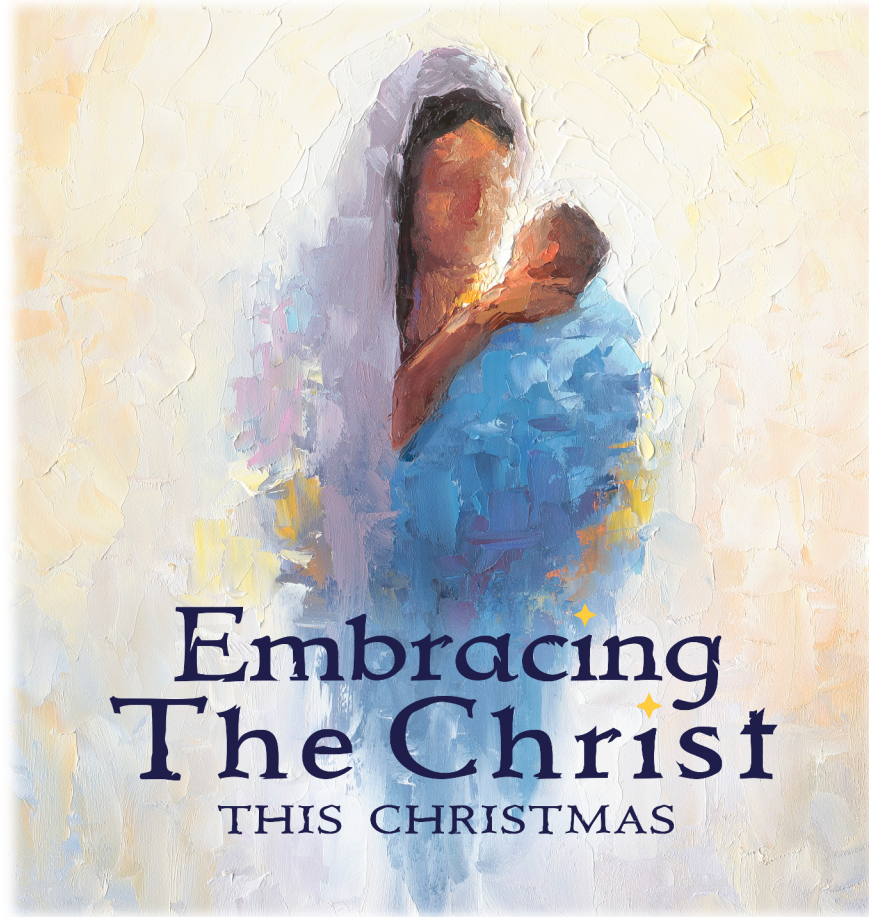




FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FRANKLIN



**CHRISTMAS EVE
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION
DECEMBER 24, 2025**

All are welcome here to worship, study, and serve. Thank you for worshipping with us. The asterisk () invites all to stand in body or in spirit.
Please remember to silence your cell phones.*

Christmas is a celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation, that God is with us - Emmanuel! God breaks into our world on Christmas, inaugurating God's realm of peace and justice. We remember Jesus' birth long ago, a sign of God's grace for all the world. The color is white, symbolizing light, glory, and joy.

ASSEMBLE IN GOD'S WORD

GATHERING MUSIC

Peter Simon / Tom Wilhoite

BELL PEAL / POURING OF THE WATER

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Tom Wilhoite

CALL TO WORSHIP (4 PM the Webb Family; 6 PM the Downey Family)

In the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In Him was life, and that life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Tonight, we remember the four candles of Advent:

The candles of Hope, of Peace, of Joy, and of Love.

All pointing us toward the Christ candle, the light of the world. In Christ, all are welcome.

In Christ, we are invited to come home.

He came to his own, and yet his own people did not receive him.

But to all who receive him, to all who believe in his name, he gives the power to become children of God.

He became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.

In Christ, we find the hope of transformation.

In Christ, we discover the peace that follows justice.

In Christ, we experience love that embraces all our diversity, empowering each of us to shine in our own way.

The light of Christ shines for all, and no one is excluded; no one is left in the shadows.

All are welcome. All are invited to come home.

Tonight, as we light the Christ candle, let us remember that we carry this light into the world, welcoming others just as Christ welcomes us. May this light remind us that Christ's love knows no bounds and that in him, we are all invited to come home.

(As the Christ candle is lit, sing Verse One 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 (has) come to you, O Israel.

Gracious God, thank you for sending your Word into the world, for making your light shine in the darkness, and for welcoming us all into your family. Help us to carry your light of hope, peace, joy, and love into every corner of our lives. In Christ, we are home. Amen.

***HYMN 133**

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTES FIDELES

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, we confess that we are too easily influenced by peddlers of despair and alarm, too quick to sink into numbness and apathy, too tired to imagine another way. Our hopes have crumbled, and our hearts are faint. Breathe new life into us, we pray. Please help us to be mindful of your promises, your faithfulness, and your presence as we face the challenges of our lives. Restore our vision and give us the courage to live in your truth.

SILENT CONFESSION

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, blessed is he 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

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 2:1-14 (Pew Bible, p. 832)

Let us treasure these words and ponder them in our hearts.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Surprise, It is Christmas!

Eddie Bellis

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

***HYMN 119**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

***LITANY FOR CHRISTMAS**

The grace of God has appeared,
bringing salvation to all.

Glory to God in the highest!

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

Glory to God in the highest!

For a child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us.

Glory to God in the highest!

He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Glory to God in the highest!

To us is born in the city of David, a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.

Glory to God in the highest!

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.

Glory to God in the highest!

Silence

... for he has been glorified!

Amen.

OFFERING/OFFERTORY MUSIC

Peter Simon (4 PM)
Chancel Choir (6 PM)

*"Come, Come! Christ is born...the Child of peace
and sacrifice is waiting to be found."*

***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.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader continues the prayer... who forever sings your praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Leader continues the prayer...

Great is the mystery of faith.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Leader continues the prayer...

...now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD OF LIFE AND THE CUP OF SALVATION

All bread is gluten-free. The wine is non-alcoholic grape juice.

COMMUNION MUSICAL MEDITATION

Peter Simon / Adam Troxler

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

GO IN GOD'S NAME

***LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

Please pass the light down the pew by lifting the unlit candle to the lit one.

***CANDLELIGHT CAROL 122**

Silent Night

STILLE NACHT

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child!
Holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace...

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from Heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing "Alleluia, Christ the Savior is born..."

Silent night, holy night! Son of God love's pure light
radiant beams from thy Holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord at thy birth...

Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light;
with the angels let us sing
"Alleluia to our King, Christ the Savior is born..."

***BENEDICTION**

As the Sanctuary lights return, you may extinguish your lighted candle.

***HYMN 134**

Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

Joy to the world the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing...

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love...

***POSTLUDE**

Peter Simon / Tom Wilhoite

LEADING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Eddie Bellis, Interim Pastor

Anne Keener, Commissioned Pastor

Michael Snoddy, Director of Music & Organist / Chancel Choir

Peter Simon, piano / Adam Troxler, instrumentalist

4PM: Khris Downey, Liturgist; Jack Granstaff, Acolyte

6PM: Susan Burns, Liturgist; Nora Downey, Acolyte

Mike Moyers: Artwork

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Church Office Closed through Jan. 2 to give our office volunteers a much-deserved break. Thank you to Sandra Fields, Marlene Cole, Brenda Plunkett, Clata Miller, Betty Barcheski, Karen Hanson, Martha Johnson, and Betty Webb for responding to God's grace in this way.

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.

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 ages 4 through kindergarten in Room 101 following 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 contact the Director of Youth Ministries, Sam Belcher (sbelcher@fpcfranklin.org).

Prayer requests to share concerns or celebrations may be sent to 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!

