



In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!

December 1, 2024
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
First Sunday of Advent

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, please silence your cell phone.

Greeting

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Prelude

Savior of the Nations, Come Johann Sebastian Bach

Words of Welcome

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Congregational Response

VENI 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.**

Call to Worship

People of faith, prepare for the coming reign of Christ!

**As we gather to pray and sing and listen,
a spirit of anticipation and hope fills us.**

The days are surely coming, says Our God,
when justice and righteousness will prevail.

**May our worship illuminate our hearts and minds,
freeing us to respond joyfully to God's call in the days to come.**

*Hymn 1

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

STUTTGART

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Loving Creator, you call us to rejoice in your promise of the birth that is to come, but we are afraid. You invite us into a world where justice and righteousness prevail, but we turn away in fear. We long for an easy path into your promised world, but you warn us that there is no easy way. Birth new life within us, that we may abide in your perfect love — the love that casts out fear. We pray all of this in the name of the Christ who is coming to meet us here. Amen.

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad, making note of new and old friends, check in on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram (firstpresathensga).

The lighting of the Advent wreath at 11:00 a.m. will be done by Terry Miller.

In the ancient world, people lit fires to mark the turning of the light into winter's season and to pray for the return of the light. To us, these candles are signs of the growing light of Christ who is coming again in all fullness into the darkness of our world. We watch and wait for Christ's coming into the darkness of our world, lighting candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, and remembering the promises of God with prayer.

With the opening word, *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus* sounds the note of entreaty and invitation that characterizes the Advent season (from the Latin *adventus* = "coming"). Its blending of memory and hope helps us give voice to our present faith as we stand between the past and the future.

**Those who are able please stand.*

At “The Peace,” worshipers are invited to greet each other by saying, “The peace of Christ be with you,” and responding, “And also with you.”

Children are invited to remain in the Sanctuary on Communion Sundays.

11:00 a.m. Lay Reader:
Anne Marie Miller

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence is part of the 19th century rediscovery of ancient Christian hymns. This 4th century text is set to a 17th-century French melody.

Scholars debate whether this powerfully poetic text is an early Christian hymn which Paul is quoting or his own composition. It is one of the best-known and most influential passages in the Pauline corpus.



You may mail your check, set up an automatic payment of your estimate of giving through your bank, or donate online using this QR code or at firstpresathens.org/giving. Thank you for your generosity.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

*Assurance of Pardon

*Congregational Response

Hymn 3, stanza 1

**Comfort, comfort you my people, tell of peace, thus says our God;
comfort those who sit in darkness bowed beneath oppression's load.
Speak you to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.**

*The Peace

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination PUER NOBIS NASCITUR
**Come, thou Redeemer of the earth, and manifest thy virgin birth.
Let every age adoring fall: such birth befits the God of all.**

First Lesson

Psalms 25:1-10, page 492

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Second Lesson

Jeremiah 33:14-16, page 724

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

These Days The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 5

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

PICARDY

*Affirmation of Faith

Philippians 2:5-11

**Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.**

**And being found in human form, he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.**

**Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name
that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and
under the earth, and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

8:45 Offertory

Picardy

Craig Phillips

11:00 Offertory

Savior of the Nations, Come Georgiann H. Toole

Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make earth your home,
marvel now, O heaven and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
From the Godhead forth you came, and return unto the same,
captive leading death and hell, high the song of triumph swell!
You, the chosen Holy One, have over death the victory won,
boundless shall your kingdom be; when shall we its glories see?
Brightly does your manger shine, glorious is its light divine.
Let not hate overcloud this light; ever be our faith, so bright!

***Doxology**

Hymn 592

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**

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Lord's Table

The Great 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...

The musical setting
of the communion
liturgy is based on the
hymn tune *Picardy*,
arranged by Kimberly
Bracken Long.

Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, reign-ing God of pow'r and
might, heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry, all cre - a - tion
seeks your light! Bles - sed is the one who
comes in your name. Bles-sed is the Lord most high!

Memorial Acclamation

Christ has died, Christ is ri - sen,
Christ the Lord will come a - gain.

The Great Amen

A - men, a - men, a - men.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates begins as a paraphrase of Psalm 24, and ends with the individual's welcome of the approaching Savior. It is set to an 18th-century English tune.

Texts and music for hymns and sung responses reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714861

Breaking of the Bread and Giving of the Cup

Communion of the People

Prayer after Communion

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.

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

***Hymn 8** *Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates* TRURO

***Charge and Benediction**

***Congregational Response** VENI EMMANUEL, refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

Postlude *Savior of the Nations, Come* Johann Sebastian Bach

A special word of welcome to our guests: thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Please fill out the Fellowship Pad so that we may be in touch. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

Nursery Play for children 4 years old and younger is available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., are located in our Children's Playroom area next to the Children's Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

Children's Church is an important developmental time for children, but there are times when children remaining in worship, watching and learning from their parents, is even more valuable. Children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on Communion Sundays.

Poinsettia Dedication

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Monday, December 16**. Each dedication is \$10. You may fill out the form and pay online (please click on the link posted in the church website under FPC News & Updates for more instructions), mail it with a check to the church office, or contact the church at 706-543-4338 or frontdesk@firstpresathens.org with your dedications. Each dedication will be listed in the December 22 worship service bulletin.

In Memory of

In Honor of

Given by

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

Lay Reader

11:00 a.m. Anne Marie Miller

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Terry Nestor

11:00 a.m. Jimbo LaBoon III (head),
Steve Covington, Emily LaBoon

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Aiden Dowling

DECEMBER FLOWER TEAM

Greta Covington and Susan Ferguson (co-chairs),
Susan Barrett, Susan Banister, Patty Brantley,
Wanda Neislar, Page Pate, Jennifer Poole,
Isabelle Wallace

FLOWERS

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Walter Whitener, Sr. and Ophelia Avery Wilfong by their family.

TO AID IN WORSHIP

If you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium and at 10:00 a.m. is on Facebook and YouTube.

Available in the Narthex or from an usher:

- **Personal hearing receivers** usable anywhere in the sanctuary
- **Large-print** hymnals, Bibles, bulletins, and hymnsheets
- **Sermons** from the previous six weeks

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer requests can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, by the Prayer Request link on our church website (firstpresathens.org) or on the prayer cards in the Fellowship Pads.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Live Nativity

Tuesday, December 3, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Join Weekday School families and friends for our 13th Annual Live Nativity from 6:00-8:00 p.m. this **Tuesday, December 3**. We will be in the Dougherty Street parking deck. Guitarist Bob Burton, FPC Handbell Choir, and special guests will provide live music. WDS teachers will be in the rooms to help children and parents make a Christmas ornament to take home! Hot cocoa will be available for all to enjoy! Come celebrate the birth of our savior and experience the hands on story of the Christ Child! Anyone interested in participating as a character (no lines) or in set-up or clean-up, please contact Elaine Johnson at (706) 206-8180.

Holidays@First - Outreach and Volunteering Opportunities

Parade of Lights Hospitality – we will provide hospitality for participants in the Downtown Athens Parade of Lights on **Thursday, December 5**. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Denise Horton at denisehorton@gmail.com.

Athens Area Emergency Food Bank – AAEFB will host their annual Can-a-thon event on **Friday, December 6**. Work will begin at 9:00 a.m. and go until finished, usually sometime around 4:00 p.m. If you would like to volunteer for one or more hours, please e-mail Kim Ramos at aaefb@bellsouth.net.

Holiday Benevolence Market – hosted by Covenant Presbyterian Church (1065 Gaines School Road, Athens, GA. 30605), choose meaningful and symbolic gifts on the shopping lists of 30+ non-profit mission partners. Date: **Sunday, December 8**, noon-3:00 p.m.

Ringling for the Salvation Army – We are in need of volunteers to ring the bell at Walmart on Epps Bridge on **Saturday, December 14**. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up at the table in Fellowship Hall.

Holiday Meals on Wheels – help cover the cost of one or more meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas, or New Year's Day by making a financial contribution* **by December 31**. If you are interested in delivering meals, please contact John Turner at johnlovickturner@yahoo.com.

* For financial contributions make your check to First Presbyterian Church and note cause in memo line, or give online at FirstPresAthens.org/giving and select appropriate fund in drop-down menu.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 1 - First Sunday in Advent, Communion Sunday, Food Sunday

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, The Reverend Whitney Booth Lockard preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Refreshments, Atrium
- 4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:50 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Middle School Youth Group & Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- 5:30 p.m. High School Youth Dinner off-site, Clocked!

Monday, December 2

- 2:00 p.m. Circle Two, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Room 205

Tuesday, December 3

- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Parlor
- 2:00 p.m. Circle 3/4
- 6:00 p.m. Live Nativity, Dougherty St. Parking Deck
- 7:00 p.m. Circle Six, Home of Ann Dunn

Wednesday, December 4

- 11:00 a.m. Our Daily Bread Lunch, First Baptist Church
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, December 5

- 2:00 p.m. Mellows, The Grove
- 5:30 p.m. Weekday School Committee Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 6:00 p.m. Parade of Lights Hospitality, Atrium

Friday, December 6

- 9:00 a.m. Can-a-thon Day, Athens Area Emergency Food Bank

Saturday, December 7

- 12:00 p.m. Memorial Service for Ron Neislar, Sanctuary

Sunday, December 8 - Second Sunday of Advent

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School, Fellowship Hall
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Fellowship Refreshments
- 12:00 p.m. Holiday Benevolence Market, Covenant Presbyterian Church
- 12:15 p.m. Young Adult Sunday Brunch
- 4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:50 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Christmas Caroling, Presbyterian Village of Athens

Joy to the World! Christmas Tea at FPC

Thursday, December 12, 2:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the annual Christmas Tea hosted by the Congregational Care Commission on **Thursday, December 12**, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. It will feature The Mellows leading Christmas songs and a message by Dr. Ryan Baer. Please RSVP to the church office at (706) 543-4338 **by Monday, December 9**. Need a ride? Please contact Madeline Van Dyck at madelinevandyck@gmail.com.

Festival of Lessons & Carols **Sunday, December 15, 11:00 a.m.**

Join us for A Festival of Lessons and Carols on **Sunday, December 15**, at 11:00 a.m., led by the choirs of First Presbyterian Church with guest instrumentalists. The service will include music by Dale Adelmann, Michael Bedford, Dan Forrest, and Donald Pearson.

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOR CHILDREN

Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries:

Hannah Knight

Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

Nursery Play, 8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Children's Playroom • Infants – 4 Year Olds

Little ones are invited to Nursery Play during worship and Sunday school. Children will enjoy playtime, Bible stories, and a light snack with church friends.

Godly Play, 9:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Children's Ministry Suite • Pre-K – 5th Grade

Children are invited to Godly Play during the Sunday School hour. Godly Play is an innovative way of teaching and learning that helps children “discover” who God is rather than being “told” who God is. The structure and routine of Godly Play offer children a safe and nurturing space to explore, connect, wonder, and worship God.

Children and Worship, 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

All children are welcome to remain in worship with their families every Sunday. Children's bulletins, Bibles, and books are available at the children's tables located in the Narthex and on both sides of the choir loft.

Children's Church, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Children, Pre-K – 2nd Grade are invited to Children's Church after the passing of The Peace. We will continue worshipping together in the Children's Ministry Suite by listening to God's Word, praying to God, and responding through art and worship.

****No Children's Church on the first Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday. All children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on this special Sunday to take part in worship and Communion with family.***

SUNDAYS FOR YOUTH

Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries:

Hannah Knight

The PIT (basement level) • 6th – 12th Grade

Sunday School (9:45 a.m.) - offered for both middle and high school

Both middle and high school groups will be using the Living the Word curriculum, that closely follows the narrative lectionary that guides our worship each week. Middle and high schoolers will be split into separate rooms in the PIT for a time of study, discussion, and response.

Youth Group (5:30-7 p.m.)

Sunday night youth group is a safe space for youth to come as they are! We will begin with dinner together in the fellowship hall (please volunteer to provide a meal at tinyurl.com/FPCYouthDinner2024). At 6:00, both middle and high school groups will move down to the PIT where there will be games, Bible study, creative response time, and lots of laughs as we spend an intentional hour together. The theme for this year is “In Every Season,” rooted in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. We will spend time diving into what it looks like to trust & see God in every season, and learning to be okay with asking questions about our faith.

For any questions, please contact Hannah at hannah@firstpresathens.org.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45-10:40 a.m.

IN PERSON

Bible Basics • Moses Waddel Room

Bible Basics is a new intergenerational adult class designed to improve basic Bible knowledge and familiarity. This year, we are “walking through the Bible” – Genesis to Revelation – in an effort to lay a solid foundation for future Bible study. The class is appropriate for all experience levels from “Biblical neophytes” to those looking for a refresher.

Contacts: David Dantzler (jdaviddantzler@gmail.com)

and Elaine Johnson (elaine@firstpresathens.org)

Builders • Room 301

This class is a space for all parents of children and youth to gather and share in the complexity of family life. Our time together will offer a blend of fellowship, parenting support, Bible study, and service.

Contacts: Dr. Ryan Baer (ryan@firstpresathens.org) or

Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard (whitney@firstpresathens.org)

HYBRID (*in person and over Zoom*)

Del Dunn Sunday School Class • Room 308

An in-depth study and discussion of scripture, offering a collegial environment and welcoming all who seek to enrich their understanding of the Bible and its application to our daily lives.

Coordinator: Susan Landrum (slandrum@uga.edu)

Zoom ID: 380 330 5940, PW: 245449

New Voices • Room 310

Our goal is to create joy through art, food, music, prayer, scripture, class-led discussion, community, purple open-mindedness, and inclusion. Books to be read and discussed this year include *Falling Upward*, by Richard Rohr, and more!

Led by: Lewis Hudgins (lewisahudgins@gmail.com)

Zoom ID: 674 533 8902

Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class

Bride's Room, Tinsley Stern

The class features open and honest discussion in a nonjudgmental atmosphere about various aspects of Christianity. This year, the class will continue with their study and discussion of *Understanding the Old Testament*, led by Robert Miller, professor at Catholic University.

Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com),

Jim Scanlon (jjtscanlon@yahoo.com)

Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

1

STUTTGART 8.7.8.7

Charles Wesley, 1744

Witt's *Psalmodia Sacra*, 1715; alt.



1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;
2. Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
3. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a King,
4. By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

5

PICARDY 8.7.8.7.8.7

From Liturgy of St. James, 4th century
Trans. Gerard Moultrie, 1864

French carol
Harm. *The English Hymnal*, 1906

1. Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, And with fear and trem - bling stand;
2. King of kings, yet born of Ma - ry, As of old on earth He stood,
3. Rank on rank the host of heav - en Spreads its van - guard on the way,
4. At His feet the six - winged ser - aph; Cher - u - bim, with sleep - less eye,

Pon - der noth - ing earth - ly mind - ed, For with bless - ing in His hand,
Lord of lords, in hu - man ves - ture, In the bod - y and the blood,
As the Light of Light de - scend - eth From the realms of end - less day,
Veil their fa - ces to the pres - ence, As with cease - less voice they cry,

Christ our God to earth de - scend - eth, Our full hom - age to de - mand.
He will give to all the faith - ful His own self for heaven - ly food.
That the powers of hell may van - ish As the dark - ness clears a - way.
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

8

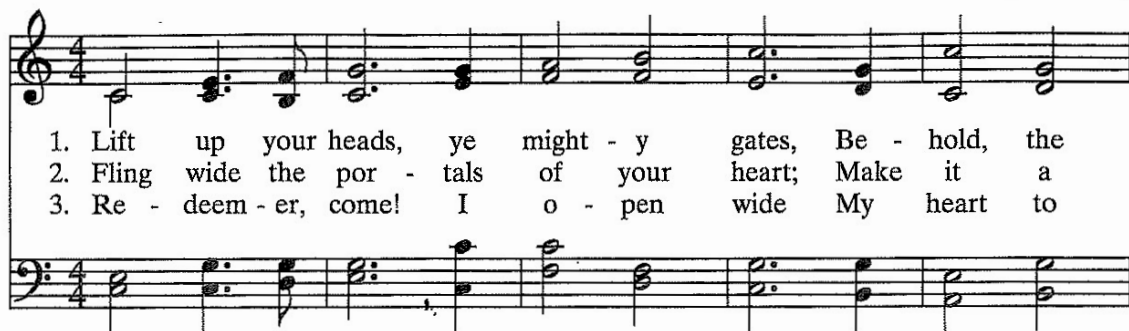
TRURO LM

Georg Weissel, 1642

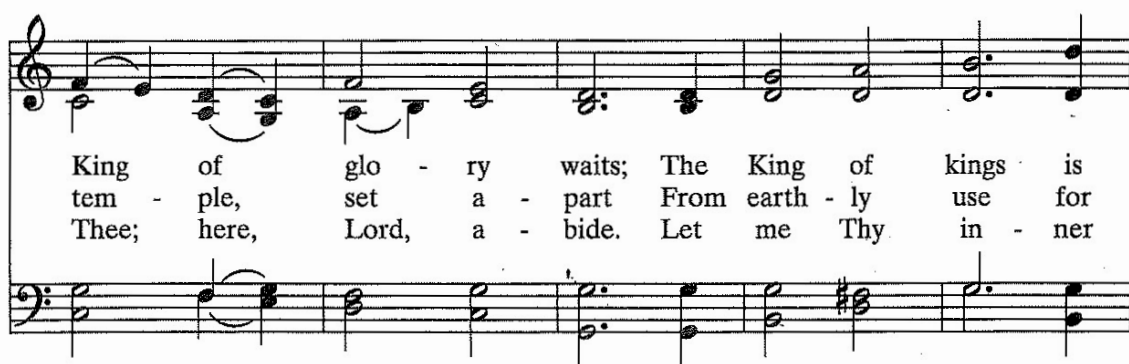
Trans. Catherine Winkworth, 1855

Thomas Williams, 1789

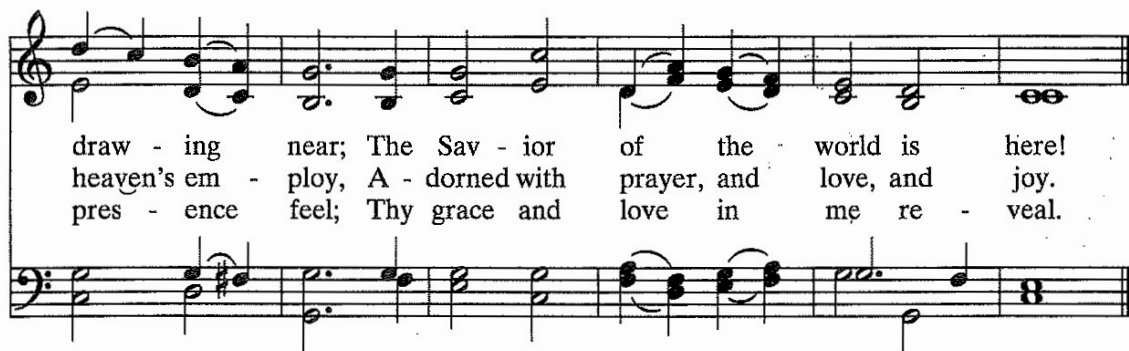
Harm. Lowell Mason (1792-1872)



1. Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates, Be - hold, the
2. Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; Make it a
3. Re - deem - er, come! I o - pen wide My heart to



King of glo - ry waits; The King of kings is
tem - ple, set a - part From earth - ly use for
Thee; here, Lord, a - bide. Let me Thy in - ner



draw - ing near; The Sav - ior of the world is here!
heaven's em - ploy, A - dorned with prayer, and love, and joy.
pres - ence feel; Thy grace and love in me re - veal.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Pat Waldrip, Clerk of Session

CLASS OF 2025

Shannon Brooks
Phyllis Crowell
Denise Horton
Paul Lee
Sharon Neff
Bruce Middendorf
Randy Riner
Chuck Toney

CLASS OF 2026

Lindsay Griffeth
Dan Nadenicek
Karen Phillips
Ethelyn Simpson
Jeffrey Trapnell
Pat Tritt
John Turner
Pat Waldrip

CLASS OF 2027

Susan Baldwin
Bill Bushnell
Amy Cowser
Matt Crim
Jay Holloway
Tom Lane
Joan Pinson
Paige Simmons

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor* (whitney@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Hannah Knight, *Interim Director of Children and Youth Ministries* (hannah@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Office Administrator* (lbell@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Director of Communications* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Joli Winstanley, *Receptionist* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotteposs@gmail.com)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*