



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*Please rise in body or spirit.

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.

FOR WORSHIP

In this morning's scripture reading from James, the brother of Jesus teaches on the outworkings of the Christian life. The Christian acknowledges that every generous act and perfect gift is from God. Out of the power of the implanted word of God in our hearts, we must be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Our new lives in Christ will reject wickedness and instead embrace the righteousness and generosity of God through loving one another, especially the most vulnerable. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus warns us not to offer vain worship with lips that honor him but hearts that are far away. Jesus calls us to a whole-hearted relationship with him that is transformative in its love.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

Thee We Adore, O Blessed Savior
A Meditation on "Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether"
"The Peace may be exchanged" from Rubrics
Janice Robison, organist

Healey Willan
Gerre Hancock
Dan Locklair

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Keith Morrow

L: For the joy of human company, shared songs, and spoken prayers,

P: thanks be to God.

L: For a place that spans the ages and is a home to all who gather,

P: thanks be to God.

L: For the wonder of life, and the decision of God to come among us,

P: thanks be to God.

L: Let us worship God!

*HYMN 473

For the Beauty of the Earth

DIX

**1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:**

Refrain:

**Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our hymn of grateful praise.**

**2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon, and stars of light: (Refrain)**

**3 For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight: (Refrain)**

**4 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild: (Refrain)**

**5 For thyself, best gift divine
to the world so freely given;
for that great, great love of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heaven: (Refrain)**

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.

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

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Liturgist Morrow

All-providing God, you call us to cloak ourselves in your strength and grace, but we are guilty of girding ourselves with lies instead of the truth. We try to protect ourselves with arrogance, superstition, and self-reliance instead of righteousness, faith, and compassion. Our footsteps do not follow your path of peace, and we are quick to use your story to attack one another, instead of offering it as a gift to heal the wounded soul. Forgive us, holy God. Gift us with the wisdom and strength to trust in your love as the power to transform ourselves and our world. 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.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you!

We invite you to greet those around you, wishing them "peace" or "the peace of Christ."

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Richard Nease

ANTHEM

There is a Balm in Gilead

Traditional Spiritual/arr. Howard Helvey

There is a balm in Gilead, to make the wounded whole;

There is a balm in Gilead, to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,

But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,

You can tell the love of Jesus, and say "He died for all."

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Morrow

Loving God, by your Spirit grant us meekness to receive the implanted word that has the power to save our souls; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE James 1: 17-27 (page 543 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Morrow

Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23 (page 195 in pew Bible)

Rev. Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Can the Rules Change?

Rev. Martin

*HYMN 339

Be Thou My Vision

SLANE

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

3 Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
thou, mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

4 High King of Heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS & PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Martin

Choral Response #585: *The congregation is invited to sing along with the chancel choir.*

THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY

Children of the Heavenly Father

Robert Lau

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 Morrow

Gracious God, every good and perfect gift comes from you. In thanksgiving for all your blessings, we open our hands to give back to you. Receive these gifts as an expression of our love and as a dedication of the greater gift of our lives to your service. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION

GREAT THANKSGIVING

L: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them to the Lord.

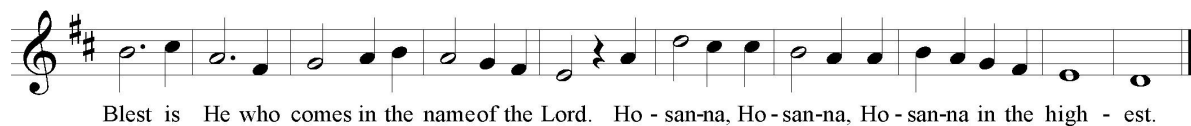
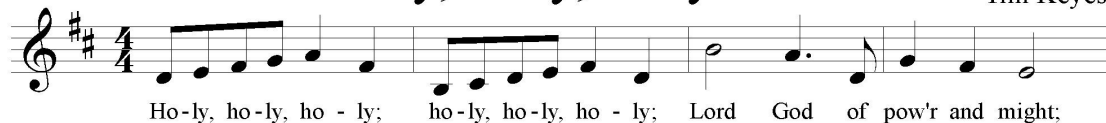
L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

L: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, eternal God..... Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Tim Keyes



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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Words of Institution

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (In Unison)

Holy Spirit, you have filled us with your life. Christ our Savior, you have embraced us in your love. God our parent, you have fed us with your grace. Now send us out into your beloved world to share your life, your love, your grace with all. Amen.

***HYMN 276**

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

FAITHFULNESS

1 *Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changest not; thy compassions they fail not.
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:
Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
(Refrain)

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
(Refrain)

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Choral Response #586: The congregation is invited to sing along with the chancel choir.

POSTLUDE

Postlude

Matthew Lundquist

Janice Robison, organist

Deacon of the Month of September- Bobbi Conliffe

- A friend to phone with joys or concerns

Communion Prep: Ellen Sostarich and Kim Jordan

Ushers: Riley Smoot and Kim Jordan

Fellowship Hour:

Sunday School during Worship. If you have questions or would like to help with a class, please contact 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.

Women's Book Study - Join the Women's Book Study on Fridays at noon via Zoom beginning September 6th, 2024 as we discuss *Beguiled by Beauty: Cultivating a Life of Contemplation and Compassion* by Wendy Farley. For more information or to join, please contact the church office at 740-593-3351 or Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org

THE AFPC COLLEGE LUNCH begins it's fall schedule September 5 with Pastor Rob cooking the main dish. The organizers are once again reaching out to the church family to help with this local mission work. Whether you're willing to provide a main dish, usually soup or a casserole, or dessert, it will be welcomed by the staff and the students who so enjoy and appreciate our home cooked meals. Please contact the office or Lee Gregg (tleegregg@gmail.com) for more information.

Minister: Rev. Dr. Robert E. Martin

Clerk of Session: Andrew Stuart

CE Coordinators: Richard and Joan Nease

Administrative Assistant: Debbie Perry

Organist: Janice Robison

Bell Choir Director: Anna Crum

Choir Director: Dr. David Tadlock

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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.