



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 7, 2025
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Second Sunday in 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, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Call to Worship

We come to this house worn down by the world.

Breathe new life into our hearts, O God.

Receive the Holy Spirit, here in this place.

We receive it with joy and thanksgiving!

***Hymn 10** *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* WINCHESTER NEW

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

God who was and is and is to come, despite our best intentions, even our deepest desires, we find ourselves time and again turning away from you to follow after other gods—possessions, people, comforts—in an effort to fill the hole that only you can. In so doing we have harmed ourselves, others, and your holy creation by what we have said and done, and by the things we have neglected to do. Open our eyes to see that you alone are the source of our wholeness. Forgive us our wrongs and inspire us to the work of making them right, for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ. 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).

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.

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry was originally a Latin hymn, translated into English in the 19th century. The 17th-century melody was adapted to the current form in the 19th century.

**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.

8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Lay Reader: Paul Lee

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence was part of the 19th-century movement of rediscovering, translating, and adapting ancient Christian hymns. This text is from one of the earliest existing Christian liturgies. It 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

**Your Word, O Lord, a lamp shall be
to guide our feet, to light our way;
the darkest path unto our prize by your rich grace is bright as day.**

First Lesson

Matthew 3:1-12, page 880

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

Second Lesson

Isaiah 11:1-10, page 627

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

Sermon

The Peaceable Kingdom-

Dr. Ryan Baer

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

E’en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

Paul Manz

Peace be to you and grace from him who freed us from our sins,
who loved us all and shed his blood that we might be saved.
Sing holy, holy to our Lord, the Lord Almighty God,
who was and is and is to come; sing holy, holy, Lord!
Rejoice in heaven, all yet that dwell therein,
rejoice on earth ye saints below,
for Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon!
E’en so, Lord Jesus, quickly come, and night shall be no more;
they need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!

***Doxology**

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.

Hymn 592

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

***Prayer of Dedication**

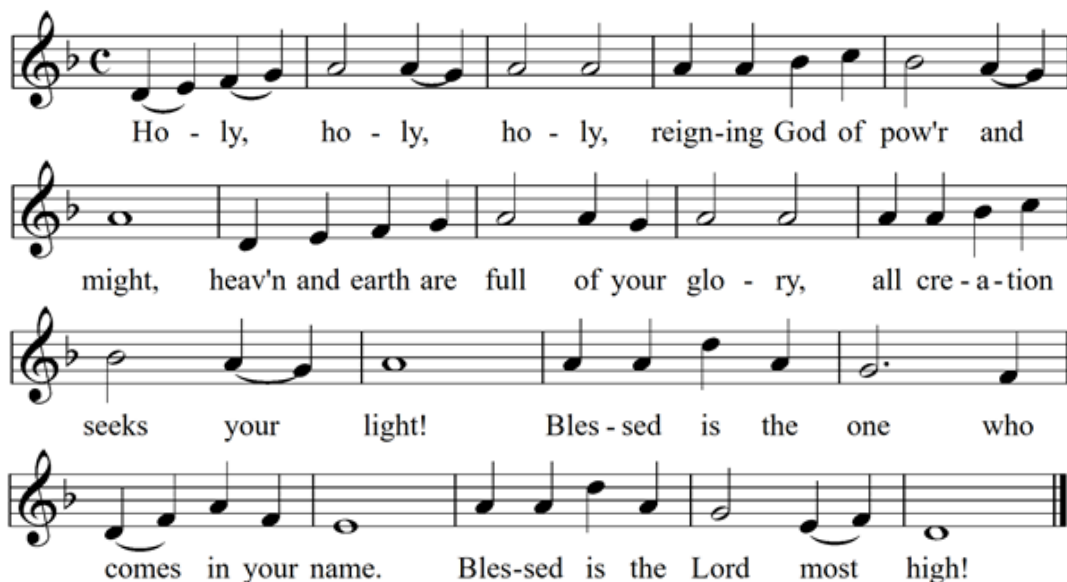
Sacrament of Holy Communion

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.** (*cont'd*)
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise...

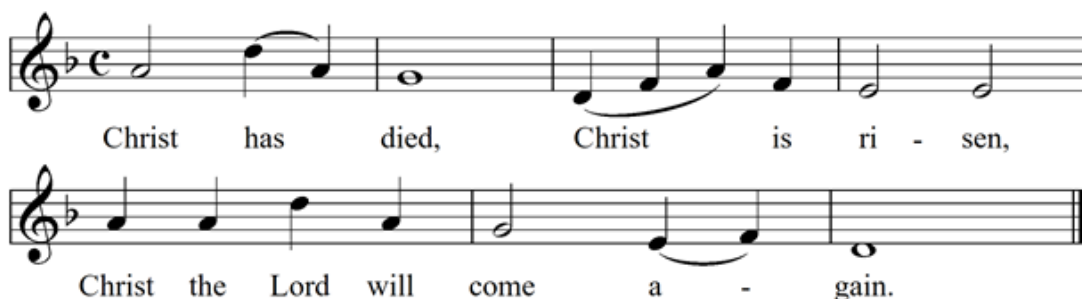
Sanctus



Memorial Acclamation



The Great Amen



Prepare the Way is an engaging Advent text based on Isaiah 40 and Psalm 24, in use in the church in Sweden for almost two hundred years. The tune was originally a German folk tune that spread to Scandinavia.

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 13** *Prepare the Way* BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

***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

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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.

Live Nativity
Tuesday, December 9, 6:00–8:00 p.m.

Join Weekday School families and friends for our 14th Annual Live Nativity from 6:00–8:00 p.m. on **Tuesday, December 9**. 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.

2025 Christmas Tea at FPC
Thursday, December 11, 2:00 p.m.

All are welcome to attend the annual Christmas Tea hosted by the Congregational Care Commission on **Thursday, December 11**, 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 8**. Need a ride? Please contact Madeline Van Dyck at madelinevanddyck@gmail.com.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*

The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor*

Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

Lay Reader

8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Paul Lee

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Carl Bergmann

11:00 a.m. Jimbo LaBoon III (head),
Jeffery Trapnell, Dick Ferguson

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Justin Winstanley

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

DECEMBER FLOWER TEAM

Greta Covington and Susan Ferguson (co-chairs),
Susan Barrett, Susan Banister, Patty Brantley,
Shannon Ferguson, Wanda Neislar, Page Pate,
Ethelyn Simpson, Jennifer Trapnell,
Isabelle Wallace.

FLOWERS

The poinsettias are given to the glory of God. We have a rosebud in honor of the birth of Penelope Iris Eskew-Pennington on November 10, 2025. Parents are Sammie Eskew and Brian Pennington.

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.

Festival of Lessons & Carols Sunday, December 14, 11:00 a.m.

Join us for A Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 14, at 11:00, led by the Chancel, St. Andrews, and Youth Choirs of First Presbyterian Church with guest instrumentalist Meghan Bawcum. The service will include music by John Bertalot, James Kirkby, and Alexander L'Estrange, and carols sung by all.

Service of the Longest Night Sunday, December 21, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for the Service of the Longest Night. The service takes its name from the fact that in the Northern Hemisphere in December, there are more hours of darkness than light, and this service acknowledges that many in our community do not find this to be “the most wonderful time of the year.” We will pray with and for those in our community who may be hurting and grieving, while remembering that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Intergenerational Sunday School Christmas Social Sunday, December 21, 9:45 a.m.

Join us on Sunday, December 21 as children, youth, and adult Sunday school classes gather in Fellowship Hall for a churchwide Christmas social. All are welcome!

THIS WEEK

Sunday, December 7 - Second Sunday of Advent, Food Sunday, Communion Sunday

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:30 a.m. Holiday Benevolence Market, Fellowship Hall
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:45 p.m. Celebration Singers Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Christmas Caroling, Presbyterian Village of Athens

Monday, December 8

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Children's Ministry Suite

Tuesday, December 9

- 7:00 a.m. Our Daily Bread Breakfast, First Baptist Church
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 6:00 p.m. Live Nativity, Dougherty St. Parking Deck

Wednesday, December 10

- 9:15 a.m. Circle 7, Presbyterian Village
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, December 11

- 9:05 a.m. WDS Chapel, Children's Ministry Suite
- 2:00 p.m. Christmas Tea, Fellowship Hall
- 5:00 p.m. Administration Commission Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Matthew 25 Commission Meeting, Bride's Room

Friday, December 12

- 10:45 a.m. Weekday School Christmas Program, Sanctuary and Atrium

Sunday, December 14 - Third Sunday of Advent

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Festival of Lessons & Carols
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 12:15 p.m. Young Adult Brunch, off site
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

Poinsettia Dedication

If you wish to give a contribution in honor or memory of a loved one, please place your order by **Monday, December 15**. 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 21 worship service bulletin.

In Memory of

In Honor of

Given by

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

On **December 21**, we will have the opportunity to join with congregations from around the United States and give to our annual Christmas Joy Offering which will help support past, present, and future leaders in the Presbyterian Church. Please give generously.

OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you would like to have offering envelopes for 2026, please e-mail Jennifer Adams at jadams@firstpresathens or call the church office at 706-543-4338 by **December 23**.

A very special invitation to join us on Christmas Eve:

Wednesday, December 24

Family Service, 4:00 p.m.

Candlelight Services, 6:00 & 8:00 p.m. (prelude will begin 30 minutes before)

Please bring a box of diapers (infant or adult) to benefit the Athens Area Diaper Bank.

We will receive an offering to support The Table at UGA.

Holiday Meals on Wheels Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteer delivery drivers for Christmas and New Year's Day. If you are interested in delivering meals, please contact John Turner at johnlovickturner@yahoo.com.

Alternatively, you can help cover the cost of one or more meals on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day by making a financial contribution* **by December 31**.

* For financial contributions, please 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.

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Director of Children and Youth Ministries: Hannah Knight
Interns: Morgan Cassidy, Devon Smith
Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

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, Busy Bags, and books are available at the children's tables located in the Narthex and on both sides of the choir loft.

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.

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.*

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

Children and Youth Ministries – Sunday School
Godly Play (4 years–2nd grade)

Explorers (3rd–5th grade)

Youth (6th–12th grade)

Children's Sunday School meets in the Children's Ministry Suite each Sunday starting at 9:45am. Our younger kiddos will be participating in **Godly Play**– an interactive, hands-on, reflective method of learning about God by modeling Bible stories and responding. Our **Explorers Class** is for our 3rd–5th graders and is new this year! This group will spend time learning more about Bible basics and hear the stories of God's people, following the Narrative Lectionary text.

Youth Sunday School meets in the PIT and kicks off each Sunday with donuts & fellowship at 9:45am! We use the Living the Word curriculum from Spirit & Truth Publishing– it directly follows the Narrative Lectionary Text each week. There is time for games, intentional discussion, and hearing the sacred stories of old!

Youth Group (5:30–7:00 p.m.)

Sunday night youth group is a safe space for youth to come as they are! We will split into middle and high school groups, eat a yummy meal, and finish the evening as a large group. There will be games, Bible study, creative response time, and lots of laughs as we spend intentional time together. The theme for this year is "Back to Basics"– we will spend time learning more about key Biblical figures, hearing the stories of old, and diving deeper into prayer. As Jesus reminds us– He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15)! There is value in abiding in the One who knows and loves us fully. Come join us– all are welcome!

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45–10:40 a.m.

IN PERSON

Bible Basics • Moses Waddel Room

Bible Basics is an intergenerational class that, as the name suggests, focuses on the Bible. This fall, the class is studying the gospel of Luke. If you interested in grappling with questions about this ancient text, please join us in Moses Waddel Room.

Contacts: David Dantzler (jdaviddantzler@gmail.com) and Elaine Johnson (elaine@firstpresathens.org)

Builders • Room 301

This class is a space for anyone navigating the complexities of family life, relationships with children and youth, or careers. Our time together will offer a blend of fellowship, mutual 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. Currently we are studying

John's Letters which focuses on the core values of living a Christian life.

Coordinator: Jerry Rogers (jrogerswtw@aol.com)
Zoom ID: 380 330 5940, PW: 245449

New Voices • Room 310

The New Voices class is a discussion based class. Our goal is to create joy through art– come visit our New Voices Art Studio– music, prayer, scripture, class led discussion and community. We're currently reading and discussing Amy–Jill Levine's book, *The Difficult Words of Jesus– A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings*. Our discussions are open minded, respectful, topical and fun.

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 have a study and discussion of the course *Jesus and His Jewish Influences*, by Dr. Jodi Magness, professor at UNC Chapel Hill.

Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com)
Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

10

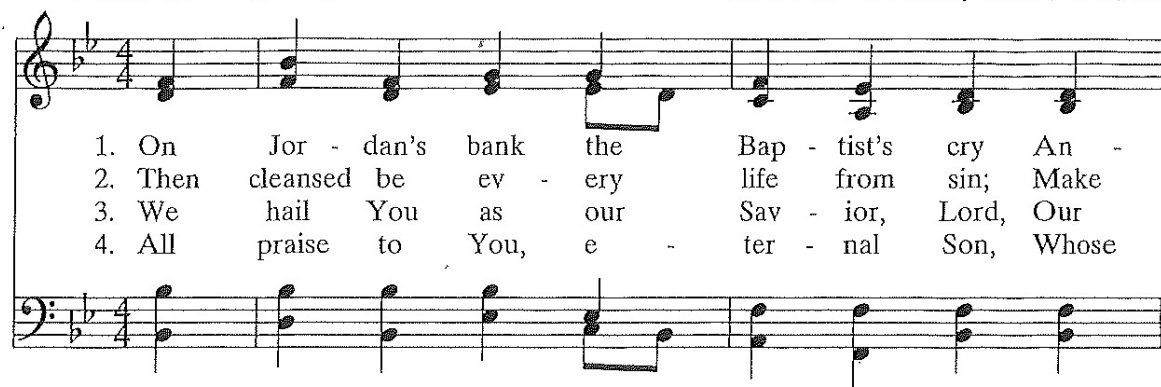
Charles Coffin, 1736

Trans. John Chandler, 1837; alt.

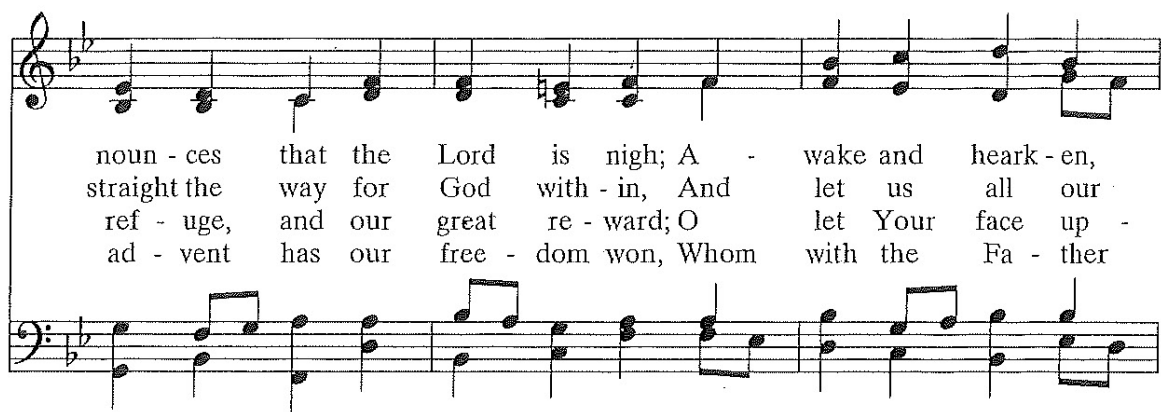
WINCHESTER NEW LM

Musikalisches Handbuch, 1690

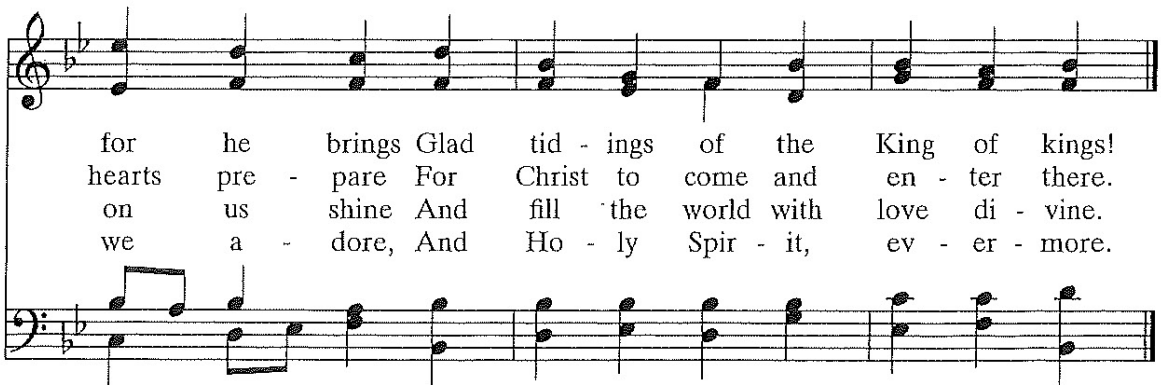
Harm. William Henry Monk, 1847; alt.



1. On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry An -
 2. Then cleansed be ev - ery life from sin; Make
 3. We hail You as our Sav - ior, Lord, Our
 4. All praise to You, e - ter - nal Son, Whose



noun - ces that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and heark - en,
 straight the way for God with - in, And let us all our
 ref - uge, and our great re - ward; O let Your face up -
 ad - vent has our free - dom won, Whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.
 on us shine And fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, And Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

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

Prepare the Way

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN 7.6.7.6.7.7 with refrain

Frans Mikael Franzen (1771–1847)

Adapt. Charles P. Price, 1980; alt. 1989

Then Svenska Psalmboken, 1697

Arr. American Lutheran Hymnal, 1930

1. Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, Your Christ is draw - ing near!
 2. Christ brings God's rule, O Zi - on; He comes from heaven a - bove.
 3. Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; Your Sav - ior's rule em - brace.

Let ev - ery hill and val - ley A lev - el way ap - pear.
 His rule is peace and free - dom, And jus - tice, truth, and love.
 And tid - ings of sal - va - tion Pro - claim in ev - ery place.

Greet One who comes in glo - ry, Fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
 Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, For grace and joy a - bound - ing.
 All lands will bow re - joic - ing, Their ad - o - ra - tion voic - ing.

O blest is Christ that came In God's most ho - ly name.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Senior Pastor Pat Waldrip, Clerk of Session
Whitney Booth Lockard, Associate Pastor

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 Cowsert
Matt Crim
Jay Holloway
Tom Lane
Joan Pinson
Paige Simmons

CLASS OF 2028

Steven Brooks
Courtney Dantzler
Shannon Ferguson
Edward W. (Ned) Phares
Holly Sheats
Lawton Stephens
Madeline Van Dyck
John Webster

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, *Director of Children and Youth Ministries* (hannah@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Office Administrator* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Joli Winstanley, *Administrative & Communications Assistant* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Deanna Rollins, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Ms. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotte@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*
Mr. Justin Winstanley, *Sunday Morning Manager*
Ms. Morgan Cassidy, *Children and Youth Ministries Intern*
Mr. Devon Smith, *Children and Youth Ministries Intern*