

AWE STRUCK

LOST IN WONDER, LOVE, AND PRAISE



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Welcome to First Presbyterian Church- Lynchburg, VA

MERRY CHRISTMAS! It is great to have you at First Presbyterian this morning and I pray you feel welcome and as much at home as possible. And yes, it is still Christmas, because Christmas is a season of 12 days leading to Epiphany on January 6. So, let's keep celebrating in the spirit of Christmas!

The Season of Christmas is all about God's inbreaking into the world. Yes, Jesus was born a baby, but as though of us with children know, Jesus didn't stay a baby very long. Soon, Jesus was out and about playing with the other kids in the town, helping Joseph in the wood shop, running to the market for Mary, and as we read in the Scriptures, even teaching others in the synagogue. Not long then, Jesus' ministry to fulfill all the law and prophecies as part of God's will began. And with Jesus comes life, light, and love! With Jesus comes grace, mercy, and forgiveness! With Jesus comes peace, hope, and joy! With Jesus comes healing, compassion, and miracles! With Jesus comes righteousness, strength, and courage! With Jesus comes transformation and salvation! For whom? For YOU! For ALL! How awesome is that? How AWE-inspiring?

Today, I pray you will join me in welcoming The Reverend Doctor Nancy Dawson, our Parish Associate for Pastoral Care, in worship leadership and preaching. Nancy is a child of God who knows about the inbreaking of God with us and she is a walking testimony of the good news in her life and her service to the church. I also pray you will join me in welcoming Gary Lowe to the Organ console. Gary is no stranger to FPCLY. He has played here before and he is also the one responsible for the electric organ that was with us during the organ renovation project. Gary was most recently serving Court Street UMC as their organist prior to their closure.

Merry Christmas and yes, Happy New Year as well! May God bless you and keep you and may you always be open and ready for the power of God's Spirit to work in you and through you.

Run the Race, Fight the Fight, Keep the Faith... Rev. Dr. Peter Thompson

Building Hospitality and Welcoming Children

Just as God's arms are open wide with grace and welcome, so too are the doors of FPCLY open wide with hospitality. We are grateful you are here today and pray you feel at home! The following are a few notes to help be a comfort and guide during your time here:

- Ushers are available and willing to assist you in finding your way or answering other questions.
- All visitors are encouraged to stop by the Hospitality (Welcome) Desk near the main entrance for more information or to share your contact information.
- Hearing-assist devices, Large Print Bulletins, and Large Print Hymnals can be found in the Narthex.
- Accessible Restrooms can be located down the main hallway from the Foyer.
- The Elevator is also located down the main hallway from the Foyer.
- The Nursery (ages 0 to 3) and Nursery Nook are located on this level through the Chapel in Room 101. A Nursery Care Provider is there to help assist you.
- Welcoming Children: Just as Jesus welcomes the little children to come, so we welcome children of all ages in worship. In order to make the worship service as welcoming for our littlest ones as possible, we provide worship carts in the Narthex with a variety of resources to make a worship bag. Following the Children's Moment, all children who go up front are invited to return to their seat as there will be no Worship Workshop this morning.

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Interested in joining?

First Presbyterian would love to welcome YOU as a new member. If you'd like to be here in a more official capacity, you are invited to join First Presbyterian as a member. Everyone who is part of our community is treated the same. Joining isn't about special treatment, but rather about a commitment you make to following Jesus alongside others trying to do the same. New member gatherings take place throughout the year based on interest. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Rev. Dr. Peter Thompson (peter@fpcly.org) or Alex Collier (alex@fpcly.org).

Service of the Lord's Day... First Sunday of Christmas

December 28, 2025

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

Prayer of Preparation

God of power and mercy, you call us once again to celebrate the coming of your Son. Remove those things that hinder love of you, that when he comes, he may find us waiting in awe and wonder for him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, let us join our voices in worship of the newborn King.

All: The Lord our God is great and worthy of our praise and adoration.

Leader: This season of Wonder, Love and Awe has at times been hard, disappointing, and stressful.

All: Even Jesus and his parents face danger at the hands of the Roman Ruler, Herod.

Leader: We must be willing to follow Jesus in spite of life's challenges for he is with us and for us.

All: Let us worship Almighty God as we continue to celebrate his coming to earth and as we wait for his return.

*Hymn #49: Once in Royal David's City

Irby

Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed, where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for His bed: Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all, and His shelter was a stable,
and His cradle was a stall: with the poor, and meek, and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,
through His own redeeming love; for that Child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above, and He leads His children on
to the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by, we shall see Him, but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high; when like stars His children crowned
all in white shall wait around.

Call To Confession and Prayer of Confession

Loving and powerful God, so often in our pride, we question our need for your salvation. Pharaoh would have killed Moses, had Pharaoh's sister not saved him with the help of Moses' mother and sister. Harod would have killed Jesus had an angel of God not warned Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt. We, in our stubbornness, have tried to silence your voice and followed our own plans instead of obeying your call. Forgive us, Lord. Give us courage and faith to serve according to your perfect will. (Moment of Silent Prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

*Hymn of Assurance #31: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Mendelssohn

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King!"

*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 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.

*Sharing the Love, Joy, and Peace of Christ

In response to God's love, grace, and forgiveness given as a gift to us, we are called and encouraged to share those gifts with others. During this time, we invite all to share the love, joy, and peace of Christ you have been given with those around you with a handshake, fist bump, peace sign, or hug. You may also use the words: "May the peace of Christ be with you." And a response would be, "And also with you."

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Children's Moment

Following the Children's Moment, all children are invited to return to their seat as there will be no Worship Workshop this morning.

Prayer for Illumination

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 2:10-18 (based on the Modern English Version)

It was fitting that God, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise You."

And again: "I will put My trust in Him."

And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

Since therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, He likewise shares the same thing, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. For it is clear that He did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, He had to become like His brothers and sisters in every respect, so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself was tested by what he suffered, He is able to help those who are being tested.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:13-23

"God with Us"

Nancy Dawson

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Call to Offering

Offertory Anthem

***Doxology**

Hymn #592

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

***Prayer of Dedication**

WE GO OUT IN GOD'S SERVICE

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

***Benediction**

***Postlude**
