



# Vanderbilt

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

### Welcome to Vanderbilt! We rejoice that you are here to worship God with us.

Children are important members of our faith community and are welcome in worship. Nursery ministry is also available.

Please ask an usher if assistance is needed. As a courtesy to others, please turn off cell phones during the service. The asterisk (\*) in the bulletin indicates that the congregation is asked to stand as able. We use responsive or unison readings and prayers at different times. The leader will read the words in *italics*, the congregation reads words in **bold print**.

#### VPC MISSION

Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church is called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live like Christ in a broken world.

To Proclaim the Gospel

To Glorify God in worship and deed

To Equip our congregation for ministry

To Serve others in Christ's name.

#### VPC VISION

A congregation...

...so grounded in scripture and sustained by prayer,

...so committed to spiritual growth and faithful discipleship,

...so inviting, welcoming and inclusive,

...so nurturing and healing,

...so mission-minded,

...so vibrant, energetic and open to opportunities to share the Gospel that lives are transformed by the love of Christ.

Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church is a safe place for all people to worship regardless of race, creed, age, cultural background or sexual orientation.

We invite you, members and visitors, to sign our Green Friendship Pads and pass it down your pew and back, to welcome those with whom you are worshipping. If you are visiting, please fill out the blue card and leave it in the green pad.



1225 Piper Blvd., Naples, Florida 34110 — [www.vpcnaples.org](http://www.vpcnaples.org)  
Office: 239-597-5410 — Learning Center: 239-594-9557  
*The church is a member of the Peace River Presbytery, the Synod of South Atlantic, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) — OneLicense.net # A-719387*



## December 14, 2025 — 10:00 am

### The Third Sunday of Advent

The flowers adorning the Chancel and the Fellowship Hour are sponsored in honor of our beautiful family by an anonymous donor.

### Worship Participants

**The Rev. Robert J. Marrow**, *Pastor*

**James Cochran**, *Director of Music*, playing the  
**Richard & Patricia Fors Organ** given to the  
glory of God and in honor of James Cochran,  
Organist

**Heather Mikes**, *Director of Christian Education*

**The Gersch Family**, *Advent Readers*

**Bill Payne**, *Liturgist*

**Julie Carver**, *Pianist*

**The Chancel Choir**

**Victoria Bonavita**, *Audio/Visual Technician*

**Greeters:** Pat Gagliano & Joyce Hickmon

**Ushers:** Jerry & Mari-Bea Warnken (Head  
Ushers), Barbara Hebert, Ben Hood,  
Lynn Thomas, Joe Trees

## ORDER OF WORSHIP

### Psalm 146:5-10

<sup>5</sup> Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; <sup>8</sup> the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD!

**Prelude:** "Two Noels"

Jean-François Dandrieu (1682-1738)

### Announcements

### Passing of the Peace

### Advent Candle Litany

The Gersch Family

*In the midst of our waiting and longing for God to make the world right again, we cling to the truth that God has saved, God is saving, and God will save. So today, we join our voices with the prophet Isaiah, who calls us to live in the joy of the truth of God's salvation.*

**We choose to believe that the day is coming when "the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isaiah 35:10)**

*We light this candle of joy as a sign of the Truth that sets us free to live in joy as we wait and work for the day when all creation will flourish together.*

**Amen.**

**\* Hymn #38:** "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"

CAROL

1. It came upon the midnight clear,  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,  
from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay,  
to hear the angels sing.

2. Still through the cloven skies they come  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains,  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.

*Continued*

3. And ye, beneath life's crushing load,  
whose forms are bending low,  
who toil along the climbing way  
with painful steps and slow,  
look now! for glad and golden hours  
come swiftly on the wing.  
O rest beside the weary road,  
and hear the angels sing!

4. For lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophet bards foretold,  
when with the ever-circling years  
Comes round the age of gold:  
when peace shall over all the earth  
its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world give back the song  
which now the angels sing.

### Call to Confession

#### Prayer of Confession & Silent Personal Confession

God of majesty and glory, we are thirsty for your grace. You made a way for us in the wilderness, and still, in our foolishness, we go astray. We hide our eyes from your presence. We do not listen to your word. We are lifeless when we ought to dance and speechless when we ought to sing. Forgive us, O Lord. Speak peace to our fearful hearts, strengthen our weak hands, and make firm our feeble knees as we seek to follow in your holy way. *(silence)* Amen.

#### Affirmation of Forgiveness

*Now return to the Lord with joy and gladness. Sing a song of redemption! Let sorrow and sighing be no more. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.*

**Thanks be to God.**

#### \* Gloria Patri

Henry Greatorex (1816-1858)

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen, Amen.

#### A Moment for Children

Heather Mikes

We invite children to gather up front for a special children's message. After we sing "Jesus Loves Me," children and youth ages PreK-3 through High School may go to Sunday school or families may choose to worship together in the Sanctuary.

Jesus loves me, this I know, For the Bible tells me so.  
Little ones to Him belong, They are weak but He is strong.  
Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me.  
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.

## Prayer of Illumination

### The First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. <sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." <sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; <sup>6</sup> then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. <sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### The Gospel Reading

Matthew 11:2-11

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." <sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' <sup>11</sup> "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Message:** "Signs and Truths"

The Rev. Robert J. Marrow

**Recognition of Leaders**

**\* The Affirmation of Faith**

From A Declaration of Faith

**In Christ, God gave us a glimpse of the new creation God has already begun and will surely finish. We do not know when the final day will come. In our time we see only broken and scattered signs that the renewal of all things is under way. We do not yet see the end of cruelty and suffering in the world, the church, or our own lives. But we see Jesus as Lord. As he stands at the center of our history, we are confident he will stand at its end. He will judge all people and nations. Evil will be condemned and rooted out of God's good creation. There will be no more tears or pain. All things will be made new. Amen.**

**Reception of New Members**

**Offering**



*Let us with gladness present our gifts and offerings to the Lord.*

*Gifts may be placed in the offering plates, given online, or by scanning the QR code.*

**Offertory: "The Snow Lay on the Ground"**

Mary McDonald (b. 1956)

The Chancel Choir

The snow lay on the ground, the stars shone bright, When Christ our Lord was born on Christmas night.  
Venite adoramus Dominum. And thus the manger poor became a throne, For He whom Mary bore was  
God the Son. O come, then, let us join the heavenly host, To praise the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

**\* Doxology**

OLD HUNDREDTH

**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.**

**\* Offertory Prayer**

**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.**

**\* Hymn #23: "Angels We Have Heard On High"**

GLORIA

**1. Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains.**

**2. Shepherds, why this jubilee?  
Why your joyous strains prolong?  
What the gladsome tidings be  
Which inspire your heavenly song? *Refrain***

*Refrain:*

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**3. Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee  
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. *Refrain***

**\* Commission and Blessing:**

*Be patient, beloved ones,*

**And let your hearts be strong.**

*For the coming of the Lord is near. Alleluia!*

**Amen!**

**\* Benediction Response: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"**

(Copyright 1955 by Jan-Lee Music. Renewed 1983. Used by permission.)

**Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth the peace that was meant to be. With God as our Father, children all are we; Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony. Let peace begin with me let this be the moment now. With every step I take let this be my solemn vow. To take each moment and live each moment in peace, eternally. Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.**

**Postlude:** Noel: "A Minuit fut fait un reveille"

Dandrieu

*Please remain seated until the end of the postlude.*

**WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS**



**Sagar & Jennifer Bankar** were married in 2017 at VPC. They welcomed their son, Zion, in August. Jennifer is the daughter of VPC members, Farhat & Yousaf Naseem. They joined as full time members by reaffirmation of faith.



**Darren & Lauren Gersch** joined as full time members by letter of transfer from Moorings Presbyterian. Darren works for Truist Bank in commercial finance and Lauren is an elementary school teacher. Alyssa and Wyatt joined by affirmation of faith and attend Aubrey Rogers High School and are actively involved in our Youth Ministry. The Gersch's have been attending VPC actively since 2021.



**Marijane Glantz** joined as a full time member by reaffirmation of faith. She is a retired teacher who enjoys golf and bridge with her husband, Fred. She has been active in many other churches and volunteered as a Deacon, church office volunteer, greeter and usher.

**Our next A.I.M. class is Sunday, January 4, 2026 at 11:15 am!**

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR NEXT WEEK**

**December 21, 2025 10:00 am**

**Sermon:** "Signs & Faithfulness"

**First Reading:** Isaiah 7:10-16

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 1:18-25

**REMINDERS FOR TODAY**

Fellowship Hour will be held in the Student Center. Don't forget to sign the letters of joys and concerns which are found on the long table in the Narthex.

## WORSHIP

- **Christmas Eve Worship: December 24: 4pm**—Family and **7pm**—Traditional Candlelight
- As we prepare our hearts for the arrival of Christ, we invite all VPC youth in middle school, high school, college and graduates to lead our church family in the Advent reading and candle lighting during the Christmas Eve Family Service on **December 24 at 4pm**. Please email Heather for the reading and more information, [hmikes@vpcnaples.org](mailto:hmikes@vpcnaples.org).
- The Christmas Eve Family Service begins at **4pm on December 24** and includes our **Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant**. Children are invited to dress as angels & shepherds, as we experience the Christmas story together. Costumes will be available in the Student Center at **3:30pm**.
- **Family Led Worship: Sunday, December 21 at 10am.**
- **Christmas Poinsettias:** Complete the form in the Narthex and place in the offering plate with your donation (any amount). Due by **December 21**.
- **Fellowship Hours:** The Parish Life Ministry Team will provide drinks and request that you bring a plate of cookies to share on **Sunday, December 21 and 28** following worship. Thank you!
- **Giving Envelopes:** Sign up in the Narthex if you would like to receive giving envelopes.

## MUSIC

- **Sunday, December 14 at 4pm**— **The Annual Christmas Choir Concert**. The VPC Chancel Choir will be joined by guest instrumentalists to present Mary McDonald's "Festival of Christmas: A Joyful Celebration of the Season."
- **Wednesday, December 17 at 12pm**—**Advent Noontime Concert**— Gordon Black & Jim Cochran.

## EDUCATION

- **VPC Book Club: Monday, December 15 at 11:45am**—offsite. Discussion on *How to Read a Book* by Monica Wood. Email Peggy Landon for more information: [mlandon711@gmail.com](mailto:mlandon711@gmail.com).
- **Wednesday Night Lights Gingerbread House Decorating Party: Wednesday, December 17 at 5:30pm**. Sign up in the Narthex or email Heather by **December 14**, [hmikes@vpcnaples.org](mailto:hmikes@vpcnaples.org).
- **Family Led Bible Study: Sunday, December 21 at 11:30am** in the Library
- **Pastor's Bible Study:** is on hiatus until mid-January.

## MISSION

- **Collier Harvest: Monday, December 15 at 4:15pm**—join us to pack bags of healthy food for our hungry neighbors across Collier County. 4451 Mercantile Ave. Email Pete Rodino—[pvrodino@aol.com](mailto:pvrodino@aol.com).
- **Café of Life: Friday, December 26 at 9am**—Join us as we serve a meal to our neighbors in Bonita! Donations of food and volunteers to serve are needed. Leitner Park, 26724 Nomad Dr., Bonita 34135 Email Eliza Nevin—[elizanevin@comcast.net](mailto:elizanevin@comcast.net).
- **Christmas Joy:** through **December 21** donation envelopes are in the Narthex.

## COMMUNITY

- **Dine with Nine:** Groups are being formed. They will meet once a month starting in January. Sign up sheets are in the Narthex—be sure to specify lunch or dinner. Email Tom Grundstrom—[tgrundstrom@vpcnaples.org](mailto:tgrundstrom@vpcnaples.org).
- **Femme Foodies:** A new ladies group is being formed. If you would enjoy getting together with other married women from VPC for a casual lunch, this group is for you! If there is enough interest, we will begin lunching together once a month in January. Email Jan Higdon—[higdonjb@msn.com](mailto:higdonjb@msn.com).



## PRAYER CONCERNS

Please continue to hold in prayer our church family and friends facing illness, injury and hardship. Also, if you have any joys or concerns, let us know. They are lifted up daily through our intercessory prayer ministry. Prayer requests will be kept in the bulletin for 30 days, after which a new prayer request card should be submitted.

# PRAYER

## list

Ronan Bann	Dick Creviston	Doris Martin	Bill Shouldice
Chuck & Kristi Beattie	Andrea Daggett	Laura McLarty	George Singer
Rick Bethem	The Davies Family	Sally Muir	Stephanie Smith
Kimberly Gould Blackwell	Ron Davis	Donna Mullins	Charles Thompson
Russel Blad	Joyce Dersch	Nancy Myers	Yana and family in Ukraine
Trisha Gould Campion	John Dietrich	Herb Newman	Susanne VanderStarre
Adriana Caruso	Asia Elsbree	Ivana Novelli	Bill & Sue Van Fossen
Pat Colby	Mark Giersch	Audrey Olsen	Yvonne & Tony Van Rooyen
Bob & Jan Conrad	Jim & Mary Hart	Pocket Patterson	Ian Walker
Sonja Cookson	Deb Hincewicz	Mary Ann Portman	Don Westall
Richard Crawford	Charles Irvin	Jodi Reckmeyer	Jon White
	Sandra Johnson	Twila Rowe	<i>In praise of the birth of</i>
	Lys	Sam & Marilyn	<i>Greyson, our 5th great-</i>
	Carolyn Mackie	Schellar	<i>grandchild by Pat &amp; Max</i>
	Sr. Markolette	Pete Schwiers	<i>Gould.</i>
	Madden		

### Happy Birthday!

Ada Nuhn	12/14	Linda Minck	12/16
*Mary Lou Gast	12/14	Dick Watts	12/16
*Nancy Diederich	12/14	Courtney Martinez	12/18
*Chris DeBruyckere	12/15	*Charles Whittington	12/19
*Francine Marinari	12/15		



### Happy Anniversary!

Norman & Linda Parker 12/18

\* **Birthday Club Members** give one dollar for each year of their life and

\*\* **Anniversary Club Members** give two dollars for each year of their marriage to celebrate or commemorate these special events. The Education Team may request up to 5% from the Club for Youth and Education Ministry!

## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN SERVING OUR COUNTRY

If you have any additions or corrections to the list below, please email Michele Byrd ([mbyrd@vpcnaples.org](mailto:mbyrd@vpcnaples.org)). Thank you for your continued prayers for these military personnel.

<b>LT Wyatt R. Dawley</b> US Navy Intel (Debbie Dawley's grandson)	<b>COL Jessica D. Grassetti</b> (Claudia Polzin's niece)	<b>1st LT Tyler Olbrich</b> US Army - South Carolina (friend of Karen Hiller)
<b>PVT E2 Joshua Fowler,</b> US Army, Columbus, GA (Joe & Sharon Doggett's grandson)	<b>E4 Brian Guzman</b> USAF - Colorado (Cesar Guzman's son)	<b>MAJ Rex Rafferty</b> USAF—Alabama (Norm & Linda Parker's granddaughter's husband)
<b>MAJ Allen Fujinaka</b> US Army (LaVerne Perrollaz's granddaughter's husband)	<b>Staff SGT Jacob Guzman</b> US Army-Ft. Campbell, KY (Cesar Guzman's son)	<b>LCPL Michael Russell</b> USMC - Camp Lejeune, NC (Heather Anderson's son)
	<b>SGT Wesley Kennedy</b> USMC - Ft. Myers, FL	