



We light this
candle of *Foy*

Topsail Presbyterian Church
HAMPSTEAD, NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 14, 2025 | 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

OUR MISSION

The beautiful story of Topsail Presbyterian is comprised completely in the unique make-up of the individuals who call Topsail Presbyterian their home. Although vastly different in their journeys, there are 3 cords that bind each of us together.

We Are...

We are real people infused with dynamic faith, committed to a common vision, joined together in the covenant love of our Creator.

We Used to Be...

We used to be completely broken but are now grateful for undeserved redemption, astonished by amazing Grace, healed by forgiveness and humbled by the divine invitation to be included in the greatest cause on earth.

We Serve...

We serve a good and perfect God. The nations are His dwelling and our lives are His vessels. We have compassion for the poor, and our hearts are open to the rich.

Welcome

May you truly sense God's Spirit at work in this place and in your life.

Greetings to everyone! We extend a warm welcome to those joining us in-person or for our live stream worship service this morning. As we celebrate together, we hope you will sense God's presence as we gather.

If you are a guest this morning, please fill out one of the visitor information cards located in the pew pockets so we can get to know each other better. Simply, hand your completed card to an usher or place it in the offering plate. In addition, we invite you to take a Guest Bag from the table in the narthex as you leave today. If you need assistance at any time, please feel free to ask someone seated next to you or one of the ushers.

Children are welcome to sit with their families during worship or attend Sunday School following the Children's Sermon. We have a nursery available for infants and our parlor is available for nursing mothers & parents in need of a quiet space with their children during worship. Restrooms are located through the door to the right of the chancel.

Sunday School Opportunities

Children's Sunday School

The children's Sunday school (ages 3 years to 5th grade) is held every Sunday during the 10:30am worship service down our Preschool hallway. Participants will be excused from the worship service following the Children's Sermon and will reconnect with their parents at the conclusion of the service. **First time visitors are asked to walk their child to their first session for instruction & to complete registration.**

Youth Sunday School

The middle and high school Sunday school class is held every Sunday during the 10:30 am worship service in the Youth Building. Participants will be excused from worship service following the Children's Sermon and will reconnect with their parents at the conclusion of the service. Our current Bible Study is God, Heroes, and Everyday Dragons: Finding Your Story in God's Story. In addition to studying the Bible, we also enjoy snacks & refreshments, fellowship, and games during Youth Sunday School. **The first Sunday of every month is Youth Sunday. There is no Youth Sunday School on these days.** Youth will assist in providing liturgy, ushering, & greeting guests and will remain seated with their families for worship.

The Present Word (Adult) Sunday School

This Adult Sunday School class regularly meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30am in the Parlor (across from the pastor's office).

The winter quarter will focus on the essential teachings of the Bible in relation to defining elements of our Christian faith. (Books available in the Admin office soon.)

Join us, bring your ideas and insights and become a part of the conversation.

Today's Worship Participants

QRE Jay Bender, Guest Preacher

Betsy Fischer, 8:15 Liturgist

Scott Sutton, 10:30 Liturgist

Sutton Family,

10:30 Advent Lighting

Shelly Aebi, Organist

Dr. Rebecca Rose, Music Dir.

Marcia Bowlin,

Elder of the Month

Get to Know Today's Guest Preacher

Jay Bender is a Qualified Ruling Elder (QRE) and the Clerk of Session at the Pollockville Presbyterian Church in Pollockville, Jones County, NC. Currently the Chair of the FULL Commission on Ministry for the Presbytery, he has served several terms on COM as well as Moderator of Presbytery in 2012. In 2010, the Presbytery elected Jay as a commissioner to the PCUSA General Assembly in Minneapolis, MN, and at that meeting, he chaired the GA's Committee on Social Justice Issues. Retired from his wholesale/retail grocery business after 40+ years, he occupies his time with local and regional church work as well as serving as the Mayor of Pollockville - a position he has held for 42 years. He and his wife, Sheron, -- a retired elementary school guidance counselor and current WeightWatchers Leader - have two grown children and one grandson.

†Please stand if able.

8:15am Worship

We hope you will sense our vision for Greater Faith, Deeper Relationships, and Stronger Community as you worship with us.

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Opening Prayer

Prelude

Call to Worship (Call & *Response*)

Soon parched lands will blossom into life
and burst into joyful song—very soon.

Say to those who are drowning in fear,
"Take courage! Here is God, coming to save you."

Soon every creature will have what it needs in abundance.
***All peoples of all dis/abilities and ages
will shout for joy in freedom—very soon.***

A highway stretches heavenward, smooth and level.
All may walk or roll there unimpeded.

Soon happiness and joy will overwhelm us!
***Grief and groaning will flee for good—very soon.
Amen.***

†Gathering Hymn #88 "O Come, O Come Emmanuel "

vs. 1 & 6

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing. Isaiah 7:14

(Call & *Response*)

How does a weary world practice joy?

By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.

By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy
babies. By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

***By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up
for our community.***

There are a million ways to practice joy.
So today we light the candle of joy as a
reminder and a charge.

***With God's help, may we bring joy
into a weary world. Amen.***



Hymn #89 "My Soul in Stillness Waits" Refrain x2

*For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.*

*For you, O Lord,
my soul in stillness waits;
truly my hope is in you.*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (Unison)

*Magnificent God,
it is easy to rejoice at
the wilderness bursting into bloom
and the hungry being filled with good things.
We may not want
the powerful to be brought down
or the rich to be sent away empty.
We know that sometimes, we are the powerful.
Sometimes, we are the rich.
Sometimes we are the ones with privilege,
ignoring and harming those you would lift up.
Forgive us, humble us, and refocus us,
that we may follow your way of life and truth.*

Silent Confession

Promise of Forgiveness

†Response Hymn #447 "We Are Forgiven"

*We are forgiven. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.
Thanks be to God.
We are forgiven. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.
Thanks be to God.*

†Passing the Peace

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings

OT: Isaiah 35: 1-10

NT: Matthew 11: 2-11

Sermon I QRE Jay Bender "Hope for Hurting Hearts"

†Affirmation of Faith (Unison)

*Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus.
His faith and obedience were the response
of the perfect child of God.
He was the fulfillment
of God's promise to Israel,
the beginning of the new creation,
and the pioneer of the new humanity.
He gave history its meaning and direction
and called the church to be his servant
for the reconciliation of the world.*

Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.19

Stay in Touch

Staying connected to faith is more important than ever. At Topsail Presbyterian Church, we strive to make sharing, and worshipping with us easy. We gather to encourage each other, connect with friends, & learn From God's Word through our website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, email, newsletter and of course in-person. Connect with us, we're here for you!

Call for Offering

Offertory Music "Prepare the Way, O Zion"

†Doxology #606 "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow"

*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. Amen.*

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (*Unison*)

†Closing Hymn #83 "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"

vs. 1 & 4

†Benediction

Recessional



10:30am Worship

We hope you will sense our vision for Greater Faith, Deeper Relationships, and Stronger Community as you worship with us.

Words of Welcome

Announcements

Opening Prayer

Prelude "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

arr. W. Fritchie

Carlton Howard, Trumpet; Rob Hamilton, Tenor Saxophone

Call to Worship (Call & *Response*)

Soon parched lands will blossom into life
and burst into joyful song—very soon.

Say to those who are drowning in fear,
"Take courage! Here is God, coming to save you."

Soon every creature will have what it needs in abundance.
***All peoples of all dis/abilities and ages
will shout for joy in freedom—very soon.***

A highway stretches heavenward, smooth and level.
All may walk or roll there unimpeded.

Soon happiness and joy will overwhelm us!
***Grief and groaning will flee for good—very soon.
Amen.***

†Gathering Hymn #107 "Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

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like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing. Isaiah 7:14

(Call & *Response*)

How does a weary world practice joy?

By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.

By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy
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***By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up
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There are a million ways to practice joy.
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Prayer of Confession (*Unison*)

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the wilderness bursting into bloom
and the hungry being filled with good things.
We may not want
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We know that sometimes, we are the powerful.
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Sometimes we are the ones with privilege,
ignoring and harming those you would lift up.
Forgive us, humble us, and refocus us,
that we may follow your way of life and truth.*

Silent Confession

Promise of Forgiveness

†Response Hymn #447 "We Are Forgiven"

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Thanks be to God.
Thanks be to God.
We are forgiven. We are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.
Thanks be to God.*

Recognition of Departing Member: Sharon Schwarz

†Passing the Peace

Children's Sermon

Anthem "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

R. Willis/arr. W. Fritchie

Carlton Howard, Trumpet; Rob Hamilton, Tenor Saxophone

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Readings OT: Isaiah 35: 1-10

NT: Matthew 11: 2-11

Sermon | QRE Jay Bender **"Hope for Hurting Hearts"**

†Affirmation of Faith (*Unison*)

*Out of Israel, God in due time raised up Jesus.
His faith and obedience were the response
of the perfect child of God.
He was the fulfillment
of God's promise to Israel,
the beginning of the new creation,
and the pioneer of the new humanity.
He gave history its meaning and direction
and called the church to be his servant
for the reconciliation of the world.*

Adapted from the Confession of 1967, 9.19

Call for Offering

Offertory Music "Go Tell it on the Mountain"

American Spiritual/ arr. W. Fritchie

Carlton Howard, Trumpet; Rob Hamilton, Tenor Saxophone

†Doxology #606 "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow"

*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. Amen.*

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (*Unison*)

†Closing Hymn #100 "My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout"

vs. 1 all; vs. 2 women; vs. 3 men; vs. 4 all (all on refrain each time)

†Benediction

Recessional

Can't Worship in Person?

That's okay! We live stream our 10:30am worship service every Sunday. You can find us streaming on Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo, and of course, our website. So whether you're out of town or otherwise unable to be here in person, you can be with us in spirit while watching from the comfort of wherever you are.



Announcements

Prayer Requests

Bonnie Miller, Nancy Lockamy, Janice Thomas, Donna Kraynick, Ann Henry, Charlotte Kelly, Mary Anne Matherly, Sally Ferrante, Ken Rice, John Stillgebauer, Brian Jones, Mary Rogers-Ellsworth, Carolyn Rice, Sharon Egan, Theresa Allen, Deliah Sitorus, Linda Blount, Marjorie Gulliksen, Wiley Lewis, Carol Campbell, Vicki Hufham, Ronnie Edens, June Crosby, Jeanne Rick, Jeffrey Smith, Mary Gist, Brian Padgett, Martin Padgett, John Flowers, Adrianna Neely, Graycin Goesswein, Joey Scavone, Alexander Marechal, Taylor Barnes, Pete Brunsvold, Bonnie Carpenter, Carol Wilson, Gayle Lathom, Gary Gulliksen, the family of Tom Feller, Brenden Roberts, Lynn Anderson, Stephanie Moore, the family of Barbara Ruegner, Bryant Smith.

Year-End Giving to Topsail Presbyterian Church Benefits of Year-End Donations

Contributing to Topsail Presbyterian Church before December 31, 2025, offers important benefits for donors. Donations received prior to this date qualify for tax deductions on your federal income tax return. Even if you are planning to donate for 2026, giving before December 31, 2025, may help reduce your taxable income for the current year.

Contribution Deadline Please remember that all funds must be received by the church before December 31, 2025, to be eligible for these benefits.

Thank you for your continued support of Topsail Presbyterian Church.

Questions? Bob Simon – ilmbobpi@gmail.com

Lessons & Carols - Children's Opportunity to Participate

Children are invited to sing next Sunday, December 21st during our Lessons & Carols service. Children will meet at 10 am in the Sanctuary to practice their music with our TPC Choir. We will also review their song in our Sunday School classroom prior to our time to sing. Sheet music will be provided. For more information, contact Dawn at christianed@topsailpres.org or 910-270-2312.

TPC Choir & Handbells

Rehearsals for choir and handbells are held every Monday evening. Handbells at 6:00pm and choir at 7:00pm. If you would like to participate, please contact Dr. Rebecka Rose & Shelly Aebi at music@topsailpres.org.



HOLIDAY SERVICE

SCHEDULE

DECEMBER

18 BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE 7:00PM

21 LESSONS & CAROLS ONE SERVICE ONLY 10:30AM

24 CHRISTMAS EVE ONE SERVICE ONLY 6:00PM (with Communion)

28 ONE SERVICE ONLY 10:30AM



! Please Note: There will be no pastor during our Lessons & Carols service on December 21st.

TPC Church Office - Closed for the Holiday

The Church office will be closed for the holiday on Wednesday December 24th, Thursday December 25th, and Friday December 26th.

Online Giving Platform

If you would like to donate to TPC, please scan the QR code to use our online giving platform.

You can also visit our website at topsailpresbyterian.org and click on "DONATE" in the dropdown menu at the top of the page.



Interested in Joining Our Church Family?

If you are not a member and would like more information or are ready to join, please contact Cheri Haight at (203)394-8304 or membership@topsailpres.org or Pastor Steuart Link.

Join us this evening!



*Topsail Presbyterian's
Children & Youth
invite you all on an Alaskan
adventure for a
True North Christmas!*

Sunday, December 14 - 5 pm

Refreshments will be served with a very special visitor in the Fellowship Hall immediately following their performance.

For more information contact:

Dawn Frazier - christianed@topsailpres.org

Leslie Blair - Youth@topsailpres.org



TOPSAIL PRESBYTERIAN PRESCHOOL

2026-2027 REGISTRATION

Priority Registration opens 1/19/26

Public Registration opens 1/26/26

WHY PARENTS CHOOSE US

- Small teacher-to-child ratio
- Safe and nurturing environment
- Thematic units of play-based learning
- Developmental curriculum to include:
Phonics, Literacy, STEAM, Math, Science,
Art, Music & more
- Christian Education - Chapel weekly
- Highly qualified staff



AGE GROUP PROGRAMS

- Toddler class (2 years old by 8/31/26)
- Preschool class (3 years old by 8/31/26)
- Pre-Kindergarten (4 years old by 8/31/26)
- Transitional Kindergarten (5 years old by 8/31/26)



Call to schedule
a tour!

910-270-2315

16249 US HWY 17 HAMPSTEAD 28443

[HTTPS://WWW.TOPSAILPRESBYTERIAN.ORG/PRESCHOOL](https://www.topsailpresbyterian.org/preschool)

Monday - Thursday*
9:00am-12:30pm

*Now Offering 5-day option
for Preschool, Pre-K & TK



Topsail Presbyterian Church - 16249 Highway 17 North, Hampstead, NC 28443

www.topsailpresbyterian.org

Presbytery of Coastal Carolina - www.presbycc.org

Church Office (910) 270-2312 Preschool Office (910) 270-2315

Contacts

Rev. Steuart Link

Interim Pastor

Contact # 910-685-2076
pastore@topsailpres.org

Mrs. Marissa Watson

Preschool Director

Contact #: 910-270-2315
preschooletopsailpres.org

Mrs. Dawn Frazier

Childrens Ministry Director

Contact #: 910-270-2312 (option 3)
christianed@topsailpres.org

Leslie Blair

Youth Director

Contact #: 910-612-6465
youth@topsailpres.org

Ms. Aly Moody

Administrative Assistant

Contact #: 910-270-2312
aly@topsailpres.org

Dr. Rebecca Rose

Music Director

music@topsailpres.org

Ms. Shelly Aebi

Organist/Pianist

music@topsailpres.org

Mr. Elmer Hewett

Custodian

elmerhewett@gmail.com

Members of Session

2026

Russ Layman - **Stewardship**

Jennifer Schwarz - **Christian Education**

Shona Talbert - **Personnel**

2027

Laurie Rucks - **Session Clerk & Preschool**

Nicole Demchock - **Worship**

2028

Stephen Polk - **Buildings & Grounds**

Cheri Haight - **Membership**

Tom Sidbury - **Digital Ministry-IT**

David Howard - **Finance**

Marcia Kissire - **Missions**

Deacons

Jay Heidel - **Chair**

Bryna Fair - **Secretary**

Jimmy Smith

Patty Bowdoin

Beth Garland

Dickie Grace

Rick Lamb

Kitty Lamb