

# Service of Light 2025



First Presbyterian Church  
101 Legends Club Lane  
Franklin, Tennessee 37069  
[www.fpcfranklin.org](http://www.fpcfranklin.org)

# SERVICE OF LIGHT

## DECEMBER 21, 2025 - 5:30 PM

### PRELUDE

John Johns, guitar

### WELCOME

We will begin the service with one minute of silence. This rest, this breathing, this Sabbath is for us, for those we love, and for a world which is desperately in need of light in the midst of darkness.

You might take this time to notice your breath. As you inhale, say to yourself, "God of light, Word made flesh" and then as you exhale say to yourself, "Bring life and light."

You may also use this space to think of those you want to lift into God's healing light and picture them encircled with the light of Christ.

### \*OPENING SENTENCES

We come together to listen for the Word.

**In the beginning was the Word.**

We come together to embrace the life of the Word.

**In the beginning was life.**

We come together to watch for the light of the Word.

**In the darkness, a light shines for all people.**

### \*PRAYER (*Advent Prayer by Henri Nouwen*)

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness,  
send your Holy Spirit upon us.

We who have so much to do  
seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things  
look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways  
long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy  
seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people,  
walking in darkness yet seeking the light.

To you we say,  
"Come, Lord Jesus." Amen.

### \*HYMN 88

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*  
(Verses One, Five, Six and Seven)

VENI EMMANUEL

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of Light, Word made flesh,  
as you were in the beginning, be with us now.  
Speak to us in the waiting and the watching.  
Speak to us through your Word and  
walk with us until the day of your coming. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE READING

John 1:1-9

### HOMILY

Anne Keener

## OFFERING OF OUR LIVES AND PRAYERS TO GOD

We invite you to take a few moments to reflect on your own life and the lives of those you love, and then to write names, prayers, or both using as many cards as you need. When you have completed your prayer(s), we invite you to come as you are able, light a taper from a lit candle on each table, and light as many votives as you want. We then invite you to place your lit candle(s) on the table with your prayer card(s) underneath, as a sign of lifting them into the healing light of Christ.

## MUSICAL MEDITATION

John Johns, guitar

## INTERCESSION FOR HEALING

Holy God, we join our voices with those of ages past who come to you offering prayers of intercession. We pray for those we love, for all on our prayer list, and for this world you created. You alone are the Light of the world, and you alone can bring peace that passes understanding. Open our hearts as we pray. Bring healing and wholeness as only you can.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those for whom pain is the greatest problem, who are remembered more for their distress than their potential, who at night cry, 'I wish to God it were morning,' and in the morning cry, 'I wish to God it were night.'

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those whose struggle is psychological, those who are haunted by nightmares of their past or fears of their future, those whose minds are shackled by depression, and those who do not know what is wrong or even what to pray.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those for whom light has turned to darkness, as the end of a life or the breaking of a relationship leaves them stunned in their souls and silent in their conversation, feeling disoriented, not knowing where to turn, whom to turn to, or whether life still has a purpose.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those whose struggle is physical, those who have a recent diagnosis and are still processing their new reality, and those who know all too well the challenges of living with chronic illness.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those who feel the pressure to be merry and bright this season when they are not. We pray for those who long for more. Not for more things, but for more silence in the midst of the noise, more solitude in the midst of the crowds, and more depth to each experience of Advent.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those who tend the sick, counsel the distressed, or sit with the dying. We ask your blessing, that in caring for your people they may meet and serve you.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We lift into your light those whose troubles we do not know or whose names we would not say aloud, but here in the silence we trust you hear our hearts.

*Silence*

O God, you alone know the cure for each sickness and every soul. Even as we pray, your healing love is breaking into this world. By your grace, allow us to reflect your light and love on all we encounter.

God of light, Word made flesh,

**Bring life and light**

We ask all of this in the name of Christ, the Light of the world, who boldly taught us to pray saying, **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.**

**\*HYMN 92**

*While We Are Waiting, Come*

WAITING

**\*LITANY OF AFFIRMATION** (*"First Coming" by Madeleine L'Engle*)

God did not wait till the world was ready, till nations were at peace.

**God came when the Heavens were unsteady,  
and prisoners cried out for release.**

God did not wait for the perfect time.

**God came when the need was deep and great.**

**God dined with sinners in all their grime, turned water into wine.**

God did not wait till hearts were pure.

**In joy God came to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.**

**To a world like ours, of anguished shame,**

**God came and God's Light would not go out.**

God came to a world which did not mesh,

to heal its tangles, to shield its scorn.

**In the mystery of the Word made Flesh,  
the Maker of the stars was born.**

We cannot wait till the world is sane

to raise our songs with joyful voice,

for to share our grief, to touch our pain.

**God came with love: Rejoice! Rejoice!**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*POSTLUDE**

John Johns, guitar

You are invited to take a candle home as a reminder of God's light and love.

May the light of Christ fill your heart today and always.

Thank you for joining us tonight.

We hope this service provides space for prayer, reflection, and  
a reminder that God's face shines upon you even in the darkness.

If you are in the midst of a difficult season of life  
and would like to speak with a pastor, please reach out to us.

We are here to support you and lift you into God's healing light.

**WORSHIP LEADERS**

Anne Keener, Commissioned Pastor

Eddie Bellis, Interim Pastor

Michael Snoddy, Director of Music and Organist

John Johns, Guitar

Mike Moyers, Cover Artwork

## **For Light**

Light cannot see inside things.  
That is what the dark is for:  
Minding the interior,  
Nurturing the draw of growth  
Through places where death  
In its own way turns into life.

In the glare of neon times,  
Let our eyes not be worn  
By surfaces that shine  
With hunger made attractive.

That our thoughts may be true light,  
Finding their way into words  
Which have the weight of shadow  
To hold the layers of truth.

That we never place our trust  
In minds claimed by empty light,  
Where one-sided certainties  
Are driven by false desire.

When we look into the heart,  
May our eyes have the kindness  
And reverence of candlelight.

That the searching of our minds  
Be equal to the oblique  
Crevices and corners where  
The mystery continues to dwell,  
Glimmering in fugitive light.

When we are confined inside  
The dark house of suffering  
That moonlight might find a window.

When we become false and lost  
That the severe noon-light  
Would cast our shadow clear.

When we love, that dawn-light  
Would lighten our feet  
Upon the waters.

As we grow old, that twilight  
Would illuminate treasure  
In the fields of memory.

And when we come to search for God,  
Let us first be robed in night,  
Put on the mind of morning  
To feel the rush of light  
Spread slowly inside  
The color and stillness  
Of a found world.

- John O'Donohue

## **We Stand in God's Circle of Light**

Today, we stand in God's circle of light,  
Breathing in, breathing out.  
Today we stand in God's circle of light,  
Light before, light behind,  
Light on left, light on right,  
Light buried deep within.  
Today, we stand in God's circle of light,  
With friends and family, neighbors and strangers,  
With all the people of the world.  
Together we stand in God's everlasting light.  
Encircled, embraced,  
United into one family,  
From every nation and culture and creed.  
Let this circle hold us,  
Let this circle sustain us,  
Let this circle surround us,  
With the bright and shiny presence  
Of the Eternal One,  
Who leads us into light.

- Christine Sine

## **Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light**

Blessed are you  
who bear the light  
in unbearable times,  
who testify  
to its endurance  
amid the unendurable,  
who bear witness  
to its persistence  
when everything seems  
in shadow  
and grief.  
Blessed are you  
in whom  
the light lives,  
in whom  
the brightness blazes—  
your heart  
a chapel,  
an altar where  
in the deepest night  
can be seen  
the fire that  
shines forth in you  
in unaccountable faith,  
in stubborn hope,  
in love that illumines  
every broken thing  
it finds.

- Jan Richardson