



**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 of himself on the cross we are forgiven and restored to God and one another.

SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

FOR WORSHIP

This morning's Scripture readings speak of the great mercy God extends to us when we wander far away. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus answers those who question the company he keeps by teaching two parables about seeking what is lost. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who is willing to go in search of the one lost sheep.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

Processional

Douglas Wagner

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy
Janice Robison, organist

Southern Harmony/Janet Linker

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Robert E. Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Samuel Amanyio

L: We come to this place seeking something.

P: But even more important, we come as people who are sought by the One whose other name is Love.

L: Let us enter this time of worship with hearts and minds open.

P: Come, let us worship God.

*HYMN 263

Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

ST. DENIO

**1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.**

**2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might:
thy justice, like mountains high soaring above;
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.**

**3 To all, life thou givest, to both great and small.
In all life thou livest, the true life of all.
We blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.**

**4 Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light.
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight.
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!**

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Liturgist Amanyio

Holy One, sometimes we lose our way and we feel lost. But in other seasons of life we are lost and we don't even know it. It is not until later when we realize we have gone astray, made mistakes, and harmed others by our actions or inactions. Forgive us. Open our eyes to see ourselves clearly. Call us to your table to be loved and healed. Fill us with strength and conviction to change our ways and to begin anew today. Turn us again toward you and give us life. We pray in Jesus' name. 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 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.

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.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of Christ be with you.

P: And also with you!

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Helen King

ANTHEM

There is a Balm in Gilead Traditional Spiritual/arr. Howard Helvey
Alexandro Ramirez-Nagy, conductor

*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."*

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Amanyo

**Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us: open our eyes to your wonders,
and come now to illuminate your holy word; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE Psalm 14: 1-7 (page 495 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Amanyo

Luke 15: 1-10 (page 78 in pew Bible)

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

What does it mean to be lost?

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

*HYMN 370

Just as I Am, Without One Plea

WOODWORTH

**1 Just as I am, without one plea
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou biddest me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

**2 Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

**3 Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

**4 Just as I am, thy love unknown
has broken every barrier down;
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come; I come!**

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

Choral Response #570: *The congregation is invited to sing along with the chancel choir.*



John Weaver

THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY

Dearest Jesus, We Are Here
Janice Robison, organist

David Cherwien

***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 Amanyo
Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the opportunity to give back to you and to show our gratitude for who you are. We pray these gifts might be used for your healing and reconciling mission. As we offer you gifts from our lives and labor, we offer ourselves as well, that together you might use us in your transformation of the world. Amen.


***HYMN 396** O for a Closer Walk with God CATHINESS
1 O for a closer walk with God,
a calm and heavenly frame,
a light to shine upon the road
that leads me to the Lamb!

2 Return, O holy Dove, return,
sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn
and drove thee from my breast.

3 The dearest idol I have known,
whate'er that idol be,
help me to tear it from thy throne,
and worship only thee.

4 So shall my walk be close with God,
calm and serene my frame;
so purer light shall mark the road
that leads me to the Lamb.

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**
Choral Response #583: *The congregation is invited to sing along with the chancel choir*



Marty Haugen

POSTLUDE *Sonata for Organ, Mvt. 3* Theodore Beck
Janice Robison, organist

**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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Deacon of the Month of September - Helen King  
(518) 944-6158 or [hbking55@hotmail.com](mailto:hbking55@hotmail.com) - A friend to phone with joys or concerns  
Chancel Prep: Carolyn Allen  
Ushers: Harold Robison and Ayse Suer  
Fellowship Hour: Megan and Patrick Tegge  
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Women's Book Study - The Women's Book Study will restart on Fridays at noon via Zoom in September as we discuss *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible* by A.J. Jacobs. For more information contact Joan Nease at christianed@athensfpc.org

Church Directory Updates - We are currently working on updating our church directory of members and friends. Please take a moment to fill out a form found on the narthex table if you have any changes such as new address, phone number, email, etc., or if your information was not included in the last directory. Place the completed form in the box on the table.

Presbyterian Women - You are invited to join the study group beginning the third Wednesday of September as we study *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*. Call Martha Johnson at (740) 707-9640 for more information.

Cultivating Kindness - As part of our theme “Cultivating Kindness”, everyone is invited to write a brief description of a time they experienced kindness, either as a giver or a receiver, onto the paper flowers provided by the ushers. Please drop your flower into the offering plates or return them to Joan Nease. She will be using them as part of her bulletin board design downstairs.

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 Barb Martin at barbaramartin729@msn.com or phone the church office.

College Lunch Fall Edition - College Lunch resumed on September 4th. Please see Lee Gregg if you are interested in providing a main course or dessert during fall semester. Cooking not your thing? Stop in and visit with the students from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or help with set up or clean up afterwards. For more information contact Lee Gregg at (740) 592-3622.

Presbytery Fall Youth Retreat - Mark your calendars for the Presbytery Fall Youth Retreat to be held November 14-16 at Kirkmont Center. The retreat starts at 7:00 p.m. Friday and goes until 12:30 p.m. Sunday. Richard and Joan Nease will have more information soon with details about registration and events scheduled during the retreat. Contact them at christianed@athensfpc.org to express interest.

CROPwalk - CROPwalk will take place on October 5th this year. Your walkers are Margaret Bourke, Helen King, Danny Moates, Linda Parsons, Carol Perry, and Jan Robison. Each has a special envelope to receive your CROPwalk donations. Please give big. Give often.

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

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