



**All are welcome, because God is Welcome!**

We hope you feel the warmth of God's presence and a genuine welcome here. If this is your first time with us, we are honored to have you and look forward to seeing you again soon!

Connect with First Church by scanning the QR code or visiting our website. There are wonderful things happening here, and we would love for you to find your place in our community of faith!

ABOUT THE SERVICE

Portions of worship services are recorded and available on Facebook and our church website.

\*Indicates that the congregation may stand. **Words we all say are in bold print.**

We celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month and on special occasions. **All are welcome at the table of our Lord.**

**Offering plates are available in the Narthex** (sanctuary entrance) before and after worship, or you can give online by scanning the QR code. Your support enables First Church to make a meaningful impact within our community and beyond. As we often say, we are truly **"blessed to be a blessing!"**

During this season of transition, as we seek both an interim and eventually a new called pastor, we will be blessed by a variety of guest preachers. We invite you to embrace this opportunity to hear God's Word proclaimed through many different voices.

CONNECTION, LEADERSHIP AND STAFF

**WE ARE A CONGREGATION IN CONNECTION WITH**

- The Presbytery of Florida
- The Synod of South Atlantic
- The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**THE SESSION**

**The Rev. Mark Broadhead**, Moderator, **Bob Plank**, Clerk of Session

*Elected spiritual leaders of this congregation:*  
**John Deegins** ('25), **Ann Fyfe** ('26), **Jennifer Hodges** ('27),  
**Rich Kangas** ('25), **Bob Plank** ('26), **Kathy Welsh** ('27)

**CHURCH STAFF AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Bradley Thoreson**  
Music Director, Organist  
**bradfpclh@gmail.com**

**Terri Boardway**  
Administrative Assistant  
**firstpresbylh@gmail.com**

**For emergency pastoral care**, contact Kathy Welsh:  
(850) 866 -0019

**Church Office:**  
810 Georgia Avenue  
Lynn Haven, FL 32444

**Hours:**  
Monday-Thursday, 8 AM-12 PM  
**Other days/times by appointment.**

**Office:** 850.265.2051  
**Email:** firstpresbylh@gmail.com  
**www.firstchurchlh.org**

GOD WELCOMES US IN LOVE

**Prelude** ‘O Come, O Come, Emmanuel’ *Anna Laura Page*

**Chiming the Hour**

**Words of Welcome**

**Advent Introit** ‘Christ, Be Our Light’ *Bernadette Farrell*

**Advent Responsive Reading** *Jen Hodges*

Advent is a time for the human heart to wait, while trusting God’s eternal time.

**How long, O Lord, how long?**

For those waiting for answered prayer: Grant your steadfast patience. For those waiting in the face of uncertainty:

**Grant unshakable confidence in your sovereign provision.**

For those waiting for justice and mercy to reign:

**Grant a glimpse of your glory in our wounded world.**

For all of us waiting for God’s kingdom to come:

**Grant that we might have the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.**

**Lighting the Advent Candle** *Kirsten and Steve Summers*

**\*Advent Response (Hymn Refrain 314)** CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT

**Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.**

**Shine through the darkness.**

**Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

**\*Prayer of Praise**

Holy God, You are the One who was, who is, and who is to come. As we enter this Advent season, awaken our wonder and remind us that your promises bloom even in uncertain days and your mercy meets us in every moment. **Christ is coming, Christ is with us, and Christ will come again. Amen.**

**\*Hymn 82** ‘Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus’ *HYFRYDOL*

**Call to Confession**

In this holy season of watching and waiting, we are invited to lay down all that weighs heavily on our hearts. Let us approach the throne of grace with honesty and hope, trusting the God who meets us with mercy.

**Prayer of Confession**

Gracious God, in this meantime between promise and fulfillment, we confess that we often grow impatient and afraid. We cling to what is comfortable, ignore signs of your presence, and become distracted by worries that do not lead us to you.

Forgive us when we fail to watch for your coming in the faces of neighbors, in the cries of the vulnerable, in the beauty of ordinary days. Renew our hearts, steady our spirits, and teach us to live with readiness, compassion, and joy—until your kingdom comes in its fullness. Amen.

**Declaration of Forgiveness**

Friends, hear the good news: The One who is coming lives now with grace unbounded. In Jesus Christ, God meets us with mercy that is new every morning. Believe the good news of the Gospel: **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

**\*Joyful Response (Hymn 654)** IN THE LORD I’LL BE EVER THANKFUL

**In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful;**

**In the Lord I will rejoice!**

**Look to God; do not be afraid.**

**Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.**

**Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.**

GOD INVITES US TO LISTEN

**Gospel** Matthew 24:36-44 *p. 800 hardback  
NT p. 40, softback*

**Message** ‘Living In the Meantime’ *Julian Wells*

GOD MOVES US TO RESPOND

**\*Hymn 384** ‘Soon and Very Soon’ *SOON AND VERY SOON*

**\*The Litany of the Greens**

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of Jesus, the King?

**With branches of cedar, the tree of royalty.**

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of the Eternal Christ?

**With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, evergreen.**

How shall we prepare this house for the coming of our Savior?

**With wreaths of holly and ivy, symbolizing Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection.**

How shall we prepare our hearts for the coming of the Son of God?

**By hearing again, the words of the prophets who foretold the saving work of God.**

For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through him might be saved.  
Glory to God in the highest. Glory to God!

**Anthem** ‘People, Look East’ *arr. John Leavitt*

**Decorating the Chrismon Tree**

**Carols of the Season** *arr. Bradley Thoreson*

**Prayers of the People and 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.

# GOD SENDS US TO LIVE THE LOVE OF CHRIST

**\*Hymn 93** ‘Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates’ *TRURO*

**\*Benediction and Three-fold Amen**

**\*Postlude** ‘Prepare the Way, O Zion’ *BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN*

**LEADING WORSHIP TODAY:**

**The Chancel Choir**  
**Bradley Thoreson**, Music Director, Organist  
**Donna Yielding and Lloyd Stanley**, Sound Volunteers  
**Jen Hodges**, Lay Leader  
**Julian Wells**, Guest Preacher

**ASSISTING TODAY:**

**Carol Oakley and Larry Hammond**, Greeters; **Bruce Mackay**, Church Safety Volunteer; **Donna Yielding and Lloyd Stanley**, Sound Volunteers

**ASSISTING NEXT WEEK:**

**Paula Pezdirtz and Linda Wentworth**, Greeters; **Bill Mease**, Church Safety Volunteer

**DURING THIS SEASON OF TRANSITION:**

**If you have a prayer request, please contact Kathy Welsh, Congregational Care Chair**, at 850-866-0019. Your requests will be kept confidential and shared only in the manner you prefer.

**Have an announcement for the bulletin or website?** Please send it to Terri Boardway (firstpresbylh@gmail.com) by noon on Wednesdays so we can keep our church family informed and connected.

**If you are interested in church membership, please speak with Bob Plank, Clerk of Session.** We are eager for you to find your place in the life of First Church!

# GOD CALLS US INTO COMMUNITY

**Welcome to the First Sunday of Advent at First Church!** As we enter this holy season of watching and waiting, we gather to listen for God’s promise, to lift our hearts in hope, and to prepare room for Christ’s coming light. Whether you are a longtime member or visiting with us today, we’re grateful you’re here. May this time of worship open our eyes to grace already unfolding among us and strengthen us to live with anticipation, compassion, and joy in the days ahead.

**Today we celebrate our annual Hanging of the Greens** as we begin the Advent season. During worship, we will decorate the Chrismon tree—an evergreen adorned with white and gold symbols that represent the life and ministry of Christ. These “Chrismons” (from *Christ + monogram*) remind us of the story we tell and the faith we share. After worship, we’ll enjoy fellowship together, and then those who are able are invited to return to the sanctuary to help finish decking our halls for the holiday season. Your hands and presence help make this a joyful time of preparation for Christ’s coming

**We are pleased to welcome back our own Julian Wells as guest preacher and worship leader today.** Julian currently co-leads Coffee and the Word on Sunday mornings.

**Our December Fellowship Tuesdays gathering** will meet this Tuesday, December 2, at 6:00 p.m. at Simply Seafood in Lynn Haven. This monthly outing is a wonderful way to get to know one another and strengthen the bonds of our church community. All are welcome! If you plan to attend, please text Tami Valdez (850-625-8882) no later than Monday, December 1.

**The Presbyterian Women’s Annual Holiday Party**—and festive Sock Exchange—will be held this Saturday, December 6, from 10:00 a.m. to noon in the Fellowship Hall. All women are warmly invited to join us for a joyful morning of sistership, seasonal treats, and plenty of holy hilarity. Come and share in the fun and fellowship as we celebrate the season together!

**Next Sunday, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion.** As we approach this holy meal, we invite you to prepare your hearts to receive the Gifts of God for the People of God. All are welcome at the table of grace—come as you are to share in Christ’s nourishing presence.

**The Session has called a congregational meeting** at the close of worship next Sunday, December 7, for the purpose of receiving the report of the Nominating Committee and electing two new Session members. We look forward to welcoming Rev. Mark Broadhead, who will serve as both our guest preacher and the moderator of the meeting. All are welcome, but only members may vote.



**Stay connected!** Sign up for This Week @ First Church, the Friday e-Alert, worship links, prayer updates, and more by scanning the QR code.

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# 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY of ADVENT

## MORNING WORSHIP

*Hanging of the Greens*

November 30, 2025  
10 AM

ADVENT | CHRISTMAS | EPIPHANY  
LENT | EASTER | PENTECOST