

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP

Prelude *Dr. Mary Crowell, Dr. Jenny Maclay*

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Jim Truesdell

* Call to Worship Avery Paysinger

LEADER: Angels announced Good News of great joy for all the people

PEOPLE: Christ, the Savior is born. He is the Messiah, the Lord.

LEADER: Glory to God in the highest heaven!

PEOPLE: And on earth peace and good will among people.

LEADER: Let us worship God!

Lighting of the Christ Candle-
Eloise Chouinard and Avery Paysinger

*Carol of Praise O Come, All Ye Faithful #133

*Prayer of Adoration Avery Paysinger

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession Unison

God of grace and truth, in Jesus Christ you came among us as light shining in darkness. We confess that we have not welcomed the light, or trusted good news to be good. We have closed our eyes to glory in our midst, expecting little, and hoping for less. Forgive our doubt, and renew our hope, so that we may receive the fullness of your grace, and live in the truth of Christ the Lord

* Kyrie Eleison Unison

Three staves of musical notation in G major, 6/8 time. The first staff has lyrics: "You are the Lord, giv-er of mer-cy!". The second staff has lyrics: "You are the Christ, giv-er of mer-cy!". The third staff has lyrics: "You are the Lord, giv-er of mer-cy!". Chords are indicated above the notes: Am, D, C, D, Em, C, Em for the first two staves, and Em, D, G, Am, Em, D, E for the third.

*Assurance of Forgiveness Pastor Truesdell

* The Gloria Patri Unison

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.

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you all. Pastor Truesdell

All: And also with you.

WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

Christmas Prayer for the children
(children and parents may come forward to receive a blessing)

Prayer for Illumination Avery Paysinger

First Reading Luke 2: 1-7 Avery Paysinger
p. 1,014

Anthem *Dr. Crowell*

Second Reading Luke 2: 8-16 Pastor Truesdell
p. 1,014-15

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon *"The Meaning of the Manger"* Pastor Truesdell

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE

*Carol of Celebration Angels We Have Heard on High #113

* Affirmation of Faith Unison

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Invitation to Worship God with Our Christmas Offering

Offertory *Dr. Crowell, Dr. Maclay*

*Doxology

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow; praise Him all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication Pastor Truesdell

Sacrament of The Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table Pastor Truesdell

The Communion Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The Lord's Prayer Unison

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.

The Words of Institution Pastor Truesdell

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Please hold each element until all have been served.

*Christmas Eve Benediction & Passing of the Christ Light

Christmas Carol of Sending Silent Night, Holy Night #122

Please remain seated while we are singing the Carol of Sending. The ushers will light the candles of the persons sitting near the pew aisles. Once your candle is lighted, please hold it upright while the person next to you dips their candle into the light of your candle. When all the candles are lighted, we will process out the front entrances of the church, carrying the Christ Light into the world.

* Postlude *Dr. Crowell, Dr. Maclay,*

**Stand if you are able*

The Work of Christmas

by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman from his book
"The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations"

About Howard Thurman by Drew Myron

Written in 1948, this poem remains as powerful and relevant as when it was penned 78 years ago.

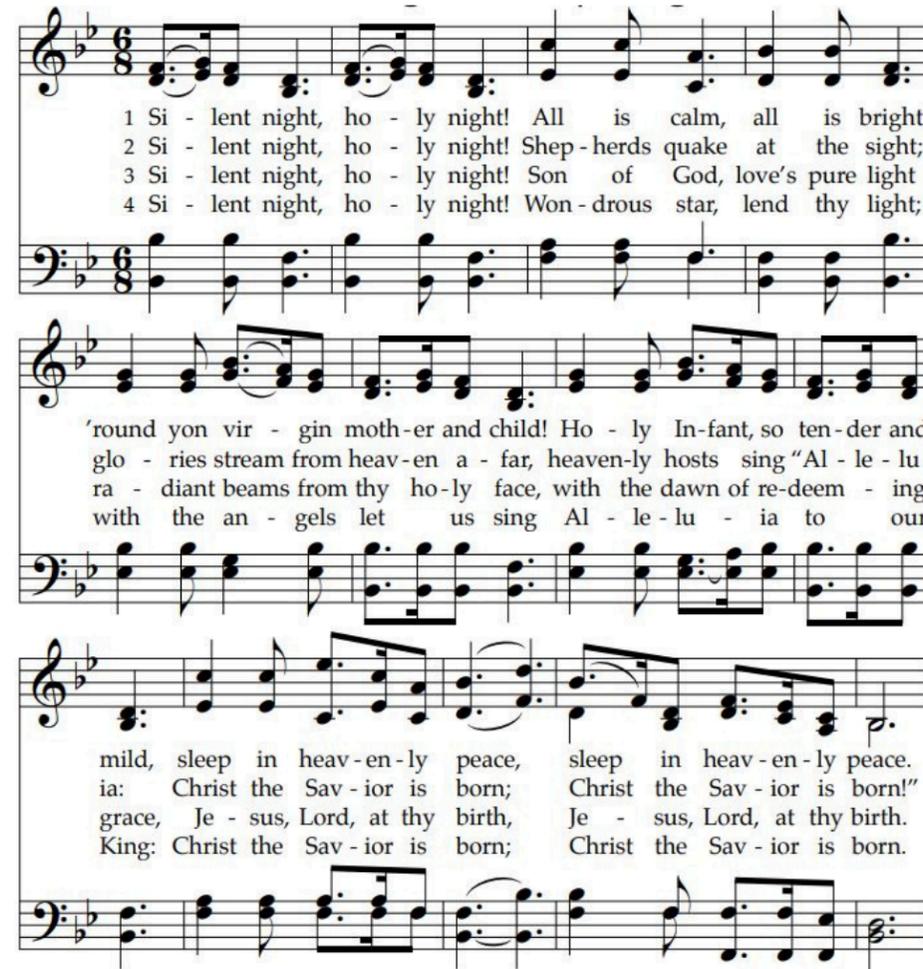
Howard Thurman was a professor, pastor, and civil rights leader. Born in 1899, he founded the first major interracial, interdenominational church in the United States, was the first black dean at a mostly white American university, and served as mentor to scores of students, including Martin Luther King, Jr. Yet, Howard Thurman remains widely unknown. The activist was not boastful or loud. He believed real change was internal, individual, and often quiet.

"There must be always remaining in every life," he wrote, "some place for the singing of angels, some place for that which in itself is breathless and beautiful."

Colleagues and scholars have long praised Thurman's work and heart. "He gently and powerfully moved through the world in a spirit of grace, dignity, and humility," says Walter Fluker, a professor at Boston University, where Thurman served as dean.

With grace, dignity and humility —
the spirit of Christmas shines on.

Silent Night



1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm, all is bright
2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake at the sight;
3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God, love's pure light
4 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Won - drous star, lend thy light;

'round yon vir - gin moth - er and child! Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far, heav - en - ly hosts sing "Al - le - lu -
ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face, with the dawn of re - deem - ing
with the an - gels let us sing Al - le - lu - ia to our

mild, sleep in heav - en - ly peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.
ia: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born!"
grace, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth, Je - sus, Lord, at thy birth.
King: Christ the Sav - ior is born; Christ the Sav - ior is born.

Worship Leaders

Sermon:

Pastor Jim Truesdell

Liturgist:

Avery Paysinger

Musicians:

Erica Hand
Emily Clem
Dr. Mary Crowell
Dr. Jenny Maclay

Follow us Online

Visit www.fpcathens.org for information, news, and digital worship. Sunday worship is live-streamed and archived on our YouTube page. Follow our Facebook page for news, updates on recent events, and upcoming opportunities. Join our Facebook group for community life. Sign up for our weekly email subscription at fpcathens@fpcathens.org.

December 24, 2025

Christmas Eve



First Presbyterian Church
112 South Jefferson Street
Athens, Alabama 35611

(256) 232-0122
www.fpcathens.org

We serve each other, the Athens community, and the world on the square in downtown Athens. Our church family is a community of believers who come seeking the grace and peace of God.

If you are looking for a place where you will be accepted, nurtured, and nourished in your journey of faith, or if you are still examining the claims of Christianity, then you are welcome at First Presbyterian Church.