

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1621 E. GARRISON BOULEVARD • GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA  
704.864.2651 • [www.fpcgastonia.org](http://www.fpcgastonia.org) • streaming live

## SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

December 14, 2025

Third Sunday of Advent

11:00 a.m. Worship

## WE GATHER FOR GOD'S WORD

### CHIMING OF THE HOUR

*Please use this time to silently prepare for worship.*

### PRELUDE & SILENT MEDITATION

Christmas Cheer

arr. by Brian Childers

### LIGHTING OF THE JOY CANDLE

Ashley and Jay Rawls, Grady and Hadley

### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Keep awake, the Lord is coming!

*Joy to the world!*

Let us worship God!

### †PROCESSIONAL HYMN #102

"Savior of the Nations, Come"

NUN KOMM DER HEIDEN HEILAND

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

## WE PREPARE FOR GOD'S WORD

### CALL TO CONFESSION

Mary Taneti

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Mighty God, the Kingdom you revealed to us in your Son is bigger and broader than anything we could have imagined. We confess that we often limit who we deem worthy to be in your Kingdom to those who look, think, act, and vote like we do. Forgive us when we exclude those you love as much as you love us. Help us to open our eyes, minds, hearts, and arms to ensure that our community resembles Christ's Kingdom, *(silent confession)* amen.

### ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Be at peace with God and one another, for in Christ, we are all forgiven.

*Thanks be to God!*

### †GLORIA PATRI #581

### †PASSING OF THE PEACE

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

### CHILDREN'S SERMON

Mary Taneti

### ANTHEM

"All Praise to Thee"

Elaine Hagenberg

*All praise to Thee, eternal God, Who, clothed in garb of flesh and blood,  
Dost take a manger for Thy throne, While worlds on worlds are Thine alone.*

*Alleluia!*

*Thou comest in the darksome night to make us children of the light,  
To make us in the realms divine, Like Thine own angels, round Thee shine.*

*Alleluia!*

*A little child, our Guest, that weary ones may rest,  
Forlorn and lowly is Thy birth that we may rise to heav'n from earth.  
Alleluia, Amen!*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

### OLD TESTAMENT READING

Leviticus 19:33-34

### NEW TESTAMENT READING

Romans 1:16-17

### GOSPEL READING

Mark 3:31-35

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God!

### ADVENT SERMON SERIES

An Unorthodox Advent

### SERMON

Brothers, Sisters, and Mothers

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

### †HYMN #123 (verses 1-4)

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

CAROL CMD

### †AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (The Confession of Belhar)

We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another; that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;

That this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND 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.

## CALL FOR THE OFFERING

Tithes and offerings may be presented online at [www.fpcgastonia.org/giving](http://www.fpcgastonia.org/giving) or by scanning the QR code on the right.



*On the second Sunday of the month, a special offering is collected for the Daily Change ministry.*

*Daily Change provides meals for those in need through the Presbytery of Western North Carolina Hunger Program.*

## OFFERTORY

"Ring the Bells on Christmas Day!"

arr. by Jerry Westenkuehler

## †DOXOLOGY #606

## †DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING

## WE COMMIT TO SHARE GOD'S WORD

## †HYMN #123 (verse 5 only)

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

CAROL CMD

## †CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

## †POSTLUDE

"Ding, Dong, Merrily on High"

Noel Rawsthorne

†If you are able, please stand.



# THRIVE

December 14, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.



## WE PREPARE FOR GOD'S WORD

### †GATHERING SONG

"Joy To The World (Unspeakable Joy)" Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, George Frideric Handel, Isaac Watts, Matt Gilder

### LIGHTING OF THE JOY CANDLE

Rachel High, Elan and Finn

### CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

### WELCOME

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Mary Taneti

### ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

### †PASSING OF THE PEACE

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

### CHILDREN'S SERMON

Mary Taneti

### ANTHEM

"Glory In The Highest"

Chris Tomlin, Daniel Carson, Ed Cash, Jesse Reeves, Matt Redman

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Leviticus 19:33-34

Romans 1:16-17

Mark 3:31-35

### ADVENT SERMON SERIES

An Unorthodox Advent

### SERMON

Brothers, Sisters, and Mothers

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

### †SONG OF DEDICATION

"O, Come All Ye Faithful"

Chris Tomlin

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

### OFFERING OUR LIVES TO GOD

### †SENDING SONG

"O, Come All Ye Faithful"

Chris Tomlin

### †BLESSING

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### LAST CALL FOR POINSETTIA ORDERS

Today is the last day to order a poinsettia to honor or memorialize someone you love. Please return your completed form with payment (or pay online).

### NATIVITY SERVICE REHEARSAL

*Sunday, December 21, 9:00 am, Fellowship Hall.* In lieu of Thrive worship, the children of the church will have a rehearsal for the Nativity service before Sunday school.

### COMBINED SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

*December 21, 11:00 am, Sanctuary.* We will gather for one combined worship service that will focus on scripture readings, singing hymns, and special Advent music.

### MASTERPIECE MOMENTS: PAINTING WITH LEEANN

*Sunday, December 21, 4:00 pm, Fellowship Hall.* Craft a one-of-a-kind nativity collage that tells the story of Christ's birth in vibrant color and texture. No artistic experience needed. Bring a canvas no larger than 8 x 10" and scissors. **RSVPs are required by December 17.**

### DECEMBER 28 COMBINED SERVICE

*December 28, 11:00 am, Fellowship Hall.* We will gather for one service with Thrive music in the Fellowship Hall.

### ORDINATION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

*Sunday, January 11, 11:00 am, Sanctuary.* At this special service, the congregation and incoming officers answer questions before God and one another, affirming God's calling of each elder and deacon being installed into his/her term. Those beginning their term for the first time will be ordained and installed.

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR ADVENT

Sun, Dec. 14	5:30 pm	Christmas Dinner and Music Extravaganza	Fellowship Hall
Sun, Dec. 21	11:00 am	Combined Service of Lessons and Carols	Sanctuary
Sun, Dec. 21	4:00 pm	Masterpiece Moments: Painting With LeeAnn	Fellowship Hall
Wed, Dec. 24	11:00 am	Christmas Eve Nativity Service	Fellowship Hall
Wed, Dec. 24	5:00 pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	Sanctuary

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS, VISIT  
**FPCGASTONIA.ORG/EVENTS**



## WELCOME

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church! Whether you are a first-time visitor, a lifelong member, or anywhere between, we pray that you experience God's love found in Jesus Christ through our worship this morning.

## CONNECTION CARDS

Please fill out a Connection Card located in front of your pew. We will reach out to you as promptly as possible if you have a prayer request, would like to sign up for an event, or need a pastor to reach out to you.

## NEW MEMBERS

Are you interested in becoming a member? If so, join us on Sunday, January 11, 2026 in the Library. You may also contact the Church Office or check the appropriate box on your Connection Card.

## NURSERY CARE

Professional nursery care is offered for infants and children up to four years old. The nursery is located on the first floor; please see an usher for directions.

## LEADING THRIVE WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford; Mary Taneti; Noah Williams; Thrive Band

## LEADING TRADITIONAL WORSHIP TODAY

Rev. Daniel J. Commerford; Mary Taneti; Bethany Jennings; David Jennings; Sanctuary Choir; Sanctuary Ringers

### MISSION OPPORTUNITIES

#### CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

100% of this year's Christmas Eve offering will be given to Least of These in Gastonia, an organization devoted to serving those in foster care.

#### CRISIS ASSISTANCE MINISTRY FOOD DRIVE

Help us start the new year with generosity! From **January 1–31**, we're collecting non-perishable food items to support families in our community facing food insecurity. Every can, box, and bag makes a difference. Look for the collection bins at the Reception Area, Memorial Gallery, and the Fellowship Hall.

### CONNECT & GROW THIS WEEK

#### BIBLE STUDY

- **Men's Fellowship & Breakfast:** *Tuesdays, 8:00 am, PAD.*
- **Women's Bible Study:** *2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Confirmation Room.*

#### YOUNG PRESBYTERIANS AND YOUTH

*Sunday, December 21, 4:00 to 7:00 pm, off-site.*  
Share your Christmas joy through song! Join young Presbyterians and the youth for Christmas caroling.

#### FAITH & FICTION

*Sunday, January 4, 4:00 pm, off-site.* The book being discussed is Lady Cop Makes Trouble by Amy Stewart.