

FOX CHAPEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Highlights

A Letter from Ginger Thomas, Co-Senior Pastor

Dear friends,

In this season of preparation for Christmas, I'm thinking about the busy innkeeper who appears in Christmas pageants and children's storybooks that tell of Jesus' birth. We can picture him being confronted by a haggard Mary and Joseph, his shoulders shrugging as he apologizes for having no place for them but a barn, even though the familiar Christmas account of Jesus' birth in the gospel of Luke makes mention of an inn but no innkeeper.

Joseph and Mary were among scores of others in Bethlehem that night, so it's no surprise that there would not have been an available guest room for Joseph and Mary. We can imagine Joseph's frustration, wanting to provide for Mary, to give her a safe and comfortable place to rest from their journey. And we can just see the innkeeper, distracted by all the out-of-towners and the hectic day he had had. Who knows how many others he had turned away already before Joseph and Mary turn up. Maybe it was in the way that Joseph pleaded with him, that he thought of the barn. Maybe it was Mary's groaning, labor pains having already begun. Maybe it was the innkeeper's wife, who had pity on this poor young couple who needed a place to welcome a baby into the world.

Whatever it was that tugged at his heart, he offered what he had, a barn, to Mary and Joseph, and it was there that the light of the world came and shown in the darkness.

The innkeeper could never have guessed before this night that God's plan would unfold right under his nose. But in his little corner of Bethlehem, in the wee hours of night, a baby was born whose name was Emmanuel—God with us. ...**CONTINUE PG. 2**

Sermon Series: "Simple Gifts: Receiving Christ's Gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love"

Hope, peace, joy, and love—don't our hearts long to know their richness? These four words, traditionally associated with the four Sundays of Advent, can help us experience the fullness of what God gives us in Christ at Christmas. Join us for worship this December as we open our hearts to receive these simple, meaningful gifts.



Christmas Eve Worship Services

Tuesday, December 24

Worship Led by Children

4:30 PM in the Sanctuary

Worship featuring FCPC children and youth.

Contemporary Worship

6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall

Contemporary service featuring our worship band.

Traditional Worship

7:30 PM and 10:00 PM in the Sanctuary

Traditional candlelight worship.

*Childcare available at 6:00 and 7:30 services

**Live stream available at 4:30, 6:00, and 7:30

...My friend Cathie, while shopping in a small store, started talking with the salesclerk. Her heart broke open as she learned that the salesclerk's father at that very hour was having surgery for cancer. "Let's pray," she said to the clerk. So they did. And afterward the clerk looked at her with tears in her eyes, saying no one had ever offered to pray for her before. That is light, shining in the darkness, in a place as unexpected as a barn in Bethlehem.

In Martin Luther's Christmas sermon from 1542, he says, "The inn was full... There are many of you who think to yourselves: 'If only I had been there! How quick I would have been to help the baby!' Why don't you do it now?" he continues. "You have Christ in your neighbor. You ought to serve your neighbor, for what you do to your neighbor in need, you do to the Lord Christ himself."

Sometimes our faithful, quiet obedience, without fanfare, is what God uses to bring about hope, healing, and light in our darkened world. When we as disciples go about doing our work quietly, doing our part to be faithful, who knows how God will shine light into the dark, unexpected places of our world! A kind gesture, a caring word, an act of forgiveness, an offer of help, a loving presence--these all can represent the light of Christ shining in the darkness for those wondering if God has any hope or light to offer them.

May all that we do, living in the light of Jesus Christ, be a reflection of his light, so that in our small acts of faithfulness, we and others will see Jesus, the Light of the world, shining in the darkness. O come, O come Emmanuel!

In faith,



Rev. Ginger Thomas, Co-Senior Pastor



Dove Tree Donations Thank You

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Dove Tree Gift Collection. We collected more than 400 gifts to support 80 local families associated with Poppin Tags Store, East End Cooperative Ministry, Homewood-Brushton Ministry, and Sojourner House. Thanks for helping make Christmas a little more joyful for so many local families! - FCPC Deacons

Staff Christmas Gift Donations Thank You

Dear congregation members,

Thank you for your many contributions toward the Staff Christmas Gift! Your gifts totaled \$4,145 and were shared evenly between the 13 individuals on staff who work 15 hours/week or more. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by our staff. Thank you for making this holiday bright!



With gratitude,
Your FCPC staff members



Congregational Meeting

JANUARY 5 / 10:40 AM / SANCTUARY

A congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, January 5, at 10:40am in the Sanctuary, to form an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC). Our current designated associate pastor, Rev. Rebecca DePoe, is serving our church for a designated time period that ends in September. The Session has approved a new job description for a future associate pastor and the Nominating Committee is prepared to nominate the following individuals to serve on the APNC to search for and identify a new associate pastor: Judy Grune, Mark Haas, Judy Leininger, Lynn Leppert, Jimmy Minor, Tim Oberlin, and Jaye Tuppence. The congregational meeting will have two agenda items: to receive nominations and officially elect members to the APNC, and to elect one individual to session for 2025 alone to a recently vacated position. The Nominating committee will be nominating Amy Szlachetka for this position.

Stewardship Update & Financial Info

As pledges continue to come in to financially support the church's ministries in 2025, we are excited to share that 19 new households have made pledges totaling more than \$99,000, and 69 households have increased their annual pledge amount by a total of more than \$67,800. It's exciting that so many are investing in significant new ways as our church is "Following Jesus to Flourishing Ministry" in 2025. If you have submitted a pledge, thank you!



We have a good deal of progress still to make in funding the ministries we all count on and hope for in the coming year. Our pledges received for 2025 total \$42,000 less than the pledges made for the current year. Our ministry commitments are dependent on every person's giving. If you have not yet made a commitment, we hope you will prayerfully consider how you will be a part of supporting our church's ministries financially in the coming year. Pledge cards can be found throughout the church, and online pledges can be made on our website at www.fcpc.us/giving.

Per Capita

You can help offset FCPC's Per Capita assessment, paid to the presbytery based on church membership. This year our church will pay \$35,061, which represents \$38.11 per member. Your donation of \$38.11 can help offset this obligation. So far this year, \$2,045.70 has been donated to help cover FCPC's Per Capita amount.

2024 Reimbursements Due!

The deadline to request reimbursement for expenses incurred in 2024 is Tuesday, January 7th, 2025. You must submit a completed expense request with approval signature by this date. You can obtain expense request forms in the church office. If you are not sure how to fill out the form, please ask your committee chairperson to help you.

All 2024 pledge contributions, 2025 pledge prepayments or 2024 non-pledge contributions to FCPC must follow the deadlines below to be eligible for a 2024 tax deduction:

- Credit card donations must be made by midnight on December 31 in your time zone (your credit card statement must be time-stamped with a 2024 date).
- Check envelopes must be postmarked by USPS on or before December 31, 2024.
- Checks/cash must be dropped off at FCPC or put into the offering place by noon on December 31, 2024.

If you have any questions, contact Sarah Hays, Office Manager (sarah@fcpc.us).

Youth Ministry (Grades 6-12)

We invite all middle and high school students to join our weekly Sunday afternoon youth group. We meet in the Youth Lounge for games, snacks, discussions on how scripture impacts our life, and to grow together as a community. Bring a friend!

Questions? Contact Emma Kate Lander, Interim Minister of Youth, at emmakate@fcpc.us or 410-858-7311

DO YOU HAVE A 9TH GRADER WHO'S INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CHURCH? SIGN THEM UP FOR CONFIRMATION!

Confirmation prepares youth to engage in the life of the church! It provides a space to wrestle with big questions like, "Who is God?" or "What is God doing?" or "How can my faith impact the world around me?" This exciting journey invites students to deepen their faith and officially become members of Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church.

SIGN UP FOR MORE INFORMATION USING THE QR CODE BELOW.



CONTACT EMMA KATE LANDER, INTERIM MINISTER OF YOUTH, AT EMMAKATE@FCPC.US OR (410) 858-7311 WITH ANY QUESTIONS!

DECEMBER FCPC YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE

DEC. 1: MS 2:00-3:30/HS 4:00-5:30
DEC. 8: MS 2:00-3:30/HS 4:00-5:30
DEC. 15: COMBINED CHRISTMAS PARTY 2:00-4:30
DEC. 22: NO YOUTH GROUP - HAVE A GREAT XMAS BREAK!
DEC. 29: WILD ILLUMINATIONS AT THE PITTSBURGH ZOO @ 5:30 - ADVANCED SIGN UP REQUIRED!

Wild Illuminations

AT PITTSBURGH ZOO & AQUARIUM
DEC 29 5:30-8:00

JOIN FCPC YOUTH FOR A SPECIAL OUTING TO SEE THE HOLIDAY LANTERNS AT THE PITTSBURGH ZOO. ADVANCED SIGN UP IS REQUIRED! PLEASE USE THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP AND SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT TICKET COSTS.

Make a Difference as a Youth Group Volunteer!

Want to share Christ's love and support with teens? Talk to Emma Kate Lander about serving as a volunteer for youth ministry for youth group gatherings, special youth events, or a trip with youth.



Children & Family Ministries (Infant-5th Grade)

SUNDAY MORNINGS

8:15 AM WORSHIP

No children's programming during this service.

9:30 AM KIDS' CHURCH

For age 3 to 5th grade. Children are signed in prior to worship and begin the service on the children's rugs at the back of Fellowship Hall. After the Children's Message, children will be led to the Lowest Level. Parents/guardians can pick up their children in the Lowest Level.

9:30 & 11 AM NURSERY CARE

Room 109, ages 0-3. Staffed by experienced adults.

9:30 & 11 AM COMFORT SPACE

Room 107. A place to comfort or feed a child and watch the worship service.

11 AM KIDS' CHURCH

For ages 3 to 5th grade. Children are signed in before worship and begin the service with loved ones. After the Children's Message, children will be led to the Lowest Level. Parents/guardians can pick up their children in the Lowest Level.

Questions? Contact our Minister of Children and Families, Pastor Lori Bass-Riley, by email at lori@fcpc.us or call/text at 412-737-1412.



Wednesday Night Live! Kids Club

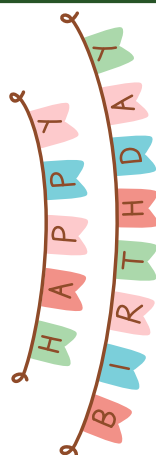
WNL will be off for the rest of December and will resume Wednesday, January 8!

Questions? Contact Pastor Lori at 412-737-1412 (call/text)

FCPC Preschool Tours

TIME TO SCHEDULE A TOUR!

Families interested in learning more about the preschool and the enrollment process are encouraged to schedule a tour with us. Contact Karin, Stephanie, or Jason in the preschool office at karin@fcpc.us, 412-552-9382, or preschooladmin@fcpc.us. We're excited to hear from you!



Birthdays

DEC 22 Tad Donovan, Miriam Hartner, Fay Powell, Ryan Frohlich

DEC 23 Cate Sauer

DEC 24 Jerry Sauers

DEC 25 Ed Watters, Nadine Tomer

DEC 26 Jeanne Conner, Grace Braham, Kelsey Friday

DEC 27 Joanne Bowser, Jay Douglass, Ray Overmyer, Chester Todd, Dean Marsico, Karen Brett Forsythe

DEC 28 Lois Mellott, Kim Strohm, Amie Hessler, Justin Pasay, Alex Dor



Music at FCPC

Organist Position

In consultation with the Minister of Music and Pastor/Head of Staff, FCPC seeks an organist to provide organ and/or piano accompaniment for scheduled worship services and other occasions in support of the music ministry.

Duties:

- Play the organ and/or piano for two Sunday morning worship service and other regularly-scheduled special services (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.)
- Play for rehearsals of the Chancel Choir
- First right of refusal for weddings and funerals (paid separately, not included in compensation)

Education/Training:

While a degree(s) in music is/are preferred; private study, course work, and experience will be considered.

Experience:

Minimum of three years experience in service playing, accompanying at the organ and piano, and hymn playing required.

Interested? Please send any resumes to S.C. Toe at sc@fcpc.us

Call for Musicians

Interested in leading through sharing musically in one of our worship services? You are most welcome! We have opportunities to play the piano, other instruments, and sing at 8:15am; play in the band or sing, at 9:30am; play an instrument or sing in the choir at 11:00am. There is also the opportunity to play in the handbell choir on Thursdays at 6:15pm.

Contact S.C. Toes if interested or with any questions at sc@fcpc.us

Join the FCPC Children's Choir

Children K-5th grade welcome to join

Rehearsals are held weekly on Sundays from 10:15-10:55 AM in the choir room (room 209).

Questions? Please reach out to S.C. Toe, Minister of Music at sc@fcpc.us



Lessons & Carols Thank You

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Lessons and Carols Services for sharing their musical gifts this holiday season!

- S.C. Toe, Minister of Music



Care & Concern

We hold these friends in prayer:

Sue Heitzenroder
Beth and Bill Meyer
Laurie
Molly and Chris
Ryan Frohlich
Dave Houggy
Barry Freeman
Charles MacDonald, friend of Bob Heister
Kim Power
Dorothy Hill's niece, Helen
Hutch Hutchison
Jonny Wallisch
Jane May, sister of Sue Patrick
Lorraine, friend of Diane Tung
Ewan Boag, Grandson of Emy and Bill Boag
MacKenzie and Chasen Strawn, family of Marcia Mayhew

We celebrate with:

- Erica Sandbothe and Evan Wright on the birth of their daughter Mabel Sandbothe Wright, born November 30th.

We pray for those who grieve:

- For Toby Eberhart and family at the death of his brother Alan.
- For the Leslie family, at the death of M. Russell Leslie on November 23rd.
- For Pat Taylor, at the death of her husband Tom Taylor on November 7th.

We pray for peace, aid, and consolation for all who suffer, including:

- For addicts in our community to heal and recover.
- The people of Israel, Gaza, Ukraine, Haiti, Sudan, and places in conflict, violence, and hunger.
- Refugees throughout the world.
- For our republic.

To keep this list current, please renew requests on a monthly basis for continued prayers.



Letters of Concern

Every week the deacons send letters of concern to members of our church family who are experiencing joys or concerns. You are invited to sign these letters each week before or after all worship services.

Staff Contacts

FCPC Office.....412-963-8243
Rev. Ginger Thomas, Co-Senior Pastor.....ginger@fcpc.us / ext. 16
Rev. Roger Owens, Co-Senior Pastor.....roger@fcpc.us / ext. 17
Rev. Rebecca DePoe, Designated Associate Pastor.....rebecca@fcpc.us / ext. 18
Rev. Lori Bass-Riley, Minister of Children and Families.....lori@fcpc.us / ext. 25
S.C. Toe, Minister of Music.....sc@fcpc.us / ext. 29
Nikki Rosswog, Minister of Congregational Care.....nikki@fcpc.us / ext. 07
Emma Kate Lander, Interim Minister of Youth.....emmakate@fcpc.us
Sarah Hays, Office Manager.....sarah@fcpc.us / ext. 10

This Week at FCPC

SUN DEC 22

- 8:15 AM** Cup and Loaf Worship Service (Chapel)
- 9:30 AM** Contemporary Worship (Fellowship Hall), Kids' Church (Lowest Level), Nursery Care (Room 109), Comfort Space (Room 107)
- 10:15 AM** Children's Choir (Choir Room)
- 11 AM** Traditional Worship Service (Sanctuary), Kids' Church (Lowest Level), Nursery Care (Room 109), Comfort Space (Room 107)
- 12 PM** Christmas Eve Children's Service Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

MON DEC 23

- Preschool Closed
- 2 PM** Knitting Group (Library)

TUE DEC 24

- Christmas Eve**
- Preschool Closed
- 8 AM** Men's Prayer Fellowship (Lounge)
- 12 PM** Office Closed
- 4:30 PM** Worship Led by Children (Sanctuary)
- 6 PM** Contemporary Service (Fellowship Hall)
- 7:30 PM** Traditional Service (Sanctuary)
- 10 PM** Traditional Service (Sanctuary)

WED DEC 25

- Christmas Day**
- Preschool Closed
- Building Closed

THURS DEC 26

- Preschool Closed

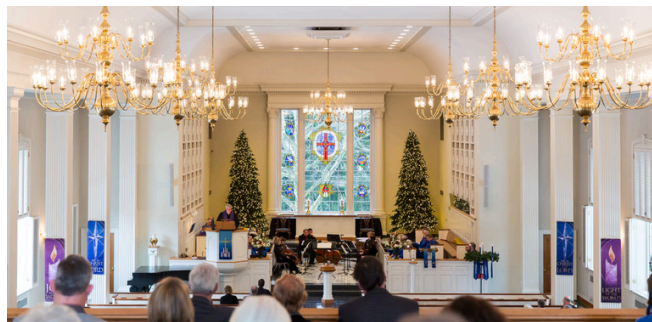
FRI DEC 27

- Preschool Closed
- 10 AM** Caregiver Coffee (Lounge)

SAT DEC 28

SUN DEC 29

- 8:15 AM** Cup and Loaf Worship Service (Chapel)
- 9:30 AM** Contemporary Worship (Fellowship Hall)
- 10:15 AM** Children's Choir (Choir Room)
- 11 AM** Traditional Worship Service (Sanctuary)
- 5:30 PM** Youth Group Zoo Trip (offsite)



Giving

Give Online

- + Scan the QR code to give online
- + Text the word GIVE to 412-201-0557



2024 Giving Statement

Annual giving statements will be emailed in January 2024. Please be sure to you are able to receive emails from giving@fcpc.us. Please contact the church office if you are unable to receive an emailed giving statement.

2025 Financial Pledge

If you have not yet made your stewardship pledge for the coming year, there is still time. 2025 pledges can be made online via our website at www.fcpc.us/giving or by contacting Sarah Hays, Office Manager at sarah@fcpc.us or call 412-963-8479.

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