

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

First Presbyterian Church Oakland

Making God's Welcome Known



W E L C O M E

Visitors:

- If you would like to be added to our email list, please go to firstchurchoakland.org and fill out the form at the bottom
- Need help hearing? Ushers can provide **hearing devices** to assist you.
- Please feel free to take the Sanctuary flowers home to enjoy after the service.

Visiting Parents:

- Ushers can guide you to the **nursery** for certified childcare for children age three years and younger.
- You may also make use of the **Parent Corners** at the rear sanctuary entrance or up front by the font.
- Children's **worship bags** are available in the narthex or from the ushers with worship play items.
- On the first Sunday of the month we celebrate **Family Worship & Communion** and children remain in worship.
- **Godly Play** is offered for children all other Sundays. Children are escorted to Classroom 2 during *Passing of the Peace* and rejoin their families during Fellowship Time.

O R D E R o f S E R V I C E

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland is a **More Light** faith family,
on a journey toward becoming the **Beloved Community**.

We welcome and affirm persons of every age,
national origin, racial and ethnic heritage, gender identity, sexual orientation,
socio-economic status, physical ability and spiritual leaning.

I N V I T A T I O N t o W O R S H I P

Prelude

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
by Johannes Brahms and Michael Praetorius
Child in a Manger Born
by Mark and Helen Johnson

Welcome

Call to Worship

One: All people are welcome here tonight

All: We have gathered to hear the story of Jesus' birth.

One: All who walk in darkness,

All: come see a great light.

One: All who hope to see God,

All: come see the glory of our savior, Jesus Christ.

One: All who are simply waiting to see what's next,

All: come see the good news God brings.

One: Rejoice before God in the light and glory of this night.

All: We rejoice that God's grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

Gathering Prayer

One: Holy God, help us pause in the midst of our busyness. Quiet our minds on this Christmas Eve, that we may hear the good news of your gift of Jesus Christ --your gift to a world so in need of peace, justice, and joy. If we wait in hope for the coming of Christ, help us offer hope to those around us. Help us see your glory breaking into our lives, as Mary and shepherds before us saw. In the quiet of this night, may we welcome your peace through Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

Please rise in body or spirit
Carol

O Come, All Ye Faithful
Glory to God #133

**O Come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant:
O come ye; O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come, and behold him, born the King of angels!
O come let us adore him [x3]... Christ, the Lord!**

**True God from True God, Light from light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Very God, begotten not created!
O come let us adore him [x3]... Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!
O come let us adore him [x3]... Christ, the Lord!**

M a r y a n d t h e A n g e l G a b r i e l

Luke 1:26-33

Carol

What Child is This?
Glory to God #145

Please remain seated

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through; the cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!**

M a r y a n d t h e A n g e l G a b r i e l

Luke 1:34-38

Carol

Please remain seated

Away in a Manger

Glory to God #115

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing; the poor baby wakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

M a r y a n d E l i z a b e t h

Luke 1:39-45

Carol

Please remain seated

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Glory to God #121

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary and, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to all on earth.

M a r y ' s S o n g

Luke 1:46-55

Carol

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Glory to God #119

Please rise in body or spirit

**Hark! the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King:
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, join the triumph of the skies;
with th’angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

**Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
late in time behold him come, offspring of the Virgin’s womb:
veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’incarnate Deity,
pleased in flesh with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn king!”**

A d v e n t P r a y e r & L i g h t i n g o f t h e A d v e n t C a n d l e

Advent Prayer

By Howard Thurman

I will light Candles this Christmas,
Candles of joy despite all the sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch,
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long.

Musical Offering

O Holy Night

For more information about this song, please see article after the order of worship.

Pop - Up Nativity

All are invited to participate in an interactive reenactment of the Nativity story from Luke 2:1-20. We will be singing #113 in the Glory to God hymnal.

The Angels are invited to come forward, while the people sing:

**Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Shepherds and Animals are invited to come forward, while the people sing:

**Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Holy Family and King Herod are invited to come forward, while the people sing:

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.
Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!**

The Nativity Story

After the story, all are invited to return to their seats, while the people sing this carol:

Carol

*Go Tell It on the Mountain
African American Heritage Hymnal #202*

**Refrain: Go tell it on the mountain, Over the hills and ev'rywhere,
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born.**

**While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens There shone a holy light. Refrain**

**The shepherds feared and trembled When lo! above the earth,
Rang out the angel chorus That hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain**

**Down in a lowly manger The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation That blessed Christmas morn. Refrain**

Reflection

Carol

Joy to the World

Please rise in body or spirit

Glory to God #134, verses 1, 2, & 4

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing! [x3]**

**Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy! [x3]**

**He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love! [x3]**

Candle Lighting & Recessional

During the singing of "Silent Night," please join the procession to the back of the church once your candle has been lit by the ushers.

Carol

Silent Night

**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.**

**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!"**

**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.**

**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.**

The History of O Holy Night

The poem “O Holy Night,” originally “Cantique de Noël,” was written by French poet Placide Cappeau in 1847 and set to music by nineteenth-century French composer Adolphe Adam. The song and its author were subject to significant controversy over the theological perspective and abolitionist stance of the text, but in the 175 years since its publication it has become one of the most well-beloved Christmas carols.

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;
it is the night of the dear Savior’s birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!
Fall on your knees! O hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born!
O night divine! O night, O night divine!

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother,
and in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
let all within us praise His holy name.
Christ is the Lord! O praise His name forever!
His pow’r and glory evermore proclaim!
His pow’r and glory evermore proclaim!

Serving in Worship Today

Pastor: Rev. Matt Prinz

Music Director: Jake Fontana

Song leader: April Edwell

Soloist: Leah Marquez

Violinist: Matthew Major

Head Usher: Matthew Inadomi

Renowned Composer Mark Miller to Lead Feb. 2026 Choir Concert

By Jake Fontana

This February we will have the pleasure of welcoming organist and composer Mark Miller to First Church. Mark will visit us on Saturday, February 7, 2026 to lead a choral workshop and concert in honor and in celebration of Black History Month.

Mark is a graduate of Juilliard and Yale University who is equally at home in classical, gospel, and contemporary styles, and his music blends all three. You will have heard his music here already in anthems like “Child of God,” “We Resist (Prayer Chant),” and “Lament”. Our choir has been working hard on his music for almost a year. Mark often writes his own lyrics for his songs, and many of the texts emphasize themes of social justice and building the beloved community.

I first met Mark while studying sacred music at Yale, where he opened my eyes to the richness of liturgical music in a breadth of traditions and genres. Before meeting Mark, my musical background focused on the ancient and the classical -- it was wonderful music to learn and perform, but it was a small slice of the profession and of great church music. If you’ve ever heard me play a cool chord on the piano or a good gospel shuffle on the Hammond, it’s probably because Mark taught me to!

We are collaborating with Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church to bring Mark to the Bay Area. Their choir will join ours for the Saturday workshop and concert, and Mark will worship with LOPC on Sunday morning.



LOPC’s choir director, Bryan Dunnewald, is a good friend and colleague, and I hope this concert will be an opportunity for our choirs and congregations to get to know one another better through music and fellowship. If you’d like to be involved in welcoming Mark and LOPC to our church, please be in touch.

I hope you will plan to attend the concert (and afterparty!) on February 7th, which will be a great way to dive into Black History Month with song, prayer, poetry, and more. I am thrilled to have Mark join us, and I’m sure it will be a wonderful event for our church and community.

In the words of Mark’s music, “Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still!”

Practices of our Church Community – Ways to Join Us

Worship Service Each Sunday we gather at 10am to sing, pray, confess, and worship God together. We invite our community to participate in our worship services through singing, reading, praying, ushering, or sharing testimony. Do you like to write prayers or help connect music to themes in scripture? Talk with Di Pagel (Elder of Worship), Jake Fontana (Music Director) or Pastor Matt if you would like to help lead/design our worship services. You can also help us create space for conversation and building community through providing food during our coffee hour (11-12). Email Julia Marquez jmarquez@fbcl-visa.com if you would like to contribute.



Food Ministry Each week, more than 40 volunteers share over 300 meals with our neighbors through our food ministry. Volunteers gather donated food on Fridays and Saturdays from local supermarkets and bakeries. Meals are prepared on Sundays and Mondays and are shared with neighbors and delivered to local encampments. We have opportunities to serve during the week, each Saturday, and Sunday. Email Gay Plair Cobb gaycobb@gmail.com, Dorothy Dugger dorothy.dugger@gmail.com, or Nina Lapachet ninalapachet@gmail.com to get involved.



Bible Study Wednesday nights at 7pm via Zoom we gather around the sacred texts of scripture to study and reflect upon our lives and take new steps of faithfulness together. No need to study beforehand, just sign up for our weekly emails, click on the Zoom link and join conversation. Come with a desire to build community and listen for God's Spirit in the midst of scripture. Talk with Henry Gardner or Maggie Harmon or Pastor Matt for more details.



Building the Beloved Community Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. constantly spoke about God's work of building the beloved community - a community bridging across the differences of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Building the Beloved Community is one lens we use to look at all of our ministry at First Church. We also host conversations, book groups, attend concerts and art shows, to learn, reflect, and to help us build God's beloved community within our church community, in our neighborhoods, and city. Talk with Suzie Inadomi, Pastor Matt or Pastor Joel to learn about ways to join BBC work at First Presbyterian Church of Oakland.



Community Life - God is community Three in one and we are made for community. Creating spaces for community around meals, discussion groups, backyard firepits, and outings together (A's game, beach etc.) are an important ministry within our church community. Do you like to host events, love connecting with others, enjoy building community? Talk with Julia Marquez or Pastor Matt and join them in planning our next community life events.



Faith in Action "Justice is what love looks like in the public." Cornel West. How do we put our faith into action to love our neighbors? One way we live out our faith is joining the ministries of Faith in Action East Bay, who for over 40 years have advocated and worked in areas of gun violence, immigration, education, housing, and equity in Oakland and the larger Bay Area. Members of First Pres. regularly join FIA Ceasefire night walks, advocate for affordable housing, and seek to support new structural changes for equity and justice. Talk with Pastor Matt to get involved and our new community organizer Chris Logan.



Mark your Calendar for our October 2-4, 2026 Church Retreat



Join us next year at Zephyr Point at Lake Tahoe for an opportunity to gather in a beautiful space, to step away from everyday rhythms of life, to build community with other members, and to connect with God.

First Church proudly supports our COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Afterglow Chorus
- Cantare Choirs
- Catalyst Youth Network
- College Awareness
- Community Women's Orchestra
- Faith in Action East Bay
- Food Not Bombs
- Habitat For Humanity, East Bay-Silicon Valley
- Mandela Partners
- Oakland Civic Orchestra
- Oakland Early Head Start Preschool
- Oakland Gay Men's Chorus
- Oakland Kids First
- ReCares
- The Lucy Kinchen Chorale
- Vituity Care Foundation



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Elders

Ben Baab: Building and Grounds
Di Pagel: Worship and Music/Personnel
Gay Plair Cobb: Personnel/Food Ministry
Erick Bevington: Treasurer
Maggie Harmon: Finance
Julia Marquez: Community Life
Suzie Inadomi: Building the Beloved Community

Session Officers

Rev. Matt Prinz, Moderator
Anne Margaret Manay, Clerk
Erick Bevington, Treasurer

Deacons

Derrick Polk, Su Coburn, Pauline Ahanotu,
Monrovia Prinz, Martha Bauman, Charmaine
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Temple Tidings

Temple Tidings is a weekly publication. All are welcome to contribute news, events and opinion.

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