

The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Service for the Lord's Day | December 28, 2025 | 11 a.m.



Auguste Renoir, *A Road in Louveciennes*, ca. 1870

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

Partita on “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

James Vivian

PEALING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME

INTROIT

Johann Schop; harm. J. S. Bach

Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light, and usher in the morning. You shepherds, shudder not with fright,
but hear the angel's warning. This child, now weak in infancy, our confidence and joy shall be, the power of
Satan breaking, our peace eternal making. —Johann Rist; trans. John Troutbeck

HYMN 159

“O Sing a Song of Bethlehem”

KINGSFOLD

Please stand in body or spirit.

CALL TO CONFESSION

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Arise, shine: for your light has come.

O God, we live as if the light

had never defeated the darkness in the world or in us.

And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

We confess that we ignore the Christ

you sent to be among us, to be in us.

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,

and thick darkness the peoples;

but the Lord will arise upon you, and God's glory will be seen upon you.

We've kept the birth of your Son confined to the Christmas season

and do not yearn for his birth each moment in our waiting hearts.

And nations shall come to your light,

and kings to the brightness of your rising.

Lord, you came to us in the fullness of time.

Forgive us for not opening our eyes to your presence.

It's time that we prepare our hearts.

Let the earth ring with song.

Let the light break forth.

Let us all rejoice in the miracle of love.

Let Christ's presence move us in the fullness of our time.

Hear us as we pray to you...

SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

RESPONSE: HYMN 132 “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

IN DULCI JUBILO

SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

HEARING THE WORD

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 63:7-9

pew Bible, Old Testament page 693/large print, Old Testament page 848

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Ralph Vaughan Williams

The blessed son of God only in a crib full poor did lie; with our poor flesh and our poor blood was clothed that everlasting good. *Kyrie eleison.*

The Lord Christ Jesu, God's son dear, was a guest and a stranger here; us for to bring from misery, that we might live eternally. *Kyrie eleison.*

All this did he for us freely, for to declare his great mercy; all Christendom be merry therefore, and give him thanks for evermore. *Kyrie eleison.*
—Miles Coverdale, after Martin Luther

SECOND LESSON

Psalms 148

pew Bible, Old Testament page 582/large print, Old Testament page 716

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

“Looking Back. Looking Forward.”

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 87

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

GENEVAN 42

Please stand in body or spirit.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

John 1:1-5 NRSVUE, adapted

**In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.**

The Word was in the beginning with God.

**All things came into being through the Word,
and without the Word not one thing came into being.**

**What has come into being in the Word was life,
and the life was the light of all people.**

**The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overtake it.**

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

from *Piae Cantiones*; David Willcocks, arr.

Unto us is born a son, King of choirs supernal: see on earth his life begun, of lords the Lord eternal. Christ, from heaven descending low, comes on earth a stranger; ox and ass their owner know becradled in a manger. This did Herod sore affray, and grievously bewilder, so he gave the word to slay, and slew the little childer. Of his love and mercy mild hear the Christmas story: O that Mary's gentle Child might lead us up to glory! O and A and A and O, *cum cantibus in choro*, let our merry organ go, *Benedicamus Domino*.

—15th century; George Ratcliffe Woodward, trans.

DOXOLOGY

Please stand in body or spirit.

OLD HUNDREDTH



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 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.**

SENDING

HYMN 134

Please stand in body or spirit.

"Joy to the World"

ANTIOCH

BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Toccata on "Joy to the World"

Craig Phillips

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

LEADING THIS MORNING

Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell, *Senior Pastor*
Michael Clay, *Liturgist*

The First Church Choir
Michael Shake, *Organist and Director of Music*

THIS WEEK AT FIRST CHURCH

Today

11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship
12:00 p.m. Coffee & Fellowship

Monday

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

Thursday - Friday

Church Offices Closed

Saturday

10:00 a.m. Soup Kitchen
12:00 p.m. RIF Asylum Support

Next Sunday

9:30 a.m. Childcare
9:30 a.m. Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers
11:00 a.m. Sunday Worship with Communion
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. Presbyterian Women

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025 CALL FOR ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Corporate and Congregational Meeting of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, on Fifth Avenue between 11th and 12th Streets, New York, New York, will be held in person in the sanctuary and by Zoom video teleconference on Sunday, January 25, 2026 immediately following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. This meeting is for the purpose of electing elders and deacons to replace those whose terms expire and for electing successors to the following trustees: Buffy Barton, Alyssa Browne, and Timothy Warmath and to transact such other business as may properly come before it. Nominees for election to the Trustee Class of 2029 are Tommy Hoscheid, Buffy Barton and Danny Mapes. This meeting is open to all members of First Church.

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

This year's hybrid adult education programs explore hope through ancient and contemporary voices.

- **Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. – Bible Study** meets Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. in the library and on Zoom. This winter we are studying The World of Paul, focusing on 1 Corinthians on January 21, February 4, and February 11. For the January 14 session, we will explore the broader context of Paul's ministry.
- **Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Coffee and Theologians** will explore Jonathan Edwards on January 18, Harry Emerson Fosdick on January 25, and Phyllis Trible on February 1.
- **Thursdays at 8:30 a.m., virtual January 8, 15, 22, 29 Prayer Writing** on zoom. These sessions create a meditative space as we write in response to prompts from scripture and additional writings. No one is asked to share their work, nor is any writing experience needed.

For details and Zoom links, contact Barbara at bdavis@fpcnyc.org.

Youth & Family Ministries

Youth and Family Ministries returns next week! Church School, Student Choristers, and our other offerings are off today and return next week. We look forward to seeing you soon!

- **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, 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.



St. Joe's Soup Kitchen serves 300+ meals to New York's homeless and hungry every Saturday—help us prepare and serve! volunteer@sjsk.nyc or sjsk.nyc for more info.

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