

First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro December 22, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

We invite you to light a candle as you enter the worship space to prepare your heart and mind for worship.

Gathering Music: Hymn No. 85 – Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

TIF IN VELDELE

Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness. He shall bring salvation to Israel, God fulfills the promise.

Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness. He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.

Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness. Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.

Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness. He is coming; tell the glad tidings. Let your light be shining.

Welcome & Announcements

Jill Duffield

Call to Worship and Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Crawford, Danielle, Weezie, and Ford Miller

Leader: For unto us a child was born, For this world ... Jesus, who is Light of the World. All: Love was proclaimed, Strength and power were promised.

Call to Worship continues, over

Leader: Jesus, Light of the World, meet us this day, For we wait on you. Fill us with the light of your love.

(Silence is observed. The first four candles are lit.)

All: Jesus, Light of the World, With your light, transform this world.

– The Methodist Church in Ireland

* Song of Praise: Hymn No. 107 – Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning. Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! the Child of our longing. Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together, he opens wide the heavenly door and lives now inside us forever.

To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a-singing; his humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing; music to heal the broken soul and hymns of loving-kindness. The thunder of his anthems rolls to shatter all hatred and violence. In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing, as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring. Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder, the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.

Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night. Though dark the winter and cheerless, the rising sun shall crown you with light; be strong and loving and fearless. Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story; may God fill every day we share and bring us at last into glory.



THE CONFESSION OF SIN

* Call to Confession and Prayer of Confession

God of the future, You are coming in power to bring all nations under your rule. We confess that we have not expected your kingdom, for we live casual lives, ignoring your promised judgement. We accept lies as truth, exploit neighbors, abuse the earth, and refuse your justice and peace. In your mercy, forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your way, and to seek things that will endure when Christ comes to judge the world. – from Book of Common Worship

A brief period of silence is observed for personal confession.

* Assurance of Pardon

- * The Peace
 - Leader: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

* Passing of the Peace

Response to the Peace: Hymn No. 71 – Surely, It Is God Who Saves Me

Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and God will be my Savior. Matt Bussell

THE WORD OF GOD

The Word Read: Micah 5:2-5a

Janie Underwood

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.
Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel.
And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and he shall be the one of peace.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord. **People: Thanks be to God.**

A Moment of Godly Play for Children of All Ages

Lisa Witherspoon

The Word Read: Luke 1:39-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name; indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord. **People: Thanks be to God.**

The Word Proclaimed: Comfort and Joy? Upended for All Generations

Jill Duffield

Newton Cowan

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Affirmation of Faith

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

. .

Affirmation of Faith continues, over

In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

- from A Brief Statement of Faith

Prayers of the People followed by 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.

Call for the Offering

You may also participate in the offering using the QR code on the back page of this bulletin. Information for giving by other options, including text, app, and regular mail, can be found there as well.



Offertory: Hymn No. 100 – My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great, and my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait. You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my name be blest. Could the world be about to turn?

[Refrain]:

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn. Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

Though I am small, my God, my all, you work great things in me, and your mercy will last from the depths of the past to the end of the age to be. Your very name puts the proud to shame, and to those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the strong to flight, for the world is about to turn. [Refrain]

From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone. Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne. The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn; there are tables spread; every mouth be fed, for the world is about to turn. [Refrain]

Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast: God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp. This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be crushed by God, who is turning the world around. [Refrain] Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here below. Sing praises, Alleluia. Praise God Creator, God the Son, Praise God the Spirit three in one. Sing praises, sing praises, Alleluia! Alleluia!

- * Prayer of Dedication
- * Song of Sending: Hymn No. 384 Soon, and Very Soon

Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King!

No more crying there: we are going to see the King. No more crying there: we are going to see the King. No more crying there: we are going to see the King. Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King!

No more dying there: we are going to see the King. No more dying there: we are going to see the King. No more dying there: we are going to see the King. Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King!

Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Soon and very soon we are going to see the King. Hallelujah, hallelujah, we're going to see the King!

* Benediction



Newton Cowan

Jill Duffield

Today's Worship Leaders

Jill Duffield, Senior Pastor | Matt Bussell, Associate Pastor for Outreach and Mission Newton Cowan, Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care Lisa Witherspoon, Director of Children & Youth Ministry Crawford, Danielle, Weezie, and Ford Miller, FPC Family | Janie Underwood, Lay Reader Will Edwards, Director of Music for Rejoice! | Rejoice! Ensemble

* Let us rise in body or spirit

OMFORT AND JOY?

Advent 2024 at FPC

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WE CONTINUE THE SEASON OF ADVENT.

a time of preparation for God's gift of Christ to our world. We light the fourth candle of

Advent at the beginning of this morning's service.

During Advent we actively prepare for and anticipate the coming of Jesus into our world. While the culture busies itself for Christmas, we as Christians reflect upon the need for the Christ child in our lives as we anticipate Christ's birth with excitement and awareness anew.

OUR ADVENT SYMBOLS INCLUDE:

- The color **blue** of the paraments and pastors' stoles reminds us of our joyful anticipation as we sing songs of waiting, hear stories and scriptures of preparation, and ready ourselves for the birth of the One who was sent to give us the gift of new life.
- The advent wreath: its greenery symbolizing eternal life;
- *The four blue candles* are lit to remind us of the light of Christ that we are to bear into the world;
- *The white Christ candle* that is lit on Christmas eve is a reminder that Christ is the light to the world.

ADVENT WORSHIP & MUSIC

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

 A LITTLE ADVENT MUSIC: ORGAN RECITAL 5 pm, sanctuary A Little Advent music closes with John Alexander.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

- CHRISTMAS EVE – FAMILY NATIVITY SERVICE,
 - 10 am – CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICES at 5:30 and 11 pm

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

 CHRISTMAS DAY CAROLING AND COMMUNION, 10 am, sanctuary



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

ONE SERVICE, 10 am, sanctuary



OUR WINTER EMERGENCY SHELTER OPENS SOON: Partnering with Urban Ministry, we will provide overnight shelter in the Shetler Building for 15 unhoused men. To help, use the QR code *(left)* for more info & sign-ups, or contact Matt Bussell, 336-478-4705 or mbussell@fpcgreensboro.org.

- Volunteers need to bring dinner, work check-in, stay overnight (open to men and women, will assist a staff member from Urban Ministry), and help coordinate.
- You can also donate toiletries: Chapstick, earplugs, deodorant, shave cream /razor, shampoo, bar of soap, toothpaste/toothbrush, gallon bags, socks, comb, tissues, winter hat.

WE WELCOME YOU to the worship of God and to our community of faith. We are a church of growing disciples believing that worship is at the center of all we are and do as Christians.

We seek to be God's changemakers for good in the world. FPC is a Matthew 25 church, and our creation care and hunger ministries have been recognized by the Presbyterian Church USA.





TAKING ATTENDANCE: The QR code, left, directs you to an online form; just open your smartphone camera, hold it over the code, and follow the prompts. If you do not have a smartphone, you can pick up a physical copy of an attendance card as you enter the Life

Center or Sanctuary. If using the paper form, place it in the offering at the end of the service. On the back of the card is a prayer request form. Your submitted prayers will be prayed for by staff members and kept in strict confidence.

NURSERY CARE IS PROVIDED for infants through age 4 on the first floor of Mullin Life Center. Our Child Protection Policy helps ensure our care is safe, loving and appropriate.

WHAT TO DO - UNWELLNESS AND MEDICAL

EMERGENCIES: If during the service you or someone who is with you begins to feel unwell, or is having a medical emergency; or if you notice someone else having a medical event; please contact the closest usher, who can assist in the situation.

FOR MORE INFO ON CHURCH SCHOOL, UPCOMING SERVICES, AND OTHER EVENTS • Check out the "Coming Up" insert in your bulletin • Subscribe to our e-news and Sunday preview emails at fpcgreensboro.org/connect • Visit fpcgreensboro.org/events.

PARKING MINISTRY: This ministry helps members with mobility issues get from their cars to the sanctuary for the 11 am service on Sundays. Two volunteers work on Greene Street 10:30-11:15 am. Passengers may be dropped off at the Greene Street door and will be escorted into the sanctuary. Drivers will be directed to a reserved space as needed. One volunteer is needed after the service until 12:15 pm. *Want to help?* Choose a Sunday at fpcgreensboro.org/signup. ABOUT THIS MORNING'S ROSEBUDS – The rosebuds in Rejoice! and in the sanctuary celebrate the birth of Ford Miller. Born September 8, 2024, Ford is the son of Crawford and Danielle Miller and joins big sister Weezie. The family resides at 914 Englewood St., Greensboro, NC 27403.

FIND FIRST PRESBYTERIAN ON SOCIAL MEDIA – Members are sharing great photos, comments and more! Follow and Like us on Facebook 🕜 (search "First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro"), YouTube 🗈 ("fpcgreensboro") and Instagram 🞯 ("1stpresgso") to get more of our posts in your newsfeed.

WAYS TO GIVE: In addition to the inperson offering, you may also give by mail, web, app, or text. Scan the QR code at top right to make a pledge, or scan the QR code at bottom right to give to the offering online (be sure to choose whether this is a one-time or recurring gift, and to which fund it should be applied). You can also go to fpcgreensboro.org/give/web-app-text to download the FellowshipOne Giving mobile app (Apple 📽 or Android 🗬) and for instructions for giving via text. You may also mail your gift to the church at 617 N. Elm St., Greensboro, NC 27401. Go to fpcgreensboro.org/give for more ways to give.

USHERS AND ACOLYTES NEEDED: Contact Anne Albert, aalbert@fpcgreensboro.org or 336.478.4711.

PASTOR ON CALL: When church offices are closed and you have an emergency, call 336.908.8615. Leave a message with your phone number and the pastor on call will be in touch with you.

PLEDGE HERE



OTHER GIFTS

HERE



ADVENT& MORE ATFIRSTPRESBYTERIAN

FOR DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 5 See our full calendar at **FPCGREENSBORO.ORG**



DECEMBER 22

• A Little Advent Music: Organ Recital by John Alexander concludes our series., 5 pm, sanctuary, free.

MORE INFO AT FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/ADVENT

DECEMBER 23-29: ADVENT CONCLUDES AND CHRISTMAS BEGINS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

• Lectio Divina, Mondays, 11 am-noon on Zoom. Contact David Partington, DCPSBw197@ GMAIL.COM. Prayerful listening to Scripture as we ponder, pray & share, led by the Spirit.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

- Offices closed, Christmas holiday. No Hot Dish & Hope this week.
- Christmas Eve services at 10 am, 5:30 pm and 11 pm.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

Offices closed, Christmas holiday

• One Christmas Day service at 10 am.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26

Offices closed, Christmas holiday. No Hot Dish & Hope this week.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

- One worship service at 10 am, Jill preaching.
- No nursery or Sunday School for children or youth.
- Church school at 9 am: Jill Duffield leads the YMBC and Agape classes, in Redhead Hall.



Family Nativity, 10 am Candlelight Communion, 5:30 & 11 pm

Christmas Z

Carols & Communion, 10 am

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services will be livestreamed, and will also be available shortly after the services on our YouTube channel, youtube.com/FPcgreensboro

DECEMBER 30 - JANUARY 5 A NEW YEAR BEGINS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30

Lectio Divina, 11 am-noon on Zoom. Contact David Partington, DCPSBW197@GMAIL.COM.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31 and THURSDAY, JANUARY 2

Hot Dish & Hope, 4:45-6 pm, Mullin Life Center. Hot Dish & Hope offers a free meal and a measure of hope each Tuesday and Thursday evening. If you are interested in volunteering, go to FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/SIGNUP. To learn more about Hot Dish & Hope contact Camille Townsend, ccTOWNSEND15@GMAIL.COM or 336-908-2088.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1

Campus closed for New Year's holiday.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 2 through SATURDAY, JANUARY 4

Montreat Retreat for College-aged Students:

January 2-4 for pre-registered guests. Keep our travelers in your prayers!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5

- Worship services at 9 and 11 am, with Jill preaching for Communion Sunday.
- New church school classes at 10 am:
- Thrivers: The Surprising Reasons Why Some Kids Struggle and Others Shine. Book is available for sale in the Welcome Center.
- Commitment Class study of Barbara Brown Taylor's book Always a Guest in the Blair Hagan Room.
- Milestones of Faith for children ages preschool-elementary.
- Kids Disciple Club for grades 3-5, meet for fellowship, fun & bible study. 3-4:30 pm, Life Center.
- Sunday Funday Movie Night for youth: Bring a friend, 5:30-7:30 in the Life Center.
- Registration to open for *Growing Deeper Lenten Retreat: Listening to the Language of the Soul.* Being held Saturday, March 8, 9 am-3 pm at the church. *More info to come*.

OUR CHURCH'S VISION

Rooted and reaching in Christ's love, we will serve God as Spirit-led changemakers for good.

Our vision is to be a caring, compassionate, and inclusive faith community welcoming those who seek

- an abundant relationship with Jesus Christ.
- meaningful worship
- authentic connections
- lifelong learning
- transformative service

We are continually growing and evolving, even as we remain strongly rooted in the Greensboro community and the Presbyterian tradition.

Come as you are and prepare to be transformed by God's love.

BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

SESSION HAS CALLED A CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FOR JANUARY 12 at the start of the 11 am service. The purpose of the meeting is to consider a slate of members to serve on the nominating committee for the Associate Pastor for Christian Formation. *The slate includes*: Lisa Cook, Katherine Farless, Layne King, Will Martin, Paul Parker, Rebecca Sheaffer, and Adrienne Woods.

ONGOING, IN JANUARY, AND BEYOND

TRANSFORMATIVE SERVICE

Our Winter Emergency Shelter is

now open. Partnering with Urban Ministry, we are providing overnight shelter in the Shetler Building for 15



unhoused men. Help needed: Bring dinner, work checkin, stay overnight, help coordinate. Use the QR Code, ao to FPCGREENSBORO.

org/wintershelter, or contact Matt Bussell, 336-478-4705 or mbussell@ FPCGREENSBORO.ORG. Toiletries also needed: Chapstick, earplugs, deodorant, shave cream /razor, shampoo, bar of soap, gallon bags, socks, comb, tissues, winter hat.

Backpack Beginnings Workday: On

January 27 all ages can help children & families in our community. (It's a GCS teacher workday.) *Look for sign-ups in the new year.*

10 am - noon: Parents & children ages 5+ (under 16 must be accompanied by an adult) will sort food donations and assemble weekly food bags given to children and families experiencing food insecurity.

2-4 pm: Adults only, sort donations, hang clothes & assemble comfort backpacks.

MEANINGFUL WORSHIP

ON JANUARY 9 WE WILL WELCOME REV. TONY LARSON, co-moderator of our Presbyterian

Church (USA), to lead devotions at midweek worship with our Hot Dish & Hope guests at 5 pm. Tony is pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in



Surfside Beach, S.C. He was elected at last summer's General Assembly along with Rev. CeCe Armstrong, associate pastor of St. James Presbyterian Church on James Island.

COMMUNION SUNDAYS:

January 5, February 2, March 9

MULLIN FORUM SUNDAY: Kavin Rowe, vice dean of the faculty and the George Washington lvey Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, will be our preacher for Mullin Forum Sunday. It's part of our 200th anniversary focus on Pastoral Leadership in February.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY: After months of learning and reflection, on March 2 our eighth-grade confirmands will be welcomed as full members of the church.

ASH WEDNESDAY: Our Lenten walk begins on March 5 with the Imposition of Ashes service.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES: Palm Sunday, April 13. Maundy Thursday, April 17. Good Friday Tenebrae, April 18. Great Vigil of Easter, April 19. Easter Sunday, April 20.

AUTHENTIC CONNECTION

MLK MEMORIAL BREAKFAST: On January 20, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Greensboro's Human Rights Commission will host a breakfast celebrating his life and legacy and honoring those who continue his work in our community. We are proud to support the ongoing work of racial reconciliation in Greensboro. Interested in attending? Let Matt Bussell know by Friday, January 3, 336-478-4705 or MBUSSELL@ FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.

JANUARY BOOK CLUBS: The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride, facilitated by Rev. Kate Huddelson Gillespie, meeting in the Garden Room. Monday, January 13 at 10:30 am and Tuesday, January 14 at 1:30 pm.

BIBLE & BISCUITS: January 14, 7:45-8:30 am in the Solarium. Before heading to work, join us for food, fellowship and reading & discussing scripture. Bibles and food provided. No sign-up or prep needed-just show up to meet God and your FPC community.

REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER CAMPS

SUMMER CAMPS FOR ELEMENTARY & YOUTH – *Signup deadline is January 31.*



- PASSPORT KIDS CAMP for completed grades 3-6, takes place July 7-10.



 MASSANETTA SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL CONFERENCE, takes place July 15-18.



 HIGH SCHOOL MONTREAT YOUTH CONFERENCE, takes place July 20-26. Trying to get more housing & chaperones!

AND SAVE THE DATES FOR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, AUGUST 4-7. Look for registration info in March!

OUR 200TH CELEBRATION CONTINUES

FPC's anniversary celebration moves to the Greensboro History Museum, which occupies our third church building and has many items related to our history.

TRADITIONS OF GUILFORD COUNTY: SCOTS-IRISH AND PRESBYTERIANS

January 11, 11 am - 3 pm. A day of demonstrations and activities related to these early colonial settlers in Guilford County. The Greensboro Scottish Country Dancers will be there!

GUIDED MUSEUM TOUR

January 12 at 2 pm.

OLD PRESBYTERIAN GRAVEYARD TOUR

January 15 & 18 at 11 am.

The Old Presbyterian Graveyard behind the museum is the resting place of our founding minister and other early notables in Greensboro and NC.

Events are free. Park next to the museum or in the lot on Church Street between Summit and Lindsay.

FPCGREENSBORO.ORG/200

LIFELONG LEARNING

STAFF-LED DISCIPLESHIP STUDY OF THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN begins January 7, noon-

1 pm in the Garden Room. Will meet on Tuesdays for 11 weeks.

Contact Yolanda Baxter,

YBAXTER@FPCGREENSBORO.ORG.