

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 17, 2025 10:30 a.m. Worship



So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us.

Hebrews 12:1a

First Presbyterian Church

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www.fpcsb.net

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

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 with those who rejoice, weep with 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, September 7th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Amy Gano

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

In recent decades, best seller lists have been tracking the rise of the memoir.

In our high-tech age where the art of conversation has been waning, our hunger for stories has only grown. If book sales are a reliable indication, we long especially for the stories of ordinary people who share from the depth of their lives all the complexity of being human. We want to hear the stories of others because in them we recognize our own experience and discover a greater sense of belonging.

Mary Fosskett, *Working Preacher*

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Prelude

A. Grinwald

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

INTROIT

He Leadeth Me

Gilmore/Bradbury

Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom, By waters still, o'er troubled sea, Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me. He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me: His faithful follower I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.

*CALL to WORSHIP

In times of joy and of sorrow,

✠ **We belong to God, who loves us.**

In seasons of waiting and of doing

✠ **We belong to God, who loves us.**

Wherever, whenever we gather

✠ **We are home, for God is with us.**

*HYMN 65

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

CWM RHONDDA

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

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

PRAYER of CONFESSION¹

Trusting in God's hopes for us,
let us come before God with contrite hearts,
asking for reconciliation and seeking peace.

- ✘ God of hope, we confess
our disregard of your care . . .
our doubt of your providence . . .
our blindness to signs of your love.
We are afraid to risk our comforts to find new life;
we separate ourselves from you and from others
and foster divisions between those you love.
(Moment for silent reflection and confession)
- ✘ Help us to amend our lives
and make us your faithful people
who bear the good fruit of your Word in the world.

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

KYRIE²

Dinah Reindorf



Note: Lower voices may hum.



ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:

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

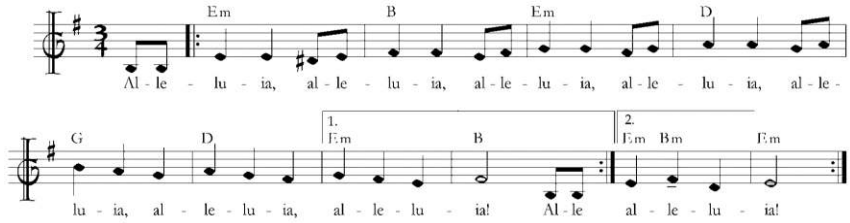
¹ *Feasting on the Word Lectionary Liturgies*

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(We stand and sing Alleluia)

***ALLELUIA**

William Zeitler



TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. There are activity bags and books in the back of the room.]

ANTHEM

*The Gift of Love*³

Hal Hopson

Though I may speak with bravest fire and have the gift to all inspire, And have not love; my words are vain, as sounding brass, and hopeless gain. Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess, But not be giv'n by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin. Come, spirit, come, our hearts control. Our spirits long to be made whole. Let inward love guide ev'ry deed. By this we worship, and are freed. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 11:17-12:2

By faith Abraham offered Isaac when he was tested. The one who received the promises was offering his only son. He had been told concerning him, *Your legitimate descendants will come from Isaac*. He figured that God could even raise him from the dead. So in a way he did receive him back from the dead.

By faith Isaac also blessed Jacob and Esau concerning their future.

By faith Jacob blessed each of Joseph's sons as he was dying and *bowed in worship over the head of his staff*.

By faith Joseph recalled the exodus of the Israelites at the end of his life, and gave instructions about burying his bones.

By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months when he was born, because they saw that the child was beautiful and they weren't afraid of the king's orders.

By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter when he was grown up. He chose to be mistreated with God's people instead of having the temporary pleasures of sin. He thought that the abuses he

³ Text: Hal H. Hopson based on 1 Corinthians 13, Music: American folk tune; arranged by Hal H. Hopson. ©1972 Hope Publishing Company. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-706254. All rights reserved.

suffered for Christ were more valuable than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking forward to the reward.

By faith he left Egypt without being afraid of the king's anger. He kept on going as if he could see what is invisible.

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, in order that the destroyer could not touch their firstborn children.

By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if they were on dry land, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were drowned.

By faith Jericho's walls fell after the people marched around them for seven days.

By faith Rahab the prostitute wasn't killed with the disobedient because she welcomed the spies in peace.

What more can I say? I would run out of time if I told you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. Through faith they conquered kingdoms, brought about justice, realized promises, shut the mouths of lions, put out raging fires, escaped from the edge of the sword, found strength in weakness, were mighty in war, and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured and refused to be released so they could gain a better resurrection.

But others experienced public shame by being taunted and whipped; they were even put in chains and in prison. They were stoned to death, they were cut in two, and they died by being murdered with swords. They went around wearing the skins of sheep and goats, needy, oppressed, and mistreated. The world didn't deserve them. They wandered around in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.

All these people didn't receive what was promised, though they were given approval for their faith. God provided something better for us so they wouldn't be made perfect without us.

So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage, get rid of the sin that trips us up, and fix our eyes on Jesus, faith's pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front of him, and sat down at the right side of God's throne.

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Cloud of Witnesses

Pastor Wendy Lamb

RESPONSE REFRAIN 389

Come and Sing the Praise of the Lord
Sing Twice

HAL'LUHU

BUILDING and GROUNDS

Dave Thomas

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 plates as they are passed. 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 326

For All the Saints

SINE NOMINE

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

* RESPONSE

He Leadeth Me

Gilmore/Bradbury

And when my task on earth is done, When, by Thy grace, the vic'try's won,
e'en death's cold wave I will not flee, Since God thro' Jordan leadeth me! He
leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me: His faithful
follower I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.

POSTLUDE

Hymn

GREETER: Mindy Rueda, Amy Rueda

USHERS: Brad Smith, *Lead Usher*

Al Rueda, *Security Usher*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Marianna Fowles, Sandy Garza, Debora Holk

Elders: Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann

Deacons: Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith, Christian Usher

Pastor Nominating Committee:

Brian Gano, Kendra Lamb, Jim Morris

This Weeks' Celebrations

Aug 17 Joanne Ballard
Ethan Gano

Aug 19 Aaron Rueda

Aug 20 Elle Carlos

Campus Preservation Fund. As our campus ages, the repairs and upkeep grow greater and more expensive. As we enter our 7th decade in these buildings, we anticipate some very large needs. Session has established the Campus Preservation Fund to help meet those needs, and will match any donations made to the Fund through October 1st, up to \$10,000. If you are able to give, your gift will be doubled. Thank you.

A New Member Class has been scheduled for two Sundays, September 7th and 14th. If you would like to join our congregation, or simply learn more about what it means to be Presbyterian, contact the church office at (909) 882-3308, pres.first@gmail.com, or talk to Laurie or Wendy.

If your group meets regularly, either on campus or otherwise, please contact Mimi in the church office as soon as possible when your meeting schedule changes. This allows her to keep the calendar accurate, properly announce meetings, and avoid double-scheduling. Thank you for your help.

Thank you for your generous support of our food participants. We continue to accept donations of any shelf-stable foods. A suggestion list is at reception and on our website. If you want to shop with a focus, we can use more canned beans and vegetables and pop-top cans of fruit at this time.

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 the quiet ruins of a city long surrendered to wind and ivy, Marien wandered. She was a healer, wandering to see where the tides of Life might take her.

That was when she found it — hanging across the broken arms of a statue — a cloak woven entirely of thorn branches. Its weave was intricate, almost beautiful, but each thorn gleamed like a tiny fang.

An old man, leaning on a staff, emerged from the shadows of a nearby archway.

“It’s the Cloak of the Valley,” he said. “Long ago, when the river first grew sluggish and the orchards began to wither, the elders wove it. They cut the thorns from the hedges that marked the valley’s boundaries, binding them together with threads of winter grass. The one who wore it would draw the sickness out of the land, taking it into themselves.

“It worked,” he said softly. “The valley bloomed again. But each healer who bore it paid dearly. And when the last healer fell, the Cloak was brought here, out of sight — because no one wanted it. They didn’t even want to think about it.”

Marien asked if anyone in the valley knew of its existence now.

The old man shook his head. “They know the orchards are dying again. But they have forgotten the Cloak. And perhaps that is how it must be.”

She thought of the children she had seen there only yesterday, their laughter bright but their faces pale. She thought of the brittle branches of the apple trees, and the long hush in the market where the river’s fish once overflowed the baskets.

She did not ask who would tend her wounds.

She did not ask if the villages would know she was doing this for them.

She did not ask how long the pain would last.

She simply lifted the Cloak from the statue’s arms. It was heavier than she expected.

The first pain was sharp enough to take her breath away. The second was deeper — not in the skin, but in the bone.

The old man nodded once, slowly.

“Now,” he said, “the healing has begun. They will never know what you are doing. But the valley will know. And will be healed.”

And so Marien walked towards the lonely wilds of the valley, each step binding her more tightly to the fate she had chosen.

-- William Zeitler



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:

Lily Bolaños, Margaret Doane, Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough,
Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

Rebecca Allen, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas, Chris Wright-Thomas,
Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda, Rick
Rodriguez, Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith, and Christian Usher.

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