



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.

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, November 12, 2023, 10:30 A.M.

FOR WORSHIP

As the liturgical year draws to a close, this morning's Scripture readings instruct us to be prepared for the second coming of Christ. In Joshua, the tribes of Israel renew their covenant before the Lord, while the apostle Paul teaches of Christ's return, which heralds the resurrection of the dead. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus teaches the parable of the ten bridesmaids. He warns us to remain faithful to him and alert to his coming, so we are not caught unprepared.

PRELUDE

*Prelude on a Theme of Gustav Holst
Prelude on the Hymn Tune "Rhosymedre"*
Janice Robison, organist

Charles Callahan
Ralph Vaughan Williams

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Robert Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Hugh Woods

L: In the beginning, before time, before people, before the world began,

P: God was.

L: Here and now among us, beside us, enlisting the people of earth for the purposes of heaven,

P: God is.

L: In the future, when we have turned to dust and all we know has found its fulfillment,

P: God will be.

L: Not denying the world, but delighting in it, not condemning the world, but redeeming it, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit,

P: God was. God is. God will be.

L: Let us worship God!

*HYMN 460

Holy God, We Praise Your Name

GROSSER GOTT, WIR LOBEN DICH

**1 Holy God, we praise your name;
Lord of all, we bow before you.
All on earth your scepter claim;
all in heaven above adore you.
Infinite your vast domain,
everlasting is your reign.**

**2 Hark! The glad celestial hymn
angel choirs above are raising;
cherubim and seraphim,
in unceasing chorus praising,
fill the heavens with sweet accord:
"Holy, holy, holy Lord!"**

**3 All apostles join the strain
as your sacred name they hallow;
prophets swell the glad refrain,
and the blessed martyrs follow,
and from morn to set of sun,
through the church the song goes on.**

**4 Holy Father, Holy Son,
Holy Spirit: three we name you,
while in essence only one;
undivided God we claim you,
and adoring, bend the knee
while we own the mystery.**

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Liturgist Woods

O most gracious God, you are the source of all that makes life possible. You are the giver of all that makes life good. We gather this morning to give you thanks, yet we

also confess that we have often failed to live our thankfulness. We take things and people for granted. We grumble about what we lack. We easily become a fear-shaped people, rather than a people shaped by our hope in you. Forgive us, O God. In this time of worship, accept our thanksgiving and teach us to make gratitude and sharing our way of life; through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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

*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.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you!

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.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Puppets

CHORAL ANTHEM

Esurientes implevit bonis from Magnificat

Brianna Stokes, mezzo-soprano

John Rutter

*Esurientes implevit bonis;
et divites dimisit inanes.*

*Susecepit Israel puerum suum,
recordatus misericordiae suae.*

*Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros,
Abraham et semini eius in saecula.*

*He hath filled the hungry with good things;
And the rich he hath sent away empty.*

*He, remembering his mercy, .
hath helped his servant Israel.*

*As he promised to our forefathers,
To Abraham and his seed forever.*

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Woods

God of glory, may we with all creation rejoice to sing your praise: send your Spirit now to illuminate your holy word, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE I Thessalonians 4:13-18 (pages 204, 205 in pew Bible) Matthew 25:1-12 (page 28 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Woods

Rev. Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Ready or Not, Here I Come

Rev. Robert Martin

*HYMN 17

"Sleepers, Wake!" A Voice Astounds Us

WACHET AUF

1 "Sleepers, wake!" A voice astounds us;
the shout of rampart guards surrounds us:
"Awake, Jerusalem, arise!"

Midnight's peace their cry has broken,
their urgent summons clearly spoken:

"The time has come, O maidens wise!

Rise up, and give us light;
the Bridegroom is in sight.

Alleluia!

Your lamps prepare and hasten there,
that you the wedding feast may share."

2 Zion hears the watchmen singing;
her heart with joyful hope is springing;
she wakes and hurries through the night.
Forth he comes, her Bridegroom glorious
in strength of grace, in truth victorious:
her star is risen, her light grows bright.

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

Now come, most worthy Lord,
 God's Son, incarnate Word,
 Alleluia!
 We follow all and heed your call
 to come into the banquet hall.

3 Lamb of God, the heavens adore you;
 let saints and angels sing before you,
 as harps and cymbals swell the sound.
 Twelve great pearls, the city's portals:
 through them we stream to join the immortals
 as we with joy your throne surround.
 No eye has known the sight,
 no ear heard such delight:
 Alleluia!
 Therefore we sing to greet our King;
 for ever let our praises ring.

On behalf of the congregation, the Pastor expresses the corporate prayers of the congregation. These prayers are for world, local and personal concerns.

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.

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Martin

Response – #586 "Amen"

THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY *O God of Mercy, God of Light*

David Cherwien

Janice Robison, organist

***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 Woods
Make us thankful each day, O God, for the gifts that come upon us from your bounty. Guide us to use these offerings to your glory for the health of your people and this creation. Amen.

*HYMN

Soon and Very Soon

1 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
 2 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 3 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 4 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.
 No more cry - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 No more dy - ing there: we are going to see the King.
 Soon and ver - y soon we are going to see the King.

Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're going to see the King!

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.

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Response – #585 “Amen”

POSTLUDE

Postlude in G
Janice Robison, organist

Henry Kihlken

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**Deacon of the Month of November – Bobbi Conliffe**

740-707-7461 or conliffb@ohio.edu - *A friend to phone with joys or concerns*

Ushers: Mary Costello and Martha Johnson Chancel Prep: Mary Costello  
Fellowship: Lee Gregg  
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Poinsettias - If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory of or in honor of someone for decorating the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season, please notify the church office at 740-593-3351 or email office@athensfpc.org; phone 740-593-3351. Price per flower is \$10.00 and choice of color is on a first come-first served basis. An insert with “In memory of” or “In honor of” will be in the bulletin. Please specify if you want to pick up the flower after the Christmas Eve service or donate it to the Deacons for distribution. Please send your check to 9 North College Street, Athens OH 45701, or place it in the offertory plate with “Poinsettia” in the memo line.

The deadline to order flowers is November 20th.

NEXT Sunday, November 19th - Piano Duet Recital, Following the Worship Service - Joyce Beauvais and Janice Robison will play a piano duet recital Sunday. The program will be Christmas music to get you in the mood for the holidays. All are invited to stay for this thirty-minute recital.

Advent Devotional Submissions are due NEXT Sunday, November 19th.

Thursday, November 23rd - Thanksgiving Day at 2:00 p.m. - There will be a Church Potluck dinner at 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Contact Harvey Ballard, Andrew Stuart or the church office for more info, and to let them know if you plan to attend. Turkey will be provided.

Women’s Book Study - Join the Women’s Book Study on Fridays, noon via Zoom. This week wraps up discussion on “Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again by Rachel Held Evans, an Episcopal priest. In January, the book study group will begin discussion on “Holy Envy” by Barbara Taylor Brown. Contact Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org for more info.

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”.

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 or Barb Martin at barbaramartin729@msn.com or the church office at 740-593-3351. Lesson plans and materials will be provided for all volunteer teachers. Class sizes are usually small in number.

Minister: Rev. Robert E. Martin Clerk of Session: Andrew Stuart
CE Coordinators: Richard and Joan Nease Administrative Assistant/Financial Secretary: Jane Baker
Organist: Janice Robison Bell Choir Director: Anna Crum Choir Director: David Tadlock

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