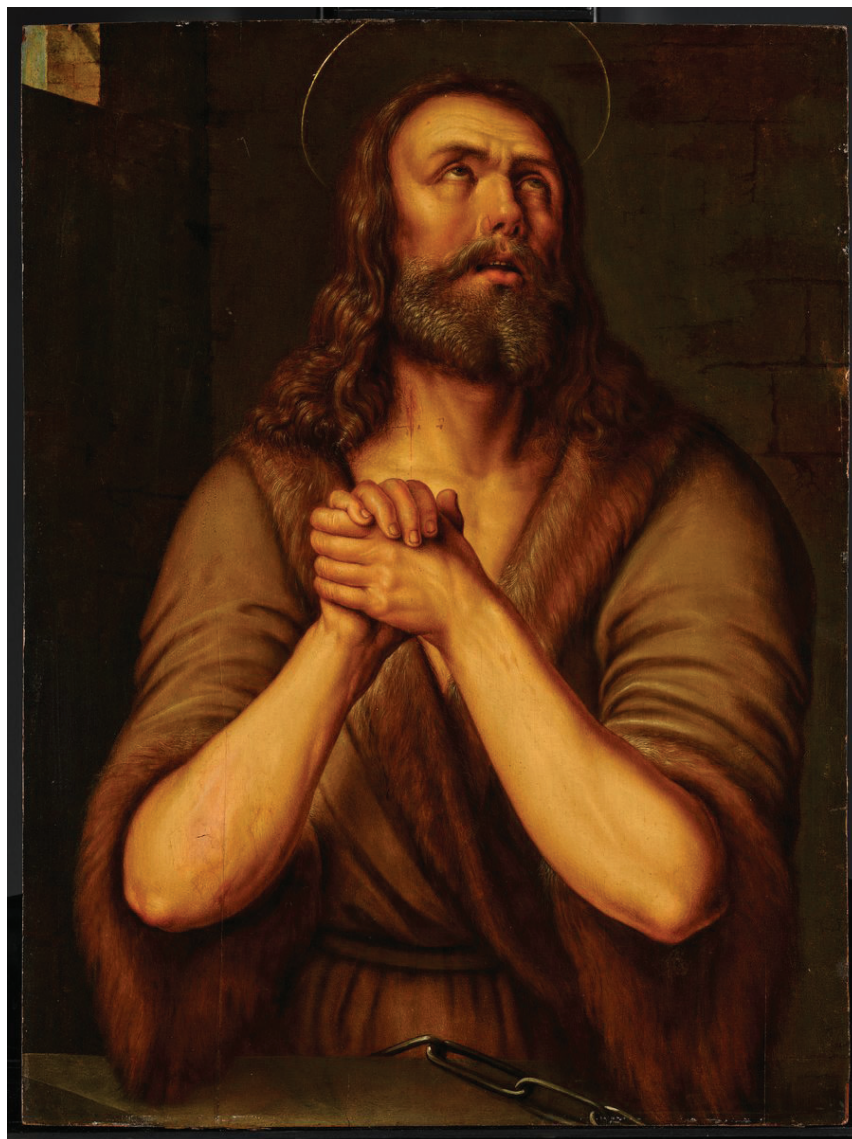


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SPARTANBURG, SC



DECEMBER 21, 2025

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8:30AM EARLY

9:00AM CONTEMPORARY

11:00AM TRADITIONAL

WELCOME TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH!

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church Spartanburg – we are delighted that you are joining us for worship today! First Presbyterian is a community of believers in the heart of Spartanburg seeking to know and share the transformative love of Jesus Christ with others. Here you will encounter people who come from all walks of life representing diverse beliefs and faith experiences. What binds us together is our common hope in Jesus Christ. Through worship, study, fellowship, and mission we seek to root our lives in scripture, nurture our unity in Christ, and serve our neighbors in faith! No matter who you are or where you are on your spiritual journey, know that you are welcome here.

Peace,

Rev. Alan F. Dyer
Senior Pastor

IF YOU ARE NEW HERE Whether you are searching for a church home or visiting from out of town, we are delighted that you are worshipping with us today. If you are interested in receiving more information about membership or the ministries of our congregation, please be sure to speak with a pastor before or after today's worship or fill out the friendship register. We would love to get to know you better!

PASTORAL CONCERN? Please let us know how we can be praying for you by visiting with a pastor before or after worship. If you need to contact a Minister, call 864-208-2142 day or night.

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME IN WORSHIP!

Activity Bags located in the welcoming areas of each worship venue are available for your child to use during worship. After worship, please return the crayons and bags to the baskets. The activity sheet is for your child to keep.

Nursery is available for infants through age 3 in the Clark Building in Room 105.

After *The Word for Children* in the 11:00am Traditional Service, children 3K-1st grade may attend Children's Worship with Ms. Kara. After the service, families are asked to pick their children up from Room 202 of the Clark Building.

TO AID IN WORSHIP Advanced listening technology, large-print hymnals, and large-print bulletins are available upon request for the Chapel and Sanctuary. Please locate an usher for assistance.

WORSHIP ONLINE Livestreaming of the Contemporary and Traditional Worship Services is available at fpcspartanburg.org/worship. Additionally, sermons are on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, or wherever you find your podcasts!

WAYS TO GIVE There are many ways you can support the missions and ministries of First Presbyterian. During worship, place your gift in the Offering Plate or scan one of these QR Codes (you may give via **ShelbyNext** or via **Venmo**). Additionally, you may mail a check to the church office (address on back of bulletin). Thank you. *Questions? Contact Church Financial Officer Lynise Clarke; 864-208-2130/lclarke@fpcspartanburg.org.*



ShelbyNext
(No log in required)



Venmo

EARLY WORSHIP

8:30AM

CHAPEL

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

WELCOME AND INVITATION

Rev. Alan F. Dyer

This is the day that the Lord has made;

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!

Wilbur Held

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: LOVE

The Lynch Family

Come and fill our hearts with your hope. You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia!

Come and fill our hearts with your joy. You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your love. Alleluia!

UNISON PRAYER

God of past, present, and future, grant us love when all around us would lead us to feel unwanted and apathetic. Grant us love that not only comforts but that also emboldens your people to live as citizens of your promised and coming kingdom even here and now. Amen.

✦HYMN 147

The First Nowell, v. 1-3, 6

THE FIRST NOWELL

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. L. Craig Foster

Gracious God,

you invite us to see and to tell the good news of your kingdom,

yet we confess that our vision is often blurred and our witness hesitant.

We look for signs that match our expectations and miss the grace unfolding before us.

Instead of telling what we have seen, we hold back in fear or doubt.

Forgive us, O God.

Clear our sight to recognize your work among us,

and loosen our tongues to speak the truth of your mercy,

as we prepare our hearts to trust the One who comes.

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God!**

✦RESPONSE: HYMN 88, VERSE 7

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.

✦PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

In the ancient world, fires were lit to mark the turning of the light toward winter and to pray for its return. The church has Christianized this practice in the Advent wreath. These candles are signs of the growing light of Christ, who comes into the darkness of our world and will come again in fullness. As we watch and wait for that Great Day, we light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering God's promises in prayer.

✦ Please rise in body or in spirit.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

FIRST READING Psalm 146 John Lynch

SECOND READING Matthew 11:2-11

SERMON *Prepare the Way: Today* Rev. Alan F. Dyer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

✦ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily task and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY *Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child* traditional Spiritual, arr. Mark Hayes

✦ DOXOLOGY: HYMN 143, VERSE 4

REGENT SQUARE

*All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the coming king!*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Hymnal Page 35

BEARING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

✦ HYMN 119 *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing* MENDELSSOHN

✦ CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

✦ BENEDICTION RESPONSE

O WALY WALY

*Lord Jesus come to us we pray, Bring us your truth, show us your way,
As once the prophets did foretell, Oh, come to us, Emmanuel.*

CLOSING VOLUNTARY *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* Neil Harmon

The Christian life is an offering of oneself to God. In worship we encounter Christ's own self-offering and, in response, offer our lives, gifts, and resources in gratitude and service.

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

9:00AM
FOGARTIE HALL

INSTRUMENTAL PRAYER

WELCOME

Landon Hammett

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: LOVE
ADVENT SONG

The Caldwell Family
Come and Fill Our Hearts

✦ SONG OF PRAISE

The First Noel

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Leslie L. Denny

SUNG ASSURANCE OF PARDON

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

✦ PASSING OF THE PEACE

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

CHILDREN'S TIME

ANTHEM

Angels (Glory to God)

FIRST READING

Psalm 146

Betty Pearson

SECOND READING

Matthew 11:2-11

SERMON

Prepare the Way: Today

Rev. Alan F. Dyer

✦ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
THE LORD'S PRAYER

✦ CLOSING SONG

Midnight Clear (Love Song)

✦ BENEDICTION

In the ancient world, fires were lit to mark the turning of the light toward winter and to pray for its return. The church has Christianized this practice in the Advent wreath. These candles are signs of the growing light of Christ, who comes into the darkness of our world and will come again in fullness. As we watch and wait for that Great Day, we light candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, remembering God's promises in prayer.

✦ Please rise in body or in spirit.

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

11:00AM
SANCTUARY

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

WELCOME AND INVITATION

Rev. Alan F. Dyer

This is the day that the Lord has made;

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

OPENING VOLUNTARY

Two French Carols

arr. Todd Marchand

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: LOVE

The Evans Family

Come and fill our hearts with your hope. You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia!

Come and fill our hearts with your joy. You alone, O Lord, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your love. Alleluia!

UNISON PRAYER

God of past, present, and future, grant us love when all around us would lead us to feel unwanted and apathetic. Grant us love that not only comforts but that also emboldens your people to live as citizens of your promised and coming kingdom even here and now. Amen.

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THE FIRST NOWELL

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Ansley B. Page

Gracious God,

you invite us to see and to tell the good news of your kingdom,

yet we confess that our vision is often blurred and our witness hesitant.

We look for signs that match our expectations and miss the grace unfolding before us.

Instead of telling what we have seen, we hold back in fear or doubt.

Forgive us, O God.

Clear our sight to recognize your work among us,

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✦ RESPONSE

HYMN 88, VERSE 7

VENI EMMANUEL

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bid envy, strife, and discord cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

✦ PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

THE WORD FOR CHILDREN

Rev. Rachel N. Klompmaker

*Children ages three years to first grade are invited to dismiss to Children's Worship;
those second grade and older will return to the pews.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

STUTTGART

FIRST READING

Psalm 146

Harrison Pack

SECOND READING

Matthew 11:2-11

SERMON

Prepare the Way: Today

Rev. Alan F. Dyer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

✦ AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Rev. L. Craig Foster

FROM A BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:

preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives,

teaching by word and deed and blessing the children,

healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted,

eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners,

and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

In gratitude to God,

empowered by the Spirit,

we strive to serve Christ in our daily task and to live holy and joyful lives,

even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth praying,

"Come, Lord Jesus!"

The psalms have served believers in every generation as a biblical source of prayer and praise and as models for their own response to God. The book is an invaluable resource for worship. The people of God have also heard God addressing them in the psalms, as the prayers and hymns bear witness to the nature and work of God. The Psalter is unique, bringing together human word and word of God in an inseparable unity.

We pray for the world because God loves it. God created the world and cares for it. To abide in God's love is to share God's concern for the world. Our prayers should therefore be as wide as God's love, and as specific as God's tender compassion for the least ones among us.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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.**

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY

There's a Song in the Air

John Moody

✦ DOXOLOGY

HYMN 143, VERSE 4

REGENT SQUARE

*All creation, join in praising God the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One:
come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the coming king!*

✦ PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

BEARING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

✦ HYMN 119

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

MENDELSSOHN

✦ CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

✦ BENEDICTION RESPONSE

O WALY WALY

*Lord Jesus come to us we pray, Bring us your truth, show us your way,
As once the prophets did foretell, Oh, come to us, Emmanuel.*

CLOSING VOLUNTARY

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Neil Harmon

The Advent Greens in the Sanctuary

*are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of
Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Chapman, Jr. and Mr. Robert H. Chapman III
by Sadie Chapman and John Chapman and their families.*

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

Today we conclude our Advent series. Today we conclude our Advent series, shaped by the ancient cry to *prepare the way of the Lord*. We have looked back to God's faithfulness in the past, ahead to the promise of God's future, and now to Christ's presence with us today. As Christmas draws near, we open our hearts to the ways God continues to form a path of comfort, courage, and renewal among us.

STEWARDSHIP 2026 UPDATE

Thank you to the more than 437 individuals and families who have already pledged for 2026, bringing us to 82% of our goal! Your generosity strengthens FPC's ministry and helps us plan faithfully for the year ahead. If you haven't yet pledged, please join us. Pledge cards are available throughout the church, or you can pledge online by using the QR code or visiting fpcspartanburg.org/stewardship.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CNC

The Congregational Nominating Committee is seeking six members to replace those who will rotate off the CNC in June of 2026. Members will serve for one year and will be charged with the nomination of Church Officers. Use the QR code to submit a name - you may submit multiple forms and may even nominate yourself. The deadline for submittal is Wednesday, December 31, 2025.



ANGEL TREE

Thank you to all who provided gifts for 124 local children on behalf of an incarcerated parent through Angel Tree. If you would like to deliver gifts on Christmas Eve at 9:00am, please contact Brandt Goodwin at brandtgoodwin@gmail.com.

JOIN THE CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR

Anyone high-school age and older is invited to sing for both Candlelight Services. Rehearsals are December 21 (TODAY!) at 12:15pm and December 23 at 6:00pm in the Choir Room. Interested? Contact Holt Andrews (rhandrews@fpcspartanburg.org).

CHRISTMAS EVE

On **Wednesday, December 24**, First Presbyterian will hold three services in the Sanctuary as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The Family Service and 6:00pm Candlelight Service will be livestreamed at fpcspartanburg.org/worship.

Family Service - 4:00pm

Come all you angels, shepherds, and kings, and join us on Christmas Eve for our children's nativity pageant. Any child may come dressed as the part he or she wants to play.

Candlelight Services - 6:00* and 9:00pm

A tradition in our church, these services feature music by the Christmas Eve Choir. A special message will be delivered and the services will conclude with the Sanctuary bathed in candlelight.

** A Nursery will be available at the 6:00pm service for children 6 months - 3 years of age.*

HELP DECORATE FOR CHRISTMAS

Tomorrow, **Monday, December 22**, the bows and flowers in the church will be changed to white, to celebrate the Season of Christmas. Meet in the Tower Room at 10:00am. Questions? Contact LeAnne Thurmond (leanne.thurmond@gmail.com / 864-621-0213).

NEXT SUNDAY - ONE SERVICE

On **Sunday, December 28**, we will worship as one in the Sanctuary at 11:00am. There will be no Sunday School. Please join us and bring a friend!

ONE-STOP SHOPPING

Spread warmth and joy this winter with custom FPC merchandise. We have **ties** and **scarves** with our church's tartan pattern on them, as well as new **aprons** in our familiar "Presbyterian Blue!"

Additionally, there are special gift cards available for donations to **Hand in Hand** or our **Winter Warmth** ministry! Click this QR Code to browse the Holiday Shoppe!



PASTORAL COUNSELOR

We are pleased to announce that in the new year we will add **Rev. Heidi Campbell-Robinson** to our staff in a part-time capacity as a Pastoral Counselor. She will begin seeing clients on an appointment basis in January. Please email her at hcrobinson@fpcspartanburg.org to set up an appointment.

MEET MERIANNA HARRELSON

All youth and parents are invited to a meet-and-greet with **Rev. Merianna Harrelson**, our new **Director of Youth and Family Ministry**, on **Sunday, January 11, 6:00- 7:00pm**, in the Family Life Center. Merianna will briefly greet parents and youth in Fogartie Hall, then students will head to the gym for games while parents remain in Fogartie for questions, conversation, and fellowship. Light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP to **Carrie Coleman** (ccoleman@fpcspartanburg.org).

READY TO JOIN FPC?

Come to the Parlor on **Sunday, January 11**, at 10:30am for a brief meeting. Please contact **Cathy Bagwell** at cbagwell@fpcspartanburg.org for details.

SAVE THE DATE - JANUARY 25, 2026!

Two worship services, at **9:00am** and **11:00am** in the **Sanctuary**, will celebrate 100 years of First Presbyterian Church's location at 393 East Main Street - a century of faith, community, and God's steadfast presence. Between services, enjoy refreshments, warm fellowship, and shared memories at **10:00am** in **Fogartie Hall**. Mark your calendars now to celebrate this milestone!

NEW SERMON SERIES BEGINS JAN 4 MIGHTY WATERS: GOD'S CALL FOR JUSTICE, MERCY, AND HUMBLE DISCIPLESHIP

In a world marked by deep injustice, division, and suffering, the call of God still echoes through the voices of the prophets: Let justice roll down like mighty waters. This three-week series invites us to confront the brokenness around us - not with despair, but with a faith that does justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly with God. Rooted in Scripture and grounded in hope, we'll explore what it means to embody God's vision of justice in our time and in our lives.

DISCOVER FPC

Learn more about First Presbyterian Church Spartanburg at the **Discover FPC Class** on **Sundays - January 11, 18, and February 1**. The class will meet at 10:00am in the Large Private Dining Room. Learn more at fpcspartanburg.org/discoverfpc.

BRING YOUR KEYCARDS!

We encourage all members to bring their keycards to church. These not only serve as access to the building, but also demonstrates our commitment to Christian hospitality (learning each other's name!).

MEMORIAL WREATHS

Advent Wreaths in the Columbarium have been placed in memory of the following individuals:

Wendy Mayrose

by Sandra and Bill Mayrose

Cliff Neal

by Peggie and Harry Schoen

Dwight Pemberton

by Sandra and Bill Mayrose

The above names were inadvertently left off last week's listing.

SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00AM

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Nursery – Room C105 (Clark Building)
Preschool (3K-5K) – Room C110 (Clark Building)
1st & 2nd Grade - Room C202
3rd & 4th Grade - Room C203
5th Grade - Room C206
Youth - Second Floor of the Family Life Center

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Bible Alive – Room 2215 & Zoom

An extensive book-by-book study of the Bible

Emmaus – Purnell Room

A journey with eyes open towards Jesus, with fellowship and a fresh new scripture-based lesson each week.

Faith Forum - Social Hall

All ages are welcome to the Faith Forum!

Advent

This Advent our Associate Pastors will explore the riches of the Advent themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.

TODAY'S MUSICIANS

Early Worship

Marcia Andrews and Leigha Keller

Contemporary Worship

Kolby Carrouth, drums
Lisa Cunningham, piano/vocals
Landon Hammett, vocals
Anna Harkey, violin
Matt Kelly, guitar/vocals
Jeff Key, electric guitar
Corey McDaniels, bass guitar
Charlie Millinor, vocals

Traditional Worship

Holt Andrews and Marcia Andrews
Chancel Choir
Thomas Cotter and Matt Gill, trumpet
Kaci Cotter, horn
Jeff Kuntz, trombone
Jeff Key, tuba
Matt McDaniel, timpani
Tweetie Bowman, triangle

*Front Cover: "Saint John the Baptist in the Prison,"
by Hans Hoffmann (attributed to)
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest*

*Parts of today's liturgy are from the work of
Rev. Carol Holbrook Prickett.*

OFFERTORY

There's a Song in the Air
John Moody

*There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!
There's a mother's deep prayer, And a baby's low cry!
And the star rains its fire while the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.*

*There's a tumult of joy O'er the wonderful birth,
For the virgin's sweet boy Is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire and the Beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.*

*In the light of that star Lie the ages impearled:
And that song from afar Has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the Beautiful sing
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.*

*We rejoice in the Light, And we echo the song
That comes down through the night
from the heavenly throng.*

*Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
And we greet in the cradle our Saviour and King.*

CALENDAR

DECEMBER 24

Angel Tree Delivery
Family Worship Service 4:00pm
Candlelight Worship Services 6:00pm and 9:00pm

DECEMBER 25-26

Church Facilities Closed

LOOKING AHEAD

DECEMBER 28

No Sunday School
Worship Together at 11:00am

JANUARY 1

Church Facilities Closed

JANUARY 7

Wednesdays at First Resumes

JANUARY 25

Celebration of 100 Years at 393 East Main!

*Keep up with all Life of the Church events at
fpcspartanburg.org.*

TO PONDER PRAYERFULLY

*“At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?
Mark the season of Advent by loving
and serving the others with God’s own love and concern.”*

- Mother Teresa

MINISTERS: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

We are a community of believers committed to “Glorifying God and Sharing Christ Together through Word and Deed.”

Rev. Alan F. Dyer
Senior Pastor

Rev. Leslie L. Denny
Associate Pastor
Young Adults and Missions

Rev. L. Craig Foster
Associate Pastor
Discipleship

Rev. Rachel N. Klompmaker
Associate Pastor
Congregational Care

Rev. Ansley B. Page
Pastoral Associate
Engagement

Holt Andrews
Pastoral Musician

Marcia Andrews
Associate Director of Music;
Organist

Kara Clark
Director of Children’s Ministries

Carrie Coleman
Youth Ministry Coordinator

Beth Cecil
Parish Nurse

Colleen Darrall
Director of Recreation

Jane Mullins
Director of Hospitality

Pano Stathakis
Kitchen Assistant

Kris Graham
Director of the Weekday School

Lisa Cunningham
Contemporary Worship Music Leader

Lee Raines
Facilities Administrator

Jim Pitts
Campus Safety and Services Manager

Lynise Clarke
Director of Finance

Joanie Shackleton
Assistant Director of Finance
and Mission Support

Monteigne Campbell
Office Manager and
Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor

Cathy Bagwell
Visitor and New Member Coordinator

Ian Ritchings
Communications Coordinator

Shannon Hutcheson
Administrative Assistant
Weekday School, Children’s and
Adult Discipleship

Cathy Rush
Receptionist and
Admin to Music

Kerri Bell
Administrative Assistant
Congregational Care and Deacons

Andy Mayfield
Grounds Manager

Judith Holbert
Tiffany Long
William Massey
Custodians



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
393 East Main Street
Spartanburg, SC 29302
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