



Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 31, 2023 • 11:00 AM



Lauren Wright Pittman, *Center Christ*, 2020

This Is God's House. All Are Welcome.

Welcome to Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

Whether you are visiting for the first time, or are a longtime member, we are blessed to have you with us.

The cover of this bulletin reads, “This Is God’s House. All Are Welcome.” We take these words seriously. We strive to be a community as diverse and hospitable as God’s kingdom. We don’t all look or act alike; God knows we don’t all think alike. We don’t all read the Bible the same way. We bring different questions, and we carry different burdens. But every Sunday, gathered in the Sanctuary and online, we worship together as one.

In this grand old church, we do Sunday morning in some pretty traditional (very Presbyterian) ways. We study the teachings and the actions of Jesus. We sing many of the same hymns our grandparents sang. Yet, in our preaching and our prayers, we wrestle with the challenges of the modern world. I hope your heart will hear something personal and relevant this morning—a word of comfort, a spur to action, a call to a deeper relationship with God.

After the service, please stick around. Introduce yourself to one of our clergy or someone at our Welcome Table. We have lots of programs and community groups to feed your soul and expand your spirit. Try one out. You never know—you just might be home!

Scott Black Johnston
Senior Pastor

➔ New to Fifth Avenue?

Please fill out the welcome card you will find in your pew. Place the card in the offering plate, hand it to an usher, or drop it off at the Welcome Table (inside the Fifth Avenue entrance). You may also complete the welcome form online at fapc.org/welcome. Our friends at the Welcome Table can provide you with information about our ministries, programs and volunteer opportunities.

➔ Large-Print Bulletins

Please speak with an usher if you would like to use a large-print bulletin or hymnal to follow the service.

➔ Families with Children

Children are always welcome! You will find children’s Bibles in the first 10 rows of pews on the far north side of the Sanctuary (to the right when looking down the aisle). Ushers can also provide children’s bulletins and worship bags. If you need to leave the service with your child, the ushers can direct you to the nearest changing table and livestream monitor. Every Sunday, we provide childcare for infants and toddlers from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm in the LaDane Williamson Christian Education Center. There is Sunday school for children in preschool through 5th grade at 9:30 am and Children’s Church for children in preschool through 2nd grade at 11:15 am.

➔ Worship Resources Online

A replay of today’s service will be available this afternoon at fapc.org/playback. This morning’s Prayers of the People can be found at fapc.org/pray. Details about the upcoming service each week can be found at fapc.org/this-sunday. For information about future worship services, visit fapc.org/worship.

➔ Parking

We have a parking arrangement with the garage at 51 W. 56th St. For \$16, you may park for up to three hours, seven days a week. Please provide your mobile phone number or an email address to the staff person at the 55th Street reception desk. You will receive a QR code to use at the garage. (The garage no longer provides physical validation stickers.)

ORDER OF WORSHIP

*As the Prelude begins, we invite you into a period of quiet reflection as we prepare for worship.
Please silence all electronic devices and do not take flash photos during the service.*

PRELUDE

Cradle Song • *Herbert Howells (1892–1984)*

The Holy Boy • *John Ireland (1879–1962)*

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Trustee Janet Otto

One: When Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph,

All: God is there.

One: When Jesus is presented at the temple,

All: God is there.

One: When Simeon holds Jesus in his arms,

All: God is there.

One: This very morning, on the threshold of the new year,

All: God is here.

One: In the promised future we cannot yet see,

All: God is there.

One: Let us worship Almighty God, tender and just.

* HYMN 143

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Jaime Staehle, Director of Christian Education

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed, by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

In your mercy, forgive what we have been,

**help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be,
so that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name.**

Silent Reflection and Confession

* SONG RESPONSE

Be near me Lord Je - sus; I ask thee to stay
close by me for - ev - er and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear chil - dren in thy ten - der care,
and fit us for heav - en to live with thee there.

Music: James R. Murray, 1887 – MUELLER. Text: Gabriel's *Vineyard Songs*, 1892.

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON

* RESPONSE OF PRAISE

Good Chris - tian friends, re - joice With heart, and soul, and voice;
Now ye need not fear the grave: Je - sus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all To gain the ev - er - last - ing hall.
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Music: German folk tune, 14th century - IN DULCI JUBILO. Text: Medieval Latin, trans. John Mason Neale, 1853.

* PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The peace of Christ be with you.
All: And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LITANY OF PARTING

All: May God be with you there.
Children: May God be with you here.

Children (pre-K through second grade) are invited to exit the Sanctuary for Children's Church. If this is your child's first time at Fifth Avenue, please accompany them downstairs.

SOLO

Nunc Dimittis • Geoffrey Burgon (1941–2010)

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant
depart in peace according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation;
Which thou hast prepared
before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles
and to be the glory of thy people Israel
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 2:25-32

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.”

One: This is the Word of God; for the People of God.
All: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

The Rev. Natalie Owens-Pike

“Christmas at Simeon’s House”

* PRAYER FOR THE DAY

**Loving God, who knew us in our mother’s womb,
who looked upon creation and called it good,
You sent your Son to dwell on earth with us
First as a newborn babe.**

**This Christmas,
Help us know the presence of your love,
Help us to see our neighbor and ourselves
With the innocence of a child,
and the light of Christ.
Amen.**

* HYMN 121

O Little Town of Bethlehem

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Christine Boyle, Director of Outreach & Missions

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.**

CALL TO GIVE

OFFERTORY SOLO

Gesù Bambino • Pietro Yon (1886–1943)

A flower blossomed in the snow
Upon a winter night—
So came the Child, the Christmas Rose,
The Gift of love and light.
The angels sang, the shepherds came,
The grateful earth rejoiced;
And at his blessed birth the stars
Their exultation voiced.

Refrain

*O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him;
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

Our God, so pure, so high above,
Is pleased to come and dwell.
Come see the mystery of his love:
A child, Emmanuel.
The One whom time cannot contain
And mind can never trace
Has touched our lives with tender hands
And shown a human face.

* DOXOLOGY

**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

* HYMN 134

Joy to the World

* BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Postlude on 'Mendelssohn'
("Hark! The Herald Angels Sing")
David Willcocks (1919–2015)

The ministry of music this morning is offered by
Dr. Patrick Kreeger, *Associate Organist* • Wilson Nichols, *Soloist*

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

If You Are in Need of Prayer

Deacons (wearing white stoles) are available to pray with you after the service. Your prayers are confidential unless you request that they be shared with our Congregational Care staff. You may also complete a prayer request card (available in the pews and at the entrances) and place it in the offering plate or hand to an usher. You may submit prayer requests online at fapc.org/prayer-requests.

Please pray for:

Candy Asman, Pat Backus, Algernon John Baptiste, Neta Beberino, Helen Betzaia, Becky Bjornstad Benjamin Bradley, Britta Cabanos, Pastor Toribio Cajiua, Ella Calderon, Denise Campbell Phoebe Chiu, Sookjoong Choi, Anne Coffey, Dr. Johanna Cook, Edna Craddock, William Cuffee Athanassia Doucas, Sherian Edgreen, David Elissa and Barbara Mitchell, Michael Elissa Narmella Elissa, Sohn Fong, Janet Gibbs, Irene P. Gilman, Wanda Roush Hannan Christopher Henderson, Donna Marie Henderson, Maggie Hendrix, Juliet Kaldanie Frederick Loomis, Louis Sterling King, Ceciwa Khonje, Janet Lamberth, Richard J. Lawson Mary Lowry, Lauren Ma, The McCall Family, Frank Owarish, Dexter Ramcharan, Don Rogers Pauline Sample, Robert Scheuer, Tshombe Selby, Taylor Shultz, Spencer Robert Smith Willie Gerald Smith, Frieda Sompotan, Neva Strom, Rocco Tannehill, Harold Tither Susan Tobiason, Henny Waisapy, Bill Wanek, Warren White, Suzanne Wilks, Sylvia Winrich Deborah Wurgler, Doris Wurgler, Wayne Zhou

If you would like to add a name to the church prayer list or the list of faithful departed, please contact Natalie Wardius (congregationalcare@fapc.org, 212.247.0490).

CALENDAR

Today

- 11 am** **Worship.** Livestream & Sanctuary.
- 11:15 am** **Children's Church.** LaDane Williamson Christian Education Center.
- 12 pm** **Coffee Hour.** Bonnell Hall and online.
- 12 pm** **Tour the Church.** Meet at the rear of the Sanctuary following worship.

This Week

- Mon Jan 1** **New Year's Holiday.** Building closed.
- Tue Jan 2** **Weekly Word Bible study.** 12 pm • Zoom. To register, visit fapc.org/bible-study. For more information, please contact The Rev. Werner Ramirez (bible-study@fapc.org).
- Wed Jan 3** **Asian-American Bible Study.** 6:30 pm • 6th Floor Conference Room and Zoom.
- Kate Bowler Book Study.** 6:30 pm • Zoom. Contact Ashley Gonzalez-Grissom (engagement@fapc.org) to sign up.
- Sun Jan 7** **Epiphany Sunday.** The Rev. Werner Ramirez will lead our celebration of Epiphany. Chapel Church. 9:30 am • Jones Auditorium. Worship. 11 am • Sanctuary & livestream.
- Sun Jan 14** **Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday.**
- Womanist Proclamation and the Arts.** 9:30 am • Bonnell Hall. Join us for an introduction to womanist theology with the Rev. Dr. Andrea C. White, Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Union Theological Seminary.
- Worship.** 11 am • Sanctuary & livestream. The Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyterian of National Capital Presbytery, is our guest preacher this morning.
- Sun, Jan 21** **Game Day with the Homeless.** 1 – 3 pm • Jones Auditorium. We are looking for 15–20 volunteers. Please contact Christine Boyle, Director of Outreach & Missions (outreach@fapc.org) with any questions.
- Believing & Belonging: New Member Class.** 2 pm • Zoom. A an online class for prospective members. Details and registration at fapc.org/membership. Contact: Ashley Gonzalez-Grissom for more information (membership@fapc.org).
- Wed, Jan 31** **The Anita and Antonio Gotto Lecture: Kate Bowler.** 7 pm • Sanctuary & livestream. To secure a ticket, head to fapc.org/gotto. For more information, please email Ashley Gonzalez-Grissom (gottolecture@fapc.org).

Next Sunday • Epiphany Sunday

“New Year's Project” • Matthew 2:1-12

The Rev. Werner Ramirez, preaching.

NEWS & EVENTS

Kate Bowler Book Study

This book group will meet Wednesdays at 6:30 pm on Zoom in January to prepare for our 2024 Gotto lecture. We will read and discuss Kate's bestselling memoir, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved* (Random House, 2018). All are welcome! Please reach out to engagement@fapc.org if you're interested in signing up.

Sunday, January 14: Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday

We have an engaging Sunday planned. Join us in Bonnell Hall at 9:30 am for “Womanist Proclamation and the Arts.” The Rev. Dr. Andrea C. White, Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Union Theological Seminary and Theologian-in-Residence at The Riverside Church, introduces us to womanist theology and an exploration of black art as a site for wonder and grace. Breakfast will be served. Worship begins at 11 am in the Sanctuary and on livestream. Our guest preacher is the Rev. John Molina-Moore, General Presbyterian of National Capital Presbytery. Rev. Molina-Moore will launch the winter sermon series “Beloved Community.”

Saturday, January 20: Women's Winter Sabbath Retreat

Come reflect and restore at this year's Women's Winter Sabbath Retreat, which will focus on storytelling. From large group keynotes to breakout Zoom conversations and “Emmaus walks” (ie: short, partnered walks through the city or building), we will find God in relationship, in listening, and in time together. This retreat will be from 10 am to 1 pm EST for our online participants and from 10 am to 3 pm for those attending in person. All generations of women are welcome and we hope to see you there! To sign up, visit fapc.org/womens-retreat. For more information, please email the Rev. Sarah A. Speed (womensministry@fapc.org).

Sunday, January 21: Game Day with the Homeless

Please join us for Game Day with members of the homeless community on Sunday, January 21, from 1 pm to 3 pm in Jones Auditorium. Join this heartwarming tradition of sharing a meal with our homeless neighbors, playing games, and engaging our guests in conversation. Please reach out to Christine Boyle, Director of Outreach & Missions (outreach@fapc.org) with any questions. Registration for the event will close on January 16.

Wednesday, January 31: The Sixth Annual Gotto Lecture

Author, historian, and podcast host Kate Bowler will deliver the sixth Anita and Antonio Gotto Lecture in our Sanctuary and on livestream. Bowler is the author of six books, ranging from history and memoir to devotionals and blessings. She is an associate professor of the history of Christianity in North America at Duke Divinity School and hosts the popular podcast *Everything Happens*. Her latest book, *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day! Daily Meditations for the Ups, Downs & In-Betweens* will be released next month, shortly before her lecture. Head to fapc.org/gotto for tickets. For more information, please email Ashley Gonzalez-Grissom (engagement@fapc.org).

Give the Gift of Church Officers

The Nominating Committee seeks your input as it prepares a slate of officer candidates for new, three-year terms. If you, or a member you know, would be a good candidate for the Board of Deacons, the Session, or the Board of Trustees, please send us your recommendation. Information on the officer election process and the officer recommendation form are available at fapc.org/officer-elections. Please submit your recommendations by Sunday, January 21.

OFFICERS BY CLASS

The Session

The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston, *Moderator* • The Rev. Dr. Jonah So, *Executive Pastor*
 The Rev. Werner Ramirez, *Associate Pastor* • The Rev. Sarah Speed, *Associate Pastor*
 John Wyatt, *Clerk of Session* • Meg Sheehan, *Assistant Clerk of Session*

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Jill Borrero	Eric Daniels	Rachel Brenner
Mae Cheng-PaVon	Ann Marie Koehler	Dennis Bushe
Bruni Fernandez	Sara Rodgers	Roseanne Lind
Paul Griggs	Chris Rogers	Nate Mahrer
Sam Griggs	Janeen A. Sarlin	Brian McLendon
Claire Kedeshian	Meg Sheehan	Louisa Raitt
John Kern	Sylvia Winrich	Martha Van Hise
William Stone		
John Wyatt		

The Board of Deacons

Greg Dow, *Moderator* • Joann Harrah, *Vice Moderator* • Sarah McKoy, *Secretary*
 Shane Markstrum, *Treasurer*

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Jennica Carmona	Kirsten Aiello	Chrissy Badger
Greg Dow	Kelly Baer	Brendan Birth
Joann Harrah	Jessica Carmona	Joshua Code
Beverly Elmyra Johnson	Hope Griggs	Rumel Francois
Lydia Kalmen	Jane Henn	Jeanne Lehman French
Shane Markstrum	Sarah McKoy	Bruce Ramsden
Auguste Nipabi	Jeannine Rodgers	Susan Roberson
Joyce Nolen	Chad Schepp	Betsy Ross
Branden Wang	Dicky Tuwaidan	Amelia Vogler
Lynn Wishart	Arthur Wong	Julia Ward

The Board of Trustees

Ken Henderson, *President* • Joanna McNurlen, *Vice President* • Susan Cersovsky, *Secretary*
 Glenn Hubbard, *Treasurer* • Alyce Andrews, *Assistant Treasurer*

Class of 2024	Class of 2025	Class of 2026
Alyce Andrews	Susan Cersovsky	Christopher Duffy
Paula Berry	Jose Guardado	Chris Edwards
Bob Henn	Ken Henderson	Meredith Fleck
Glenn Hubbard	Joanna McNurlen	Jane Hong
Daniel Krueger	Jeff Rowbottom	Susan Neunaber
Mark Moreland	Mark Snyder	Thomas Wesley

CLERGY & STAFF



The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston *Senior Pastor*
The Rev. Dr. Jonah So *Executive Pastor*
The Rev. Werner Ramirez *Associate Pastor for Congregational Care & Family Ministries*
The Rev. Sarah A. Speed *Associate Pastor for Young Adults & Membership*

The Rev. Kate Dunn, *Parish Visitor*
 The Rev. Dr. Patricia Kitchen, *Parish Associate*
 The Rev. Dr. J. Oscar McCloud, *Associate Pastor Emeritus*
 The Rev. Natalie Owens-Pike, *Director of Ministry to the Online Campus*
 The Rev. Randy Weber, *Associate Pastor Emeritus*
 Christine Boyle, *Director of Outreach & Missions*
 Ashley Gonzalez-Grissom, *Director of Engagement*
 Dr. Ryan Jackson, *William S. Perper Director of Music & Fine Arts Ministries*
 Stephanie Kelley, *Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor & Director of Special Projects*
 Donna Ketchledge, *Program Coordinator & Assistant to the Executive Pastor*
 Dr. Patrick Kreeger, *Associate Organist*
 Derek Maddalena, *Director of Facilities*
 Sean McAvoy, *Director of Communications & Development*
 Can Olgun, *Director of Chapel Church Music*
 Richard J. Schexnider, *Director of Finance*
 Jaime Staehle, *Director of Christian Education*
 Dr. Eugenia Oi Yan Yau, *Director of Music for Family Ministries*

CONTACT US



Announce a birth or adoption
 Jaime Staehle
familyministries@fapc.org



Fund the altar flowers
 Natalie Wardius
congregationalcare@fapc.org



Join the church
 Ashley Gonzalez-Grissom
membership@fapc.org



Make a donation
fapc.org/give



Plan your wedding
 Donna Ketchledge
weddings@fapc.org



Planned giving
 Richard Schexnider
finance@fapc.org



Prepare for baptism
 Jaime Staehle
familyministries@fapc.org

Add a name to the prayer list • Natalie Wardius, congregationalcare@fapc.org
Hire our caterer • Rodrigo Rosas, rodrigo@roxoevents.com
Notify us of a death or illness • Natalie Wardius, congregationalcare@fapc.org
Request a bulletin announcement • Sean McAvoy, fapc@fapc.org
Update contact information in our database • update@fapc.org

We livestream our worship services and provide online playback on demand. We also shoot videos and photos from time to time in the church house (interior and exterior). By your presence, you grant Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church unrestricted rights to use and publish, transmit or telecast your image or likeness in communications related to the church. Please contact Sean McAvoy (fapc@fapc.org) if you have questions or concerns. If you prefer to sit outside of camera range during the service, please speak with an usher.

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

Abiding Light

The 2024 Pledge Campaign

87%

Have you pledged?

378 families have pledged \$3,059,151
towards our \$3.5 million goal.

Thank you!

Your pledge supports our worship services,
music ministries, online campus, outreach
to our neighbors, educational offerings,
and so much more.

Please visit fapc.org/pledge today!

Support the Church

Scan this code using the camera
on your smartphone and follow
the instructions to make a secure
donation to our ministries.

fapc.org/give



Holiday Building Hours This Week: Jan. 1 – 7

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday – Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Building Closed	9 am – 9 pm	9 am – 6 pm	8 am – 1 pm	8 am – 2:30 pm



FAPCNYC



FAPC_NYC



FAPCinNYC



FAPC.ORG/LIVE

7 West 55th Street • New York, NY 10019