

relationships matter

GOD • ONE ANOTHER • WORLD



# Spring Branch Presbyterian Church

## Who's Who:

Minister: All Members of the Church  
 Pastor: Rev. Mark Plunkett  
 Administrator: Jorida Vakiari  
 Ministries Coordinator: C. Miguel Carlin  
 Administrative Assistant: Ethan Mitchell  
 Music Director: Gabriel Perez  
 Accompanist: Jonathan Craft  
 AV Director: Ethan Mitchell  
 AV Technician: Ben Dethloff  
 Academy Director: Renee Henry

## Ministry Teams:

Administration Leader: Jacquie Ballesteros  
 Congregation Leader: Kay Craig  
 Faith Development Leader: Kathryn Dethloff  
 Mission Leader:  
 Worship Leader: Donald McDaniel  
 Treasurer: Neal Dikeman

## The Session

Clerk: Elizabeth Powell

Moderator: Rev. Mark Plunkett

## Class of 2024

Charles Fairchild  
 Glenn Lanan  
 Donald McDaniel  
 Jennifer Miller

## Class of 2025

Jacquie Ballesteros  
 Kathryn Dethloff  
 Stephen Earnest

## Class of 2026

Kay Craig  
 Sarah Dikeman  
 Ethan Mitchell

## Academy Board

Laurie Mitchell  
 Jani Shepard

Jim Kunkel  
 Web Trevathan

Neal Dikeman  
 Ashley Powell

## Serving today in Worship:

**Liturgist:** Jan Fitts  
**Children's Moment:** Jan Fitts  
**Usher Captain:** Donald McDaniel  
**PowerPoint:** Patty Blome

*e-mail:* [churchoffice@springbranchpres.org](mailto:churchoffice@springbranchpres.org)  
*website:* [www.springbranchpres.org](http://www.springbranchpres.org)  
[www.facebook.com/springbranchpres](https://www.facebook.com/springbranchpres)  
*Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM*  
*CCLI Streaming License # 20797349*  
*CCLI License # 11266777*  
 1215 Campbell Rd  
 Houston, TX 77055  
 713-464-7659



*“Voices From Bethlehem:  
 The Baptist Knows”  
 December 10, 2023*

**2nd Sunday of Advent**

**December 10, 2023**

10:50 AM

*\*Those who are able please stand*

**God's People Connect**

**WELCOME AND NEWS OF THE CHURCH**

*(Please sign the Friendship Book located in the pew rack next to the center aisle.)*

**PRELUDE**

**THE LIGHT OF CHRIST ENTERS THE SANCTUARY**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Listen to the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

Leader: The time is coming, John the Baptist tells us. Now is the time to prepare for the coming of the Christ child.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

Leader: Make the rough places smooth. Straighten the crooked places. Prepare all the paths so that hope may find its way.

**People: Prepare the way of the Lord.**

**ALL: Make room for the Holy One. Empty out a space in the inn, in the stable, in the corners of our hearts. Make room in the busyness, in the crowds, in our filled-up, frantic lives.**

**\*HYMN** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" GTG, No. 88

**Preparing for the Word**

**THE CANDLE OF PEACE** Gary, Laurie, and Ethan Mitchell, Emily and Adam Turner

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (v. 2) GTG, No. 85

*Light two candles to watch for Messiah:  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
gently lead them homeward.*

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION**

Leader: In this season of waiting, in this time of preparation, we long to draw closer to God, as a comfort and as our Savior. Often, we get in our own way; we make choices that trip us up as we move toward God. So then, let us make our confession:

**Calendar of Events**

www.springbranchpres.org/church-calendar

**December 10 — 2nd Sunday of Advent**

- 9:15 am Church Nursery
- 9:30 am Sunday School
- 9:30 am Children's Chime Choir (S)
- 9:45 am Choir Practice (Choir Room)
- 10:20 am Called Session Meeting (P)
- 10:50 am Worship
- 12:00 pm Monthly Birthday Celebration
- 12:15 pm Ambassador Group Meeting (CR)
- 6:00 pm Advent Party (FH)

**December 11 — Monday**

- 5:30 pm Academy Board Meeting (CR)
- 6:00 pm Special Olympics: Volleyball\* (GP)
- 6:30 pm Cub Scouts: Webelos II (GP 1 & 2)
- 7:00 pm Boy Scouts Court of Honor (FH)

**December 12 — Tuesday**

- 10:00 am Flexercise (GP)
- 6:00 pm Basketball (GP)
- 6:00 pm Cub Scouts: Webelos (GP 1 & 2)
- 6:30 pm Fellowship Meeting (CR)

**December 13 — Wednesday**

- 9:30 am PW Circle (CR)
- 5:00 pm Girl Scouts (GP 1, 2, 3)
- 5:30 pm Academy Christmas Pageant (S)
- 6:00 pm WNS: Chicken Tenders!

**December 14 — Thursday**

- 10:00 am Flexercise (GP)
- 6:00 pm Cub Scouts: Bear (GP 1)
- 6:00 pm Fairbees Square Dance\* (GP)

**December 15 — Friday**

- 7:00 pm CENTI Youth Program\* (YR)

**December 16 — Saturday**

- 8:00 am Presbyterian Men (CR)
- 6:00 pm CENTI Church Service\* (GP)

**December 17 — 3rd Sunday of Advent**

- 9:15 am Church Nursery
- 9:30 am Sunday School
- 9:30 am Children's Sunday School (GP 3)
- 9:45 am Choir Practice (Choir Room)
- 10:50 am Worship
- 4:00 pm Cub Scouts: Tiger Cub (GP 1 & 2)
- 5:00 pm Blue Christmas Service (S)

**December 18 — Monday**

- 10:00 am The Gathering Place
- 12:00 pm Staff Meeting (P)
- 6:00 pm Special Olympics: Volleyball\* (GP)
- 7:00 pm Horizon's Bible Study on Zoom
- 7:00 pm Boy Scouts (Scout Hut)

**December 19 — Tuesday**

- 10:00 am Flexercise (GP)
- 6:00 pm Basketball (GP)
- 6:00 pm Cub Scouts: Wolf (GP 1 & 2)

**December 20 — Wednesday**

**PresPress Articles Due**

**December 21 — Thursday**

- 10:00 am Flexercise (GP)
- 7:00 pm Rainbow's End Meeting\* (GP 2)

**December 22 — Friday**

- 6:30 pm SBM Arc Meeting\* (FH)

**December 23 — Saturday**

- 11:00 am Hot Meals
- 6:00 pm CENTI Church Service\* (GP)

\*Outside SBPC Reservations & Events  
(CR) Conference Room  
(FH) Fellowship Hall  
(GP) Gathering Place  
(L) Library  
(P) Parlor  
(S) Sanctuary



# Announcements & Events:

**December Birthday Celebration** - Join friends and congregation members in the Breezeway immediately after worship today as we celebrate our December birthdays. We will have light snacks and birthday treats.

**Please join us for the annual Advent Party tonight at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall.** There will be singing, games, crafts, great food, and more! We are also expecting a special guest from the North Pole! Please bring party food to share for dinner: appetizers, small sandwiches, pizza, chicken nuggets, dessert, etc. Please bring enough for your family. Drinks will be provided. Wear your Christmas best—we will have lots of photo opportunities! Bring an ornament for the ornament exchange, and a can of food for Fair Haven or our Angel Tree Families. We hope to see you there!

**Dust off your halos—It's Angel Tree time again!** Tags will be available starting today, December 10th, and again on the 13th. Be sure to pick up one or two! The deadline for returning gifts is December 17th. In addition to the gifts, each family receives a basket of food. Please pick up some kid friendly, non-perishable food items from the store and we will begin to set it aside for our Angel Tree families.

One of our long-time Missions in December is the **PCHAS Ornament Tree.** During Advent time, we hang ornaments on a Christmas tree. Each of the ornaments has a PCHAS tag attached with a suggested donation amount. You take the ornament home with you and leave the donation in the basket provided. *(If you pay by check, please make checks payable to SBPC and put "PCHAS Ornament Tree" in the memo line.)*

**Join us for our last Wednesday Night Supper of the school year, this Wednesday,** December 13th, at 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. On the menu are Chicken Tenders! Please email Kay Craig at [kay@craig-heidt.com](mailto:kay@craig-heidt.com) to place your dinner order. We hope to see you there!

**The Academy Christmas Pageant is Wednesday, December 13th** at 5:30 PM in the Sanctuary. All are invited to attend! A light cookie and punch reception will immediately follow in the Breezeway.

**The PW Day Circle** will meet on Wednesday, December 13th, at 9:30 AM in the Conference Room. Please contact Patti Nanney if you'd like to attend via Zoom. A salad luncheon will follow in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a salad to share. The **Evening Bible Study** will meet on Monday, December 18th at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Please contact Sarah or Ashely Powell if you are interested in attending. The Lesson 4 video is available at the following link: [www.springbranchpres.org/adult-education/presbyterian-women/sacred-encounters](http://www.springbranchpres.org/adult-education/presbyterian-women/sacred-encounters).

**Copies our Advent Devotional for this year, "The Light of Grace: Welcoming God's Amazing Gift of Christ"** are available for pickup from the Narthex, Parlor, and Church Office. *"In honor of the 250th anniversary of the hymn 'Amazing Grace,' these devotions enlighten the heart, mind, and soul with the good news that the Light of the World graces us with his presence every day of our lives."*

**Please don't forget to turn in your Pledge Card and Time & Talent Pledge.** You can find blank copies in the Narthex, Church Office, or Parlor. There is a box in the Narthex for submitting cards. Cards can also be mailed to the Church Office, to the attention of Jorida. Thank you for your continued commitment!

**Poinsettias are available for purchase again this year.** A sign-up sheet is located in the Church Office & Narthex to place your order until Thursday, December 21st. Remember to indicate who you are honoring, and/or remembering, with your payment of \$10 to SBPC, which you can drop off in the Church Office, or during Worship in the offering plate.

**Please turn in all outstanding receipts for reimbursement** to Jorida in the church office no later than this Friday, December 15th.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (*unison*)

**Holy God, our hearts are often breaking, and we don't know whether to shout in rage or keep silent in fear. We take our rage and fear and regret and grief out on others, and we know that is wrong. We act selfishly; we consume and hoard and haggle, and we know that is not what you ask of us in this sacred time. Help us. Mend our hearts. Hear our voices. Comfort us in our grief and anger. Open our hands so that we will share in our sorrow and joy, in our hope and despair. Come to us again, we pray, and make us ready to receive you in true peace. Amen.**

**SILENT CONFESSION**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Leader: Friends in Christ, hear the Good News! God could not love you any more than God loves you at this very moment. You are that beloved. Know that wrapped in that love is grace and forgiveness, and a call to go out into the world to love and to bring peace to everyone you meet. Alleluia! Amen.

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**\*GLORIA** "Angels We Have Heard on High" (v. 1) GTG, No. 113

*Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.  
Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo! Glo-ri-a in excelsis Deo!*

**God's People Are Empowered**

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT** Jan Fitts

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION** (*unison*)

**Blessed Spirit, come into our hearts, and increase our love for one another by the reading and hearing of your sacred Word. Amen.**

**FIRST SCRIPTURE LESSON** Mark 1:1-8 Red Pew Bible NT 34

**ANTHEM** "Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord" Choir

**SECOND SCRIPTURE LESSON** Matthew 11:2-6 Red Pew Bible NT 11

**SERMON** "Voices From Bethlehem: The Baptist Knows"  
Rev. Mark Plunkett

**Responding to the Word**

**\*HYMN** "He Came Down" (v. 1, 2, 3) GTG, No. 137

**\*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 DISCIPLESHIP**

**PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS**

**OFFERTORY**

**\*RESPONSE** *"God's Love Made Visible"* LUYH, No. 140

*God's love made visible! Incomprehensible! He is invincible! His love shall reign!  
From love so bountiful, blessings uncountable, make death surmountable! His love shall reign!  
Joyfully pray for peace and good will. All of our yearning he will fulfill.  
Live in a loving way. Praise him for ev'ry day. Open your hearts and pray. His love shall reign!*

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (*unison*)  
Let the promise of your second coming inspire us to live with hope and purpose. As we wait for your plan to unfold in your good time, give us the patience we need. Remind us of the peace we can access when we take time to still ourselves before you and remember that you alone are God. Amen.

**SHARING OF PRAYER CONCERNS**

**PASTORAL PRAYER 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.

**Departing to Serve**

**\*HYMN** *"Jesus, Name Above All Names"* LUYH, No. 39

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*THE LIGHT OF CHRIST GOES OUT INTO THE WORLD**

**\*POSTLUDE**

Spring Branch Presbyterian Church  
**Celebrate Advent and Christmas with Us!**



**Sunday, December 10, 10:50 am**  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent Worship*  
*"Voices from Bethlehem: The Baptist Knows"*

**Sunday, December 10, 6:00 pm**  
*Advent Party in the Fellowship Hall*  
*Come for food, fellowship, an ornament exchange, music, and crafts!*

**Wednesday, December 13, 5:30 pm**  
*"Santa's Workshop" Academy Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary*  
*Last WNS of 2023, 6:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall*

**Sunday, December 17, 10:50 am**  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent Worship*  
*Choir Cantata*

**Sunday, December 17, 5:00 pm**  
*Blue Christmas Worship in the Sanctuary*  
*"Voices from Bethlehem: A God Who Cares"*

**Sunday, December 24**  
*Brunch in the Fellowship Hall, 10:00 am*  
*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Worship, 10:50 am in the Sanctuary*  
*"Voices from Bethlehem: The Angel Gabriel Witnesses"*

**Sunday, December 24, 6:00 pm**  
*Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve Service*  
*Cookies & Hot Chocolate in the Breezeway at 5:30 pm*  
*"Voices from Bethlehem: The Innkeeper's Wife Speaks"*  
*"Voice from Bethlehem: A Shepherd Speaks"*

**Sunday, December 31, 10:50 am**  
*The Baptism of the Lord*  
*"Voices from Bethlehem: Simeon and Anna Rejoice"*

**Epiphany Sunday, January 7, 10:50 am**  
*"Voices from Bethlehem: The Magi's Witness"*

