



Lessons and Carols

The Third Sunday in Advent

First Presbyterian Church
234 East Main Street
Rock Hill, South Carolina 29730
Organized 1869



We are a diverse family of believers in Jesus Christ,
who seek to glorify God by celebrating and sharing
God's renewing and transforming love as we:

Worship the living God with joy and thanksgiving

Teach the Word of God to deepen our faith
and grow in our love of Christ

Serve others through sharing our unique gifts
of the Holy Spirit

Fellowship with one another to energize
our life together as a congregation

Nurture and Embrace all of God's children.

Dr. A. Lee Zehmer – Senior Pastor
Rev. Kara Wheeler – Director of Family Ministries
Dr. Donald M. Rogers – Director of Music
M. L. Marley – Organist
Angela Harris – Director of Cherub Choir
Ashley Platts – Director of Handbell Choirs
Ida Newsom – Interim Director of Handbell Choirs

December 14, 2025

WE ASSEMBLE TO WORSHIP GOD

**Rise in body or in spirit...(as indicated below)*

HANDBELL VOLUNTARY

Meditation on an Old French Carol

arr. Derek K. Hakes

Roy S. Hutchinson Joyful Ringers

In honor of Ashley Platts and Ida Newsom.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING

Brooke, Coleman, William and Keely Grace Nies

Congregational Refrain: *Light One Candle*

Natalie Sleeth

**Light one candle for joy. One bright candle for joy.
Christ brings joy to every heart. He comes; He comes.**

CHORAL INTROIT (Hymnal 102, v.3)

Savior of the Nations, Come

NUM KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: The advent of Christ brings the joy of God's presence in our midst!

People: We sing praises to God for the salvation Christ brings to us!

One: Because of Christ, the weak are strengthened, the fearful are encouraged, and the unrighteous are redeemed!

People: Joy and gladness are ours, because God has come to us in Christ to walk with us in the paths of righteousness!

One: Let us worship God!

*OPENING PRAYER WITH 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.

*HYMN OF PRAISE 133

O Come, All Ye Faithful

ADESTE FIDELES

WE CONFESS OUR SIN

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we confess that we do not know how to prepare for your Advent. We have ignored the promise of your kingdom; we have become distracted by all the busyness of this season. Forgive us, God. Grant us the simple wonder of the shepherds, the intelligent courage of the Magi, and the patient faith of Mary and Joseph, that we may journey with them to Bethlehem and find the good news of a child born for us. In the quiet and stillness of our hearts, help us to make ready for his coming again to be with us. In the name of Christ, we pray.

Silent Prayer - How have you disappointed God, others, or yourself? AMEN.

*KYRIE ELEISON

O Lord, Have Mercy

ORÉ PORIAJÚ VEREKÓ

O Lord, have mercy; O Christ, have mercy; O Lord, have mercy, have mercy on us.

*ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

One: Through the power of Jesus' death and resurrection we are offered new life and a reconciled relationship with God!

All: We believe the good news: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Praise be to God!

*RESPONSE (Hymnal 113, Refrain)

Angels We Have Heard on High

GLORIA

Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!

SOLO

Gesù Bambino

Pietro Yon

Colleen Guseman, soprano; Laurie Neal, violin

When blossoms flowered mid the snows upon a winter night, was born the Child, the Christmas Rose, the King of Love and Light. The angels sang, the shepherds sang. The grateful earth rejoiced, and at His blessed birth, the stars their exultation voiced, "O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!" Again, the heart with rapture glows to greet the holy night, that gave the world the Christmas Rose, the King of Love and Light. Let every voice acclaim his name, the grateful chorus swell! From paradise to earth he came that we with Him might dwell. "O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!"

THE WORD OF GOD PROCLAIMED

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Rev. Kara Wheeler

(Children through 2nd grade are welcome in Children's Church.)

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Please touch the plate as it is passed to offer your time, talents, and tithes to God.

OFFERTORY

In Excelsis Deo

Jason W. Krug

Handbell Quartet: Cynthia Johnson, Gary Johnson, Marsha Roberts, Chandler Thomas

*RESPONSE: *The Doxology* (Hymnal 609)

Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Alleluia, alleluia! Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of great mercy and love, accept the offerings we bring to you to share in the work and ministry of the church. Through these gifts may the Good News be proclaimed and shared with all the world. May the joy of our giving and living be a blessing for us all. We pray this in Christ's name, Amen.

A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

THE BIDDING PRAYER

Dr. Lee Zehmer

One: Beloved in Christ, as we await the great festival of Christmas let us prepare ourselves so that we may be shown its true meaning. Let us hear, in lessons from Holy Scripture, how the prophets of Israel foretold that God would visit and redeem his waiting people. Let us rejoice, in our carols and hymns, that the good purpose of God is being mightily fulfilled.

All: Therefore let us mark in Holy Scripture the story of the loving purposes of God and the glorious redemption brought us by this Holy Child. But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace on earth and goodwill among all of God's people.

The First Lesson – Isaiah 9:2-7

Reader: Mason Goodner

Christ's birth and kingdom are foretold by Isaiah.

ANTHEM

A Babe Is Born in Bethlehem

Justin Thomas Fields

A babe is born in Bethlehem, alleluia. Exult for you, Jerusalem, alleluia! There in a manger lowly lies, He who reigns above the skies, alleluia. The ox and ass to neighb'ring stall, alleluia. See in that Child the Lord of all, alleluia! And kingly pilgrims long foretold bring incense, myrrh, and gold. And enter with their offerings to hail the newborn King of kings. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. He comes, a maiden mother's Son, alleluia, Yet earthly father He hath none, alleluia! And from the serpent's poison free; He owned our blood and pedigree, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Our feeble flesh and His the same, alleluia. Our sinless kinsman He became, alleluia! That we from deadly thrall set free, like Him and so like God, should be. Come then, and on this festive day, rejoice before the Lord and pray! Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Second Lesson – Isaiah 11:1-9

Reader: William Nies

The peace that Christ will bring is foreshown.

ANTHEM

O Little Town of Bethlehem

David German

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by, yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light; the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight. How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive Him still the dear Christ enters in. O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend on us we pray; cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell; O come to us abide with us, O come to us, abode with us, Our Lord Emmanuel.

The Third Lesson – Luke 1:26-38

Reader: John M. Demchak

The angel Gabriel salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary.

ANTHEM

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Basque Carol

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow his eyes as flame. "All hail," said he, O lowly maiden Mary." Most highly favored lady, Gloria! "For know a blessed mother you shall be, all generations praise continually, your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold." Most highly favored lady, Gloria." Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head, "To me be as it pleases God," she said. "My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria." Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn, and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

The shepherds go to the manger.

ANTHEM

While By My Sheep

17th Century/arr. Hugo Jüngst

Colleen Guseman, soprano; Marsha Roberts, alto;

Bobby Smith, tenor; Mike Forrest, bass

While by my sheep I watched at night. Glad tidings brought an angel bright: (Refrain) How great my joy, great my joy, joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy! Praise we the Lord in heaven on high. Praise we the Lord in heaven on high. There shall be born, so he did say, in Bethlehem a Child today (Refrain). There shall He lie in manger mean, who shall redeem the world from sin. (Refrain). Lord, evermore to me be nigh, then shall my heart be filled with joy! (Refrain).

The Fifth Lesson – Matthew 2:1-11

Reader: Larry Wineland

The wise men are led by the star to Jesus.

*CAROL (*the congregation sings*)

We Three Kings of Orient Are

KINGS OF ORIENT

[v.1 and refrain; vv.2, 3, 4, 5, and refrain]

We three kings of Orient are, bearing gifts we traverse afar,
field and fountain, moor, and mountain, following yonder star.

(Refrain) O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever ceasing never over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a deity nigh;
prayer and praising gladly raising, worshiping God Most High.

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

(Refrain) O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright,
westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light!

The Sixth Lesson – John 1:1-14

Rev. Kara Wheeler

John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

ANTHEM

In the Bleak Midwinter

Harold Darke

Angela Harris, soprano and Bobby Smith, tenor

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan; earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, in the bleak midwinter long ago. Our God, heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain; heaven and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign: in the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ. Enough for him whom cherubim worship night and day, a breast full of milk and a manger full of hay: enough for him whom angels fall down before, the ox and ass and camel which adore. What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what I can I give him: give my heart, give my heart.

*RESPONSORIAL READING

Dr. Lee Zehmer

One: Judah and Jerusalem, fear not, nor be dismayed;

All: Tomorrow you will go forth, and the LORD will be with you.

One: Stand still and you shall see the salvation of the LORD.

All: Tomorrow you will go forth, and the LORD will be with you.

One: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

All: Tomorrow you will go forth, and the Lord will be with you. We wait for Thy loving kindness, Lord, in the midst of thy temple and in all corners of the world.

(All shall keep silence for a time, then continue reading.)

All: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the advent of thy only Son, Jesus Christ: grant that as we joyfully receive him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him, when he shall come to be our judge; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

WE ARE SENT TO SERVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR

*HYMN 119

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

*THE BENEDICTION

One: May he who by his Incarnation gathered into one thing earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE (Hymnal 137, v. 2)

He Came Down (Sing twice.)

HE CAME DOWN/Cameroon song

**He came down that we may have Peace; he came down that we may have Peace;
he came down that we may have Peace; Hallelujah forevermore!**

*ORGAN VOLUNTARY

Carillon on a Ukrainian Bell Carol

Gerald Near



The Adult Choir and Instrumentalists

Sopranos: Sara Curry, Julie Dickson, Angela Harris, Cynthia Johnson,
Lynn Moran, Iris Rose, Brooke Zehmer

Altos: Colleen Guseman, Kathy Pender, Marsha Roberts, Betty White

Tenors: Eddie Gainey, Bobby Smith

Basses: Don Dickson, Mike Forrest, Scott Harris, Will Read, George White

Director: Don Rogers Organist: M.L. Marley Violinist: Laurie Neal

The Handbell Choir: Roy S. Hutchinson Joyful Ringers

Faye Ballard, Janelle Chubb, Cynthia Johnson, Gary Johnson, Nancy Jones, Marsha Roberts,
Bobby Smith, Scot Stanley and Chandler Thomas

The Handbell Quartet

Cynthia Johnson, Gary Johnson, Marsha Roberts, Chandler Thomas

*The flowers today are given to the glory of God and in celebration of Christy and Barry Goodner's
50th wedding anniversary by their children and grandchildren.*

Guests...WELCOME to First Presbyterian Church!

We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us and pray that you will discover anew God's love for you today. Please sign the Friendship Pad with your contact information when it is passed. Church members and our staff would be delighted to provide you with more information about FPC.

Nursery Care Today: Liz Briggs

Elder/Deacon Today: Chris Wheeler, Sue Munn

Monitor/Greeter Today: Bill Lehman

Acolytes Today: Millie Goodner, Henry Goodner

December 21: Susan Dove

December 21: Elizabeth Owens, Diane Hicks

December 21: Rod Hicks

December 21: Keaton Esposito, Ben Williams

Remember the following in prayer: Worth Kendall, Mary Tice, Shirley Burton, Beth Easley, Michele Horne, Rev. Dr. Barry Lambert, Keira Esposito, Ashley Platts, Nancy Lowery, Colleen Lathan, Jean Horton, Will Read, Linder Tucker

Help for HOPE December: We are collecting **oatmeal** to benefit the clients of Project HOPE. Large or small boxes, individual servings, old-fashioned, quick cooking, or instant are needed. Leave your donations in the Narthex bin TODAY!

The Christmas Post Office Post your Christmas cards by noon today. For 25 cents per card, the youth will sort your cards for distribution to our church family. Pick-up your cards at tonight's Christmas Dinner.

Christmas Joy Offering will be collected on December 21. This offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Christmas Jar: In the spirit of the inspiring novel, The Christmas Jar, share loose change in our jar in the Narthex to give HOPE to the recipient and JOY to the giver.

The Giving Tree: Decorate our Narthex tree with: hats, gloves, scarves, socks, men's underwear, sweatshirts and hand warmers. Your donations will be shared with the Bethel Men's Shelter in Rock Hill. Children's coats are also needed and will be donated to our local schools.

Plentiful Harvest Kitchen at Covenant PC is Sunday, December 28. Volunteers needed for both shifts: 2:00 - 4:00 pm to prepare the meal and 4:00 - 6:00 pm to serve and clean-up. Contact Rob Joiner to serve in this important ministry.

Youth Snow Tubing trip is Tuesday, December 30, 9:00 am - 9:00 pm at Hawks Nest plus dinner at the Daniel Boone Inn (\$75.) Register with Kara. Spots are filling up fast!

The 2026 Flower Calendar is on the bulletin board outside the Church Office. Please reserve your date(s) for new year! Questions? Contact Allen Katz.

Save the Date: The installation service for Rev. Kara Wheeler, Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, will be on Sunday, January 11 at 3:00 pm. All are invited!

Dates to Note

Today! Sunday, December 14 at 5:00 pm - Church-Wide Christmas Dinner & Nativity

Wednesday, December 17 at 6:00 pm - Blue Christmas Service

Sunday, December 21 at 11:00 am - Worship *The Cast of Christmas* - Joseph

December 21 at 5:00 pm - Christmas Caroling (meet at the church)

December 24 at 5:00 pm - Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship with Communion

Sunday, December 14

9:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal
 10:00 am Sunday School
 11:00 am Worship/Lessons and Carols
 5:00 pm Christmas Dinner and Nativity

Tuesday, December 16

9:00 am Walking Group
 4:00 pm Seniors Exercise Class

Wednesday, December 17

6:00 pm Blue Christmas Service
 7:00 pm Finance Committee

Thursday, December 18

9:00 am Walking Group
 4:00 pm Seniors Exercise Class

Sunday, December 21

9:30 am Chancel Choir Rehearsal
 10:00 am Sunday School
 10:00 am College Student Brunch
 11:00 am Worship
 5:00 pm Caroling—Meet at the Church!

**Members of the Session: Susan Roberson, Clerk****Class of 2025**

Butch Bailey
 Terry Dodge
 Mimi Goodner
 Mary Anne Sheppard
 Chris Wheeler

Class of 2026

John Abernathy
 Jimmy Campbell
 Scott Harris
 Elizabeth Owen
 Susan Roberson

Class of 2027

Paul Horne
 Ann Hunsucker
 Chip Hutchison
 Julia Nichols
 Sheryl Smith

Members of the Diaconate: Christy Goodner, Moderator**Class of 2025**

James Crean
 Vickey Dodge
 Christy Goodner
 Diane Hicks
 Sue Munn

Class of 2026

Jennifer Abernathy
 Heather Dellinger
 Kathy James
 Margaret Joiner
 Dave Keely

Class of 2027

Beth Janicke
 Allen Katz
 Joan Musselwhite
 Steve Roberts

Deacons for December

Vickey Dodge, Heather Dellinger, Allen Katz

Office Staff and Contact Information

Jonna Eichorn - Administrative Assistant

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Robyn Brown - Financial Secretary

rbrown@fpcrockhill.org

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Church Office Hours

Monday – Wednesday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Thursday: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Friday: Closed



This QR Code may be used for all online contributions to the church. There is a 1% processing fee for Checking/ACH transfers and 3% for Credit Card transactions.