

A Service for the Lord's Day

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, November 29, 2026
10:00 AM

A Service for the Lord's Day

Lectionary Texts:
Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

This church welcomes you no matter who you are, where you come from, or why you are here. We are Christ's people, and this is Christ's place with its doors open wide. If you are passing through, Godspeed; if you are looking for a home, stay here; if you need instruction, learn from us as we learn from you. We invite visitors to join us, but most of all, to return often.

Assemble in God's Name

Silent Prayer of Preparation

Holy One, you have promised us that the day of our salvation is near. Keep us faithful in love and watchful in prayer, so that we may stand with confidence and joy at the coming of Christ, our redeemer and Lord. Amen.

Chimes of the Trinity

Welcome and Parish Life

Choral Prelude — *O Emmanuel* Karen Marrolli

Shadows are deep'ning and evening is falling, Dusk ever hast'ning our midnight of souls.
Light to our darkness and hope for our longing, Come dwell among us till daylight consoles.
O Emmanuel, your people are calling, Calling for healing as darkness unfolds.
Shadows are deep'ning and evening is falling, Dusk ever hast'ning our midnight of souls.
Come as the artist, forever creating Torrents of dayspring where all tears have dried.
Bring us your sunrise, the darkness abating. Bring us your healing for hearts broken wide.
O Emmanuel, your people are waiting, Waiting for solace; O come and be our guide.
Come as the artist, forever creating Torrents of dayspring where all tears have dried.
Brightest and best of the stars of the morning, Dawn on our darkness and lend us your aid.

Lighting of the Advent Candle: Hope The Nielson Family

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.

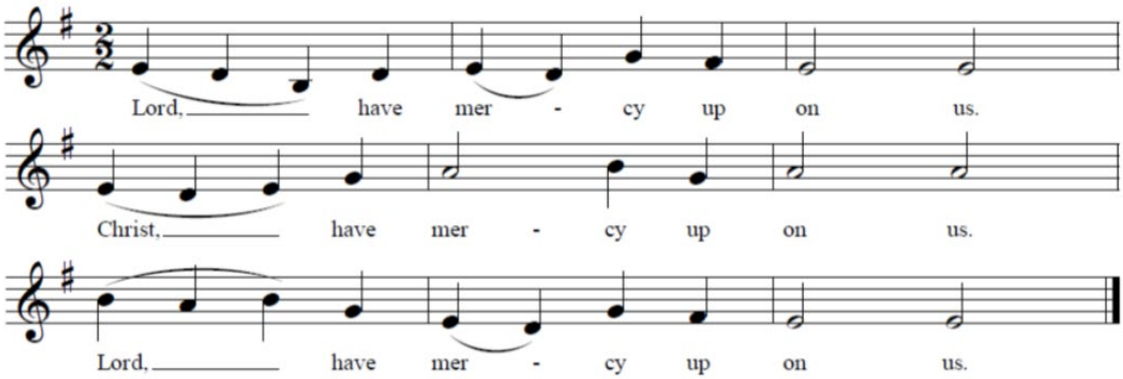
† Hymn 88 — O Come, O Come, Emmanuel VENI EMMANUEL

† Call to Confession Christy Nielson

† Prayer of Confession *Mark 13*

Merciful God, we confess that we become distracted, even weary, in our discipleship. We keep busy schedules; we rush about. Captivated by technology, seduced by the lure of consumer goods, we do not remain alert to your divine presence in our lives, in the church, and in the world. Make us better doorkeepers of our lives, watching for you attentively. Awaken us to your surprising power and glory and peace, so we do not miss how near you are to our very own gates. Be gracious toward us, we pray, until we are gathered, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven, into your embrace. We pray in the name of Christ, who was, and is, and is to come. Amen.

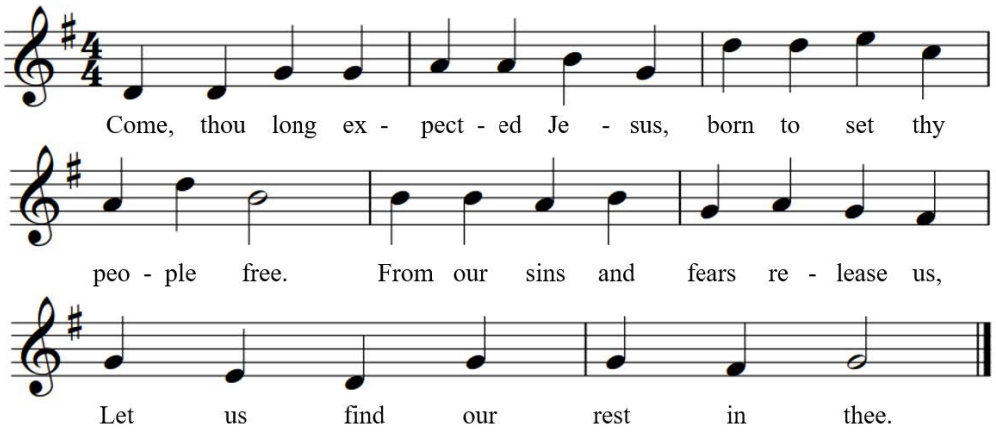
† KYRIE ELEISON



† DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Friends, hear and believe the good news;
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

† CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE STUTTGART



At this time, all children (pre-K 4 through third grade) are invited to leave the service to attend "Children's Time." Children can be picked up on the second floor of the Fellowship Hall after the worship service.

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

PSALTER READING: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 p. 665

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

MEDITATION — *Carol of the Bells* arr. Heather Sorenson

GOSPEL READING: Mark 13:24-37 p. 61

The Word of the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

SERMON Rev. Barrett C. Milner

Give Thanks to God

Moment for Silent Meditation

† Affirmation of Faith — The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Call to Offertory

Offertory — *The Holly and the Ivy* — arr. Gwyneth Walker

Presentation of Gifts, Tithes and Offerings

† Doxology — Hymnal, 606

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen.

† Offertory Prayer

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

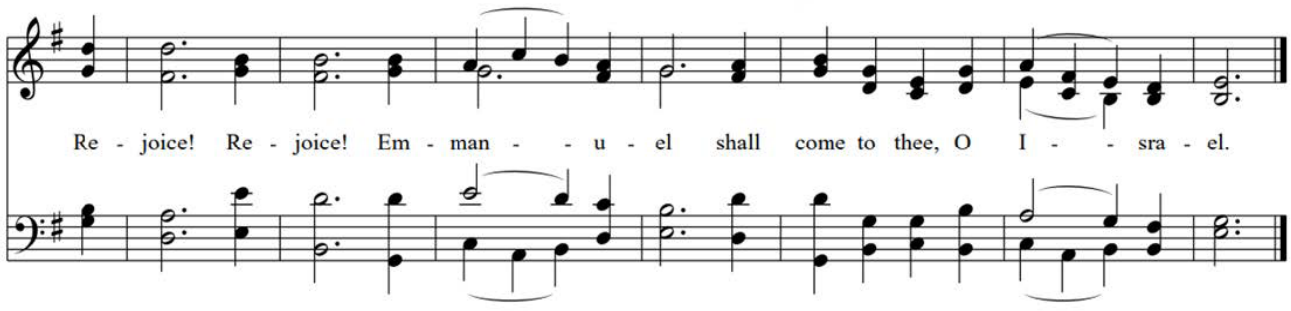
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Go and Witness in God's Name

† Hymn 92 — While We Are Waiting, Come — WAITING

† Benediction

† Congregational Response — O, Come, O Come, Emmanuel



Postlude — *Intermezzo on Carol of the Bells* — arr. John S. Dixon

WELCOME!

First Presbyterian Church warmly invites visitors to become a member of our family of faith. You may do so in one of the following ways:

- By Profession of Faith - The act of receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and sincerely promising to live for Him. Previous baptism is accounted as valid, or the Sacrament of Baptism may be administered at the time of profession.
- By Transfer of Membership - Request our minister to contact your former church for a letter of transfer, where applicable.
- By Reaffirmation of Faith - If you have been inactive or separated from the church for some time or wish to rededicate yourself, you may be received by reaffirmation of faith.

Parents of nursery aged children please note: a nursery is provided from **8:45 am - 11:15 am** for the following ages: 6 weeks - 4 years. The nursery and pre-school rooms are located in the Education Building, first floor.

UKIRK, our college campus ministry, meets for dinner & Bible study on Wednesdays throughout the semester, and other events throughout the year. More information is available at linktr.ee/ukirkofolemiss or on our Instagram @ukirkolemiss. All college students are welcome!

The FPC prayer chain is ready if you or someone you know is in need. Please contact Carlisle Wood at carlislewood@gmail.com or 662-832-8606. All requests are held in strict confidence.

The church has two portable defibrillators on site if a cardiac event occurs. One is located in our office hallway by the east stairwell; the other is located in the library of the Education Building.

Office Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm and Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm.

Tithes and Offerings: Thank you for prayerfully supporting the missions and ministries of FPC! Every gift is greatly appreciated. Here are some ways to give:

- Completing the pledge card in the friendship register found in your pew
- Online by choosing the tab titled "Giving" at the top of the church website (https://fpcoxford.net/giving/)
- Enrolling in direct deposit of withdrawal by contacting the church office.
- Scanning the QR Code provided here. Credit Card fees apply.
- Mailing gifts directly to the church office at 924 Van Buren Ave, Oxford, MS 38655

If you need assistance with any specific ways to give, please contact Frances Saralvarez at fsaralvarezfpc@gmail.com, or call the church office.

ONLINE GIVING

TODAY'S WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

Proclaiming the Word	Rev. Barrett C. Milner
Liturgist	Christy Nielson
Organist	Creighton Holder
Ushers	Rebecca Black
	Anne Doty
	Heather Harris
	Michael Portner

CALENDAR

Sunday, November 29
9:00 am Sunday School*
10:00 am Worship Service*
5:00 pm Presbyterian Youth Fellowship

Monday, November 30
6:30 pm Troop 45

Tuesday, December 1
5:30 pm Diaconate
5:30 pm Advent Service of Wholeness & Healing

Wednesday, December 2
12:00 pm Grace Notes Advent Series
12:00 pm Property Ministry Meeting
5:00 pm Children's Nativity Musical Rehearsal
5:30 pm Chancel Choir

Sunday, December 6
9:00 am Sunday School*
10:00 am Worship Service*
1:00 pm Church-Wide Ice Skating
5:00 pm Arc Benders
5:00 pm Presbyterian Youth Fellowship

Nursery provided

Are you interested in learning more? Do you have ideas to share?
Your church staff, Diaconate, and ministry team leaders would love to hear from you!

SESSION

Adult Faith Formation - Irma Buchanan (2026) & Ashley Callery (2028)
Children & Youth Faith Formation - Brynnen Quick (2026) & Corey Mauldin (2027)
Clerk of Session - Catherine Servati (2026)
Finance - Richard DeVoe (2028)
Membership & Hospitality - Matt Nielson (2026) & Angela Manley (2028)
Mission - Laura Montgomery (2026) & Michael Portner (2028)
Personnel - Al Ling (2027) & Trey Byars (2028)
Property - Hank Spragins (2027) & Anne Doty (2028)
Worship - Whitney Bolen (2027)

DIACONATE

Class of 2026: Stefanie Goodwiller, Marty Mauldin, Brad Mayo, Kathy Neff, Nina Patrick

Class of 2027: Heather Harris, Caroline McIntosh, Monte Ochs, Dee Walker (clerk)

Class of 2028: Rebecca Black, Jessica Holder, Elizabeth Miers, Ben Pettis, Lisa Tollison (moderator)

CHURCH STAFF

The Congregation	*Ministers*
Rev. Barrett C. Milner	*Pastor*……..…..……..… bmilnerfpc@gmail.com
Creighton R. Holder	*Director of Music*…….cholderfpc@gmail.com
Dave Garvey	*Director of FF for Children & Youth*……...dgarveyfpc@gmail.com
Frances Saralvarez	*Office Administrator* ……fsaralvarezfpc@gmail.com
Kaitlin Irby	*Communications Director* ……kohillfpc@gmail.com
Wade Simpson	*Property Manager*……wsimpson13@yahoo.com
Wendy Brady	*Nursery Director*……...wendybbrady@gmail.com

THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN OUR CHURCH FAMILY . . .

VIPs: Our December gathering will be held on December 3 at 6:00 pm at Matthew & Melissa Hall's home. We will provide chicken tenders. We ask that you BYOB, and either an appetizer or dessert to share. If you plan to come, reach out to the church office to sign up.

Youngish Adults: The Youngish Adults Christmas party will be held on Friday, December 4, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Whitney and Partick Bolen will be hosting it at their home. BYOB and a festive snack to share!

FPC Christmas Parade Party: The City of Oxford's Christmas Parade will be on December 7 at 6:30 pm. There will be a Pre-Parade Party at The McClatchy Home at 5:30 pm. All church members and families are welcome! We ask that you BYOB and bring a snack to share!

The Bethlehem Tree: The Bethlehem Tree is back for one more year! The exhibit will be set up in the Fellowship Hall, featuring more than 150 antique figures—truly a beautiful display you won't want to miss. The exhibit is open to the public now until December 23. The opening hours are Monday – Thursday, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, and on Sundays from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm. This is the last chance the exhibit will be available in Mississippi, so make sure to check it out!

Mission Opportunities: FPC seeks to serve "the least of these." See Fast Facts or call the church office for more details on the following outreaches as well as other opportunities.

- **LovePacks** is an in-school pantry that provides food for 250 children in the Oxford and Lafayette county schools who experience hunger in their homes. For the month of November, packs of ramen noodles are requested. Your contribution may be left at the church office anytime.
- Thank you for your continued support of the **Blessing Bag Ministry**. As grocery prices rise, the need in our Community continues to grow and we are a source of hope for those in need. Our current needs are canned fruit, canned green beans, canned green peas, spaghetti sauce, canned chicken, and Jiffy corn muffin mix (small boxes). If you prefer to make a monetary donation, please indicate "Blessing Bags".
- FPC is partnering with **Doors of Hope** again this year to help provide Christmas gifts to local families. If you'd like to participate, go grab a tag off the tree in the church office hallway. You may grab as many as you'd like. Please return all gifts back to the church no later than December 14. You may wrap them, but it is not required. Wrapped or unwrapped, please make sure they are labeled with the corresponding tag that you grab from the tree.

Advent at FPC: Advent season is quickly approaching, and as always, we have a bunch of great events happening around here. Mark these dates on your calendar! Check out Fast Facts more information.

- **Advent Services of Wholeness & Healing**: December 1, December 8, and December 15 at 5:30 pm
- **Grace Notes Advent Series**: December 2, December 9, & December 16 at 12:00 pm (free luncheon to follow each week)
- **Church-Wide Ice Skating**: December 6, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
- **CYFF Cookie and Gingerbread House Decorating**: December 13, 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm
- **Service of Lessons and Carols**: December 20, 6:00 pm
- **Christmas Eve Worship Services**: December 24, 4:00 pm & 5:30 pm

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

FPC Members: The Family of Henry Paris; Mit Hobbs; The Family of Fay Grissinger; Niles Lovelady; KB Melear; Guff Abbott; Catherine Lawhorn; The Family of Tommy Smith; Jane Henderson; Lee Borden; Vaughn Grisham; Lilly Biedenharn; Kay Tyler; Duke Goza; Keith Hayward; Becky Murphey; Ann Dickins; Scottye Boone; Leon McCullouch

Family and Friends: Caleb Samples; The Family of Margie Sanders (Stefanie Goodwiller's mother); The Family of Dick Marchbanks; The Family of Thomas Hines; The Family of Marshall Roberson; The Family of Jean Stevens and Blake Thacker; Beth Mitchell; Hannah Borden Miller; Ed Parker; Our sister Presbyterian Church in Jagüey Grande, Cuba.; Clifford Cobb; Ray Poole; Fel Macias; Amy Kennedy; Richard Bremer; Helen Luckett; Minor Atkinson; Melissa Cribbs; Steve Mistilis; Sigrid Long; Eileen Cheney and Family; Olivia Flautt; Dr. Gladys Memnon and Friends in Bongnotte, Haiti; Doors of Hope Families; Lafayette County Detention Center inmates; Parchman Prison inmates; Haven House residents

U. S. Military: SSgt Jason Freeland, USAF 26th Special Tactics Squadron, based in Cannon AFB, Clovis, NM

Please pray, too, for those with unspecified needs.
If you wish to have a name removed or added to this list, please contact the church office.

Music Notes

The First Sunday of Advent opens the Christian year with a summons to hope. We remember Christ's coming among us in humility and await his return, when God will bring creation into the fullness of justice and peace. Today's candle-lighting liturgy gives this expectation a tangible image: one small flame that pierces the darkness. As we acknowledge the weariness of waiting, we entrust ourselves to the God whose faithfulness sustains us. Isaiah's promise of renewed strength directs our attention toward the One who nourishes hope even when our courage falters.

Gwyneth Walker's *Reverence* from her suite *Sanctuary* prepares us for this attentive waiting. Walker composed the three-movement organ work for the American Guild of Organists' 2010 national convention. A gently flowing triple meter and spare chordal textures give the opening its quiet dignity. In this opening movement, she develops a gentle beginning into a clear affirmation before returning to prayerful stillness. That expressive movement offers a fitting entrance into Advent: we bring our vulnerability before God, find courage in God's presence, and quiet ourselves to listen.

Karen Marrolli's choral prelude, *O Emmanuel*, gives voice to the longing that animates our candle liturgy. Writing for choir, violin, and piano, Marrolli joins her own poetry to the early American hymn tune STAR IN THE EAST and concludes with words from Reginald Heber's "Brightest and Best." Her text acknowledges a "midnight of souls" and pleads for healing, companionship, and dawn. Its invocation, "Come as the artist, forever creating," envisions divine creativity renewing a wounded world. At this invocation, the choir expands from unison singing into four-part harmony, giving the prayer greater breadth and intensity. Like the first candle's fragile flame, the anthem's anticipated sunrise directs our hope toward God's continuing work of restoration.

Our opening hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," places this prayer within centuries of Christian devotion. Its roots reach into the ancient *O Antiphons*, which address Christ through biblical names and images. Emmanuel means "God with us": the name itself carries the assurance for which we pray. The hymn holds lament and rejoicing together, teaching us to sing God's promise amid circumstances that still cry out for redemption. The Kyrie's appeal for mercy and the Gloria's praise extend this movement through our worship, giving voice to both our need and our trust.

Heather Sorenson's arrangement of *Carol of the Bells* offers another musical expression of anticipation. The familiar melody comes from Mykola Leontovych's *Shchedryk*, a Ukrainian choral setting whose original text describes a swallow announcing a prosperous year. Its persistent four-note figure—an ostinato, or repeating musical pattern—creates rhythmic momentum and carries an unmistakable sense of expectancy. Within today's worship, we may hear that recurring pattern as an invitation to remain watchful, attentive to signs of renewal while we await the fulfillment of God's promises.

Walker's offertory, *The Holly and the Ivy*, draws the morning's imagery toward the rising sun. This arrangement belongs to her *Carols of Light*, whose inspiration encompasses candlelight and the light surrounding Christ's nativity. Walker identifies the carol's image of sunrise as a guiding musical idea; ascending scales animate the setting, and its final high notes suggest a solitary star. These gestures resonate beautifully with our first Advent candle. As we offer our gifts and sing the Doxology, we respond to God's generosity and commit ourselves to the care of the world Christ comes to redeem.

John S. Dixon's *Intermezzo on Carol of the Bells* returns us to the morning's recurring melody as we depart. Its return can remind us that faithful waiting continues beyond the sanctuary, in prayer, in steadfast companionship, and in acts of mercy and justice. The small flame we kindle today invites a whole congregation to bear hope together. Come, Lord Jesus, and make hope our song.