



DECEMBER 7, 2025 | 9:30 AM
Contemporary 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 | (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

Jonny Barahona

*SONG

Desert Song

*I will bring praise
I will bring praise
No weapon formed against me shall remain
I will rejoice
I will declare
God is my victory and He is here*

*This is my prayer in the desert
When all that's within me feels dry
This is my prayer in my hunger and need
My God is the God who provides*

*This is my prayer in the fire
In weakness or trial or pain
There is a faith proved of more worth than gold
So refine me Lord through the flame*

*This is my prayer in the battle
When triumph is still on its way
I am a conqueror and co-heir with Christ
So firm on His promise I'll stand*

*All of my life in every season
You are still God
I have a reason to sing
I have a reason to worship*

*This is my prayer in the harvest
When favour and providence flow
I know I'm filled to be emptied again
The seed I've received I will sow*

COMMUNITY LIFE

Rev. Nicholas B. Merchant

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

Rich Martinez, Patty Stover

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

Rich Martinez, Patty Stover

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Chandler Gelb

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.

*SONGS

Angels We Have Heard On High

*Angels we have heard on high
Singing sweetly through the night
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their brave delight*

*Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?
What glad tiding did you hear?*

*Gloria
In Excelsis Deo
Gloria
In Excelsis Deo*

*Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the new-born King*

*Gloria
In Excelsis Deo
Gloria
In Excelsis Deo*

*See Him in a manger laid
Whom the angels praise above
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid
While we raise our hearts in love*

*Gloria
In Excelsis Deo
Gloria
In Excelsis Deo
In Excelsis Deo
In Excelsis Deo*

Behold

*The empty filled the wounded healed
The broken back together
The poor are blessed, the weary rest
We will dance forever*

*The blinded see the chained are free
The doubtful now believer
The outcast known the orphan home
You are my Redeemer*

*Behold, behold
Behold what love can do
Behold behold
He's making all things new*

*The lost return the voiceless heard
The mourner now rejoicing*

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

*The mountains shake the world awake
Creation all composing*

*The sad untrue the Earth renewed
The song has found its singer
The darkness light the dead alive
You are my Redeemer*

*Behold behold
Behold what love can do
Behold behold
He's making all things new*

*Behold behold
Behold what love can do
Behold behold
He's making all things new*

*We've been struck down
We're not destroyed
We've sown in tears
We'll reap in joy*

*We've been struck down
We're not destroyed
We've sown in tears
We'll reap in joy*

*My eyes are open
My eyes are open now*

*Behold behold
Behold what love can do
Behold behold
He's making all things new*

*Behold behold
Behold what love can do
Behold behold
He's making all things new*

SHARING OUR GIFTS

*SONG

Prepare Him Room

PRAYER OF DEDICATION & ILLUMINATION

Rev. Merchant

SCRIPTURE • [Matthew 3:1-12](#)

THE MESSAGE

"The Light Prepares the Way"

COMMUNION

*SONG

O Come Let Us Adore

O Come let us adore Him

O Come let us adore Him

O Come let us adore Him

Christ the Lord

For he alone is worthy

For he alone is worthy

For he alone is worthy

Christ the Lord

We give you all the glory

We give you all the glory

We give you all the glory

Christ the Lord

CHARGE & BENEDICTION

Rev. Merchant

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.

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 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.

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 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.

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 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.

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.

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 or contact us at 954-462-6200 or 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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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

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.