

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Main Street at Washington ~ Greenwood, Mississippi

Established 1846



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION CELEBRATION

December 24, 2023 ~ 5:30 p.m.

Large Print Hymnals and Bibles, and Hearing Devices are available in the back of the sanctuary.
At the end of the service, please return these to the back table.

THE CHURCH GATHERS ...

Please silence all cell phones.
No unauthorized photography or recordings allowed.
*The congregation is invited to stand.
✦ Seating of those arriving after worship has begun.

... TO WORSHIP AND SING

PRELUDE	Shepherd's Noel	J. Wayne Kerr
SOLO	O Holy Night Shannon Melton, soloist	Adophe Adam
*CALL TO WORSHIP	John 1:1-14	Elder Thomas Gregory III
*ENTRANCE OF THE CHRIST CANDLE		Andrew and Kelli Stainback, Eliza Jane, Laura, and Lott
✦*PROCESSIONAL HYMN 133	O Come, All Ye Faithful	ADESTE FIDELES
*PRAYER OF ADORATION		Dr. Andrew Chaney
ANTHEM	Before the Marvel of This Night	Carl Schalk
<p>Before the marvel of this night adoring, fold your wings and bow, then tear the sky apart with light and with your news the world endow. Proclaim the birth of Christ and peace, that fear and death and sorrow cease: Sing peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace, sing peace, sing gift of peace! Awake the sleeping world with song, this is the day the Lord has made. Assemble here, celestial throng, in royal splendor come arrayed. Give earth a glimpse of heav'nly bliss, a teasing taste of what they miss: Sing bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss, sing bliss, sing endless bliss! The love that we have always known, our constant joy and endless light, now to the loveless world be shown, now breaking upon its deathly night. Into one song compress the love that rules our universe above: sing love, sing love, sing God is love, sing love, sing God is love!</p>		
HYMN 121(seated)	O Little Town of Bethlehem	ST. LOUIS
HYMN 115 (seated)	Away in a Manger	MUELLER
HYMN 117 (seated)	While Shepherd's Watched Their Flocks	WINCHESTER OLD

... TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION		
SCRIPTURE	Luke 2:8-20	
SERMON	"Lessons from the Manger" 3. The Shepherds Teach – Everyone Is Important to God	Dr. Andrew Chaney
*HYMN 113	Angels We Have Heard on High	GLORIA

... TO UNITE AROUND THE LORD'S TABLE

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE BREAD AND THE CUP

For the bread, say, "This is the body of Christ broken for you."

For the cup, say, "This is the blood of Christ shed for you."

CHRISTMAS EVE PRAYER

... TO SPREAD GOD'S LIGHT

PRESENTATION OF GIFTS

Offertory

Gesú Bambino

Pietro Yon

*Response

DIX

**As they offered gifts most rare at that manger rude and bare;
So may we with holy joy, pure, and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.**

*Prayer of Dedication and The Lord's Prayer

Elder Sherry Clark

*SHARING THE LIGHT

Night of Silence

Daniel Kantor

(Please tilt only the unlit candles.)

- (All) 1. **Cold are the people, winter of life, We tremble in shadows this cold endless night,
Frozen in the snow lie roses sleeping, Flowers that will echo the sunrise
Fire of hope is our only warmth, Weary its flame will be dying soon.**
- (Choir) 2. **Voice in the distance, call in the night, On wings You enfold us, You speak of the light,
Gentle on the ear you whisper, softly, rumors of a dawn so embracing,
Breathless love awaits darkened souls, Soon will we know of the morning.**
- (All) 3. **Spirit among us, shine like the star, Your light that guides shepherds and kings from afar,
Shimmer in the sky so empty, lonely, Rising in the warmth of your Son's love,
Star unknowing of night and day, Spirit we wait for your loving Son.**

*HYMN 122

Silent Night, Holy Night

STILLE NACHT

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright, Round yon virgin mother and child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace. | 3. Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light Radiant beams from Thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth. |
| 2. Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight, Glories stream from heaven afar, Heavenly hosts sing: "Alleluia" Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born. | 4. Silent night, holy night! Wondrous star, lend thy light; With the angels let us sing, Alleluia to our King; Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born. |

Following the Benediction, please extinguish your candle and place in the receptacle as you exit the sanctuary.

...AND DEPARTS TO CELEBRATE AND SERVE

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Joy to the World!

arr. Kurt Varner

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sir John Betjeman was an English poet, writer, broadcaster, and Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom from 1972 until his death in 1984. Betjeman was a practicing Anglican. With this portion of his poem, “Christmas”, the church staff wishes you all a very Merry Christmas.

“... **And is it true? and is it true,
this most tremendous tale of all,
seen in a stained-glass window’s hue,
A baby in an ox’s stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a child on earth for me?...
That God was man in Palestine
And lives today in Bread and Wine.**

A **Nursery** is provided this evening for infants and young children across the street in the Van Arnold Education Building.

A **Candle** should have been picked up as you entered the Sanctuary tonight. Please tilt only the unlit candle as you “share the light” and hold your lit candle up right as you share the light to the person next to you. Please be aware of how you and children hold the lighted candle in order to prevent candle wax from dripping onto the pew upholstery.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper will be served as part of worship this evening. The invitation to the Lord’s Supper is extended to all who have been baptized, remembering that access to the Table is not a right conferred upon the worthy, but a privilege given to the undeserving who come in faith, repentance, and love. In preparing to receive Christ in this Sacrament, the believer is to confess sin and brokenness, to seek reconciliation with God and neighbor, and to trust in Jesus Christ for cleansing and renewal. Even one who doubts or whose trust is wavering may come to the Table in order to be assured of God’s love and grace in Christ Jesus.

Our Thanks to Karla Bowen, Eleanor Braswell, Laura Oakes, and Sarah Nell Thach for preparing the elements for communion this evening.

Our Thanks to Somerset Peede, viola, for enhancing our worship tonight.

Tonight’s Christmas Eve loose offering has been approved by the Session to be split evenly between **Greenwood Interfaith Ministries (Community Kitchen)**, and the **Community Food Pantry**.

Stewardship 2023 – Please do your best to complete your 2023 pledge by **Thursday, December 28**, so the Session can meet its financial commitments for 2023. The Church Office will be open until 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 28. We need \$39,000.00 of outstanding pledges to come in by the end of this month. Some \$42,600.00 of benevolences are yet to be paid. Thank you for your generosity.

The Church Office will be closed Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December, 26th.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

300 Main Street
Greenwood, Mississippi 38930
662-453-4680
www.fpcgreenwood.org

Dr. Andrew Chaney, Pastor
Rev. Ray Smithee, Director of Music & Organist
Whitney Avritt, Director of Youth Ministries
Kelli Stainback, Director of Christian Education