



**First
Presbyterian**
CHURCH OF PORTLAND

Service for the Lord's Day

December 14, 2025

10:30 AM

Third Sunday of Advent

Please remember to silence your cell phone.

*Please stand as you are able.

Regular text is read by minister.

Bold text is read by congregation.

THE GATHERING

The prelude is a time of music for quiet reflection to prepare our hearts for worship.

PRELUDE

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
Prepare the Way, O Zion

arr. Johannes Brahms
arr. Wilbur Held

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those attending worship are invited to fill out a blue card in the pew to register your attendance or express interest in the church's programs. You may place the cards in the offering plates as you depart at the end of the service. Those worshipping online are invited to click the blue tab on the worship page, "Visiting FPC? Let's Connect!"

INTROIT

Let Us Prepare

Ana Hernández

Let us prepare for the coming of God.

A shruti box is a hand-pumped reed instrument from India that produces a continuous drone. This two-octave model is a recent gift to the church from members of the choir.

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING Anna & Fonda Lucas and Dana & Zabbie Powers-Green

We light this candle in joy, as a sign of the coming light of Christ.

[The third candle is lit.]

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

**like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing. (Isa. 35:1)**

Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Amen.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Peace to you and welcome,
from the God who blossoms arid ground,
the Savior who rejuvenates barren relationships,
the Spirit who fills empty cups.

Let us worship our God, three in one, worthy of our praise.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you.
Now prepare the world for your rule.
Come quickly to save us,
so that wars and violence shall end, and your children may live in peace,
honoring one another with justice and love;
through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.**

***HYMN #82**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**God, we have acted helpless, even when you called us to action.
We have resisted your truth, even when our lies were exhausting.
We have behaved as though we were alone, even when you were beside us.
God, we have believed we were dying, even when you helped us grow.**

Prayers of confession continue in silence.

***LORD, HAVE MERCY**

Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer-cy, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer-cy, have mer - cy.

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

God knows we can never undo the sins of this world.
The stories of a painful past still echo here today.
Yet before our first mistakes, God perfected the plan for salvation.
God forgives your sins, all of them.
Even when signs of our old lives remain, God's forgiveness is still at work.
God sets us free to chart a new path.

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

***RESPONSE OF PRAISE**

We are for - giv - en. We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to
God. Thanks be to God. We are for - giv - en.
We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

Lord, Have Mercy and Response of Praise © 1995 by Hal H. Hopson

***SHARING THE PEACE**

As forgiven people, we are set free to live at peace with God and with one another,
and so I say to you: the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Please take a moment to greet those around you with God's peace.

THE WORD

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Joyce Evans

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 35:1-10

Pew Bible, OT p. 663

ANTHEM

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

arr. Dale Adelman

Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung.
It came, a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter, when half spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore to us a Savior, when half spent was the night.

This flower, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness everywhere.
Enfleshed, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us and lightens every load.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 1:46b-55

Pew Bible, NT p. 57

SERMON

"Finding Joy"

Rev. Heidi Bolt

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

*HYMN #100

Canticle of the Turning

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** (*from The Declaration of Faith*)

What do you believe?

**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.**

INVITATION TO OFFERING

*Thank you for your faithful support of the church.
For various ways to contribute to the life and ministry of the church,
please refer to page 6 of the worship bulletin.*

OFFERTORY

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn

Frederick Frahm

As the dark awaits the dawn, so we await your light.
Star of promise, scatter night, loving bright, till shades of fear are gone.

As the moon reflects the sun until the night's decrease,
let your healing light release, living peace, unto your holy dawn.

Shine your future on this place, enlighten every guest,
through us stream your holiness, bright and blest; come dawn, O Sun of grace.

— Susan Palo Cherwien, 1996

***DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ, all people here below;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
Praise Triune God, whom we adore.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Text: © 1990 by Neil Weatherhogg Tune: VENI EMMANUEL, LM with refrain; Plainsong

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

THE LORD’S PRAYER (*Unison*)

**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.**

THE SENDING

***HYMN #106** Prepare the Way, O Zion

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE Noël Étranger Louis-Claude Daquin

Music reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-706706

CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions may be made by:

- *Leaving your gifts in the offering plates as you depart.*
- *Mailing a check to the church office.*
- *Scanning the QR code on the right.*
- *Visiting www.firstpresportland.org.*



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We join in holding in prayer: Dennis Bradley, Kathy Callas, Louise Grose, Russ Mendenhall, Joan Palmer, and others facing illness and loss.

You can request prayer by calling 503-228-7331 x 2 or emailing prayer@firstpresportland.org. Please let us know whether you would like someone to follow up with you and whether your request should be shared publicly or kept confidential.

SANCTUARY FLOWERS

Today’s sanctuary flowers are given by Rick Lee in memory of S. Maxine Lee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2026 Stewardship Campaign

“Let Your Light Shine Before Others”

Although we recently dedicated our pledges, it is not too late to make your financial pledge of support for First Presbyterian Church. For 2026 we set a goal of \$650,000 to support the mission and ministries of our church. We are grateful to all of those who have joined in pledging, helping us reach almost 80% of our goal so far! If you haven't pledged yet, you can use the pledge card you received in the mail or pick one up in the narthex. You can pledge online at firstpresportland.org and click on “2026 Stewardship Campaign.” Thank you for your ongoing support!

Cookie Ministry!

When: today, Sun, Dec 14, 12:00 pm

Where: Kitchen & Geneva Hall

Join us after worship today for the second day of cookie making to share with fellow church members and our neighbors! Bring your recipe and ingredients to mix and bake cookies in the church kitchen or come decorate pre-made cookies. Not able to join the baking and decorating? You can also drop off pretzels, nuts, or other snacks or cookies to be added to goody bags for delivery. Sign up during coffee hour to participate!

Fall Red Cross Blood Drive

When: Tue, Dec 16, 12:30-6:00 pm

Where: Geneva

FPC is hosting our next community blood drive, and we need your help! This event is by appointment only. Every donation helps patients in need and supports emergency care across the country. To schedule your appointment, please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org and enter code: FirstPresbyterianChurch.

Big Ideas Book Group December Meeting

When: Tue, Dec 16, 6:00 pm

Where: Chapel

The Big Ideas Book Group will meet in December and January to discuss *Belonging Without Othring: How We Save Ourselves and the Word* by John A. Powell and Stephen Menendian. Powell is a law professor at UC Berkeley and former legal director of the ACLU. The text is divided into two parts: Othring and Belonging. We'll discuss the first part, “Othring” (chapters 1-4), at our December meeting and the second part, “Belonging” (chapters 5-7), in the new year.

Christmas Joy Special Offering

When: Sun, Dec 21, during worship

Where: Sanctuary & online

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we lift up past, present, and future leaders of the church. God has blessed the church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. The Christmas Joy Special Offering provides support for Presbyterian church workers and their families in their time of need and leadership development and education for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. We'll dedicate this year's Christmas Joy offering on the Sunday before Christmas. We hope you'll join us for this celebratory and reflective day of worship and giving.

Christmas Eve Services Times and Updates

When: Wed, Dec 24, 5:00 pm & 9:00 pm

Where: Sanctuary

We're excited to celebrate the joy of the season and the birth of Christ with you during our annual Christmas Eve services. The 5:00 pm Family Service will feature our tradition of a pop-up pageant open to all kids in attendance! We'll have costumes and props available for any children who'd like to participate. This year's 9:00 pm Lessons & Carols will feature Celtic Christmas music composed by New Mexico's Karen Marrolli and performed by flute, violin, drum, piano, and choir! We hope you'll join us for these festive and reflective times of seasonal celebration.

Is Blue the Color of Your Christmas?

The Christmas season is a joyous time with family and friends for most people. But it can be a difficult reminder of loss and grief for some of us. Would you like to share your feelings one-to-one with a trained, caring, non-judgmental and confidential listener? FPC Stephen Ministers are ready to hear your story. Contact any of our pastors for more information.

Poinsettia Online Order Form Now Open

Every year, poinsettias adorn our sanctuary and are given to homebound or ill members of FPC to brighten their holidays. You can help offset the cost by donating in memory of or in honor of a loved one. The online order form is available now at shorturl.at/Hh6Ws. Deadline for orders is **tomorrow Monday, December 15**. Donations for this year's poinsettias are \$18 for each person remembered or honored. Thank you for supporting this ongoing FPC tradition!

Love God.
Love Our Neighbors.

Vision Statement

We commit to be a church that is:

Engaged: A forward-thinking and involved congregation committed to each other and to the wider community.

Inclusive: A faith community that affirms and welcomes all people.

Compassionate: A congregation that follows in Christ's way, advancing the well-being and dignity of all people, working for a just and equitable society, and caring for all creation.

Faithful: Living our faith authentically with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love while expanding the circle where God's love is known.

CHURCH STAFF

Principal Church Staff:

Rev. Heidi Bolt, Interim Pastor
Rev. Brenna Dykman, Associate Pastor
Rev. Aaron Morris, Parish Associate
Greg Homza, Director of Music Ministries
Marc Lavender, Church Business Administrator

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Support Staff:

Alexis Crawford, Communications Coordinator
Deb Davis, Bookkeeper
Bill Edwards, Sexton, Events & Wedding Coordinator
Eric Park, Maintenance Technician

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[@FirstPresPortland](https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresPortland)



[@FirstPresPortland](https://www.instagram.com/FirstPresPortland)

Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday | 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

First Presbyterian Church

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