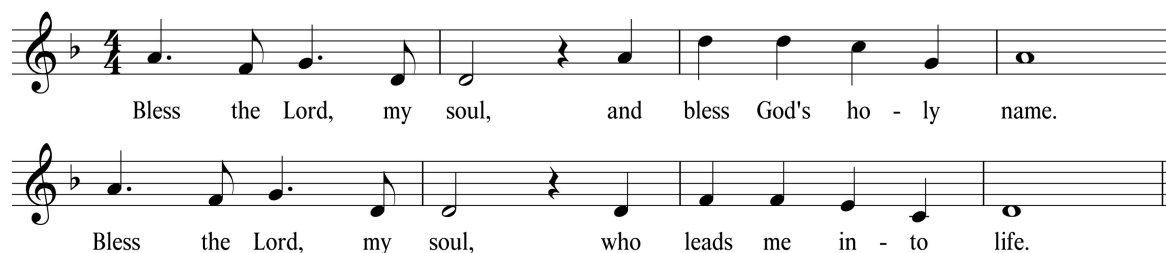
Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession and The Lord's Prayer

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.

"To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world." --Theologian Karl Barth

Response to Prayer | Hymn 544

BLESS THE LORD (Taize)



An Invitation to Generosity

Offertory

Der du bist dem Vater gleich from BWV 36

J.S. Bach

You who are equal to the father, lead forth victory in the flesh,
so that your eternal divine strength may support in us our sick flesh.

*Doxology | Hymn 609

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures high and low.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise God in Jesus fully known:
Creator Word, and Spirit one.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was given to us by Christ himself. Before church governments were devised, before creeds were formalized, even before the first word of the New Testament was written, the Lord's Supper was firmly fixed at the heart of Christian faith and life. With bread and cup, in words and actions, the promises of God are made visible and concrete. The Word we have heard read and preached is now confirmed, for all that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ means is focused in this Sacrament.

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up 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

Distribution of the elements

(The bread is gluten free and the cup contains juice.)

Prayer after communion

We Carry God's Word into the World

*Hymn 102

Savior of the Nations, Come

NUN KOMM, DER
HEIDEN HEILAND

*Charge and Benediction

During the season of Advent, the congregation is invited to be seated for the Postlude.

Postlude

Toccata on NOEL NOUVELET

Marcel Dupre (1886-1971)

*Chiming of the Trinity

The Chancel flowers are dedicated to the glory of God and are given in loving
memory of Clarence Frizzell by his wife, Janice Frizzell.

The Advent stand is given in memory of Dr. W. C. Pressly by his family

Staff Directory (919) 821-5750

The Rev. Dr. Tara W. Bulger	Senior Pastor (Ext. 2206)
The Rev. Laurie Taylor Weicher	Associate Pastor (Ext. 2208)
The Rev. Dr. Ernie Thompson	Parish Associate (Ext. 2102)
The Rev. Judy Pidcock	Parish Associate
Beth Thaxton	Director of Family Ministries & Christian Edu.
Betsy Williams	Director of Youth Ministries
Kathy Johnson	Director of Community Outreach
Mark Woodcock	Director of Music
Lindsay Anne McCall	Director of Children & Youth Music
Dr. Karl Zinsmeister	Organist
Gail Barrett	Church Administrator
Jean Suber	Director of Communications
Melani Willhite	Finance Assistant/Office Manager
Russell Clark	Facilities Manager
Brooke Barrett	Sexton
Tyler Elrod	Audio Visual Lead Tech
Dr. Fain Barker	Director of Child Development Center
Valerie Chassereau	Asst. Director of Child Development Center

Scan the QR code for
ways to become
connected to our
ministries.



A Toccata is a composition using rapidly changing chords and/or fast running passages. Today's Toccata places the melody (the same tune as our Advent candle lighting song) in the feet (the pedals of the organ) while the hands supply the harmony with briskly alternating chords. Toccatas are typically exuberant expressions of praise.

On the Calendar This Week November 30 – December 6

Today – Early Worship 8:30am | Sunday School 9:45am | Late Worship 11:00am

Monday, December 1 – Staff Meeting 1:00pm

Tuesday, December 2 – Enough for Today Podcast 8:00am | CDC Chapel 10:30am
Glenaire Lunch 12:00pm | Advent Bible Study with Laurie 7:00pm

Wednesday, December 3 – Early Birds 6:30am | CDC Music 10:00am | Book Study with Laurie 7:00pm

Thursday, December 4 – Knitting Group 10:00am | Bible Study at Glenaire 2:30pm | Choir 7:00pm

Friday, December 5 – RYC: Evening Carols of Christmas Concert 4:30pm

Saturday, December 6 – No events or activities scheduled.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Advent Bible Study

The angel Gabriel came to Mary and said, "Do not be afraid." Those powerful words shaped the story of the birth of Jesus and continue to have power today. Join us for an Advent study as we acknowledge the brokenness of the world and explore how the coming of Jesus moves us from fear to hope. Class will take place on Zoom at 7pm on December 2, 9, 16 and 23. All are welcome! For Zoom link and additional meeting information, please go to fpcraleigh.org/events and click on Advent Bible Study.

Book Club with Laurie

Join Laurie on Zoom on Wednesday, December 3 at 7:00 p.m. for a discussion on "Small Things Like These", by Claire Keegan. The book is available at the public library, and our church library has a couple of copies too. You can find the Zoom link and other information at fpcraleigh.org/events.

Christmas Pageant and Reception

Sunday, December 7 at 5pm, come watch the children (ages 3 and up) and youth bring the Nativity story to life as they provide action to a narrated pageant for all ages to enjoy! Reception to follow in Memorial Hall.

Quiet Christmas Worship Service

Begin the season of Advent with us in a service that invites us to draw near to God. While the world tells us we must be merry and bright or busy at all times, this service provides the opportunity to slow down, be still and feel God's love surrounding you. This will be a meaningful service for those who are grieving as well as anyone looking to experience the miracle of the incarnation in a beautiful time of worship. Join us Monday, December 8, at 7pm.

Adult Fellowship Carol Sing & Lunch

Back by popular demand on Tuesday, December 9 at 11am, this time of carol singing around the piano and lunch in Memorial Hall will be led by Karl Zinsmeister. This is a free event but please register. Go to fpcraleigh.org/events to register or call the church office. All are welcome, so please bring a friend!

Holiday Poinsettias for our At Home Members

We'll continue the First Presbyterian tradition of delivering poinsettias to our At Home members on Wednesday, December 10. Plants can be picked up at the church from 9-11am for delivery. If you'd like to volunteer to make a poinsettia delivery, please go to our fpcraleigh.org/events to register.

Thank you for helping to continue this Christmas tradition!

Christmas Caroling

You are invited to join this year's Congregational Christmas Caroling on Sunday, December 14, from 4-5:30pm.

Participants will be organized into groups who will visit and sing for members of our church family. All ages are welcome.

Each caroling group will make 3-4 nearby stops. If caroling isn't your thing, you can bake cookies to go into tins that will be given out by the carolers. To sign-up or if you or a family member would like to be caroled to, please go to fpcraleigh.org/events or call the church.

Hymn Sing

Join us on Sunday, December 21 at 10am in Memorial Hall for light breakfast snacks coordinated by Christian Education Committee, advent-themed mural art for children to partake in, and, of course, hymns! All are welcome! Bring a friend!

Christmas Eve Worship Services

We invite you to celebrate the birth of our Savior with us at one of our beautiful Christmas Eve services:

4:00 p.m. - Children & Family Service: A joyful service filled with bells, singing, and excitement for all ages! Perfect for families with little ones.

7:00 p.m. - Service of Lessons & Carols: Hear the Christmas story come to life through scripture and song, from prophecy to fulfillment. A rich and meaningful service for all.

11:00 p.m. - Candlelight Communion Service: Join us as we usher in Christmas morning with a peaceful candlelight service and the sharing of Communion. A holy and reflective moment to experience the true meaning of Christmas.

We would love for you to be part of this special evening. Bring your loved ones and celebrate the gift of Jesus together. All are welcome!

FPC Shares Item for November

This month's FPC Shares item is Canned Vegetables! Bring this item and/or your favorite non-perishable food donations to the church. There are FPC Shares receptacles on both sides of the Edge Lobby and in two places in the Lisa Ham Gathering Space outside the sanctuary.

Mission Spotlight

PC(USA) Christmas Joy Offering

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up past, present, and future leaders of the church. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. This Offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. If you would like to contribute to this special offering, please mail a check to First Presbyterian Church with "Joy Gift" in the memo line.