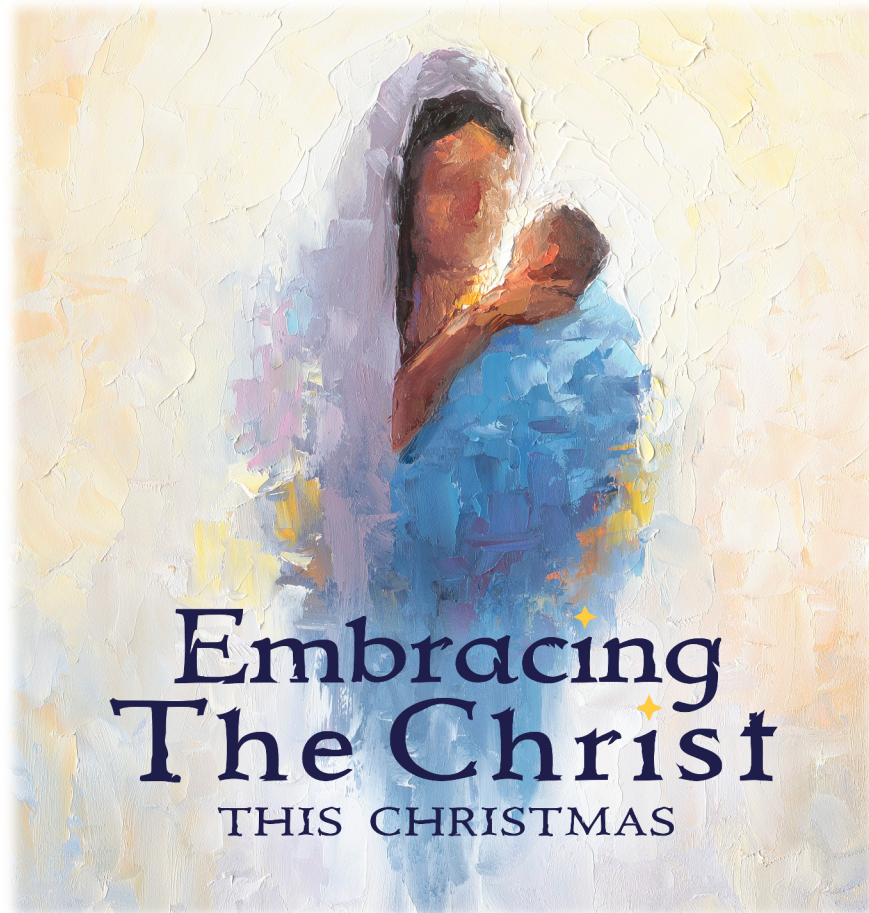




**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FRANKLIN**



**3rd Sunday in Advent  
Service of Lessons & Carols  
December 14, 2025**

*Advent marks the beginning of the new Christian year. It is a time to prepare for the One who is coming to us, both as the Incarnate Word at Christmas and as the Judge and Redeemer who comes again at the end to establish God's realm of peace and justice. Our call is to prepare the world for Christ's coming now and in the end time. The color is blue for royalty, a sign of the coming King.*

**A Word About Lessons & Carols**

The tradition of interspersing short "lessons" with carols began in the town of Truro, England, in the late nineteenth century. Drawing on the ancient monastic office of Matins (a form of sung prayer), an order of nine lessons interspersed with familiar carols was created. Eric Milner-White, Dean of King's College Cambridge, felt that the Church of England could benefit from a new form of worship and adapted this earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century lessons service for the traditional Christmas Eve service at King's College Chapel in 1918.

## ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S WORD

### BELL PEAL / POURING OF THE WATER

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### HYMN INTONATION

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Crim Family

During Christmas, surrounded by family and friends, we often feel the warmth of knowing we belong—here, in this place, with these people.

**Yet we remember that not everyone feels that joy and warmth this time of year.**

This season brings both highs and lows, joy and weariness, rushing when we long to stand still. Even in the Christmas story, opposites meet.

**Angels from on high announce good news to shepherds who are the least and the overlooked, yet they are the first to hear of Christ's birth.**

Through Isaiah, we hear, *"He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart."* God gathers Bethlehem's least—and gathers us.

**In Advent, we remember we belong to God. All are welcome, and none are shut out.**

Today, we light the third candle—the Candle of Joy—remembering that God's joy reaches into every corner of our lives and every kind of heart.

**We light this candle because we belong, because God's light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.**

A very long time ago, God said, "Let there be light."

**And there was light.**

*(As the third candle is lit, sing Verse One of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.)*

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lowly exile here until the Son of God appears.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

God of Advent, you are the Light of the world. In you, there is no darkness at all. There are no outcasts, no one who is not good enough; all have a place at the table. As we journey through Advent, help us remember those whom the world forgets, you welcome with joy and open arms. In the name of Jesus Christ, let us worship God.

\*HYMN 83

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

STUTTGART

### PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD – LESSONS & CAROLS

*"If we wish to take part in this Advent and Christmas event, then we cannot simply be bystanders or onlookers. No, we ourselves are swept up into the action there. We have a part to play too on this stage, for the spectator is already an actor. We cannot withdraw." ---Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

**THE FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-8** (God's People Are Comforted)

**CAROL – The People Who Walk in Darkness**

*"...now lift up your eyes, see the glory of the Lord..."*

**THE SECOND LESSON: Jeremiah 23:5-6** (The Righteous Branch of David)

**CAROL – Yonder Come Day**

*"...day is a 'breakin', sun is a 'risin' in my soul."*

**THE THIRD LESSON: Zechariah 9:9-10** (The Coming Ruler of God's People)

**CAROL – Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus**

*"Born, thy people to deliver...born to reign in us forever..."*

**THE FOURTH LESSON: Haggai 2:6-9** (The Promise of Restoration)

**\*Hymn 93** – *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates*

**THE FIFTH LESSON: Isaiah 35:1-10** (The Return of the Redeemed to Zion)

**CAROL** – *Every Valley*

*“Every valley shall be exalted, and ev’ry mountain made low,  
and the crooked made straight...”*

**THE SIXTH LESSON: Luke 1:26-38** (The Birth of Jesus Foretold)

**ORGAN MEDITATION** – *Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming*

*“...she bore to us a Savior, when half-spent was the night.”*

**THE SEVENTH LESSON: Mark 1:1-5** (The Proclamation of John the Baptist)

**CAROL** – *The Lord Shall Come and Not Be Slow*

*“Arise, O sleepers, trim your lamps! Their flames so swiftly burning reveal the path to hope and peace, the dawn for which you’re yearning.”*

### **RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD**

**PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

**OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND LIVES**

*Fold and place your completed “Connection Card” in the plate offering.  
To give online, scan the QR code on the back of the bulletin.*

**OFFERTORY MUSIC**

John Johns, guitar

**\*DOXOLOGY 606**

OLD 100<sup>TH</sup>

**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.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **GO IN GOD’S NAME**

**\*HYMN 49**

*The God of Abraham Praise*  
(VERSES ONE, TWO, AND FOUR)

LEONI

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE / HYMN REFLECTION / RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

### **LEADING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

Eddie Bellis, Interim Pastor

Anne Keener, Commissioned Pastor

Michael P. Snoddy, Director of Music & Organist

Elizabeth Smith, Organ

John Johns / Adam Troxler, Instrumentalists

The Chancel Choir

Khris Downey, Liturgist

Lynlee Nichols, Acolyte

## PRAYER LIST

### **New:**

Carolyn Hayes  
Caleb Lillard  
Missy Kitchings' friend, Hannah Edwards and family  
Leah Stein's friend, Kayla Haun  
Gloria Blount's friend, Mert Sloan

### **Deaths:**

Connie Jefferson's sister, Zeneith Cole, December 1, 2025

### **Members:**

Ted Bechtel  
Ann Brown  
Barbara Crunk  
Jeff Doering  
Ruthie Moulton  
Anne Osborne  
Marissa Walters  
Tom Wilson

### **Assisted Living/Homebound:**

Derrell and Tee Billingsley- home  
Ann Brown- The Lantern, Spring Hill  
Joan Hetherington- home  
Marilyn Miller- The Heritage  
Nancy Morris- Somerby  
Opal Plumley- The Heritage  
Jane Stafford- Willow Springs, Spring Hill  
Betty Willoughby- home

### **In Memory:**

Ellen McGehee	December 14, 2004
Dick Settle	December 15, 1999
Joe Willoughby	December 15, 2018
Birney Alphin	December 16, 2013
Joan Giddings	December 17, 2021
Drew Peacock	December 17, 2021
Shirley Bolich	December 18, 2015
Mary Chester	December 19, 2004
Diane Bell	December 20, 2020

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Wednesday Night Live (WNL):** 6 PM Dinner; 6:45-7:30 PM Adult, Youth, and Children programs. Sign up on the FPC website or the Connection Card. This week, Michael Snoddy, Director of Music, will share a bit of history about Advent & Carols.

**Service of Light:** Join us **Sunday, December 21** at 5:30 PM in a peaceful candlelit sanctuary for a service with space for silence, scripture, and prayer. We will make space for the wide array of emotions that come with this season and reflect on how God's light fills our lives. You will have the opportunity to write the names of people or situations in your life or the world for which you are in prayer and then place those prayers under a lit candle as a visible sign of lifting them into God's light. Please make plans to join us. All are welcome. The service will be livestreamed.

**Christmas Eve Choir:** - You are invited to join the choir on Christmas Eve for the 6:00 PM Candlelight Service of Holy Communion. Please see Michael in the Music Office for more information.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service of Holy Communion:** December 24 at 4:00 & 6:00 PM. Come, *EMBRACE THE CHRIST!* Nursery and livestream are available at 4:00 PM only.

**Advent Poinsettias:** Help beautify the sanctuary this Advent season by dedicating a poinsettia in honor or memory of a loved one. Please note your dedication on the connection card. The cost is \$20. Checks may be made payable to First Presbyterian Church (Flower Fund) or you may give online.

**Basic Essentials Collection:** This month we are collecting items for the **Shorter Chapel AME Church Food Pantry**. Suggested items: peanut butter, canned tuna & meat, cereal, corn, beans, chili, SpaghettiOs, cans with pop tops. Place all donations in the Basic Essentials Cart just outside the Sanctuary.

**Worship Flowers:** Signups are open to dedicate worship flowers for 2026. These flowers beautify our worship, remind us of God's creation, and are later shared with members as a sign of God's love and our church family's care. Go to Event/Registration page to sign up today.

**Blood Drive:** Save lives by donating blood on **Sunday, January 11** from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM in Wilson Hall. To schedule an appointment, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter sponsor code FPCF19.

**Pizza and Trivia Night:** **Saturday, January 24** at 5:30 PM. All are invited!

**NaCoMe Summer Camps 2026:** Sign up today for summer camp. FPC students receive \$150 discount. More info on the FPC website.

**Christmas donations:** Thank you to all who participated in our FPC contribution to the GraceWorks Manger and everyone who adopted a Poplar Grove Family. We had a wonderful response and another successful year of supporting these two programs!

**Christmas Joy Offering:** Look in next week's Sunday morning bulletin on December 21 for the Special Christmas Joy Offering.

**Church Office Closed:** **December 24-January 2**

**No Sunday School or Wonder Hour:** **Sunday, December 28.**

Use the QR code to visit the **Upcoming Events/Registrations** page.



***Responding to God's grace through worship, study, and service.***

Our purpose is to joyfully follow Christ and respond to God's grace as an inclusive, multigenerational faith community by:

- Deepening discipleship through relevant worship and life-long learning
- Creating and nurturing congregational relationships
- Transforming lives and connecting with others through service

**Welcome!** We extend a warm welcome to all who are here today. Whether you are from our community or visiting, we are glad to have you among us.

**We strive to be inclusive and offer assistance for those with disabilities.**

T-Coil hearing devices are available from members of the Hospitality Team. We have pew cutouts for accessibility and offer sensory nurturing items for children. If anyone has other needs or disabilities that require assistance or accommodation for any church activity, please don't hesitate to contact the church office at 615-794-5114.

**Our Nursery** is available for infants and children through 3 years old downstairs in Room 111. Children of all ages are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary.

**Children's Worship** is available for children 4 years old through kindergarten in Room 101 following the Time with the Young Church. Those attending will be returned to the sanctuary before the end of the service. For accommodations and more information, please get in touch with the Director of Youth Ministries, Sam Belcher ([sbelcher@fpcfranklin.org](mailto:sbelcher@fpcfranklin.org)).

**Prayer requests** to convey concerns or celebrations may be shared with Anne Keener ([akeener@fpcfranklin.org](mailto:akeener@fpcfranklin.org)).

#### THE SESSION

##### Class of 2025

Jason Coleman  
Marti Downey  
Christine Grisham  
Jim Mahurin  
Verna Rydlund

##### Class of 2026

Leanne Hoeffler  
John Korab  
Tammy Love  
Starr Nolan  
Phillip Otts

##### Class of 2027

Martha Johnson  
Jim Petersen  
Dan Crunk  
Greg Bennorth  
Sarah Fox

#### THE CHURCH STAFF

Eddie Bellis, Interim Pastor  
Anne Keener, Commissioned Pastor  
Michael Snoddy, Dir. of Music/Organist  
Sam Belcher, Dir. of Youth Ministries  
Catherine Olson, Dir. of Operations

Marie Hayman, Accountant  
Kate Lasseter, Nursery Coordinator  
Kelly Oldham, Nursery Coordinator  
Linda Cairatti, Nursery Staff

*First Presbyterian Church, Franklin, is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, the Synod of Living Waters, and the General Assembly of the PC(USA).*

615.794.5114 | [fpcfranklin.org](http://fpcfranklin.org)

Church Office Hours M-Th 9 AM-4 PM

Scan the QR code to the right to make an online donation.  
Thank you for your generosity!

