

Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 12, 2023 10:30 a.m. Worship



*Rock Cairn By Davidbena - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,
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“...as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”
Joshua 24:15b

First Presbyterian Church

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www.fpcsb.net

COMMISSIONED LOCAL PASTOR: DR. WENDY L. LAMB

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN SMITH

PASTOR EMERITUS: REV. JAMES C. HUFFSTUTLER

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: CURTISS ALLEN, JR., DIRECTOR OF MUSIC;

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church

This service is being livestreamed and can be viewed on our YouTube channel in real time or as a recording. **Large-print copies of this order of service**, as well as **audio enhancement devices** are available **from the ushers**.

We gather on Sunday for 3 reasons:

- **To seek God**- whom we find in sacred text and sacrament, in music and in song, in prayer, in the beauty of this space, in the stillness where we can hear our hearts. We offer God our thanks and praise, our lament and longing, and our resources. We let go of burdens and receive grace and forgiveness. We see the One our hearts love.
- **To practice Community** – rejoice w/those who rejoice, weep w/those who weep. To break bread with those whom we love and those whom we need to love more fully. We practice things our culture does not emphasize: resting, forgiving, sharing. Jesus asked us to love one another as he loved us, and we cannot do so without practice.
- **To listen for our Call**- often an invitation to go out and be or do or remember. God is speaking all the time: through conscience, nature, friends, and certainly scripture. We gather to listen for that Call and to recommit ourselves to discipleship.

Information on our common life can be found on our website www.fpcsb.net, along with sermons and newsletters. You can participate in our work by supporting us financially with a one-time or sustaining donation.

Children are welcome in worship. Younger children may go to the Nursery at any time.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Sunday, December 3rd.

Morning Worship†

REFLECTION before the SERVICE

Yet we must make a choice, not once for all time, but again and again. Like the ancient Israelites, we need times and places that remind us of the gracious acts of God and call us back to our confession. We need hours of decision when we stake our lives anew on what matters most as we renew our promise to love and serve the Lord.

- Bryan J. Whitfield, *Working Preacher*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Vision

W. Zeitler

INTROIT

*Spirit of the Living God*¹

Daniel Iverson

Spirit of the living God, Fall afresh on me; Spirit of the living God, Fall afresh on me. Melt me, mold me, Fill me, use me. Spirit of the living God, Fall afresh on me.

*CALL to WORSHIP

As if this were the only time,
and this the only place,
and we the only people,

✠ **Jesus Christ will meet us.**

As if this were the only time,
and this the only place,
and we the only people,

✠ **let us worship God!**

*HYMN 305

Come Sing, O Church, in Joy!

DARWALL'S 148TH

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Let us in silence confess our faults and admit our frailty.

(Take a moment to silently name your longing.)

† The symbols you will see in this order of worship mean:

* **Stand if you are able** ✠ **The congregation will read.**

¹ Text & Music: Daniel Iverson. ©1963 Jubilate Music. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

Before God, with the people of God, I confess my brokenness: the ways I wound my life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.

✘ **May God forgive you, Christ renew you, and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.**

Amen.

✘ **Before God, with the people of God, I confess to my brokenness: the ways I wound my life, the lives of others, and the life of the world.**

May God forgive you, Christ renew you, and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.

✘ **Amen.**

(We stand and sing Alleluia)

***ALLELUIA**

William Zeitler

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

1. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! 2. Al - le - lu - ia!

Chords: Em, B, Em, D, G, D, F#m, B, F#m, Bm, F#m

TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. After the Time with the Children you may go to KidSpace in Room 11.

Infants through pre-Kindergarten may go to the Nursery at any time.]

ANTHEM

SCRIPTURE: Joshua 24: 1-3a, 14-15

Old Testament, pg. 215

SERMON

Dr. Wendy Lamb

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our gifts as a response to God's Word, to be part of God's purposes in the world. You may place gifts in the plate during the offertory, or on your way out – or by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

OLD HUNDREDT

✘ **Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost, Amen.**

MORNING PRAYER and OUR 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.**

***HYMN 340**

This Is My Song

FINLANDIA

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***BENEDICTION**

RESPONSE

God Be in My Head²

K. Lee Scott

God be in my head, and in my understanding; God be in mine eyes, and in my looking; God be in my mouth, and in my speaking; God be in my heart, and in my thinking; God be at mine end, and my departing. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**

*Order of Chivalry:
Truth & the Knight's Lance*

W. Zeitler

Today we display the American flag in honor of our Veterans.

GREETERS: Mindy & Amy Rueda

USHERS: Brad Smith, *Lead Usher*

Chris Thomas, Tim Usher, *Security*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

² Words: Sarum Primer, 1514, Music: K. Lee Scott. Words and Music - ©1988 The Lorenz Publishing Corporation. All rights reserved. Used by permission of ONELICENSE #A706254.
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REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Jim Huffstutler, Ramon Ramirez, Robert Saenz

Elders: John-Paul Fletcher, Jeanne Clark, Susan Skoglund

Deacons: Joanna Nord, Chris Thomas, Dan Direen

This Weeks' Celebrations

Nov 13 Susan Zeitler

Nov 15 Alyssa Arellano

Nov 18 Marion Wiens

Ed & Stephani Congdon

Susan & William Zeitler

What is God calling us to be and do at this time in this place? That's the work of Mission Assessment. Learn more, or find a survey you missed, at <https://fpcsb.net/mission-assessment>, or click **Mission Assessment** from the church home page. Surveys or other feedback to the MAT can be sent to the office, to any member of the team, or left in the box at the table in reception.

CCLM Dinner and "Christmas with the Homeless". This evening the Deacons will provide dinner for approximately 50 guys at CCLM (Central City Lutheran Mission).

In addition, we are taking donations for CCLM's "Christmas with the Homeless" party for the residents of the Men's Emergency Shelter. For those who would like to help, we need: **New** Men's Colored T-shirts (S - 4X), **New** Boxer Briefs (L, XL, 1X, 2X); **New or Gently Used** Polo Shirts (M-2XL), Jeans (sizes 32 - 52, especially 36-48), Sweat Pants (sizes M - 4XL) and Jackets (sizes M-4XL). Monetary donations are also gratefully received and used. **The Deacons will collect donations on Sundays throughout the month of November. Thanks for your help.**

There will be a Congregational Meeting directly after the worship service on **Sunday, November 26**, to elect officers for the coming year. Please plan to attend.

More news and announcements are available in your Friday *Keeping in Touch* emails. If you are not receiving these, and you would like to, contact Mimi in the church office.

Music Box

In former Music Boxes I've discussed the idea of 'spiritual alchemy'. This is an idea pioneered by Carl Jung (1875-1961) — a titan in the field of psychology. Jung started out as a protégé of Freud (1856-1939), but decisively parted company with him early on. Jung was concerned with what a maximally functioning and healthy psyche looked like — something he thought few truly achieve. The process of getting past all the commercials and slogans and inputs of every sort that we uncritically accept takes at least a lifetime. It's not that we need to reject everything we've been taught and told, rather we can eventually acknowledge the wheat that fits who we really are, and let the chaff blow away. Jung called this process 'individuation' — and found in medieval alchemy boundless metaphors for that process.

Critics have asserted that the medieval alchemists weren't practicing Jungian psychology (of course not!), and that medieval alchemy has nothing to do with spirituality. And yet — although most surviving alchemical treatises read like bizarre recipe books (written in metaphorical code), not all do so. Some read more like strange poetry, or contain nothing but otherworldly images, and aren't like cookbooks or instruction manuals at all.

With that in mind, I recently came across a rather strange and marvelous book: *Aurora Consurgens* — the Rising Dawn. By, wait for it — Thomas Aquinas!

When Rome fell (around 476), that put the kibosh on institutions of higher learning and such until Europe really got back on its feet around the 12th century or so. Interest revived in philosophy, and Aristotle in particular was reintroduced to the West by Islamic scholars who had been preserving him all those centuries. Europe found Aristotle's deductive approach to 'finding Truth' electrifying, and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) — one of the finest minds of his day — was tasked with rephrasing Christian theology using Aristotle's deductive approach. Aquinas bolstered his deductions with citations from Christian, Muslim, Jewish and 'pagan' writers. The result was his *Summa Theologica* in five thick volumes. It's impact on Christian theology can hardly be overstated.

But he didn't complete it. In 1273, during a Mass, he had an ecstatic vision, after which he worked no longer on his *Summa*, breaking off in the middle of his treatise on Penance. "Everything I have written is as straw." And, "Everything that I have written seems to me worthless in comparison with the things I have seen and which have been revealed to me."

But apparently he had one last book in him: the *Aurora Consurgens* – The Rising Dawn. It consists of some opening remarks, followed by seven ‘parables’. Each parable begins with maybe a page of observations on alchemy, followed by a half-dozen or so pages of supporting quotes from Scripture and the Latin Liturgy. The last parable concerns the Song of Songs – a book in the Old Testament describing love that has been a perennial favorite of Christian mystics. The writing is intense – some of the most intense I’ve read by anyone. Reading these parables feels like trying to drink from a fire hose – the author’s mind is truly on fire.

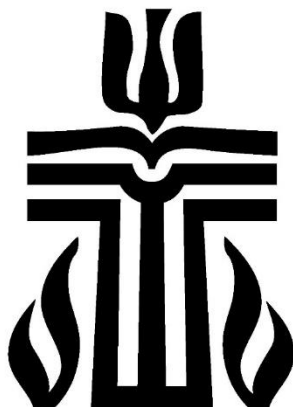
Nervous breakdown? Maybe. But, as I understand it, a mental breakdown is just that – a breakdown in mental functioning, characterized in part by an inability to stay focused on topic, or anything else. The *Aurora* parables, however, are laser focused.

Others argue that Aquinas didn’t write the *Aurora*. Perhaps. After all, the style is very different from his *Summa*. (But it would be, wouldn’t it?) Meanwhile, three of the six versions of the *Aurora* that have come down to us list Aquinas as the author (the other three don’t identify the author at all). And the parables in particular betray a mind with some knowledge of alchemy (being part of ‘science’ as they understood it, some alchemy would have been part of Aquinas’ general education). The rest of the text betrays a mind-blowing mastery of Scripture and liturgy. I haven’t seen any plausible suggestion of an author besides Aquinas who could manage it.

Not long after his ecstatic vision, Aquinas was journeying to Rome on horseback when he smacked his head on a tree branch, knocking him unconscious. (And presumably knocking him off his horse.) He regained consciousness, but never recovered, dying a month later at age 49.

Perhaps after a lifetime of trying to understand God through deduction and reason – as brilliantly as anyone is ever likely to tread that path – he was granted an ecstatic vision of God that satisfied his life’s True Desire. Perhaps *Aurora Consurgens* was his attempt to share his life’s consummation. And with that, his life’s quest and task was complete.

– William Zeidler



The seal of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities.

The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames.

As a church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), our congregational life is governed by the Ruling Elders of our current Session:

Jeanne Clark, Susan Skoglund, Alex Smith, Tim Usher, Mary Bolaños,
Brooke Dvorak, Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney, Lily Bolaños,
Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Rebecca Allen, Sharon Landeros, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord,
Chris Wright-Thomas, Dan Direen, Robin Edwards, Rick Rodriguez,
Katie Smith, Brad Smith, and Dave Thomas

In this time of change for our congregation, a Mission Assessment Plan will be completed by our Mission Assessment Team:

Mary Bolaños, John-Paul Fletcher, Nancy Horstmann,
Marilyn Kraft, Jim Morris, Brent Nord, Irene Sandoval Suverkrup