Dear friends,

I know we are three weeks into 2025 already, but I want to pause and give thanks to God for the incredible Advent and Christmas seasons we shared. The music, liturgy, candlelight, communion, new members, and baptism brought great joy and depth of meaning to our community of faith and light. It was such a privilege to have this time with you.

As we move into 2025, we balance the hope of a New Year with concerns about the well-being of the most vulnerable in our city, our state, and our nation. We hear the call of the gospel to care for the marginalized and give voice to the voiceless. Considering this, I encourage you to lean into the work we have always done as a people of faith – the work of bearing the light of Christ into the world, doing justice, loving kindness, and working for equity for all people.

We bear Christ's light to the world when we:

1) Volunteer our time and gifts to a ministry of the church or community – Emanuel Food Pantry, Emanuel Learning Center, Urban Ministries of Durham, FPC's Walk-In Ministry, Meals on Wheels, Durham Literacy Council, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, the LGBTQ Center, or many other helping organizations in Durham and the Triangle.
2) Advocate for change that benefits those in deepest need by working with Durham CAN, the North Carolina Council of Churches, Positive Childhood Alliance, Reality Ministries, Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Freedom, Interfaith Power and Light (creation care), and the NC Justice Center (and so many other organizations).
3) Recognize and name racial, economic, and social inequities in our community and work to change them.
4) Financially support the mission and ministries of First Presbyterian Church so that we can provide meaningful worship, a place for people of all ages to learn and grow in faith, support for local non-profits and international mission, and a place where we join in community to share the light of Christ with the world.
5) Deepen our relationships through connection, study, service, worship, congregational care, and fellowship. We are the Body of Christ. Individually we are incomplete; together we are strong. If you have not yet found a place to connect more deeply with others, reach out to one of our pastors or staff members. We would love to help you find a place of deep and meaningful connection!

I look forward to continuing to discern with you the ways God is calling us to live lives of faith and service in 2025.

With love and gratitude,
Mindy