



SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

SIXTEENTH 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.

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.

FOR WORSHIP

In this morning's Gospel lesson from Mark, Jesus attempts to escape from the crowds, but a Gentile woman of Syrophenician origin finds him and pleads for her demon-possessed daughter. Jesus tests the woman's faith by stating that he is first ministering to God's chosen people, Israel. The woman displays tenacious faith and again pleads for healing on behalf of her daughter. Jesus exercises his divine authority by declaring the demon has now left the girl, and the woman returns home to find her well.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

Elegiac Prelude on "Jerusalem"

Charles Callahan

Elegy

Raymond Haan

Janice Robison, organist

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Robert Martin

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist Hugh Woods

L: Sing songs of hope and peace.

P: God's love and power have lifted us.

L: Sing songs of mercy and grace.

P: God's mercy and forgiveness frame our lives.

L: Thanks be to God for all God's love and mercy.

P: Praise be to God for God's healing power.

L: Let us worship God!

*HYMN 463

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies

CHRIST WHOSE GLORY

**1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies;
Christ, the true, the only light;
Sun of Righteousness, arise;
triumph o'er the shades of night;
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear.**

**2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return
till thy mercy's beams I see;
till they inward light impart,
cheer my eyes and warm my heart.**

**3 Visit then this soul of mine;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
fill me, radiance divine;
scatter all my unbelief;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.**

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Liturgist Woods

God of life, you are the source of all goodness and the hope of our lives. Yet we confess to you that our understanding of you is small; our desire to do your will is often weak; and the gospel seed you have planted within us has yet to bear fruit. Have mercy on us, O God. Help us to lay down our guilt, our anger, our fear, our hardness of heart, and our weakness of intention. Make peace within us. Be with us and for us wherever life takes us, both this day and until we meet in glory. Amen.

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.

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.

*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

Barbara Martin

ANTHEM

Shepherd Me, O God

Marty Haugen

Refrain: *Shepherd me, O God, beyond my wants, beyond my fears, from death into life.*

God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want; I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love;

I walk by the quiet waters of peace. (refrain)

Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul; you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth;

My spirit shall sing the music of your name. (refrain)

Though I should wander the valley of death, I fear no evil, for you are at my side;

Your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. (refrain)

You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred, crowning me with love beyond my pow'r to hold. (refrain)

Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the Lord forevermore. (refrain)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (in unison)

Liturgist Woods

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant us grace to hear your holy word now; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Proverbs 22: 1-2, 8-9, 22-23 (page 604 in pew Bible)
Mark 7: 24-37 (page 42 in pew Bible)

Liturgist Woods
Rev. Martin

L. This is the Word of the Lord!

P: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Troubling Texts

Rev. Martin

*HYMN 344

Christ of the Upward Way

SURSUM CORDA

**1 Christ of the Upward Way,
My Guide divine,
Where You have set your feet
May I place mine;
And move and march wherever You have trod,
Keeping face forward up the hill of God.**

**2 Give me the heart to hear
Your voice and will,
That without fault or fear
I may fulfill
Your purpose with a glad and holy zest,
Like one who would not bring less than his best.**

**3 Christ of the Upward Way,
My Guide divine,
Where You have set your feet
May I place mine;
And when your last call comes serene and clear,
Calm may my answer be, "Lord, I am here."**

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

MINUTE FOR MISSION

CropWalk

Danny Moates

ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASTORAL PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER

Rev. Martin

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

THE OFFERING / OFFERTORY *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

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 Woods

O Lord, we have this in common with those around the world: You have created us all. You are our God, and we are your people. Bless these gifts and the generosity of those who give them, that they might feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and help those who are in need. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

*HYMN 408

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life

GERMANY

1 Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear your voice, O Son of Man.

2 In haunts of wretchedness and need,
on shadowed thresholds fraught with fears,
from paths where hide the lures of greed,
we catch the vision of your tears.

3 From tender childhood's helplessness,
from human grief and burdened toil,
from famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
your heart has never known recoil.

4 The cup of water given for you
still holds the freshness of your grace;
yet long these multitudes to view
the sweet compassion of your face.

5 O Master, from the mountainside,
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again;

6 Till all the world shall learn your love,
and follow where your feet have trod;
till glorious from your heaven above
shall come the city of our God.

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

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

POSTLUDE

Trumpet Tune

David Johnson

Janice Robison, organist

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**Deacon of the Month of September- Bobbi Conliffe**

*A friend to phone with joys or concerns*

Chancel Prep: Joyce Beauvais

Ushers: Joyce Beauvais and Helen King

Fellowship Hour: Becky Pankratz

**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.

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

please contact Barb Martin at [barbaramartin729@msn.com](mailto: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](mailto:christianed@athensfpc.org)

**Presbyterian Women** - We will resume Bible Study September 18th, 10:00 a.m., at The Plains Public Library. Study title for 2024-2025 is *Let Justice Roll: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creatures*. For more information, call Martha Johnson at (740) 677-0034. Everyone is welcome!

**The AFPC College Lunch** begins its 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](mailto:tleegregg@gmail.com)) for more information.

**The Music Ministry** here at First Presbyterian Church helps lead and deepen the congregation's worship experience. Our primary goal is to illuminate the word of God as it is read and preached. Music is chosen for its ability to reinforce and enhance the themes of the worship service as well as for its artistic merit. The Music Ministry is also a family, part of each others' lives in the sharing of joys and concerns, and uplifting each other in prayer. We strive to minister to the congregation and to each other by caring for and supporting one another. If you enjoy singing or ringing, there's something for everyone in the music ministry. Our Bell Choir under the direction of Anna Crum meets each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. Our Chancel Choir under the direction of Dr. David Tadlock meets each Wednesday beginning at 7:10 p.m. If you are interested in joining one of our Music Ministry groups, see either David or Anna.

**Prayer Walk, Saturday, September 14, 2024.** Join us for a Prayer Hike on the Ora Anderson Trail from the Dairy Barn. Rev. Dr. Martin will be leading us through the trail. We are hoping the weather will cooperate for an outdoor event beginning at 10:00 a.m. If it is rainy/muddy, we will reschedule for later in the day or another day. Please contact Richard at [ChristianEd@AthensFPC.org](mailto:ChristianEd@AthensFPC.org) if interested in joining us.

Stand by the roads, and look,  
And ask for the ancient paths,  
Where the good way is; and walk in it,  
And find rest for your souls.

**Jeremiah 6:16**

O, God, bless the step that I am taking and bless the soft earth beneath my feet.

**Old Irish Prayer**

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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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