



# Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS  
DECEMBER 28, 2025 • 11:00 AM



Lauren Wright Pittman, *Terrifying, Joyous News*

**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. Sunday School for pre-K through fifth grade follows the Litany of Parting during the 11 am worship service.

## ➔ **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.)

## 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

Chorale Prelude on *In dulci jubilo*  
("Good Christian Friends, Rejoice!"), BuxWV 197  
*Dietrich Buxtehude (1637–1707)*

### \* CALL TO WORSHIP

*Elder Jama Toung*

One: Prepare the way of the Lord!

**All: Lift every valley, lift every voice.**

One: Prepare the way of the Lord!

**All: And all flesh shall see the salvation of our God.**

One: Let us worship 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*

### \* SUNG 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*, 1802.

\* 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.**

LITANY OF PARTING

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

*Children (pre-K through fifth 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.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sean McAvoy, Director of Communications & Development

SOLO

The Holy Boy • John Ireland (1879–1962)

Lowly, laid in a manger,  
With oxen brooding nigh,  
The Heav'nly Babe is lying  
His Maiden Mother by.  
Lo! The way-faring sages,  
Who journey'd far through the wild,  
Now worship, silent adoring,  
The Boy, The Heav'nly Child -  
The Heav'nly Child.  
Leave your work and your playtime,  
And kneel in homage and prayer,  
The Prince of Love is smiling  
Asleep in his cradle there!  
Bend your hearts to the wonder,  
The Birth, the Mystery mild, And worship,  
silent adoring, The Boy, the Heav'nly Child -  
The Heav'nly Child!

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Dim the light of the lantern,  
And bare the mean abode,  
Yet gold and myrrh and incense  
Proclaim the Son of God.  
Lowly laid in a manger  
By Virgin undefiled,  
Come worship, silent, adoring,  
The Boy, The Heav'nly Child.  
The Heav'nly Child!

#### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

#### SCRIPTURE LESSON

*Luke 2:8-20*

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and 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 heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

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

#### SERMON

*The Rev. Werner Ramirez*

#### **"When Shepherds Run"**

#### \* PRAYER FOR THE DAY

**Holy God,  
as the shepherds ran toward the good news of your love,  
guide us to run as well  
to run toward justice when the world is unfair,  
to run toward love when fear tempts us to turn away,  
to run toward peace, joy, and hope in all that we do.  
May our lives bear witness to the Christ born among us.  
Amen.**

#### \* HYMN 121

**O Little Town of Bethlehem**

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

*Messiah: Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion*  
*G.F. Handel (1685–1759)*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion,  
shout, O daughter of Jerusalem:  
behold, thy King cometh unto thee.  
He is the righteous Saviour,  
and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

\* 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

*~ Please watch your step as you exit your pew. ~*

POSTLUDE

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

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

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE

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### **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](http://fapc.org/prayer-requests).

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### **Please pray for:**

Ann Alexander, Pat Backus, Eliseo Batuan, Neta Beberino, Helen Betzaia, Becky Bjornstad  
Patricia Blair, Teresita Block, Sarah Boyce, Benjamin Bradley, Britta Cabanos, Ella Calderon  
Denise Campbell, Nina S. 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, Daniele Engome, Jeanne Lehman French, David Getz  
Irene P. Gilman, Anthea and Neville Graham, Florence Hall, Torian Hall, Peter S. Hawkins  
Carol Healy, Christopher Henderson, Donna Marie Henderson, George Illingworth, Emi Iwaida  
Tara Kay Johnson, Juliet Kaldanie, Ceciwa Khonje, Louis Sterling King, Janet Lamberth  
Richard J. Lawson, Violet Lorenzen, Penelope Rose Lovely, Mary Lowry, Lauren Ma  
The McCall Family, Octavia McLaren Epifania Mercado, Ryan Moloughney, Gerry Nagy,  
Joyce Nolen, Frank Owarish, Emmett Raitt, Dexter Ramcharan, Debbie Rogers, Ramon Rosa  
Norma Santos, Robert Scheuer, Taylor Shultz Monica Smith, Spencer Robert Smith  
Willie Gerald Smith, Frieda Sompotan, Neva Strom, Rocco Tannehill, Harold Tither  
Susan Tobiason, Henny Waisapy, John Weisel, Warren White, Suzanne Wilks, Sylvia Winrich  
Deborah Wurgler

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](mailto:congregationalcare@fapc.org), 212.247.0490).

## CALENDAR

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Today

11 am

**Worship.** Sanctuary & Livestream.

**Little Lambs Nursery & Sunday School.** LaDane Williamson Christian Education Center.

12:15 pm

**Sermon Springboard.** Zoom. Join Sean McAvoy and members of the online campus for sermon discussion and fellowship.

**Tour of the Church.** After worship, look for a docent in the back of the Sanctuary with a “Tour Starts Here” sign.

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Coming Up

Thu Jan 1

**New Year’s Holiday.** Building closed.

Sat Jan 3

**Meals on Heels.** 8:30 am • Bonnell Hall. Volunteers prepare and deliver weekend meals to homebound seniors. Contact John Wyatt at [moh@fapc.org](mailto:moh@fapc.org). Sign up is required.

Mon Jan 5

**SAGES.** 12 pm • Zoom. Join elder members for fellowship and study. Contact [community@fapc.org](mailto:community@fapc.org) to join.

Tue Jan 6

**Weekly Word Bible Study.** 12 pm • Zoom. For more information, please email [community@fapc.org](mailto:community@fapc.org). To register, visit [fapc.org/community](http://fapc.org/community).

Wed Jan 7

**Community Choir.** 6 pm • Jones Auditorium. All voices are welcome!

**FAYA Midweek.** 6:30 pm • The Living Room. To learn more, contact [youngadults@fapc.org](mailto:youngadults@fapc.org).

Thu Jan 8

**Career Directions.** 10 am • Zoom. Visit [fapc.org/community](http://fapc.org/community) to learn more and to sign up.

**Asian American Bible Study.** 6:30 pm • 6th Floor Conference Room & Zoom.

Sun Jan 11

**Believing and Belonging Membership Class.** 2 pm • Zoom. Meet clergy and staff and discover how faith and community come together at Fifth Avenue. Register at [fapc.org/membership](http://fapc.org/membership).

Sun, Jan 18

**Courageous Conversations.** 9:30 am • Bonnell Hall & livestream. A panel of Fifth Avenue congregation members will share their life experiences in regards to race and racism. Register at [fapc.org/adulted](http://fapc.org/adulted).

Sun Jan 25

**All Men Are Created Equal—A Faithful Reckoning.** 12:45 pm • Jones Auditorium.

Thu Jan 29

**Moms Night Out.** 6 pm • Location TBD. Join other Fifth Avenue moms for a fun evening out! Register at [fapc.org/moms](http://fapc.org/moms).

Fri Jan 30

**Youth Last Friday Hangouts.** 7 pm • LaDane Williamson Christian Education Center. Join us for pizza, games, and devotionals. Register at [fapc.org/youth](http://fapc.org/youth).

### Next Sunday • Epiphany Sunday

“When Magi Evade” • Matthew 2:1-12

*The Rev. Natalie Owens-Pike, preaching.*

## NEWS & EVENTS

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### **Sunday, January 11: Believing and Belonging Membership Class**

Believing and Belonging is a welcoming space designed not just for those considering membership, but for anyone looking to explore the life and mission of this vibrant faith community. Whether you're new to the church, returning after some time, or looking to find connection and a spiritual home in the city, this is a great opportunity to ask questions, meet others and discover how faith and community come together at Fifth Avenue. Come learn and see where the Spirit might lead you. Register at [fapc.org/membership](https://fapc.org/membership) and join us at 2 pm on Zoom.

### **Sunday, January 11: Family Ministries Day of Service**

All families are invited to join us for a family service project at 12:30 pm in the LaDane Williamson Christian Education Center. We will be putting together Kids Kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance—providing school supplies for kids who have experienced natural disasters. There will also be lunch. Please register at [fapc.org/families](https://fapc.org/families) so we know how many supplies to have.

### **Sunday, January 18: Courageous Conversations**

All are invited to join our Anti-Racism Response Team for a continental breakfast and Courageous Conversations around the table. A panel of Fifth Avenue congregation members will share their life experiences in regards to race and racism, and offer us an opportunity to continue these conversations around the table. There will be opportunities to follow up these conversations in online community groups this winter as well. This event will take place at 9:30 am in Bonnell Hall and on Zoom. Food will be served. Register at [fapc.org/adulted](https://fapc.org/adulted).

### **Sunday, January 25: All Men Are Created Equal—A Faithful Reckoning**

How have communities of color read the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution? Join us as we learn from Dr. Andrea C. White and explore how Christians of color have sought to hold the nation accountable for its failures while reclaiming the moral and spiritual promises embedded in its ideals of liberty and justice. Dr. White is the Associate Professor of Theology and Culture at Union Theological Seminary, where her research focuses on womanist theology, Black critical theory, and phenomenology. Join us at 12:45 pm in Jones Auditorium. Food will be served, and the lecture will be recorded for later viewing.

### **Saturday, January 31: Women's Winter Sabbath**

All women are invited to a rejuvenating day-long Sabbath retreat at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church! Starting at 10 am, we'll come together for a rich day of fellowship, insightful study, and a delicious lunch. We'll wrap up this inspiring time with a closing worship by 4 pm, leaving you refreshed and renewed. The cost for this retreat is \$25 in-person (includes lunch!) and free for online participants. Online participants can join us from 11 am to 2 pm ET. Register at [fapc.org/women](https://fapc.org/women).

### **Officer Nominations**

The Nominating Committee is seeking 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](https://fapc.org/officer-elections).

## OFFICERS BY CLASS

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### The Session

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The Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston, *Moderator* • The Rev. Dr. Jonah So, *Executive Pastor*  
The Rev. Werner Ramirez, *Associate Pastor* • The Rev. Natalie Owens-Pike, *Associate Pastor*  
The Rev. Chris Palmer, *Associate Pastor* • Dennis Bushe, *Clerk of Session*  
Persis Luke, *Assistant Clerk of Session*

<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Rachel Brenner	Chloe Hawker	Evelyn Acosta
Dennis Bushe	Josie Lawrence	Amanda DeMeola
Roseanne Lind	Persis Luke	Kathy Henderson
Nate Mahrer	Patrick Obeng-Frimpong	Phillip Ma
Brian McLendon	Thomas Pak	Thomas Mann
Erica Moffett	David Roberson	Glenda Moreland
Martha Van Hise	Beth Rumore Stanley	McKenna Nelson
Suri Wong (Youth Elder)	Jama Toung	Lynn Wishart

### The Board of Deacons

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Brendan Birth, *Moderator* • Jeanne Lehman French, *Vice Moderator* • Kyle Hughes, *Secretary*  
Susan Roberson, *Treasurer*

<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Chrissy Badger	Jesse Allen	Lisa Cinelli
Brendan Birth	Jessica Carmona	Linda Ferm-Fagan
Joshua Code	Andy Craven	Debbie Goetz
Rumel Francois	Myra Ford	Tingting Markstrum
Jeanne Lehman French	Kyle Hughes	Gary McKoy
Bruce Ramsden	Susie Hunter	Charlotte Nichols
Susan Roberson	Trevor Illingworth	Matt Roush
Betsy Ross	Jamie Ku	Anggryani Sumenge
Amelia Vogler Topping	Elizabeth (Beth) McCullough	David Sytsma
Julia Ward	Kathy Peterson	Suzanne Zywicki
	Nicole Rusk	

### The Board of Trustees

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Jane Hong, *President* • Joyce Hansen, *Vice President* • Chris Edwards, *Secretary*  
Marran Ogilvie, *Assistant Secretary* • Christopher Duffy, *Treasurer* • Constance Pond, *Assistant Treasurer*

<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>	<u>Class of 2028</u>
Christopher Duffy	Joyce Hansen	Julie Hennighausen
Chris Edwards	Mark Moreland	Tammi Kenton
Meredith Fleck	Marran Ogilvie	Daniel Krueger
Jane Hong	Constance Pond Hubbard	Janet Nettleton Otto
Susan Neunaber	Phil Ryan	Sean Topping
Thomas Wesley	William Stone	Chrissy Wojcik

## 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. Natalie Owens-Pike** *Associate Pastor for Ministry to the Online Campus*

**The Rev. Chris Palmer** *Associate Pastor for Young Adults & Membership*

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Austin Applebach, *Director of Engagement*

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

Stephanie Kelley, *Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor & Co-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*

Dr. Can Olgun, *Director of Chapel Church Music*



Isabel Packevicz, *Parish Visitor and Young Adult & Youth Associate*

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](mailto:familyministries@fapc.org)



**Join the online campus**

Natalie Owens-Pike

[hybridchurch@fapc.org](mailto:hybridchurch@fapc.org)



**Join the church**

Austin Applebach

[membership@fapc.org](mailto:membership@fapc.org)



**Make a donation**

[fapc.org/give](http://fapc.org/give)



**Make a bequest**

Richard Schexnider

[finance@fapc.org](mailto:finance@fapc.org)



**Plan your wedding**

Donna Ketchledge

[weddings@fapc.org](mailto:weddings@fapc.org)



**Prepare for baptism**

Jaime Staehle

[familyministries@fapc.org](mailto:familyministries@fapc.org)

**Add a name to the prayer list** • Natalie Wardius, [congregationalcare@fapc.org](mailto:congregationalcare@fapc.org)

**Fund the altar flowers** • Natalie Wardius, [congregationalcare@fapc.org](mailto:congregationalcare@fapc.org)

**Hire our caterer** • Rodrigo Rosas, [rodrigo@roxoevents.com](mailto:rodrigo@roxoevents.com)

**Notify us of a death or illness** • Natalie Wardius, [congregationalcare@fapc.org](mailto:congregationalcare@fapc.org)

**Request a bulletin announcement** • Sean McAvoy, [fapc@fapc.org](mailto:fapc@fapc.org)

**Update contact information in our database** • [update@fapc.org](mailto: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](mailto: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

# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## 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](https://fapc.org/give)



Thursday, January 1, the building will be closed in observance of the New Year's Day holiday.

## Building Hours

Monday,  
Wednesday – Friday  
9 am – 6 pm

Tuesday  
9 am – 9 pm

Saturday  
8 am – 1 pm

Sunday  
8 am – 2:30 pm



FAPCNYC



FAPC\_NYC



FAPCinNYC



FAPC.ORG/LIVE

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