



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sunday, March 8, 2026, 10:30 A.M.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

FOR WORSHIP

In the iconic comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes," Calvin is handed a snow shovel and shunted out the door with the observation that he is building character. In response, Calvin quips, "Pretty convenient the way every time I build character, Dad saves a few bucks." In Paul's letter to the Romans, we are reminded of how this character comes about: in Romans 5:3-5, he writes, "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts."

**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.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

Lent 3

Gerald Near
Janet Linker

Variations on "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"
Janice Robison, organist

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Anne Kemmerle

L: O come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

P: We come into God's presence with thanksgiving and raise our songs of praise.

L: O come, let us worship and bow down;

P: let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker.

L: In spirit and truth, let us worship God

*HYMN 324

Open My Eyes That I May See

OPEN MY EYES

1 Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes; illumine me, Spirit divine!

2 Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear.
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears; illumine me, Spirit divine!

3 Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere.
Open my heart, and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart; illumine me, Spirit divine!

*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.*

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

Liturgist Kemmerle

Lord, you know who we are. You know everything we have done. We thirst for things that will never satisfy us. We commit ourselves to things that will never last. We worship things that will never bring salvation. Still, you offer us the gift of living water. Still, you offer us the gift of eternal life. Forgive us, O Lord, and give us this living water so that we may never thirst again. Amen.

*DECLARATION OF PARDON

L: Friends, believe the good news.

P: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

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

***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

Barbara Martin

ANTHEM

O Day of Peace (Hymn #450)

JERUSALEM

C. Hubert H. Parry
Carl P. Daw, Jr.
Richard Proulx

Choir: *O day of peace that dimly shines through all our hopes and prayers and dreams;
Guide us to justice, truth and love; delivered from our selfish schemes.*

Congregation and Choir: *May swords of hate fall from our hands; our hearts from envy find release,
Till by God's grace our warring world shall see Christ's promised reign of peace.*

Congregation and Choir: *Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the fierce devour the small;
As beasts and cattle calmly graze, a little child shall lead them all.
Then enemies shall learn to love, all creatures find their true accord;
The hope of peace shall be fulfilled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.*

PROCLAIM GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Kemmerle

God of our forebears, as your servants were given faith to obey your call and go out into the unknown, so may your church hear your word in faith that we may follow you with courage for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Psalm 95 (page 550 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Kemmerle

Romans 5: 1-11 (page 155 in pew Bible)

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Successful Failure

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

***HYMN 126**

Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove

ST. AGNES

**1 Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
with all thy quickening powers;
kindle a flame of sacred love
in these cold hearts of ours.**

**2 In vain we tune our formal songs;
in vain we strive to rise;
hosannas languish on our tongues,
and our devotion dies.**

**3 Dear Lord, and shall we ever live
at this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to thee,
and thine to us so great!**

**4 Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
with all thy quickening powers;
come, shed abroad a Savior's love,
and that shall kindle ours.**

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

THE OFFERING/OFFERTORY

Ah, Holy Jesus
Janice Robison, organist

Janet Linker

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.

***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 Kemmerle
Compassionate God, we offer you these gifts as signs of our time and labor. Receive the offering of our lives, and feed us with your grace, that in the midst of death all creation might feast on your unending life in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

***HYMN 399** *We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight* DUNLAP'S CREEK

1 We walk by faith and not by sight;
with gracious words draw near,
O Christ, who spoke as none e'er spoke:
"My peace be with you here."

2 We may not touch your hands and side,
nor follow where you trod;
but in your promise we rejoice,
and cry, "My Lord and God!"

3 Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;
and may our faith abound
to call on you when you are near
and seek where you are found.

4 And when our life of faith is done,
in realms of clearer light
may we behold you as you are,
with full and endless sight.

***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

POSTLUDE *When All Thy Mercies, O My Lord* Robert Powell
Janice Robison, organist

~~~~~

Deacon of the Month of March – Riley Smoot  
*rileysmoot@gmail.com* - A friend to contact with joys or concerns  
Chancel Prep: Ellen Sostarich  
Ushers: Carol Perry and Ellen Sostarich  
Fellowship Hour: Mary Costello and Lee Gregg

~~~~~

Congregational Meeting - The session has called for a congregational meeting held Sunday, March 15th immediately following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the 2025 Annual Reports, and to receive a report from the Nominating Committee to elect Deacons and Elders.

Easter Flowers - if you would like to purchase a spring flower (lily, hyacinth, or tulip) in memory or in honor of someone for Easter Sunday please complete the order form in your bulletin during the month of March. The choice of flowers will be first come-first served. An insert in the Easter Sunday bulletin will have a list of those honored and remembered, as is our custom. Fill out your form and place it, along with your payment of \$12, in the offering plate or send directly to the church office at 9 N. College Street, Athens, Ohio 45701. Deadline to order flowers is March 16th.

Fellowship Hour hosts needed - the Church Community Committee is seeking volunteers to host the Fellowship Hour immediately after worship. Light refreshments, to go along with our coffee and conversation are appreciated. Expenses incurred can be reimbursed by turning in your receipts to the church office. A sign-up sheet is posted on the wall near the kitchen in Fellowship Hall.

Children's Sunday School – grade school and pre-school children are invited to attend Sunday School during Worship. The pre-school class is learning from the *Growing With Gratitude* series and the elementary class lessons are from the *Amazing Adventures* curriculum with stories from the early days of Jesus' ministry. Email Barb Martin at barbaramartin729@msn.com or phone the church

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.

