



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FRANKLIN

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 21, 2025

Welcome to worship. The asterisk () invites all to rise in body or spirit.
The people's responses are in **bold type**. Please silence cell phones.*

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S WORD

BELL PEAL / POURING OF THE WATER

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE / HYMN INTONATION – *While We Are Waiting, Come*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Brent Sower and Jackson Reynolds
Covenant Partner and Confirmand

Today, we stand on the threshold of Christmas, feeling the nearness of the manger and the hush of hope settling over the world God loves.

We long for the love that holds us, heals us, and makes us whole.

Advent teaches us to pause, to breathe deeply, and to notice the Holy Spirit drawing near with every heartbeat.

We wait for the One who is Love made flesh, dwelling among us.

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed the promise: “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,*” the One called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We wait for this Child who comes not with force, but with love strong enough to cast out fear.

Jesus was born into a world anxious and unsettled, much like ours, and yet he came as Love that cannot be shaken.

God's love turns strangers into neighbors, enemies into friends, and weary hearts into places of peace.

And so today we light the Candle of Love, trusting that God's love still breaks into our world and into our lives.

We light this candle as people who long to live in love, for our families, our neighbors, and the whole world God embraces.

*(As the fourth candle is lit, we will sing the
first verse of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.”)*

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

God of Love, draw near to those who feel forgotten, to those who carry sorrow, and to those who search for belonging. Teach us to be bearers of your love in every place we go and every word we speak. In the name of Jesus Christ, Love Incarnate, let us worship God.

***HYMN 92**

While We Are Waiting, Come

WAITING

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, you reach out to us so we might know and accept your love. In ages past, you sent your prophets, but we would not hear. In the fullness of time, you sent your Son, Love made flesh, Emmanuel, yet we confess that we still turn away. Like Joseph, we wrestle with fear and doubt. You invite us to trust your presence, but we cling to our own understanding.

You call us to receive the child who saves us, yet we resist the change His love demands. You sent your Son, and we nailed Him to the cross. Still, you continue to come to us as gentle, persistent, and redeeming love. Forgive us, O God. Open the floodgates of your Holy Spirit, that Emmanuel may be born in us anew, and that we might share Christ's Gospel with every people on earth.

SILENT CONFESSION / CHORAL VERSE

"What can I give him...give my heart."

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, believe in the Good News.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

***THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also, with you.

(Please greet those around you with the peace of Christ.)

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

GLORIA

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

Glo -ria, praise the One who comes.

Glo -ria, Hosanna in the highest.

***SUMMARY OF THE LAW**

Let us now remember the standard by which God calls us to live.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Blessed are they whose delight is in the law of the Lord. **Amen.**

PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

CHILDREN'S SONG

Wonder Hour Children and Handbells
Children of all ages are invited to come forward.

TIME WITH THE YOUNG CHURCH

Eddie Bellis

CHORAL VERSE

"Make me to know Thy ways...lead me in Thy truth."

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 1:18-25 (Pew Bible, p. 783)

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Keep Calm and Carry On

Eddie Bellis

RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

***HYMN 121**

O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

(from the Confession of 1967)

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.

PRAYERS 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

OFFERTORY MUSIC

Carillon Handbell Choir

***DOXOLOGY 606**

OLD 100TH

**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 159**

O Sing a Song of Bethlehem

CAROL

VERSES One, Two, and Four

(This text will be sung to the familiar tune associated with the beloved carol
“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear.”)

***BENEDICTION**

***POSTLUDE / HYMN REFLECTION**

***RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

Five Bell Peal

LEADING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Eddie Bellis, Interim Pastor

Anne Keener, Commissioned Pastor

Michael Snoddy, Director of Music & Organist / Chancel Choir

Carillon Handbell Choir / Peter Simon, piano

Clarke Oldham, Liturgist

Charlie Stevens, Acolyte

PRAYER LIST

New:

Carolyn Hayes
Missy Kitchings' friend, Hannah Edwards and family
Leah Stein's friend, Kayla Haun

Deaths:

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

Members:

Ted Bechtel
Ann Brown
Barbara Crunk
Jeff Doering
Caleb Lillard
Ruthie Moulton
Anne Osborne
Tom Wilson

In Memory:

Jean Porter	December 21, 2013
Jim Pennington	December 21, 2023
Earl Ferari	December 22, 2016
Kay Hartman	December 24, 2022
Tibby Taylor	December 27, 2023

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Service of Light: Join us **Tonight 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: **Today is the last day to order!** 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 to First Presbyterian Church (Flower Fund) or you may give online.

Worship Flowers: Would you like to donate the worship flowers in memory or in honor of someone? There are many open dates in 2026, and the cost is \$100. 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. Sign up today on our Event/Registration page.

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.

Holy Stitches: Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Holy Stitches is the new name for our expanded prayer shawl ministry which now includes scarves and hats for our Mountain T.O.P. mission partners and blankets for new FPC babies. We're looking for new members—whether you'd like to join our monthly gatherings or contribute items from home. Learn more by contacting Karen Hanson at klhanson46@gmail.com. Join us **January 12** from 1–2:30 PM in the church parlor.

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 and enter sponsor code FPCF19.

MLK Weekend: Save the Date for the MLK Mission Weekend **January 17-19**. The trip will be local this year, with more details to come!

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

Wednesday Night Live (WNL): Signups are open for 2026 which will resume January 7. Whether you are a regular at WNL or have never attended, we hope you will join us. Sign up on the FPC website today.

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

Church Office Closed: December 24-January 2

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

Use the QR code to visit the 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).

Prayer requests to convey concerns or celebrations may be shared with Anne Keener (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

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!

