



# Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

CHRISTMAS EVE  
DECEMBER 24, 2025



Sandro Botticelli, *The Mystical Nativity*, c. 1500

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**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

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## ➔ **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](http://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](http://fapc.org/playback). This morning’s Prayers of the People can be found at [fapc.org/pray](http://fapc.org/pray). Details about the upcoming service each week can be found at [fapc.org/this-sunday](http://fapc.org/this-sunday). For information about future worship services, visit [fapc.org/worship](http://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.)

## CHRISTMAS EVE • 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

Prelude on *Quem pastores* • *Helmut Walcha* (1907–1991)

Christmas Cradle Song • *Alfred Hollins* (1865–1942)

Intrada on The First Nowell • *Ashley Grote* (b. 1982)

*Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen*  
("Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming")  
*Mary Beth Bennett* (b. 1954)

Messiah: Pifa • *G.F. Handel* (1685–1759)

*Berceuse sur le nom de SWANN* • *George Baker* (b. 1951)

Toccata—Gigue on the Sussex Carol • *George Baker*

### \* CALL TO WORSHIP

*Deacon Andy Craven* (7:30 pm)  
*Trustee Jane Hong* (11 pm)

*Luke 2:10-11*

Behold I bring you tidings of great joy;  
for unto you this day, in the city of David,  
is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

### \* PROCESSIONAL HYMN

#### **O Come, All Ye Faithful**

*Text by John Francis Wade* (1711–1786)

*Translated by Frederick Oakeley, Tune: ADESTE FIDELES*

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, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

God of God, Light of Light,  
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
Very God, begotten, not created:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above;  
Glory to God in the highest:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

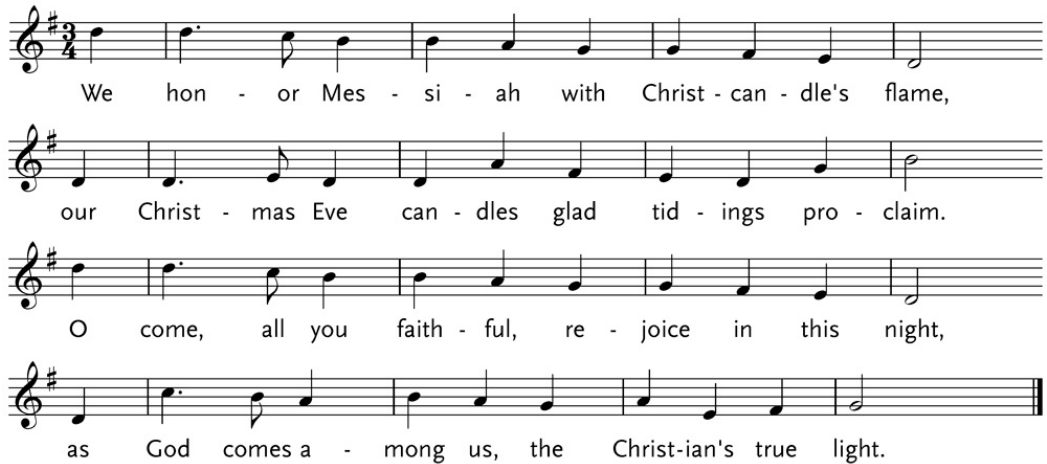
Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning,  
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:  
O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

### LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

*Marc, Mary, Jacqueline, and Olivia Lovci* (7:30 pm)  
*Bob and Janine Schindler* (11 pm)

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## SUNG RESPONSE



We hon - or Mes - si - ah with Christ - can - dle's flame,  
our Christ - mas Eve can - dles glad tid - ings pro - claim.  
O come, all you faith - ful, re - joice in this night,  
as God comes a - mong us, the Christ - ian's true light.

Music: James R. Murray, 1887 - AWAY IN A MANGER. Text: Sandra Dean © 1986 Sandra Dean.  
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## WELCOME

*The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston*

## BIDDING PRAYER

### 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.**

## INVITATORY CAROL

In Winter's House • *Joanna Marsh (b. 1970)*

*Text by Jane Draycott (b. 1951)*

In winter's house there's a room  
That's pale and still as mist in a field  
while outside in the street every gate's shut firm,  
every face as cold as steel.

In winter's house there's a bed  
that is spread with frost and feathers, that gleams  
in the half-light like rain in a disused yard  
or a pearl in a choked-up stream.

In winter's house there's a child  
asleep in a dream of light that grows out  
of the dark, a flame you can hold in your hand  
like a flower or a torch on the street.

In winter's house there's a tale  
That's told of a great chandelier in a garden,  
of fire that catches and travels for miles,  
of all gates and windows wide open.

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In winter's house there's a flame  
being dreamt by a child in the night,  
in the small quiet house at the turn in the lane  
where the darkness gives way to light.

#### THE FIRST LESSON

The prophet foretells the coming of the Savior • Isaiah 9:2-7

*The Rev. Dr. Jonah So*

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

#### CAROL

I Am the Day • *Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)*

*Text from The legend of St. Christopher and Revelation 22:16, 13*

Soon to be born...

*I am Alpha and O, and Omega!*

I am the day soon to be born.

Soon to be born...

I am the day soon to be born...

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!*

I am the spring from the root of David...

*O come, O come, Emmanuel!*

I am the Alpha and the Omega...

*O come, O come, Emmanuel!*

I am the sprig from the root of David,

And the bright star of the morning.

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee!*

*I am Alpha and O, and Omega!*

I am the day soon to be born.

Soon to be born...

I am the first and the last,

The beginning and the end.

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!*

I am the day soon to be born...

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!*

*I am the spring from the root of David...*

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*O come, O come, Emmanuel!*  
I am the Alpha and the Omega...  
*O come, O come, Emmanuel!*  
I am the sprig from the root of David,  
I am the first and last, the first and last.  
I am the sprig from the root of David,  
And the bright star of the morning.  
*Ah! Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee!*  
Soon to be born...

## THE SECOND LESSON

The Peace That Christ Will Bring Is Foreshown • Isaiah 11:1-6  
*The Rev. Werner Ramirez (7:30 pm)*  
*Dessylia and Fernando Suherlim (11 pm)*

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

## CAROL

*Ave Maris Stella* • Philip Stopford (b. 1977)  
*Text: Anonymous, 8th century*

*Ave, maris stella,* Hail, star of the sea,  
*Dei mater alma,* Loving Mother of God,  
*atque semper virgo,* And ever Virgin,  
*felix cœli porta.* Happy gate of Heaven.

*Sumens illud "Ave"* Receiving that "Ave"  
*Gabrielis ore,* From the mouth of Gabriel,  
*funda nos in pace,* Establish us in peace,  
*mutans Evæ nomen.* Transforming the name of "Eva".

*Ave, maris stella,* Hail, star of the sea.

*Solve vincla reis,* Loosen the chains of the guilty,  
*profer lumen cæcis,* Send forth light to the blind,  
*mala nostra pelle,* Dispel our evils,  
*bona cuncta posce.* Entreat for all good.

*Ave, maris stella,* Hail, star of the sea.

*Vitam præsta puram,* Bestow a pure life,  
*iter para tutum,* Prepare a safe way,  
*ut videntes Jesum* That seeing Jesus  
*semper collætémur.* We may ever rejoice.

*Sit laus Deo Patri,* Praise be to God the Father,  
*summo Christo decus,* Glory to Christ in the highest,  
*Spiritui Sancto* To the Holy Spirit  
*tribus honor unus. Amen* Be honor, to the three equally. Amen.

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## THE THIRD LESSON

The Angel Gabriel Salutes the Blessed Virgin Mary • Luke 1:26-38

*The Rev. Natalie Owens-Pike*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

## CAROL

*Nova, nova • Iain Farrington (b. 1977)*

*Text: Anonymous, 15th century*

*Nova, nova! (News! News!)*

Gabriel of high degree,  
He came down from the Trinity,  
From Nazareth to Galilee,  
*Nova, nova!*

He met a maiden in a place,  
He kneeled down before her face;  
He said, "Hail Mary, full of grace."  
*Nova, nova!*

When the maiden saw all this,  
She was sore abashed, ywis,  
Lest that she had done amiss.  
*Nova, nova!*

Then said the angel, "Dread not you,  
You shall conceive in all virtue  
A child whose name shall be Jesu."  
*Nova, nova!*

Then said the maid, "Verily,  
I am your servant truly,  
*Ecce ancilla Domini.*"  
(Behold the handmaid of the Lord.)  
*Nova, nova!*

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## THE FOURTH LESSON

The Coming of the True Light • John 1:6-14

*The Rev. Chris Palmer*

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

## CAROL

In the Stillness • *Sally Beamish (b. 1956)*

*Text by Katrina Shepherd (20th century)*

In the stillness of a church where candles glow,  
In the softness of a fall of fresh white snow,  
In the brightness of the stars that shine this night,  
In the calmness of a pool of healing light.

In the clearness of a choir that softly sings,  
In the oneness of a hush of angels' wings,  
In the mildness of a night by stable bare,  
In the quietness of a lull near cradle fair.

There's a patience as we wait  
For a new morn,  
And the presence of a child  
Soon to be born.

## THE FIFTH LESSON

St. Luke Tells of the Birth of Jesus • Luke 2:1-7

*Elder Nancy Moore (7:30 pm)*

*Elder Matt Roush (11 pm)*

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This registration occurred while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to be registered, everyone to their own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David. Joseph went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

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## CAROL

A Babe Is Born • *William Mathias (1934–1992)*

*Text: Anonymous, 15th century*

A babe is born all of a may, to bring salvation unto us.

To him we sing both night and day.

*Veni creator Spiritus (Come creating spirit).*

At Bethlehem, that blessed place, the child of bliss now born he was;

And him to serve God give us grace, *O lux beata Trinitas (O Trinity of blessed light).*

There came three kings out of the east, to worship the King that is so free,

With gold and myrrh and frankincense,

*A solis ortus cardine (From lands that see the sun rise).*

The angels came down with one cry, a fair song that night sung they

In worship of that child: *Gloria tibi Domine (Glory to you, Lord).*

A babe is born all of a may, to bring salvation unto us.

To him we sing both night and day.

*Veni creator Spiritus, O lux beata Trinitas, A solis ortus cardine, Gloria tibi Domine. Noel!*

## THE SIXTH LESSON

The Shepherds Go to the Manger • *Luke 2:8-14*

*Deacon Darby Blaker (7:30 pm)*

*Austin Applebach, Director of Engagement (11 pm)*

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward all."

## CAROL

My Lord has Come • *Will Todd (b. 1970)*

Shepherds, called by angels,

Called by love and angels;

No place for them but a stable.

*My Lord has come.*

Sages, searching for stars,

Searching for love in heaven;

No place for them but a stable.

*My Lord has come.*

His love will hold me,

His love will cherish me,

Love will cradle me.

Lead me, lead me to see him,

Sages and shepherds and angels;

No place for me but a stable.

*My Lord has come.*

\* HYMN 119

**Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**

HOMILY

*The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston*

**“When God Speaks”**

\* CHRISTMAS EVE LITANY

*The Rev. Dr. Jonah So*

One: Light looked down and saw darkness.

**All: “I will go there,” said Light.**

One: Peace looked down and saw war.

**All: “I will go there,” said Peace.**

One: Love looked down and saw hatred.

**All: “I will go there,” said Love.**

One: So he, the Lord of Light,  
the Prince of Peace, the King of Love,  
came down and crept in beside us.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

CALL TO GIVE

*The Rev. Natalie Owens-Pike*

OFFERTORY CAROL

O Holy Night • *Adolphe Adam (1803–1856)*  
*Arr. John Rutter, text by Cappeau de Roquemaure (1808–1877)*

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! Oh hear the angel voices!  
O night divine! O night when Christ was born,  
O night divine, O night divine.

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand;  
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here came the wise men from the Orient land.  
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
In all our trials born to be our friend;  
He knows our need, to our weakness no stranger;  
Behold your King! Before him lowly bend!  
Behold your King! Your King! Before him bend!

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, then ever, ever praise we,  
His pow’r and glory evermore proclaim,  
His pow’r and glory evermore proclaim.

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OFFERTORY PRAYER

*The Rev. Werner Ramirez (7:30 pm)*

*The Rev. Chris Palmer (11 pm)*

\* HYMN 134 **Joy to the World**

\* THE SEVENTH LESSON

St. John Unfolds the Great Mystery of the Incarnation • John 1:1-5

*The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

\* HYMN 122 **Silent Night, Holy Night**

\* BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella • *Keith Chapman (1945–1989)*

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The ministry of music this evening is offered by the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church Choir

Dr. Ryan Jackson, *William S. Perper Director of Music and Fine Arts Ministries*

Dr. Patrick Kreeger, *Associate Organist* • Francesca Lionetta, *Soprano*

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

## 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 Hours

Thursday, December 25, and Friday, December 26, the building will be closed in observance of the Christmas Holiday. 🎅



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