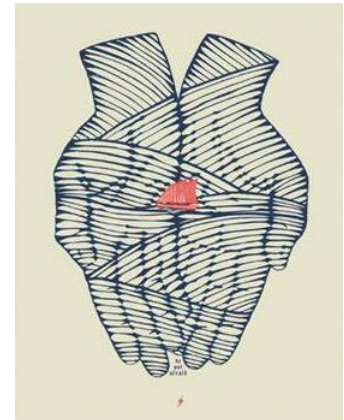
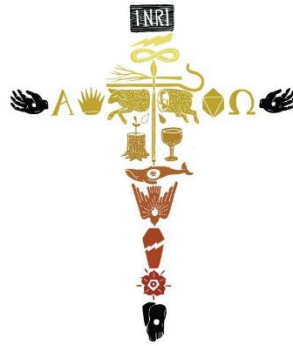
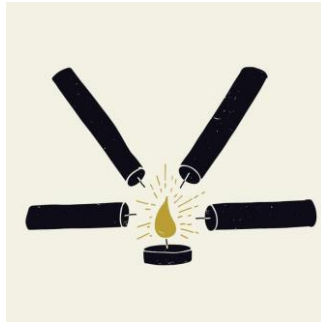




Beloved, do not feel ashamed of your emptiness.  
Instead, see that it is the perfect preparation in  
providing a space for something Holy.



1215 Virginia Episcopal School Road, Lynchburg, VA 24503  
(434) 384-6231 · [www.fpclly.org](http://www.fpclly.org) · e-mail: [info@fpclly.org](mailto:info@fpclly.org)  
<https://www.facebook.com/firstpresoflynchburg/>  
Radio Broadcast: 105.9 FM WLNI @ 9:30 am (1 week delay)



# Welcome to First Presbyterian Church- Lynchburg, VA

Grace and Peace to you all from our Lord Jesus Christ. It is so wonderful to be together as we worship God and continue in this Advent Season. Advent means “coming.” But what is “coming”? The better question is who is “coming”? The answer to “who is coming” changes everything in life as we know it and provides for us, God’s children, the hope and assurance of things greater than anything we can possibly dream or imagine. Jesus is coming! Yes, Jesus has already been born in Bethlehem a couple thousand years ago, however, we, as the body of Christ, the church, are called to PREPARE, REMEMBER, PRAISE, ENCOUNTER, AND CELEBRATE Jesus’ coming each year as a way to reignite and reinvigorate the meaning Jesus’ coming has within our lives.

With Jesus comes life, light, and love! With Jesus comes grace, mercy, and forgiveness! With Jesus comes peace, hope, and joy! With Jesus comes healing, compassion, and miracles! With Jesus comes righteousness, strength, and courage! With Jesus comes transformation and salvation! For whom? For YOU! For ALL! For just this season of Advent and Christmas? NO! This season of Advent is just the beginning (the foundation if you will) of our PREPARING, REMEMBERING, PRAISING, ENCOUNTERING, AND CELEBRATING throughout the rest of the liturgical year and witnessing it manifest itself throughout our lives every day.

Here at First Presbyterian Church of Lynchburg, we acknowledge the many blessings God has bestowed on us and trusted us with; we acknowledge the call and responsibility we have to share those blessings with one another; we acknowledge that we don’t always fulfill our call to be God’s church perfectly and thus need to ask God for forgiveness; we acknowledge our need for God’s grace, and the grace we can offer one another; we acknowledge the truth that we are all better together. Faith is a journey and one we believe God has called us and gifted us to walk together as God’s beloved children. Welcome to this journey!

Run the Race, Fight the Fight, Keep the Faith,

Rev. Dr. Peter Thompson

## Building Hospitality

Our building is a wonderful resource. It can also feel like a labyrinth when you are learning your way around. A few key locations may be helpful to you: Accessible Restrooms can be located down the main hallway from the Foyer. The Elevator is also located down the main hallway from the Foyer. The Nursery is located on the ground floor just outside the elevator. In addition to locations, there are two supports available to worship participants should they be needed: Hearing-assist devices and Large Print Hymnals can be found in the Narthex. Ushers are available and willing to assist you in finding your way or answering other questions. Wayfinding signs are also posted at all intersections throughout the building.

## Welcoming Children

Just as Jesus welcomes the little children to come, so we welcome children of all ages in worship. We believe we are better when all members of God’s family are included! In order to make the worship service as welcoming for our littlest ones as possible, we provide worship carts with a variety of resources to make a worship bag. After the children’s moment, 4 years to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade aged children are invited to participate in worship workshop in room 101 or stay for the remainder of worship. It is always a joy to have your children and all the wiggles, giggles, questions, noises, and insights they bring. If you have any questions about how to enhance your child’s worship experience, or if you’re looking to get involved with our children’s ministries, please contact Dr. Marcia Thom-Kaley ([marcia@fpclly.org](mailto:marcia@fpclly.org)).

## Interested in joining?

First Presbyterian has welcomed 20 new members over the last year, and we are ready to welcome more. If you’d like to be here in a more official capacity, you are invited to join First Presbyterian as a member. Everyone who is part of our community is treated the same. Joining isn’t about special treatment, but rather about a commitment you make to following Jesus alongside others trying to do the same. New member gatherings take place throughout the year based on interest. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Rev. Dr. Peter Thompson ([peter@fpclly.org](mailto:peter@fpclly.org)) or Alex Collier ([alex@fpclly.org](mailto:alex@fpclly.org)).

# Encountering the Messiah

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024

*\*Those who are able, please stand.*

*All are invited to join together in saying liturgy printed in bold.*

## WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

Prelude

**Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence**

*Marcia Thom-Kaley, piano*

Picardy

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of Advent Wreath

Mike and Julie Manning

\*Hymn #3: Comfort, Comfort You My People

Psalms 42

\*Prayer of the Day and Lord's Prayer

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Children's Moment

Marcia Thom-Kaley

*Worship Workshop will not meet this morning.*

*After the children's moment, children will return to their seats with their families to join them in encountering the hands-on stations as a response to God's good news read and proclaimed.*

**"Who is the Messiah to you?"**

Alex Collier

*Exodus 3:1-6, 13-14, John 1:1-14*

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD AND GO OUT IN GOD'S SERVICE

### **"Encountering"**

**Messiah Reflections  
(Around the Sanctuary)**

**&**

**Connecting with the Messiah Who...  
(Manger and Strings in Front of Sanctuary)**

In this station you are invited to first examine the images spread out around the Sanctuary (and on the cover of this bulletin). Each image is from an artist named Scott Erickson, and each represents an interpretation of who the Messiah is or what Jesus offered in His ministry. With each image there is a tag line, "The Messiah who..." As you look at each image, ask yourself two questions: "Where am I in this image?" and "Is there a need inside of me that this image speaks to?" Once you've reflected on each image, proceed to the front of the Sanctuary.

On the front pew there are different color strings that match up with the 8 named "The Messiah who..." statements. Based on the feelings that stirred up inside of you, choose a string or multiple strings that match up with a need you have in this season. There are further instructions on the front column on what to do then. There is also a 9<sup>th</sup> color that is open for you to fill in the blank with a need not named from the images.

**The Messiah Who Comforts  
No Sew Blankets  
(Narthex)**

In this station we have the chance to create something that will provide comfort and warmth for others. Spread out around the tables are various “no sew blankets”, which require only a series of knots to be tied to create a double-sided, warm blanket. These will be given to either our home-centered members or to some of our community partners working with those in need of comfort this season. Further instructions are at each table.

**The Messiah Who Prayed For Us  
(Chapel)**

In this station, you are invited into the Chapel for a quiet space to pray for friends, neighbors, family, or yourself. Prayers can be offered through the lighting of candles, reflection on Christ’s prayer from John 17, or praying individually with Rev. Dr. Nancy Dawson. You can experience this either as a response to your time with other stations or as a stand-alone opportunity.

**The Messiah Who Serves and Gives to Others  
(Board and Boxes in the Foyer)**

Alternative Giving is our way of thinking through how and why we give gifts to friends and family during Christmas. Learn about the work of three of FPCLY’s ministry partners (one local and two international) and see if a gift “in honor” of someone to a ministry he/she is passionate about is how you would like to give a gift to him/her this year.

New this year, we also have printed double-sided slips for each of our community partners. One side has a list of ways you can pray for each organization and those they serve, and the other has on-going ways you can engage or volunteer with these organizations. Members of Service & Outreach will be present to talk through various opportunities with you.

**The Messiah Who Makes Room at the Table  
*Coffee, Lemonade, Goodies, and Cookies*  
(Foyer)**

Fellowship and being in relationship with others was a main component of Christ’s ministry. Enjoy some conversation, and share a cookie and lemonade with each other in between traveling to different opportunities. All are welcome at the table.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Fed by the Word that has been read, sung, proclaimed, and encountered,  
Inspired by the presence of God who is with us in this place and with us wherever it is we are,  
Let us all now depart from this time together, empowered and encouraged on the wings of the Holy  
Spirit who gives us the courage, strength, and hope we need each and every day.*



**FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN**

**Vision:** Connect, Engage, and Draw Near to God and Others  
**Mission:** Celebrate God's Grace and Inspire the Next Generation for Christ  
*Worship Joyfully. Grow Spiritually. Love Boldly. Serve Faithfully.*

## This Week at First Presbyterian Church

For a full calendar listing and more information, please visit our website [www.fpcls.org](http://www.fpcls.org).

### Sunday, December 22- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent

10:15 am Coffee, Lemonade, Goodies, and Cookies  
10:45 am Advent Worship- ENCOUNTERING (Sanctuary)  
4:00 pm Walk with God

### Monday, December 23 through Friday, January 3 FPC Weekday School Closed

### Tuesday, December 24- Christmas Eve FPCLY Office Closed

4:00 pm Christmas Worship- CELEBRATING (Sanctuary)  
11:00 pm Christmas Worship- CELEBRATING (Sanctuary)

### Wednesday, December 18 FPCLY Office Closed

12:30 pm Al-Anon meeting

### Thursday, December 19 FPCLY Office Closed

### Sunday, December 29

10:15 am Coffee, Lemonade, Goodies, and Cookies  
10:45 am Worship (Sanctuary)  
4:00 pm Walk with God

### EXPERIENCING THE MESSIAH Christmas Worship Opportunities @ FPCLY

#### Tuesday, December 24- CELEBRATING

**4 pm-** Awaiting the light of the world with a family-friendly worship with carols, communion, and candlelight! A special children's moment will be included and festive Christmas attire is encouraged. Nursery care will be provided!

**11 pm-** Celebrate the coming of the Lord with this special late night worship including carols, communion, and candlelight. Nursery care will not be available during this worship.

#### Sunday, December 29

10:45 am- Worship the Sunday after Christmas is a wonderful opportunity to keep the Spirit of Christmas vibrant in our lives. Rev. Dr. Nancy Dawson, our Parish Associate for Pastoral Care, will be leading our time of worship and all are encouraged to come give God praise, honor, and glory.

### Notes for Today's Worship

#### **Guest Pianist:**

Dr. Marcia Thom-Kaley

#### **Worship Leaders:**

Alex Collier  
Director of Outreach  
Congregation

#### **Key Scriptures:**

*Exodus 3:1-6, 13-14, John 1:1-14*

#### **Ushers and Greeters:**

Kathryn Overstreet, Betsy Jones  
Caskie Giles, Becky Giles

#### **Coffee, Lemonade, Goodies, & Cookies:**

Gwen Maddox

#### **Audio and Video Technicians:**

Will Absher (Audio)

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#### **Pastor on Call**

#### **December 23- December 25:**

Rev. Dr. Peter A. Thompson  
(336) 269-7270

#### **December 26- December 29:**

Rev. Dr. Nancy Dawson  
(804) 399-9545

#### **Members Helping Members**

#### **December:**

Elinor Ann Clark (434) 841-7778  
Diane Stroud (434) 485-3712

#### **Prayer Joys and Concerns**

If you have a prayer request to share with the pastor or staff, please speak with them before or after worship, call the church office, or share your request online at [fpcls.org/ministries/care-nurture.html](http://fpcls.org/ministries/care-nurture.html).

# Worship, Grow, Love, Serve

**Sunday School Classes for All ages will begin again on Sunday, January 5, 2025!** Everyone connected and engaged in the life and ministries of FPCLY are encouraged to be spiritually fed through participating in a Sunday School class. There are opportunities for all to learn and grow. Classes start at 9:30 am each Sunday and will go through May 18. A list of classes is available in the insert.

## Care & Nurture Notecards – On Sale TODAY!

These amazing cards make great gifts for the Holidays, or just for your use to send someone a thoughtful note! Representatives from C&N will be in the Narthex to help you get your own pack today. Proceeds help support the ongoing efforts of the Care and Nurture Committee to provide loving support to members of FPCLY throughout the year.

## Alternative Giving – TODAY

This year the Service & Outreach Committee is inviting you to think about giving to the ministries we support in a slightly different way. TODAY, members of S&O will be at the bulletin board off the Foyer presenting ways for you to give financially to our world ministry partners, as well as to learn about opportunities to pray for and volunteer with all of our community partners. Stop by to learn more!

## Informational Gathering for 2025 Malawi Trip – Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 12pm

A trip to visit and work with our friends in Malawi is being planned for June of 2025. An informational meeting is being planned for Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 12pm in the Martin Gifford room. Lunch will be provided, and anyone that is interested in hearing more about our partnership OR that has even a remote interest in traveling with the group is encouraged to attend! Please RSVP to Alex by Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>.

## Receive God's peace....and give back

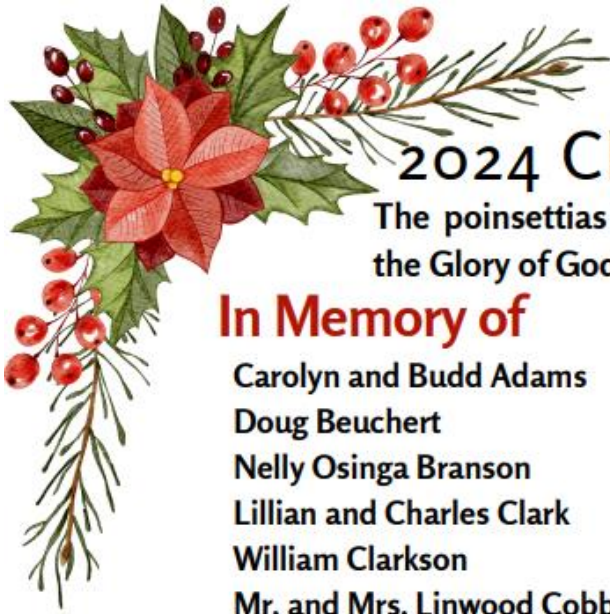
In this busy Christmas season, we can all appreciate and receive the gift of God's peace: "My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27) In receiving this peace, God calls us to "love our neighbors as ourselves." Making a financial commitment to our church is a direct way to serve others in our church and our community. Giving is a way to share God's peace and love.

So far 155 congregants (57%) have made commitments totaling \$563,000 toward our 2025 goal of \$700,000. As the body of Christ, *every member is important and greatly valued. We count on everyone and we appreciate each and every commitment.* If you have already pledged, **we thank you!** For others, cards are available at the hospitality desk. Our church Session is planning our budget for 2025, and we would be *most grateful for your commitment by December 31<sup>st</sup> or earlier.* **Thank you!** Congregational Development Committee-- *David Tate, Becky Giles, David Cheatham, Susan Hall, Sam Howe, Denise McDonald, Nancy Strosnider, Peter Thompson, Michael Trexler, Donna Whitehouse, Gary Williams*

## Year-End Reminders from the Financial Manager

As we near the end of the calendar year, we share a few reminders regarding contributions and expense reimbursements. Please contact Susan Hall (finance@fpcly.org or 434-384-6231) with any questions.

- **2024 Contributions.** All contributions *received in the office by close of business or postmarked by December 31* will be posted to contribution statements for the 2024 tax year.
  - **Electronic Contributions (credit card or draft from your checking account).** You can make contributions through our website portal (www.fpcly.org) or through your bank's bill pay system. Should you need assistance, contact Susan by **December 30** to ensure everything clears for this tax year.
  - **Stock Gift Transfers.** If you plan to transfer stock for your contribution, *please complete those right away.* It takes time for the gifts to be transferred to our accounts & clear.
- **Expense Reimbursements.** Please submit requests for reimbursement for any 2024 expenses by **December 30.** Any checks written after December 31 will be charged to the 2025 budget.



## 2024 CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

The poinsettias in the Sanctuary this morning have been given to the Glory of God in memory and honor of those listed below.

### In Memory of

Carolyn and Budd Adams  
Doug Beuchert  
Nelly Osinga Branson  
Lillian and Charles Clark  
William Clarkson  
Mr. and Mrs. Linwood Cobb  
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Groome  
Anna and Neil Hammerstrom  
Karla Hudson Inge  
Ray and Joan Jennings  
Margaret and Vic Kehrer  
Billy Mathis  
Nita and P.F. McCall  
Sara and Pete McCraw  
Francis and Travis McDonald, Sr.  
Our parents  
Harriet Ramsey  
Dippy and Scott Reams  
Ann and Jack Robertson  
Peggy Slusher  
Doris and David Tate

### Given by

Denise and Travis McDonald  
Lou Mekanik  
Jenny and John Osinga  
Mary Ann and David Tate  
Elizabeth Clarkson  
Vicki and John Cobb  
Vicki and John Cobb  
Lou Mekanik  
Annette and Ken Slusher  
Deborah Goode  
Marilyn and David Hartman  
Annette and Ken Slusher  
Vicky and John Robertson  
Ginny McCraw  
Denise and Travis McDonald  
Marilyn and David Hartman  
The Ramsey Family  
Gwen and Phil Maddox  
Vicky and John Robertson  
Annette and Ken Slusher  
Mary Ann and David Tate

### In Honor of

Will, Blair, Georgia and Josie Absher  
Courtney and Johnny Alford  
Bettie and John Alford  
Family and Friends  
Our Children and Grandchildren

### Given by

Billie and John Absher  
Billie and John Absher  
Billie and John Absher  
Sue Thornton Redmond  
Richard and Kathryn Pumphrey

At the conclusion of worship today, you may take your poinsettia home.



# Winter/Spring 2025 EDUCATION CLASSES

SUNDAYS - January 5 - May 18 (9:30am – 10:15am)

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## Children

**NURSERY** (9:00 am - 12:00 pm)

**Infants thru 2-year-olds** - Room #8 - Ground Floor  
FPCLY is happy to offer families nursery care for young children. Our staff are CPR trained and have successfully passed background checks.

### ELEMENTARY

3s, 4s & 5s - Room #207      2nd & 3rd - Room #210 K  
& 1st - Room #205              4th & 5th - Room #212

We are excited for our children to explore the Bible and what it shares with us about God - who He is and how much He loves us! We hope to empower them to be Christ's light in the world around them!

## College & 20-somethings

### COLLEGE CARES

#### College age students & 20-somethings

College students and 20-somethings meet individually and in small groups when schedules allow. Weekly contact and outreach is made to arrange possible days/times to meet. Pastor Peter Thompson and Marcia Thom-Kaley are always available. If you would like to meet or join a small group get-together, please let Peter or Marcia know.

## Youth

### Middle School- MEETING IN THE MIDDLE

#### 6th - 8th Graders

**Youth Room** - Room #2 - Ground Floor

Middle schoolers will have fun as they explore their own faith and God's promises through Bible study, service, and community-building activities. They will also be reminded of God's deep love and grace for all His children, especially those on the journey through middle school! (led by Becky Giles)

### High School – FOR REAL!

#### 9th - 12th Graders

**Room 126** - 1st Floor

High School students will explore God's truth and love together through conversation, lived experiences and an array of supplemental material. Through shared discussions, youth will embrace the lessons learned through personal choice and hear the simple truths given by our loving God. (led by Barrett Thompson)

**YOUTH GROUP:  
MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH  
WILL MEET EVERY 2 WEEKS  
BEGINNING JANUARY 19  
(5:00-7:00PM) Fellowship Hall**



*If you have questions regarding any educational offering, please contact Dr. Marcia Thom-Kaley, Director of Educational Ministries at FPCLY at [Marcia@FPCLY.org](mailto:Marcia@FPCLY.org).*



# ADULT EDUCATION

## Sundays @ 9:30AM

### **BIBLE 101: THE LETTERS OF PAUL**

Officers' Room (Room #117) - 1st Floor

What caused the early Christian church to prosper? What issues divided it? What can we learn about those things as we experience them in our time and church? Join us as we answer these questions by studying the letters written by Paul to the early churches.

### **I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! (PLEASE DON'T TELL MY KIDS!)**

Bride's Room (Room #114) - 1st Floor

Parenthood is a rewarding journey, filled with joy, struggle, and love, but it often feels overwhelming. In those moments, the support of friends, family, and God can make all the difference. We'll enjoy social time with others walking the same trials—we mean, trails—as the class explores a variety of interesting and relevant topics pointing parents towards a place of confidence, hope, and joy. Parents will also learn practical and creative ways to pray for their kids.

### **IF WE ARE THE "BODY," THEN...**

Martin-Gifford Room (Room #119) - 1st Floor

We are all a cast of characters, human and imperfect, yet God has found a place for us - in and as the Body of Christ. God knows that we are all in need of community: Eugene Peterson shares, *"Scripture knows nothing of a solitary Christian. People of faith are always members of a community."* The Apostle Paul urges us to encourage each other and build each other up while sharing the spiritual gifts with which God has graced us.

## Sundays @ 4:00pm

### **WALK WITH GOD**

Front Parking Lot

Experience God in a new way and embrace what it means to journey through life with a community of believers by your side. Share a brief time of devotion and study prior to taking a two-ish mile stroll down Peakland Place!

## Weekdays

### **PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN HORIZON CIRCLE 2nd Monday of each month @ 10 am**

Library (Room #100) - 1st Floor

Presbyterian Women (PW) is a ministry of the PCUSA offering an opportunity for *women* to gather to encourage and lift one another up in the faith. The women meet for community, study, and outreach. This year's study is called *"Let Justice Roll Down, God Calls to Care for Neighbors and All Creation"* by Patricia Tull.

### **IMMERSE BIBLE STUDY**

#### **Wednesdays @ 10 am**

Martin-Gifford (Room #119) - 1st Floor

In this bible study for both *women and men*, we will focus on exploring who we are as children of God, how we can listen for God's voice to remind us of that, and how we can walk in the light of Christ in hope and confidence. The Rev. Dr. Peter Thompson will lead the discussion.

### **COLIN CALDWELL MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**

#### **Thursdays @ 7 am**

Library (Room #100) - 1st Floor

The Rev. Dr. Peter Thompson will lead this Bible study for *men*. Men are invited to journey together as we discuss who we are as God's sons and how we can confidently walk in that light. We will have coffee made or you can bring your own!