

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Service for the Lord's Day | December 14, 2025 | 11 a.m.



Gentile da Fabriano, *Annunciation*, 1425

WELCOME TO FIRST CHURCH

The Session and members of First Church extend a sincere welcome to all persons regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation.

This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the church.

Welcome to the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. Over 800 members call this place our spiritual home and we are grateful you are worshiping with us today. We believe First Church is a community of people called to stand on the intersection of faith and life as we witness to the love, grace and justice of God for all people.

Wherever you are in your journey of faith, I pray today's service will be a blessing for you. If this is your first time here, a member of the pastoral staff would love to greet you at the door and answer any questions you may have about the life and ministries of this church.

We are glad you are here. May you experience God's welcome in this place today!

Greg Stovell
Senior Pastor

Join us for Coffee Fellowship in the Lobby to meet one another, say hello to new faces, and enjoy refreshments.

Gender-neutral restrooms are located at the back of the sanctuary as well as through the wooden doors at the front of the sanctuary on the south side. More restrooms can be found in the lobby on the north side of the sanctuary.

GET INVOLVED



GIVE



INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP?



If you are in need of care, such as prayer or a call from a pastor, a ride to the church, etc., please contact our church office at (212) 675-6150.

Our staff will connect you with one of our pastors or a deacon from our caring ministry who can assist with your needs.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

“Song of Peace”
“Drop Down, Ye Heavens”

Jean Langlais
Jeanne Demessieux

PEALING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME

INTROIT

Gregorian chant, Mode I

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour forth righteousness. Comfort ye my people; my salvation will not tarry: I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions: fear not, for I will save thee: for I am the Lord thy God the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer. –Advent Prose, drawn from the Book of Isaiah

HYMN 104

“O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

ELLACOMBE

Please stand in body or spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty God, you love us,
but we have not loved you.
You call, but we have not listened.
We walk away from neighbors in need,
wrapped in our own concerns.
We condone evil, prejudice, warfare, and greed.
God of grace,
help us to admit our sin,
so that as you come to us in mercy,
we may repent, turn to you, and receive forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ our redeemer...

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

RESPONSE

IN THE LORD I'LL EVER BE THANKFUL

The musical notation is written on three staves in a single system. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are written below the notes.

In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful; in the Lord I will re - joice!

Look to God; do not be a - fraid. Lift up your voic - es,

the Lord is near. Lift up your voic - es; the Lord is near.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

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

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Children are invited to come forward to the steps for the Lighting of the Advent Wreath, and afterward, children age 3 - 6th grade are invited to Church School and should be picked up by their families at the end of the worship service.

**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.**

ANTHEM

Basque Carol, arr. David Willcocks

The angel Gabriel from heaven came, his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame. "All hail," said he, "thou lowly maiden Mary." *Most highly favored lady. Gloria!*

"For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee, thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold. *Most highly favored lady. Gloria!*

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head. "To me be as it pleaseth 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!*

—Sabine Baring-Gould, para.

HEARING THE WORD

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 1:26-38

pew Bible, New Testament page 56/large print, New Testament page 69

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Yearning for Christmas: Mary"

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 123

Please stand in body or spirit.

"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"
stanzas 1-2, 4-5

CAROL

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Matthew 16:16; Revelation 22:13; and, John 20:28

**This is the good news
which we have received,
in which we stand,
and by which we are saved,
if we hold it fast:
that Christ died for our sins
according to the scriptures,
that he was buried,
that he was raised on the third day,
and that he appeared first to the women,
then to Peter, and to the Twelve,
and then to many faithful witnesses.**

**We believe that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of the living God.**

**Jesus Christ is the first and the last,
the beginning and the end;
our Lord and our God. Amen.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Hail, O Virgin Mother, bearer of God, holy Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; for thou hast brought forth the Savior, who redeemed our souls.

—Prayer to Mary, based upon Luke 1:28, 42

DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDREDTH

Please stand in body or spirit.



Traditional Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Him, all crea - tures

Inclusive Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Christ, all peo - ple



here be - low; praise Him a - bove, ye heaven - ly host;

here be - low; praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more;



praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SENDING

HYMN 83

Please stand in body or spirit.

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

STUTT GART

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

“Fuga sopra il Magnificat, BWV 733”

J. S. Bach

*The congregation is invited to continue worshipping through the postlude,
which is offered as a thanksgiving to God.*

The cross is dedicated
“In memory of all those who died from AIDS in our church and community.”
Our cross-bearer today is Ryan Tirre.

Lighting the Advent Wreath are
John-Charles Kelly and Andrew Wannigman.

The small candle on the communion table is lit as a
prayer for peace in this Advent season.

LEADING THIS MORNING

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell, *Senior Pastor*

Rev. Dr. Barbara Davis, *Executive Minister*

Rev. Dr. Mark Hostetter, *Associate Pastor*

Jenny Bennett, *Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

The First Church Choir

Michael Shake, *Organist and Director of Music*

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Today

9:30 a.m. Childcare

9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theologians (hybrid)

11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

11:15 a.m. Church School

12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship

12:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

12:20 p.m. Student Choristers

12:30 p.m. LGBTQIA+ Brunch (off site)

Monday

7:00 p.m. Current Events (virtual)

Tuesday

6:30 p.m. Action Group Christmas Party

Wednesday

5:30 p.m. Conversational Spanish (virtual)

Thursday

9:00 a.m. NY Artist Circle

Friday

6:00 p.m. Youth Friday Dinner

Saturday

10:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen

Next Sunday

9:30 a.m. Childcare

9:30 a.m. Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers

11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship

11:15 a.m. Church School

12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship

12:15 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

12:20 p.m. Student Choristers

4:00 p.m. Candlelight Carol Service

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Devotionals

Advent devotionals are now available! You can pick up a physical copy at the back of the church, or read it online at fpcnyc.org/advent2025.

LGBTQIA+ Brunch | Sunday, December 14

After coffee hour, the LGBTQ action group will meet for brunch at 12:30 at the front desk of the Mellin Macnab building. We'll walk to a local restaurant for some yummy fellowship. We usually have a couple of extra spaces, so please join us!

A Tartan Christmas Fair

A Giant THANKS to all those who helped with A Tartan Christmas Fair this year. It was a huge success grossing over \$34,000. ALL fair proceeds go to Bank Street Head Start School on East 5th Street and the Voices History Project here at FPC.

Action Groups Christmas Party

Join us for the Volunteers & Action Groups Christmas Party on **Tuesday, December 16**, in the Great Hall of the South Wing, from 6:30 until 9 p.m. We will enjoy delicious catered food and wine, with the background of live Christmas music and festive trees & colorful lights. Join us as we sing Christmas carols, relax in wonderful fellowship, and laugh, play and even compete in a few lively games! All action group members are invited, as are all church volunteers like Tartan Fair participants, ushers, officers, etc. Friends and significant others are welcome, too! It will be a merry and meaningful time together so don your holiday sparkle, and drop in for a few minutes or stay the whole evening! Please RSVP to mission@fpcnyc.org.

Service of Candlelight Carols | Sunday, December 21 | 4:00 p.m.

A community highlight of the season! The First Church Choir and Student Choristers offer this beautiful annual service of lessons and carols. A festive carol sing on the north lawn (weather permitting) follows. Childcare available: infant-age 3.

Join us for our Christmas Eve Services!

Celebrate the joy of Christmas with us on Wednesday, December 24 at 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. We will gather in worship and song as we welcome the birth of Christ and the light that brings hope to the world. All are invited to share in the beauty and wonder of this holy night.

Christmas Car Services

We welcome all to attend our Christmas Eve worship services, and for those who need assistance to get to the church we ask that any reservations and requests be made by Dec. 19th. to secure your ride. We look forward to celebrating Christmas Eve with you all.

Deacons of the Month

The December deacons of the month are **Maged Shenouda** and **Diane Fairbank**. They'll be wearing a name badge at coffee hour and would be happy to answer questions about the church.

Adult Education

- **Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. – Bible Study** will begin again in the new year.
- **Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Coffee and Theologians** will begin again in the new year.

Youth & Family Ministries

- **Worship Circle with Babies and Toddlers (ages 0–3)**, 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. first and third Sundays
- **Church School (ages 3–6th grade)**, children should be picked up in the Parlor after worship
- **Student Choristers (grades 1–6)**, 12:20 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- **Youth Leadership Council (grades 6–12)**, monthly dinners; if you want to sign up for the one on December 19, contact Jenny.
- **Club 345 (grades 3–5)**, fourth Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
- **Confirmation (grades 7–9)**, select Sundays at 12:30 p.m.; the next meeting is after worship on Sunday, January 11.

For more information, contact Jenny at jbennett@fpcnyc.org.

Soup Kitchen Volunteers Needed

St. Joe's Soup Kitchen, which takes place at First Church every Saturday, needs volunteers! There are two shifts—morning food prep (10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.) and afternoon food service (1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.)—to help cook and serve 300-plus meals to New York City's homeless and hungry. No experience is necessary, but please sign up in advance to volunteer. volunteer@sjsk.nyc or sjsk.nyc.

Draw Near this Advent

ALL ARE WELCOME TO GATHER,
REFLECT AND SHARE THE HOPE OF THE SEASON

TARTAN FAIR CHRISTMAS
December 5-7

VESPERS FESTIVAL OF MUSIC: *BEHOLD NEW JOY*
December 7 | 4:00 p.m.

SERVICE OF CANDLELIGHT CAROLS
December 21 | 4:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
December 24 | 4:00 p.m. & 11:00 p.m.



2025 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL
WRITTEN BY TERI MCDOWELL OTT

Draw Near

LIGHTING THE ADVENT PATH
WITH HOPE, PEACE, JOY AND LOVE



SCAN TO JOIN US IN FOLLOWING THE ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

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