

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 17, 2024 10:30 a.m. Worship

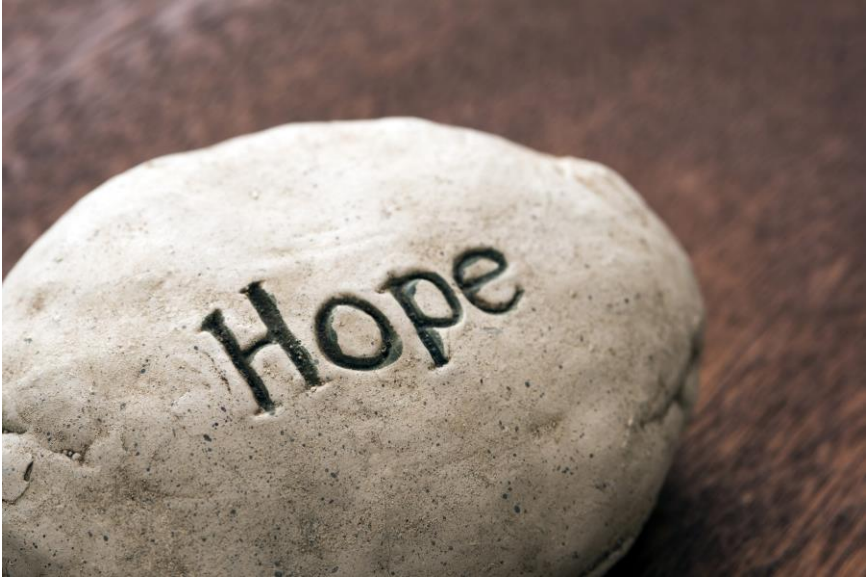


Photo by Gratuit, FreeImagesLive.co.uk.

**Let's hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering,
because the one who made the promises is reliable. -- Hebrews 10:23**

First Presbyterian Church

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COMMISSIONED PASTOR: DR. WENDY L. LAMB

MINISTRY OF PASTORAL SUPPORT: REV. DR. STEPHEN W. SMITH

MINISTRY OF VISITATION: LAURIE STAFFORD

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

WILLIAM ZEITLER, ORGANIST;

AMY GANO, BELLS

PASTOR EMERITUS: REV. JAMES C. HUFFSTUTLER

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 8th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Kyle Smith

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

You've probably seen the line emblazoned on posters and paperweights:

What would you do if you knew you could not fail?

When the world's on fire, a better question may be: What is worth doing even if you think you will fail?

Once we can answer that question, we'll be in touch with a hope that cannot fail us.

Let us begin.

MaryAnn McKibben Dana, *Hope: A User's Manual* (pp. 13-14).

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Andante Teneremente, J. Brahms (1833-1897)
Op. 118 No. 2

Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

INTROIT

Rock of Ages

Thomas Hastings

Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee. Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed be of sin the double cure, cleanse from guilt and make me pure.

*CALL to WORSHIP¹

Let our hearts exult in the Lord;

✘ **our strength is exalted in God.**

Let our mouths be ever fixed in praise;

✘ **God has given us the victory.**

There is no Holy One like the Lord;

✘ **there is no Rock like our God. Praise the Lord!**

*HYMN 772

Live into Hope

TRURO

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

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

¹ *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*

PRAYER of CONFESSION²

Since we have a great high priest, Jesus Christ, let us approach the throne of grace in full assurance of faith, for God has promised to be merciful.

✘ God of grace,

all around us are wars, and rumors of wars, and we are afraid for ourselves and our world. We follow after imperfect leaders and grasp for whatever security we can find. Forgive us, Lord, for we are quick to forget that all of life is in your hands.

[Moment for silent meditation]

Renew our hope, increase our courage,
and keep us watchful for the signs
of your just and peaceful reign that is to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(We remain seated for the kyrie, an ancient song of the church. We will sing it through in Greek first and then in English.)

KYRIE³

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Note: Lower voices may hum.

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

Friends, believe the good news:

✘ In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and are being made whole. Amen.

² *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*

³ Traditional Liturgical text. Music: Dinah Reindorf, 1987. ©1987 Dinah Reindorf. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

(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! Al - le al - le - lu - ia!

TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. After the time with Children, we invite our children ages 4 to 11 to go to KidSpace in Room 11.

Parents, please pick your children up immediately following worship.

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

ANTHEM

*O Love, How Deep*⁴

Everett Titcomb

O love, how deep, how broad, now high, How passing thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God should take Our mortal form for mortals' sake. For
us he prayed, for us he taught, For us his daily works he wrought, By words
and signs and actions, thus Still seeking not himself, but us. All glory to our
Lord and God For love so deep, so high, so broad; The Trinity whom we adore
For ever and for ever more. Amen.

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

✠ **Almighty God, speak your Word to us, and guide our feet,
that we might be hearers and doers of your word. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 10:23-25 (CEB)

Let's hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, because
the one who made the promises is reliable. And let us consider each
other carefully for the purpose of sparking love and good deeds. Don't
stop meeting with other believers, which some people have gotten
into the habit of doing. Instead, encourage each other, especially as
you see the day drawing near.

Mark 13:1-8

New Testament p. 50

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

⁴ Text: Latin 15th century, tr. Benjamin Webb. Music: Everett Titcomb. ©1952 The H.W. Gray Company, Inc./Jubilate Music. All rights reserved. Used by permission of OneLicense #A706254.

SERMON

Hold Fast to Hope

Pastor Wendy Lamb

HYMN 292

As the Wind Song

WAIRUA TAPU

*(The choir sings our response hymn this morning.
You are invited to join in as you wish.)*

THE OFFERING of OUR TITHES and GIFTS

(We offer our tithes and gifts to be part of God's purposes in the world, and we invite you to take part. You may place your offering in the basket in front or give it to the usher. You may always send gifts by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY

***DOXOLOGY**

OLD HUNDREDTH

- ✠ 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.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, 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 79**

Light Dawns on a Weary World

TEMPLE OF PEACE

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

RESPONSE

Sevenfold Amen

John Stainer

POSTLUDE

Improvisation

GREETERS: Susan Skoglund, Lynda Savage

USHERS: Margaret Doane, *Lead Usher*

Dave Thomas, Jim Siegmund, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Debora Holk, Jim Huffstutler, Ron & Ruby Kraft

Elders: **Brooke Dvorak, Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney**

Deacons: **Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord**

Pastor Nominating Committee:

Brian Gano, Kendra Lamb, Jim Morris

This Weeks' Celebrations

Nov 18 Marion Wiens

Ed & Stephani Congdon

Susan & William Zeitler

Nov 19 Earleen Dudley

Linda Murray

Nov 21 Terry & Stephanie Ross

Nov 22 Ken Mantei

Nov 23 Dan Direen

Wade Preciado

Chase Preciado

Joyce Seeger

Congregational Meeting. There will be a Congregational Meeting to elect new officers **TODAY** immediately following worship.

Deacons' Community Outreach/Thanksgiving Gift Cards

Thanksgiving will be here before we know it and the Deacons are ready to take orders for Stater Bros. gift cards. **The Deacons' plan is for you to deliver these \$50 cards to your needy friends and neighbors.** The sign-up sheet is in the office, and **today is the last day to sign someone up.** On the sign-up sheet, please list the recipient's name (non-church members only, this is part of the Deacons' Community Outreach ministry) and your name. The Deacons will have the gift cards ready for you to pick up and deliver next Sunday, November 24th. If you cannot pick up your gift card(s) that day, please let us know so we can make other arrangements. **Thank you for helping us help our neighbors!**

Celtic Christmas. The Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Pipe Band in collaboration with Claremont Community School of Music presents the **5th Annual Celtic Christmas on Sunday, December 8 at 3:00 p.m.** at Claremont United Church of Christ, 233 Harrison Avenue in Claremont. You can purchase tickets here.

<https://blandfordbands.org/store/>

Photos are taken during our services and other events, which are often published on our website, or in some of our church's publications (think Annual Report, newsletter, narrative budget, etc.)

If you do not want your photo to be published, please contact the church office immediately, and we will take steps to see that it is not published.

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

Once upon a time, a young sailor named Marina had dreams bigger than the horizon. She'd heard whispers of an island to the west, a place where travelers could find the path to their heart's deepest desire. Some said it held visions; others claimed it was a portal to a realm of dreams. Its secrets were unclear, but everyone agreed it changed everyone who set foot on its shores.

Determined to uncover the truth, Marina set sail alone, her small boat cutting through calm waters under starlight. Days passed, and as her supplies dwindled, she began to doubt the island's existence. But at dawn on the seventh day, cliffs rose from the mist, shrouded in golden light. Her heart leapt with relief and anticipation.

She anchored at a quiet cove and stepped onto the beach, sensing an odd stillness, as though the island were watching her. Following a narrow trail, she walked through dense forest until she reached a clearing at the base of a rocky hill. There, two caves awaited her, side by side, their entrances dark and cool.

Marina's pulse quickened. She recalled the legends — one path would lead to her deepest dream, while the other would trap her in illusions, spiraling into dead ends. Both caves looked identical: smooth rock, dark interiors, and an inviting coolness. She squinted, searching for any sign, but the caves revealed nothing.

Eager to begin, she started toward the left cave but hesitated. Her fingers brushed the cool rock, and a thought stirred: **What if I'm wrong?** She was about to choose blindly, risking everything on a single guess. She took a step back, frustration bubbling up. She'd journeyed so far, and felt she deserved an answer. But something held her back — a quiet intuition urging her to wait.

Marina sat cross-legged between the caves, watching their entrances. Hours passed as shadows lengthened. At first, her mind raced with anxious thoughts. What if both caves led nowhere? Or worse, what if someone had already claimed the secret, leaving nothing for her?

She sighed, closed her eyes, and let go of her frustration. She began to sense the island's rhythm — the soft whisper of the wind, the distant murmur of waves. Slowly, her impatience faded, replaced by a sense of peace. She realized she'd come with too many expectations, seeking an easy answer without understanding what she truly wanted.

As dusk fell, a soft breeze swept through the clearing, carrying a faint, sweet scent. Marina opened her eyes and noticed a faint glow coming from the right cave. It was subtle, barely more than a shimmer, but it hadn't been there before. She rose, feeling a quiet certainty. Approaching the right cave, she saw tiny green shoots clinging to the stone near its entrance, delicate yet resilient, as if they had sprouted while she waited.

This small sign, unnoticed before, now felt like an invitation. The right cave's entrance seemed warmer, more welcoming. Marina took a deep breath and stepped inside, the light fading as the cave embraced her. She moved slowly through the darkness, feeling her way. Soon, she emerged into a chamber bathed in soft light, with walls covered in sparkling crystal.

In the center of the chamber, a shallow pool reflected her image back at her, but in a way that made her pause. Her reflection looked...different. She seemed more at peace, more complete, as though this journey had unlocked something within her. She realized her deepest desire wasn't a particular treasure or destination but clarity about herself and her place in the world.

The journey to the island had tested her endurance, and the wait outside the caves had taught her patience. Her hasty expectations had blinded her at first, but by waiting, she'd learned to see subtle signs she would otherwise have missed. And in that stillness, her true path had revealed itself.

As she left the cave and walked back to her boat, she looked once more at the two entrances, grateful she had trusted her intuition and waited. The island's mystery was not about offering answers to anyone who rushed in, but about helping each traveler uncover their own wisdom through patience and discernment.

Back on her boat, Marina felt the island's presence recede, the shore fading into mist as she sailed away. She realized the journey was far from over, but she was no longer in a hurry. Her heart was steady, filled with the quiet strength that only comes from learning to wait, observe, and trust one's inner compass.

She knew now that the world was full of paths and choices, many of which looked identical at first glance. But true discernment lay in learning to see beyond appearances, to recognize the signs that revealed the way forward when the time was right. And with that, Marina sailed into the future, ready for whatever the horizon would bring.

-- 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:

Mary Bolaños, Brooke Dvorak, Pat Morris, Martha Pinckney, Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough, Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Rebecca Allen, Dan Direen, Robin Edwards, Rick Rodriguez, Katie Smith, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas, Chris Wright-Thomas, Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda

In this time of change for our congregation, a Pastor Nominating Committee has been elected by the congregation:

Susan Addington, Mary Bolaños, John-Paul Fletcher,
Brian Gano, Kendra Lamb, Jim Morris,
Shelby Obershaw, Christa Wallis, Neal Williams