



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, March 30, 2025, 10:30 A.M.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

FOR WORSHIP

Our scriptures on this Fourth Sunday in Lent remind us of the power of belonging and the joy of coming home. In II Corinthians, Paul reminds us that we are reconciled to God and to each other through Christ, in whom all things are made new. In the Gospel, Jesus tells the familiar parable of the prodigal son, and the great celebration that greets his homecoming. Our music reinforces these themes, reminding us that Jesus calls all of us to turn from our wandering and find our life – and our home – in God's mercy and love

**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.

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 God's grace and Christ's giving of himself on the cross we are forgiven and restored to God and one another.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

Lent 4

Gerald Near

*Solemn Prelude on a Theme of Thomas Tallis
Prelude on a Folk Hymn "Lonesome Valley"*

Gerald Near
Francis Jackson

Janice Robison, organist

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Louise Markland

L: The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

P: The Lord is good to all, and God's compassion is over all that God has made.

L: Let us worship our good and gracious God.

*HYMN 454

Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

Liebster Jesu

**1 Blessed Jesus, at your word
we have come again to hear you;
let our thoughts and hearts be stirred
and in glowing faith be near you.
By your gospel true and holy,
teach us, Lord, to love you solely.**

**2 All our knowledge, sense, and sight
lie in deepest darkness shrouded,
till your Spirit breaks our night,
filling us with light unclouded.
All good thoughts and all good living
come but by your gracious giving.**

**3 Glorious Lord, yourself impart,
Light of Light, from God proceeding.
Touch our lips and ears and heart;
help us by your Spirit's pleading.
Hear the cry your church now raises;
hear, and bless our prayers and praises.**

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Liturgist Markland

Holy One, we confess that we have wandered far from you: we have not trusted your promises, we have ignored your prophets in our own day, we have squandered our inheritance of grace, we have failed to recognize you in our midst. Have mercy on us! Forgive us and turn us again to you. Teach us to follow in your ways, assure us again of your love, and help us to love our neighbor. Amen.

*DECLARATION OF PARDON

Liturgist Markland

*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 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!

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

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Puppet Ministry

ANTHEM

Let Nothing Ever Grieve Thee

Johannes Brahms

*Let nothing ever grieve thee, distress thee; be silent, heed God's good will,
My soul, compose thee.
Why brood all day in sorrow? Tomorrow will bring thee God's help benign,
And grace sublime in mercy.
Be true in all endeavor, and ever stand firmly; what God decrees brings joy and peace;
He'll stay thee, He'll stay thee. Amen.*

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Markland

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. As we hear your word today, come among us and turn us back to you again; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE II Corinthians 5: 16-21 (page 181 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Markland

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 (page 78 in pew Bible)

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Not the end of the story

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

***HYMN 280**

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

AMAZING GRACE

1 Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come.
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me;
his word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

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

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

MINUTE FOR MISSION

The Gathering Place

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.

Weekly Worship Service can be seen live on Sunday Morning

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

Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/c/>

FirstPresbyterianChurchAthensOH/

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

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

THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY *My Song is Love Unknown*

Michael Burkhardt

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 Markland

Gracious God, we thank you for all the ways that you give yourself to us. Our ways of worship and service are always imperfect. But you speak to us in our hearts. May we listen always for your word, to lead us, correct us, guide us, and set us free for loving service, for the sake of the healing of the world, in the name of Christ. Amen.

***HYMN 145** *Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart!* MARION

**1 Rejoice, ye pure in heart!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!
Your festal banner wave on high,
the cross of Christ your King.**

**Refrain:
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!**

**2 With voice as full and strong
as ocean's surging praise,
send forth the sturdy hymns of old,
the psalms of ancient days. (Refrain)**

**3 Yes, on through life's long path,
still chanting as ye go,
from youth to age, by night and day,
in gladness and in woe:**

**4 At last the march shall end;
the wearied ones shall rest;
the pilgrims find their home at last,
Jerusalem the blest. (Refrain)**

**5 Then on, ye pure in heart!
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing!
Your festal banner wave on high,
the cross of Christ your King. (Refrain)**

*CHARGE AND BLESSING

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

POSTLUDE

To Thee, Lord Jesu, Thanks We Give

Johann Sebastian Bach

Janice Robison, organist

~~~~~  
**Deacon of the Month of March - Joyce Mullins**

(740) 590-0322 - [joyce.mullins1@icloud.com](mailto:joyce.mullins1@icloud.com) - *A friend to phone with joys or concerns*

Chancel Prep: Joyce Mullins

Ushers: Joyce Mullins and Ayse Suer

Fellowship Hour: Youth Pretzel Day  
~~~~~

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 welcome any opportunity to provide contact, care, and assistance to church members and friends.

Women's Book Study - Fridays at noon via Zoom

Join the next Women's Book Study meeting Friday, April 11th at noon via Zoom as we choose the next book to study and the date to resume our discussions. For more information or to join, please contact the church office at 740-593-3351 or Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org

Easter Flower Deadline - Today is the deadline to order your Easter flowers from the deacons. Please fill out the form found in the bulletin and drop in the collection plate.

Children's Sunday School - During April, our elementary children will be using the *Full to the Brim* curriculum to learn about Jesus' ministry and the events of Holy Week and Easter. The younger children will be learning about their relationship with God. We will also be experimenting with chimes and April 27 will be a lesson on Earth Day. Please contact Barb Martin at barbamartin729@msn.com or the church office at (740) 593-3351 for more information.

Putnam House Apartment Vacancy - The church is looking for two tenants for the 2025-2026 school year to occupy the apartment on the second floor of Putnam House. The two bedroom, one bath apartment has a large living area, fully equipped kitchen with refrigerator, range, microwave, dishwasher, disposal, and stacked washer and dryer. The \$1300 per month rent includes water, sewer, and garbage. Tenants pay electricity, cable, and internet. It is a one year lease with a limit of two occupants. The apartment will be available July 1st. This is a prime location uptown and includes two dedicated off-street parking spots. No smoking and no pets; a security deposit is required at time of lease signing. Call the church office at (740) 593-3351 to set up a viewing.

The origins of Lent were that one was to leave their old life behind to fast and prepare to be baptized into a new way of living. In essence, this was a practice of stepping away from corrupt power, scarcity mentality, and empty rituals in order to live a more expansive and full life of faith. Scriptures for this Lenten season (in the Revised Common Lectionary, Year C) are filled with parables and promises of God's abundant and expansive grace. As we begin our Lenten journey, we're invited to come fully as we are. The prophet Joel proclaims, "return to God with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning" (Joel 2:12). Come as you are, with all that you are. **This coming Wednesday, April 2, 5:30 – 6:00 dinner, 6:00 – 7:00 program.**

Minister: Rev. Dr. Robert E. Martin
CE Coordinators: Richard and Joan Nease
Organist: Janice Robison
Clerk of Session: Andrew Stuart
Administrative Assistant: Debbie Perry
Bell Choir Director: Anna Crum
Choir Director: Dr. David Tadlock

Athens First Presbyterian Church Office - 9 North College Street, Athens, OH 45701
Phone - 740/593-3351 Fax - 740/593-3351 Office Mobile - 220/252-6500 E-Mail - office@athensfpc.org
Web - www.athensfpc.org
Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/fpcathensoh