



*Shining Hope, Lauren Wright Pittman, used with permission.*

2 January 2022

Epiphany/2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Christmas

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Established 1817

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Building Community ▪ Transforming Lives ▪ Engaging the World

# Order of Worship

## Prayer of Preparation

*God, you placed a star in the sky to draw wise folk to the place of Christ's nativity. There you revealed the mystery of your eternal purpose for all humanity: God made flesh, born of Mary, opening to all the world the promise you made to Abraham and Sarah. Empower your church to be as the light of the star, that we may draw the world to the glory of Christ, our Lord, through whom we pray. Amen.*

## Welcome

## The Chiming of the Trinity

**Prelude** *We Three Kings of Orient Are* Mier

**Introit** *We Three Kings of Orient Are* Hopkins

## \*Call to Worship

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

**Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to a king's son.  
May he judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice.**

May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness.

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,  
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

**May he live while the sun endures,  
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.**

**May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,  
like showers that water the earth.**

In his days may righteousness flourish  
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

**May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,  
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.**

May all kings fall down before him,  
all nations give him service.

**For he delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.**

He has pity on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.

**From oppression and violence he redeems their life;  
and precious is their blood in his sight.**

In the name of Jesus Christ, let us worship God!

**Anthem**

*As With Gladness Men of Old*

Dix/Kocher

**Confession**

**Merciful God, you have given light to the world in Jesus Christ, but we have preferred to live in darkness. Your justice protects the weak and the distressed, yet we seek the shelter of privilege and power. Your righteousness redeems the poor and the needy, yet we seek the status of wealth and possessions. Your peace upholds the oppressed and the defenseless, yet we seek the security of weapons and retribution. Forgive us our sins, and lead us to true repentance, that we may trust you in all things; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.**

*Silent Confession*

**Assurance of Pardon**

**Summary of the Law**

Matthew 22:37-39

**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”**

(11am) **Children’s Moment**

Maren Sonstegard-Spray

Lord’s Prayer

Hymnal p. 35

*2nd-grade children or younger may depart for Children’s  
Worship and Wonder in the Ministry Center*

**Solo**

*Sweet Little Jesus Boy*

Spiritual

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Lesson**

Isaiah 60:1-7 and Matthew 2:1-12

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

The Rev. Dr. Maren Sonstegard-Spray

**\*Affirmation of Faith** from A Declaration of Faith PCUSA 1991 Chapter 4(1)  
God sent the promised Deliverer to his people.

**Jesus, the long expected Savior, came into the world as a child, descended from David, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of Mary, a virgin. He lived as a Jew among Jews. He announced to his people the coming of God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth. We affirm that Jesus was born of woman as is every child, yet born of God's power as was no other child. In the person and work of Jesus, God himself and a human life are united but not confused, distinguished but not separated. The coming of Jesus was itself the coming of God's promised rule. Through his birth, life, death, and resurrection, he brings about the relationship between God and humanity that God always intended.**

**Anthem**

*Love Has Come*

Bible/French melody

### **Joys and Concerns of the Congregation**

*The flowers in the Sanctuary this morning are given by Diana Bennett to the glory of God and in remembrance of all those not still here to celebrate the holidays with us.*

*The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Maureen Parker on the death of her brother, James Joseph Conroy, on December 28 in Suffolk, VA.*

### **Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer**

Glorious Light, **hear our prayer.**

### **Benediction**

**Postlude**

*How Brightly Shines the Morning Star*

Tuitti

**If you have not already done so, please place your offering in the wooden collection boxes nearest the exit you use. We look forward to seeing you again next week.**

Prayers reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion. Copyright 2014.

Cover Art Artist's Note: "After a long journey, the star hovers, suspended over the wise men's destination. Shining Hope images the joy of this moment and reminds us to revel in wonder of the journey itself."

Organist: Vance Harper Jones

Soloist: Susan Mabie

Ensemble: Susan Mabie, Pat K. Rowlett (8:30 am), Sue Jones (11:00 am)

WELCOME VISITORS! Please write your name on a visitor's badge for your blouse or lapel. Along with our members, please sign the Friendship Pad when passed to you during the service.

CHILDREN are welcome at First Presbyterian Church. The nursery is available for infants and preschool children in Room 1.23 in the Ministry Center from 8:15 am-12:15 pm. Following the Children's Moment, those in the 2nd grade or younger may depart for Children's Worship and Wonder in the Ministry Center. For all children in worship, there are worship bags available at the front and back of the Sanctuary.

RESTROOMS are available in the Ministry Center, (including a family restroom), the Session House, and the Fellowship Center.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES with ear coverings are available. Please ask an usher if you have need.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY is provided by ramps between the Ministry Center and the Sanctuary, in the back of the Ministry Center, along the side of the Session house, and at the front and side entrances of the J. Murphy Smith Fellowship Center.

MASKS are required in the Sanctuary for the time being. At a meeting of the Worship Commission on December 22 it was decided to return to a mask requirement for worship and to put a pause on singing by the choir and the congregation. It is our hope that this will be a short-lived pause until we have a better grasp on the effects of the Omicron variant. As always, if you have had an exposure to someone with Covid-19 or have symptoms that indicate a possible Covid-19 infection, we hope you will either receive a negative test before coming to worship or choose to worship online via the video or podcast.

These changes to our Covid-19 response are communicated by email and will be shared on our website and Facebook page. If you'd like to be added to this email list, please contact [cathy@firstpresnb.org](mailto:cathy@firstpresnb.org) or visit [firstpresnb.org/communications](https://firstpresnb.org/communications) (scroll to the bottom of the page).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **2022 Pledge Cards in Narthex**

Next year's offering envelopes are in the Sanctuary Narthex **through January 16th**. If you are not able to pick your envelopes up during that time, they will be available in the Financial Administrators office. Remember to bring your remaining previous year envelopes to be recycled by the counting team. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Financial Administrator, Amber Zapffel at [amber@firstpresnb.org](mailto:amber@firstpresnb.org) or 252-637-3270 ext. 105.

### **Youth Fellowship**

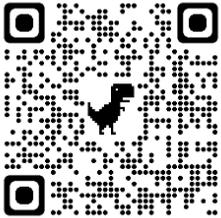
Just Older Youth (JOY) Fellowship for middle and high school students will return on Sunday, **January 9!**

**Choir Rehearsals** are currently on hold until further notice. Pat and Susan will communicate with each choir about rehearsals. Thank you for your patience.

### **January Fellowship Meal**

The January Fellowship Meal has been postponed. Stay tuned for details to come!

### **Time and Talents Survey – For Everyone!**



How are you giving of your time and your talents? Where is God calling you to serve? The time and talents survey is in the mail and on its way to you. If you would like to complete the survey online, you can find it [firstpresnb.org/time-and-talent-survey-2022.html](http://firstpresnb.org/time-and-talent-survey-2022.html) or use the QR code to the left.

### **Donations of Teacups and Saucers Needed**

Habitat for Humanity of Craven County is hosting a Women's Tea Fundraiser for International Women's Day on March 8, 2022. Currently, they are looking for donations of teacups, saucers, teapots, and tiered trays. Before donating, please check your items for chips and cracks; cups and saucers do not have to be matching. Donations can be dropped off Wednesday-Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm at their ReStore located at 930 Pollock Street. For questions about donations, please reach out to Volunteer Coordinator, Catherine Campbell, at [ccampbell@cravencountyhabitat.org](mailto:ccampbell@cravencountyhabitat.org) or (252) 633-9599, ext. 104. A small donation like this can help build homes, communities, and hope in big ways!

## **Book Donation Thank You**

Centenary Methodist Church and Oaks Road Academy would like to thank each of you who donated books for the students at the Academy. Many of these students now hold, in their hands and hearts, some of the first books they have ever owned. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

## **Devotional Booklets**

The books of the devotions written by members of the congregation and the staff of the church are now printed and available. If you reserved a copy, you can pick it up from Maren in the time between services on December 26, or during the week in the church office. The suggested donation is \$10 per book. We printed a few extra so if you did not reserve one but are interested in one, contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

## **Education**

**Sunday School classes meet Sundays 9:40-10:40 am**

### **Sunday School for Children**

**Preschool** – active play in the Nursery

**Kindergarten-5th Grade** – Ministry Center Room 1.27 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living).

**Middle & High School** – Ministry Center Room 2.23-24 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living). **Not Meeting on January 2.**

### **Sunday School for Adults**

#### **The Present Word/George Evans – Session House Parlor**

The class is currently studying the series “Justice, Law, History” in Old Testament texts. Please contact George Evans (gkevans4@gmail.com) with questions. The book is available in the church office.

#### **Getting Old – Growing Gracefully/Lloyd Griffith – Ministry Center Room 2.21 and Zoom**

“The laws of nature that dictate sundown dictate our demise.” This final part of our journey raises inevitable questions: What is our relationship with the younger generation? What is truth? What is the connection between work and vocation? How can I stay

engaged with the outer life? How can I stay engaged with the inner life? Where do I go when I die? How we respond to these built-in concerns is ours to choose. We can answer this inevitable aging process with denial or defiance and find ourselves on a passage of decline and inaction. OR...we can collaborate faithfully with this unique section on the arc of life and find ourselves on a different passage of engagement and discovery of a Holy energy holding and guiding us along the path. This Sunday School class on aging gracefully will begin on **January 2** at 9:40 am in room 2.21 (large center classroom on the second floor of the Ministry Center) and **on Zoom**. We will be guided through these challenges of the journey by Parker Palmer's "On the Brink of Everything, Grace, Gravity and Getting Older." Please contact the church office or Lloyd Griffith to register for this class. Inquiries welcome!

### **Law and Religion/James R. Copland – Session House Main Room**

America's original constitution did not expressly cover the relationship between church and state. But the Bill of Rights—insisted upon by some states, including North Carolina, as a precondition for joining the union—led off with it: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." This course will cover the historical background framing the First Amendment's religion clauses; the evolution of Supreme Court doctrine interpreting them, and modern cases and controversies. Copland is formerly a Coker Fellow in constitutional law at the Yale Law School, but the course is intended for a general, rather than a legal, audience. Where appropriate, Biblical interpretation and discussion will be incorporated to augment the discussion of law. This class will begin on Sunday, **January 2** at 9:40 am in the Session House Main Room.

### **Church Membership Class/Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight - Ministry Center Conference Room (in the Staff Office Suite)**

Whether you have been worshipping with First Presbyterian for one Sunday or one hundred, we'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you about what it means to be a part of a church community—what it might mean for you to take the joyful, faithful step of becoming a member of First Presbyterian Church. To help facilitate these conversations we have scheduled classes to be held on **January 16 and 23** (you are invited and encouraged to attend the class both weeks) during the Sunday School time with the opportunity to join and be welcomed in worship on the 23rd at 11:00 am or the 30th at 8:30 am. If these dates don't work for you, please get in touch with Anna so we can add you to the list for the next time we have these gatherings or so we can meet and find a pathway and timeline that works for you ([anna@firstpresnb.org](mailto:anna@firstpresnb.org) or 252-637-3270).

## **Guardian Ad Litem Presentation on January 16**

If you are interested in helping children in the foster care system, volunteering as a Guardian ad Litem might be right for you! A Guardian ad Litem (GAL) advocate is a trained community volunteer who is appointed, along with a Guardian ad Litem attorney, by a district court judge to investigate and determine the needs of abused and neglected children petitioned into the court system by the Department of Social Services.

Throughout North Carolina, the Guardian ad Litem Program seeks to serve the best interests of thousands of children who find themselves the subjects of court cases. The program exists in every county throughout North Carolina, and with the help of more than 5,300 volunteers, serves more than 18,000 children a year. On Sunday, **January 16**, during the Sunday School hour, 9:40-10:40 am in the Session House Main Room. Tracey Brenneman, district administrator for the GAL program, will share information about the program and how you can be involved. For more information visit: [volunteerforgal.org](http://volunteerforgal.org)

## **Praying in Color/Sue Calahan – Library (Second floor of the Ministry Center)**

Maybe you love color. Maybe you are a visual learner, a distractible or impatient soul, or a word-weary pray-er. Perhaps you struggle with a short attention span, a restless body, or a tendency to live in your head. The prayer practice “Praying in color,” by Sybil MacBeth, invites your hands as well as your mind into prayer and gives you a new way to be with God. Join us starting on **January 23** for a four week class which explores various ways doodling can be used to pray for others and ourselves. No art experience required and supplies will be provided. More information contact Maren ([Maren@firstpresnb.org](mailto:Maren@firstpresnb.org))

## **Mid-Week Formation Opportunities**

### **Monday Evening Women’s Bible Study**

The group meets on Mondays from 7:00 to 8:30 PM via Zoom. Join us as we begin a new book, *It’s Not About Me* by Max Lucado, a well-known pastor and prolific author, familiar to many in our congregation. Lucado explores how “me-centric” tendencies natural to all of us (ever watch toddlers navigate their little “it’s all about me” worlds?!) get carried into adulthood where “my agenda”, “my schedule”, “my issues”, the things that make “me” happy may present in more sophisticated forms, but only serve to alienate us in our constrained “me-centric” universes from others and, most importantly, keep us from flourishing and helping others to flourish in the “God-centric” realm in which all of us are called to live and to serve. The group will launch into this “oldie, but goody” book starting **January 3, 2022**, after a two-week holiday break. For more information or to get on our list, please call Marice Debruhl 637-5468 (h), Cathy Wingfield 828-767-0975 (c), or Wendy Moeller 876-7259 (c).

## **Tuesday Afternoon Grief Support**

The group meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 12:00 to 1:00 pm in the Chapel. This ongoing group provides its members with companionship, understanding, support, and guidance as we seek to go on living when someone we love dies. All are welcome. Come and bring a friend. Contact Lloyd Griffith for more information.

## **Life of Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Living**

Led by Lloyd Griffith on Wednesdays noon-1:00 pm and meets in Ministry Center Room 2.21 and by Zoom in a hybrid format. The group will be studying “Soul Force” by Lloyd Griffith and “Immortal Diamond” by Richard Rohr.

## **Wednesday Evening Contemplative Worship**

Led by Lloyd Griffith and meets in the Chapel in the Ministry Center. This contemplative, or reflective, approach to worship is offered each Wednesday from 5 to 5:30 pm. This quiet service is focused on silence, prayer, and reflection on the Biblical text chosen for preaching the coming Sunday. The Lord’s Supper is observed on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. Come when you can and bring a friend.

## **Thursday Morning Women’s Bible Study – New Book**

We will be starting a new book on Thursday, **January 6**, “Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice” by Stephanie Paulsell. Our Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study meets weekly 10-11 am by Zoom. The book is available for purchase on Amazon (Kindle version also available). If you need help acquiring the book or want to be added to the email list for the class, please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

**Sunday Afternoon Men’s Beer and Theology** led by Ken Wilkins at Brewery 99 (1014 Pollock St) at 4:00 pm, Sunday, **January 23**. This will be a casual men’s gathering for fellowship and conversation around topics of theology and faith. Don’t let any bad weather stop you from coming – there is a nice indoor space for gathering!

## **Montreat Women’s Conference 2022**

Join us at the Montreat Women's Connection Conference Friday-Sunday, August 12-14. The keynote speaker is author Sarah Bessey. More information at [montreat.org/women](http://montreat.org/women). We will register as a group again this year which means instead of registering on the Montreat website, you register with Maren Sonstegard-Spray (maren@firstpresnb.org). Rooms in the Assembly Inn (with air conditioning and elevator) go very quickly so please contact Maren by Sunday, **January 23<sup>rd</sup>**. The deposit to hold your spot is \$100. Registration cost includes program, room, and meals (single and double occupancy options) and the prices range from \$391 to \$511 per person. Transportation is on your

own and many arranged carpools in previous years. We are offering a discount off the cost of the registration from the McClary Scholarship fund to make it easier to attend the conference! Please contact Maren to learn more about the discount.

### **Fellowship Café**

Join us from 9:30 until 10:45 am in the Fellowship Café (on the first floor of the Ministry Center) for a cup of coffee, a bite or two, and to renew your church friendships, or stop by and grab a coffee on your way to Sunday School!

### **Church Email List and Church Newsletter**

We communicate a lot of things happening in the life of the church through emails through Constant Contact. If you would like to receive regular announcements or the newsletter, or both, please contact Cathy Wingfield ([cathy@firstpresnb.org](mailto:cathy@firstpresnb.org)) or sign up on the church website!

### **Nametags**

We want to encourage everyone to get in the habit of wearing their nametags again! If you have misplaced yours, Marcy, our Office Administrator, is happy to make you another one ([marcy@firstpresnb.org](mailto:marcy@firstpresnb.org)). There is a board in the Narthex where you can leave your nametag at the end of the service, and it will be waiting for you the next Sunday.

*Trusting that God's grace embraces and makes a covenant with all believers,  
First Presbyterian Church intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. All persons are  
welcomed into this fellowship and membership regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic or racial  
identity, economic or educational status, or political affiliation.*