



DECEMBER 7, 2025 | 11:00 AM  
*Traditional Worship*



**FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN**  
CHURCH OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**OUR MISSION** **CREATES SPACES**  
OF CHRIST-CENTERED CONNECTION  
**AND INSPIRES PEOPLE OF ALL AGES**  
TO EXPLORE FAITH IN OPEN AND HONEST WAYS,  
CULTIVATING POSSIBILITIES  
**FOR GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION**

401 Southeast 15th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
[www.firstpres.cc](http://www.firstpres.cc) | (954) 462-6200

## PRAYER FOR THE PREPARATION OF WORSHIP

Holy God,  
in this season of longing, turn our hearts toward your light.  
Quiet the noise within us so we may hear your Word  
and see your presence breaking into our lives.  
Shine on our weariness and awaken in us the hope Christ brings.  
Prepare us to worship you with openness and joy,  
that your light may grow in us and through us  
for the sake of your world.  
Amen.

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chandler Gelb

## PRELUDE

Anastasiya Naplekova, piano

*Silent Night arr. Raluca Bojor*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Nicholas B. Merchant

## ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

Rosen-Needlemann Family

One: Advent is a time for God's people to reawaken their longings.

**All: Let the peace of Christ rule our hearts.**

One: Where there is division, we long for unity.

**All: Let the peace of Christ rule our hearts.**

One: Where there is hostility, we long for resolution.

**All: Let the peace of Christ rule our hearts.**

One: Where there is separation, we long for unity.

**All: Let the peace of Christ rule our hearts.**

## LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

Rosen-Needlemann Family

## CONGREGATIONAL REFRAIN

**Lead us on, lead us on to a morning where the promise shines.**

**Lead us on, lead us on to a morning where the promise shines.**

## \*OPENING HYMN #113

GLORIA

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

## \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Merchant

**Holy God, your light shines in the darkness, yet we confess that shadows still unsettle us. We hold on to worries that weigh us down. We allow discouragement to dim our faith. We forget that your light is stronger than anything that threatens to overwhelm us. Forgive us, Lord. Speak your Word again, and shine in our hearts. Help us to trust that nothing can overcome the light of Christ. Amen.**

## **\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

### **\*JOYFUL RESPONSE • *The Gloria Patri* #581**

GREATOREX

Glory be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen, amen

## **FIRST SCRIPTURE READING**

Gelb

[Isaiah 40:1-11](#)

## **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & 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.

## **SHARING OUR GIFTS**

### **OFFERTORY**

Cathedral Choir

*I Will Be a Child of Peace - Elaine Hagenberg*

### **\*THE DOXOLOGY • Hymnal #606**

OLD HUNDREDTH

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him all creatures here below,  
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

### **\*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING & ILLUMINATION**

Rev. Merchant

## **PREACHING TEXT**

[Matthew 3:1-12](#)

## **MESSAGE**

*"The Light Prepares the Way"*

## **THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

Rev. Merchant

The Invitation  
Prayer of Thanksgiving  
The Words of Institution  
Celebration of the Supper

## SELECTION

*For the Mountains from Elijah - Felix Mendelssohn*

Ryan Gardner, soloist

## \*CLOSING HYMN #104

*O Lord, How Shall I Meet You*

VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN

## \*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

Rev. Merchant

## POSTLUDE

*Paean on 'Divinum Mysterium' - John Cook*

Susan Dodd, organ

### ***Those participating in worship today are:***

*Rev. Nicholas B. Merchant, Pastor;*

*Sophia Beharrie, Interim Director of Traditional Worship;*

*Chandler Gelb, Director of Youth & College Ministries; Ryan Gardner, Soloist;*

*Susan Dodd, Organist; Anastasiya Naplekova, Piano; Cathedral Choir*

*AV Team: Teo Constantinescu, Frantz Cyriac, Mario Rodriguez, Travis Fickinger*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**Christian Sympathy** of the congregation is extended to Anne and Craig Steinhart and family on the passing of Anne's mother, Mildred Wolfe Elliot at 103 years old on November 29th. Please keep this family in your prayers.

**The Flowers are Dedicated** in loving memory of Stanford K. Smoker, given by his family.

**Baby Rose Dedication:** The rose bud on the chancel is in celebration of the great grandson of Mary-Alice Denny, and son of Zachary and Jenna Dudas, Wyatt James Dudas, born December 1, 2025.

**Flower Availability:** December 28th and January 4th, 18th, & 25th. If you would like to dedicate flowers for the Communion table or a rose-bud in celebration of a newborn, please contact Michelle Shev at [michelles@firstpres.cc](mailto:michelles@firstpres.cc).

Giving Online is easy, [Click Here](#)

# UPDATES & UPCOMING EVENTS AT FIRST PRES

## **Angel Tree Mission - FINAL SUNDAY!**

9:30 am - 12:00 pm, Outside Patio

We still have a few Angels left who have not found a caring giver. Please consider whether you can choose one or more to bless with a gift this year. Visit us today on the outside patio or [CLICK HERE](#) for online registration. Gifts are in the \$25 range and must be wrapped and returned to the church no later than noon this Thursday.

Volunteers are needed to make the Saturday, December 13th, Angel Tree party a fun and festive time for our children of incarcerated parents. Here's a secret: the volunteers usually have as much fun as the kids! Contact Jan Nolander at 651-894-4779 or [jnolander@yahoo.com](mailto:jnolander@yahoo.com) to be part of this celebration.

## **Christmas Concert: Magnificat**

Sunday, December 14th, 4:00 pm, Sanctuary

Join us for a powerful Christmas Concert featuring the First Pres Cathedral Choir, chamber orchestra, woodwinds, and percussion. Magnificat celebrates the wonder and joy of the season through beautiful, uplifting music that will fill the Sanctuary with Christmas spirit. Admission is free and all are welcome!

## **Christmas Poinsettias Dedication**

Now - December 16th

The Christmas Poinsettias that decorate our chancel each year are given by individuals in memory of, or in honor of, a relative or friend. The suggested donation includes a small contribution to the Deacon Ministry to help with our church's congregational care needs. [CLICK HERE](#) to fill in the form with the name of the person or persons to be honored (living) or memorialized (deceased), and include your gift. Please respond by TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16th, to permit the printing of names and donors in our Christmas bulletin. For more info, contact Michelle Shev at [michelles@firstpres.cc](mailto:michelles@firstpres.cc).

## **Gingerbread Bash**

Tuesday, December 16th, 6:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Join us for a gingerbread nativity-building party that's perfect for the whole family. Along with creating and decorating your own gingerbread nativity, you'll enjoy games, singing, hearing the Christmas story straight from the Bible, and discover the good news of Jesus! [CLICK HERE](#) to RSVP.

## **Reverse Advent Calendar Food Box Drive**

*Drop Off Deadline: January 3rd*

Help a family experiencing food insecurity by filling a box this advent season with one food item per day. Boxes, directions, and the food list can be picked up at the Connection Counter today or in the church front office. Drop-off begins December 28th, and ends January 3rd. Contact Kathy Mayer at [kathymayers@gmail.com](mailto:kathymayers@gmail.com) for more info.

## **Adult Activity Center (AAC) for Seniors**

*Thursday, December 11th, 11:00 am, Sanctuary*

Join us in the Sanctuary at 11:00 am and let the Happyland children's performance get you in the Christmas spirit! Menu selection is chicken piccata. RSVP by 10:00 am on Monday to Ellen Whiteman at 954-598-9312 or [ellenw@firstpres.cc](mailto:ellenw@firstpres.cc).

## **Adult Activity Center (AAC) for Seniors - January Day Outing**

*Tuesday, January 13th, 10:00 am, West Palm Beach*

Join us for our January AAC Trip to West Palm Beach! Enjoy a day of adventure for shopping and lunch, or stroll the waterfront for some beautiful views of the intercoastal. We'll take a chartered bus, and everyone can enjoy the sites of this cute and lively downtown! The bus will leave First Pres at 10:00 am and return around 3:00 pm. Cost is \$32 and includes bus transportation and gratuity. Contact Ellen Whiteman for more info and to sign up at [ellenw@firstpres.cc](mailto:ellenw@firstpres.cc) or 954-598-9312. RSVP deadline is December 19th.

## **Third Serve Sunday**

*Sunday, December 21st, 10:45 am, Family Campus*

Join our Young Adult Ministry after the 9:30 am service at the Family Campus for a fun morning of brunch, pickleball, and connection. All are welcome! For more info contact Jon Bock at [jonb@firstpres.cc](mailto:jonb@firstpres.cc).

## **NEW TO FIRST PRES?**

First time and regular visitors are invited to learn more about First Pres Sunday, December 14th in the Neumann Center Library.

This gathering will include an introduction to our history, our mission and our values. You will learn what First Pres has to offer through our ministries, fellowship and mission opportunities.

For more info, contact our Director of Connections, Karyn Greep at [karyng@firstpres.cc](mailto:karyng@firstpres.cc).

# **HAPPENING THIS WEEK!**

## **GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES**

Grow in faith by connecting with one of our ministry groups at First Pres, there is something for all ages throughout the week - every week! Learn more at [firstpres.cc](http://firstpres.cc) or contact us at 954-462-6200 or [info@firstpres.cc](mailto:info@firstpres.cc)

### **MONDAYS**

#### ***Young Adults Virtual Bible Study***

7:30 - 8:30 pm / Via Zoom  
(Meeting ID: 871 3336 6461)  
Passcode: 177983

### **TUESDAYS**

#### ***Men's Morning Bible Study***

8:00 am / Via Zoom  
(Meeting ID: 483 553 8166)  
Starting Book of Proverbs

#### ***Young Adults A Step Further Study***

6:30 - 7:45 pm  
Spanish Room

### **WEDNESDAY**

#### ***Good Game Wednesday***

5:30-7:30 pm  
Family Campus

#### ***Wednesday Night Live!***

5:30-6:30 pm  
Fellowship Hall

[CLICK HERE](#) to RSVP by Monday.

Adults: \$12 / Students: \$8

Kids Under 5: Free

This Weeks Menu:

Chicken Piccata

#### ***Advent Study:***

#### ***The Characters of Christmas***

6:30 pm  
Following WNL! Dinner

#### ***Bible History Class***

On Break for the Holidays And  
Resumes Jan 7th

## **THURSDAYS**

### ***Women's Bible Study***

10:00 - 11:00 am

Study & Renewal Center

### ***Adult Activity Center (AAC)***

11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

### ***Men's Bible Study & Lunch***

12:30 - 1:30 pm

Neumann Center Library

### ***Cathedral Choir (Adults)***

Rehearsal 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Choir Room

## **FRIDAYS**

### ***Middle School Youth Group***

4:00 - 6:30 pm - The Harbor

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4:00 - 6:30 pm - The Harbor

## **SUNDAYS**

### ***Children's Choir Rehearsals***

9:00 - 9:30 am - Choir Room

### ***New Testament Bible Study***

9:45 am

Bininger Conference Room

### ***Children's Sunday School***

PreK3 & PreK4

9:30 & 11:00 am:

Neumann Center, Room #127

K-5th Grade

9:30 am: Neumann Center, Room #224

11:00 am: Watts Chapel

### ***Childcare***

Newborns-PreK 4

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Neumann Center, Room #127

### ***Kirk Singer Rehearsal***

4:00 - 5:00 pm

Choir Room

### ***High School Youth Group***

4:30 - 5:00 pm

The Harbor

# **REGULAR WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**9:30 am Contemporary Worship** - Fellowship Hall

**11:00 am Traditional Worship** - Sanctuary

**Livestream Sunday Worship** - Online at [firstpres.cc/worship](https://firstpres.cc/worship)

**Children's Sunday School** - Neumann Center

The Children's Ministry at First Pres provides a place where children can go while their parents are at our Sunday Worship services. Our Sunday childcare services are offered to infants - PreK4.