



# SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, September 17, 2023, 10:30 A.M.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

## FOR WORSHIP

*In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples that even after many wrongs have been done, future relationship is possible through forgiveness. Following Jesus is not about keeping track of wrongs but about extending great mercy. Jesus's parable highlights the expectation of his disciples to extend mercy because of the exceptional mercy that has been extended first to them. Paul emphasizes in his letter to the church in Rome that passing judgement on fellow disciples, be that through unforgiveness or despising another's opinions, is not following the way of the Crucified and Resurrected Christ for in the end "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God."*

## PRELUDE

*Fantasia in C*

Johann Sebastian Bach

*Before Thy Throne I Now Appear*

Johann Sebastian Bach

Janice Robison, organist

## WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Robert Martin

## CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Adrienne Nagy

*L: How good it is to thank our God and speak our Savior's name,*

**P: with choir, organ, heart, and voice, God's wonders to proclaim!**

*L: Let us worship God!*

## \*HYMN 463

*Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*

CHRIST WHOSE GLORY

**1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies;  
Christ, the true, the only light;  
Sun of Righteousness, arise;  
triumph o'er the shades of night;  
Dayspring from on high, be near;  
Daystar, in my heart appear.**

**2 Dark and cheerless is the morn  
unaccompanied by thee;  
joyless is the day's return  
till thy mercy's beams I see;  
till they inward light impart,  
cheer my eyes and warm my heart.**

**3 Visit then this soul of mine;  
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;  
fill me, radiance divine;  
scatter all my unbelief;  
more and more thyself display,  
shining to the perfect day.**

## \*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Liturgist Nagy

**God of Mystery, we want to be ready for your surprises, but sometimes we are tired and dulled by the usual routine. We want to work patiently for the fulfillment of your reign, but we can get frustrated by our desire for immediate results. We want to trust your promises from ancient days, but some of us are overwhelmed by doubts. Forgive us, O God, and break us open again. Awaken us with your unexpected grace. Shock us with your daring mercy. Lift us up from numbness and apathy and set our feet on your way once more. Amen.**

## \*DECLARATION OF PARDON

*L: Friends, believe the good news.*

**P: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

## \*Gloria Patri - 579

*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 and Amen.*

*We are glad to have you join us for worship. If you are new to First, it is our prayer that you will experience the presence of God while you are here. At First, it is our hope that all who enter find a home.*

*In the presence of a holy God, we become aware of the ways we fall short of God's best hopes for us, and the ways we have hurt others. We turn to God in prayer, asking for forgiveness.*

*We express gratitude that through of himself on the cross we are forgiven and restored to God and one another.*

Passing of the Peace is one of the most ancient responses in worship. We invite you to share a sign of peace with your neighbor.

## \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

*L: The peace of Christ be with you.*

**P: And also with you!**

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Richard Nease

## CHORAL ANTHEM

*The Lord's My Shepherd*

Lloyd Larson

*The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want; He makes me down to lie in pastures green;*

*He leadeth me the quiet waters by.*

*My soul He doth restore again, and me to walk doth make within the paths of righteousness, e'en for His own name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear no ill; for Thou art with me, and Thy rod and staff me comfort still.*

*My table Thou hast furnished in presence of my foes; my head Thou dost oil anoint, and my cup overflows.*

*Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me, and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.*

## PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Nagy

**Almighty God, you search us and know us: as we search to know and understand you through your word, help us to rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### SCRIPTURE Matthew 18:21-35 (page 20 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Nagy

Romans 14:1-12 (page 163 in pew Bible)

Rev. Martin

*L. This is the Word of the Lord!*

**P: Thanks be to God!**

### SERMON

*Belonging*

Rev. Robert Martin

### \*HYMN 388

*O Jesus, I Have Promised*

ANGEL'S STORY

**1 O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
be thou forever near me,  
my Master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
if thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if thou wilt be my guide.**

**2 O let me feel thee near me!  
The world is ever near:  
I see the sights that dazzle;  
the tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me,  
around me and within;  
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer  
and shield my soul from sin.**

**3 O let me hear thee speaking  
in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
thou guardian of my soul.**

**4 O Jesus, thou hast promised  
to all who follow thee  
that where thou art in glory**

The sermon is a reflection on the day's scriptures, suggesting implications for our faith and life.

there shall thy servant be.  
And, Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow,  
my Master and my friend.

## RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

**MINUTE FOR MISSION** (CROP Walk)

Danny Moates

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER**

Response – #586 "Amen"

**THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY** *O My Soul Be Glad and Joyful*

Janice Robison, organist

Johann Walther

**\*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** (unison)

Liturgist Nagy

Lord, you have blessed our lives in so many ways. In gratitude for all these blessings  
and in confidence that our gifts will be used for ministries of peace and hope, we offer  
these gifts. Amen.

**\*HYMN 281**

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

CWM RHONDDA

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty.  
Hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more;  
feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow.  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield;  
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside.  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to thee;  
I will ever give to thee.

**\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Response – #585 "Amen"

**POSTLUDE**

*Ricercar*

Giovanni Gabrieli

Janice Robison, organist

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**Deacon of the Month For September - Wendy Toadvine**

740-590-3280 or wtoadvine@gmail.com - *A friend to phone with joys or concerns*

Ushers: Nancy Hartley and Kim Jordan      Chancel Prep: Kim Jordan

Fellowship: Margaret Bourke and Martha Johnson

**This Afternoon, September 17th at 1:00 p.m.** – The Lindley Hymn Sing. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please contact Richard or Joan Nease or the church office.

**September 20th - Presbyterian Women** meet the third Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be September 20th at the Wyngate at 10:00 a.m. See newsletter for more details. All women of the church are invited. Contact Lillian Dinos for more info - l\_dinos@yahoo.com

**November 18th and 19th - Presbytery Youth Retreat** - Save the dates - registration will be available in late summer for this event at Camp Akita in Logan, Ohio. The Presbytery of Scioto Valley will be inviting middle school and high school Youth to participate.

**Women's Book Study** - Join the Women's Book Study on Fridays, noon via Zoom. Attendees are discussing "Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again by Rachel Held Evans, an Episcopal priest. For more info, please contact Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org

**Mission Outreach Committee Diaper Project** - This Diaper Project will benefit some of the Mission Partners here in Athens: Athens County Food Pantry and Cat's Cupboard. There is a box in the Narthex for donations of diapers. Monetary donations can be made by placing in the brown envelopes and marking "diapers".

**After-Church Fellowship** - Are you willing to host Fellowship Time after the church service some Sunday? If so, please add your name to the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. During the week prior to your Sunday, you will receive a letter with full instructions. No cooking skills are required, and simple snacks are fine. You may turn in your grocery store receipt to the FPC office to be reimbursed for your expenses. Thank you!

**From the Board of Deacons** - Each Sunday a "Deacon of the Month" is listed in the bulletin, and you are encouraged to contact that person with any needs a Deacon might be able to help with. Deacon members strive to be aware of congregational members who have challenges or concerns, and try to check on those people. Deacons also are aware that there may be congregational members, with or without particular needs, who would appreciate a phone call, a visit, or prayers. All Deacons welcomes any opportunity to provide contact, care, and assistance to church members and friends.

**Children's Sunday School** - Grade school and pre-school children are invited to attend Sunday School during Worship. If you have questions or would like to help with a class, please contact the church office at 740-593-3351 or Barb Martin at barbamartin729@msn.com. Lesson plans and materials will be provided for all volunteer teachers. Class sizes are usually small in number.

#### **Upcoming Fall Plans - More details in later newsletters and bulletins**

October 8th - Trip to the Libby's Pumpkin Patch, Albany, following the worship service.

October 22nd - Pumpkin Decorating during Fellowship Time.

Date TBA.....Uptown Trick or Treat – give out small treats to trick or treaters.

November 18th and 19th - Presbytery Youth Retreat for middle school and high school youth at Camp Akita in Logan, Ohio. Registration will be available in late summer.

#### **Weekly Worship Service can be seen**

##### **live on Sunday**

##### **Morning**

FPC's worship services can be found on YouTube channel here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/athensfpc/search?query=sermon>

You can access them on the FPC YouTube channel and on the church web site under Worship Archive.

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Minister: Rev. Robert E. Martin  
CE Coordinators: Richard and Joan Nease  
Organist: Janice Robison

Clerk of Session: Andrew Stuart  
Administrative Assistant/Financial Secretary: Jane Baker  
Choir Director: David Tadlock

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