

Long Time Ago
By Natalie Sleeth (1930-1992)

Jesus, Lord, He came to earth a long time ago.
In a stall He had His birth a long time ago. Long ago, long time ago,___
Men have forgotten why He came a long time ago.

Jesus, Lord, He showed the way a long time ago.
People followed Him every day a long time ago.
Long ago, long time ago,___ Jesus lived a long time ago,
Men have forgotten what He taught a long time ago.

Why can’t we all today recall, how He came to earth to save us,
Why Jesus came and how He died to save us all?
Sinners are we who can’t see how so great a thing could be.
For we are blinded by our own humanity. Blessed was He.

Jesus, Lord, He brought us love a long time ago,
Sent to earth by God above a long time ago.
Long ago, a long time ago,___ Jesus lived a long time ago,
And men have forgotten why He came and what He taught
And why He died a long time ago.

About the Anthem:
Natalie Allyn Wakely Sleeth was originally from Evanston, Illinois. She began to study the piano at four years old and went on to earn a BA in music theory at Wellesley College. Natalie later married a Professor of Homiletics, The Reverend Ronald E. Sleeth. She composed an inauguration anthem entitled “Joy in the Morning” for her husband’s inauguration as President of West Virginia Wesleyan College in 1977. Over a million copies of the anthem are in print. Other very popular compositions from Natalie Sleeth include “In the Bulb there is a Flower” (also called “Hymn of Promise”) and “Were You There on That Christmas Night?” While Natalie sadly passed away at age 62 of cancer, her influence continues through her music. She is one of the most popular and prolific composers in our choral library.

This anthem talks about the extraordinary birth and life of Jesus, and how it is far too easy to forget the miracle of Christ coming to earth. Musically, it is very interesting because it uses both canon and countermelody between the two voice parts. The broken chords are accessible on the guitar as well as piano. Because Jesus was sent to earth, had a human birth, showed us the Way, and died to save us – we have eternal hope. Let us not be blinded by our humanity. This Advent season and always may our eyes remain open to the eternal hope and glory of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel – God with us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS	
Today	Please greet your neighbors and pass the Fellowship Pad
Monday December 1	Handbells 5pm
Tuesday December 2	Ladies Dinner 6pm
Wednesday December 3	Wednesday Night Dinner 6pm
Thursday December 4	Thursday Bible Study 10:30am Choir 4pm
Saturday December 6	Sat. Lunch Ministry 11:30am

We will have lasagna garlic bread, salad, a tasty dessert, and tea/coffee for our Wednesday night dinner. Team 3 is in charge. Please use the reservation form in the bulletin or call the office by noon Wednesday if you plan to attend. Our program will be an Advent Music service.

Angel Tree Ministry– Get your Angel between now and Dec. 6th. All gifts are due by Dec. 7th– wrapped please. Thanks for your support!

New Members/Presbyterian 101 Class: December 7th and 14th we will meet in the Westminster Room at 9:45 for a “What does mean to be Presbyterian class?” All are welcome.

The beloved church breakfast sponsored by the Outlook Class will happen on Sunday December 14th between 10:00am and 10:45am. This year please bring finger foods. If you are able to help please speak to a class member. We will meet in Overbey Hall. Everyone is welcome! Plan to come with your family to celebrate the coming of the Christ!

SERVING TODAY	
Minister of Discipleship	Jackson Weller
Music Director	Ashley Stanley-Robey
Sound	Ray Beale
Video	Alex Walthall
Liturgist	Kathy Dolianitis
Greeter	David Clark
Side door/Offering	Gail Jones

List of Session members
Class of 2025: David Clark, Sam Meadema, Eddie Blount, Jackie Rochford
Class of 2026: Barry Cutright, Gail Jones, Kim Wimer, Ava Barrett
Class of 2027: Barbara Wilkins, Joan Reynolds, Pat Pinckney, Kent Shelton
Trustees: Bob Newnam, Ray Beale, Gary Wimer

BUDGET UPDATE		
	October 1-31	FY 2025
Contributions	\$25,335.15	\$360,474.81
Expenditures	\$32,390.90	\$358,685.91
Difference	(-\$7,055.75)	\$ 1,788.90

If you enter the hospital, your church will have no way of knowing unless you notify us. Please let us know of your hospital stay so that we may respond with pastoral care.

A Warm Welcome
We would love to have you join our church family. If you are moved to do so by the Lord, please talk to one of the elders or our pastor.

THE COLUMNS
OF THE

First Presbyterian Church

Danville, Virginia

November 30, 2025

First Sunday of Advent



Welcome

This church opens wide its doors and offers welcome in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Celebrating 198 Years of Knowing Christ
and Making Him Known*

First Presbyterian Church
937 Main Street, Danville, VA 24541-1809—434-792-7822
E-Mail: admin@fpcdanville.com
Website: http://www.fpcdanville.com

A Service for the Worship of God

GATHER TO GLORIFY GOD

Please greet your neighbors and pass the Fellowship Pad to them.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

Yiddish folk tune, arr. Wayne L. Wold

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE “Hope”

Choir

Leader: Today is the first Sunday of Advent, in which we recall the hope we have in Christ. God told Abraham that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed, because he trusted and put his hope in God. The Old Testament spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a Savior would be born, a king in the line of King David. He would rule the world wisely and bless all the nations. We too believe in God’s promise to send Jesus again to this world to establish his kingdom upon the earth. [The Candle is lit.] Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at the light of this candle, we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Let us pray:

All: God of Abraham and Sarah and all the Patriarchs of old, you are our Father too. Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Son of David. Help us in preparing to celebrate His birth, to make our hearts ready, and to place our hope in You. Help us today and every day to worship You, to hear Your word, and to do Your will by sharing Your hope with others. We ask it in the name of the One Who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Matthew 24:36-44)

Leader: Keep awake. Be ready. For the Son of Man is coming.

People: Thanks be to God! We will worship and prepare.

*HYMN# 82 “Come, Thou Long– Expected Jesus”

INVOCATION

Lord, we surrender ourselves to You today, asking for a spirit of humility to reign in our hearts. Remove any distractions that may hinder our worship and allow us to focus solely on You. May Your grace fill us, and may our hearts be open to the transforming power of Your love. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Prince of Peace, the wars and rumors of wars betray our addiction to violence, our destructive and dehumanizing ways. We deserve your judgement and condemnation. Yet, you remain faithful, a steadfast source of peace amid our warring madness. Holy God, turn us from evil. Return us to Christ and his path of peace. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Amen.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (2 Corinthians 5:17; Book of Common Worship)
“Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun.” Know that you are forgiven and be at peace. Amen.

SIGNS OF RECONCILIATION

The peace of Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us the children of God, having confessed our sins and been reconciled to God, having been assured of God's graciousness and mercy, stand and offer that same peace and reconciliation to our brothers and sisters in Christ, forgiving each other and offering grace and peace.

Please remain standing for the “Gloria Patri.”

***RESPONSE** *“Gloria Patri”*
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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING (2 Peter 3:8-15)

“All things in heaven and earth belong to God, who is coming in glory to reveal a new creation.” Let us present our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Christ calls us to live generous and grateful lives. Take these gifts we offer today, O God, and use them to the fulfillment of Christ’s ministry. May these gifts help to free the captives, heal the sick, comfort the lonely, feed the hungry, heal the wounded. As Christ’s hands and feet, use us too, in service to building your beloved community. Amen.

OFFERTORY **"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**
Arrs. by James Engel and Paul Manz

***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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

ANTHEM **"Long Time Ago"**
by Natalie Sleeth | Gregory Robey, guitar

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Savior God, guide us by your Word and Spirit that we might hear your truth, heed your call and be prepared for Christ’s coming this Christmas. Amen.

LECTIONARY SCRIPTURES:

(510/484)	Isaiah 2:1-5
(845/804)	Romans 13:11-14
(738/701)	Matthew 24:36-44

SERMON **“Awake to Hope”** **Jackson Weller**

***HYMN# 384** **“Soon and Very Soon”**

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** **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.

POSTLUDE **"O Tannenbaum"**
German carol, arr. Vince Guaraldi

*BENEDICTION

***Please stand if able.**
***Hymn lyrics projected on the screen can be found in the “Glory to God” hymnal in the pew.**