



**Twenty-Fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
September 21, 2025
10:30 a.m. Worship**

*Sculptures at Westminster Abbey
Westgate*

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

--Romans 8:38-39

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

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.

OUR NEXT COMMUNION will be Sunday, October 5th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Mindy Rueda

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

"We work, pray and hope every day to experience God's mercy. Every day we experience a continuous miracle. Others begin to feel this and come to our church in order to give their souls a rest."

--Grand Duchess Elizabeth

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Lord of Infinite Grace

S. Karg-Elert (1877-1933)

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

*INTROIT

Take, O Take Me as I Am¹

John L. Bell

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be; set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

*CALL to WORSHIP²

We come to worship with the saints,

✠ **surrounded by a cloud of witnesses:**

holy ancestors who have paved the way

✠ **holy neighbors who run alongside us**

holy hopes for all that might yet be.

✠ **We come to worship out of joy**

that in God no one is ever lost or forgotten.

✠ **We come to join the communion of the saints!**

*HYMN 100

Canticle of the Turning

STAR OF THE COUNTY DOWN

PRAYER of CONFESSION²

✠ **Patient God, forgive us for the things**

we have done and not done.

Forgive us for the words

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

*** Stand if you are able**

✠ The congregation will read.

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² Prayer by Carol Holbrook Prickett.

we have said and not said.
 Forgive us for the life
 we have lived and not lived.

(Moment for silent reflection and confession)

- ✘ Renew our trust in your guidance,
 that we might reflect the image
 of the One we profess to follow
 in thought, word and deed,
 and know deeply the power of your mercy. 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

Dinah Reindorf

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 of the gospel:

- ✘ In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and are being made whole.
 Alleluia, 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!
 lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

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TIME with the CHILDREN

[Children are always welcome in worship. There is KidSpace today in Room 10 following the Time with the Children.]

ANTHEM

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus! ⁴

Benjamin Harrison

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus! His the scepter, his the throne; Alleluia! His the triumph, His the victory alone; Hark! The songs of peaceful Sion Thunder like a mighty flood; Jesus out of ev'ry nation Hath redeemed us by his blood. Alleluia! Bread of Heaven, Thou on earth our food, our stay! Alleluia! Here the sinful Flee to thee from day to day: Intercessor, friend of sinners, Earth's redeemer, plead for me, Where the songs of all the sinless Sweep across the crystal sea. Alleluia! Not as orphans Are we left in sorrow now; Alleluia! He is near us, Faith believes, nor questions how; Though the cloud from sight received him, When the forty days were o'er, shall our hearts forget his promise, "I am with you evermore!"

SCRIPTURE

Romans 8:28-39

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor

⁴ Text: William C. Dix. Music; Benjamin Harrison. Words & Music ©1988 MorningStar Music Publishers, Inc./Birnawood Publications. Reprinted with permission under ONELICENSE #A706254. All rights reserved.

powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 25:34-40

Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

*Grand Duchess Elizabeth: Pastor Wendy Lamb
Finding Joy*

HYMN 730

*I Sing a Song of the Saints of God
Verse Three*

GRAND ISLE

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 727**

The Servant Song

Gillard

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

***RESPONSE**

*I'm Gonna Live
So God Can Use Me*

*African American
spiritual*

I'm gonna live (work, pray, sing) so God can use me anywhere, Lord anytime!

POSTLUDE

GREETER: Jeoff Molcan

USHERS: Chris Thomas, *Lead Usher*

John-Paul Fletcher, *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

Ron & Ruby Kraft, Bob Saenz

Elders: Jon Horstmann, Phyllis Hough, Sue Alexander

Deacons: Christian Usher, Steve Smith, Rebecca Allen

Pastor Nominating Committee:

Susan Addington, Mary Bolaños, John-Paul Fletcher

This Weeks' Celebrations

Sep 22 Al Rueda

Sep 23 Michael Cummings

Sep 24 Kyle Smith

Sep 26 Jim Siegmund

Kelli Vasquez

Sep 27 Eli Morales

The New Member Class will meet with Session members today in Room 10.

Thank you for your generous support of our food participants. Thank you for your generous donations of shelf-stable foods. A suggestion list available at reception, and on our website. We encourage bargain shopping since all donations can be put to good use. **Currently we would especially appreciate both regular & pop-top cans of fruit.**

Campus Preservation Fund. WE HAVE EXCEEDED OUR GOAL! THANK YOU ALL! Please remember that this is an ongoing need, and we will be grateful for your donations at any time.

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.

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

Two kingdoms lay side by side, their borders drawn not by rivers or mountains but by ancient grievances.
Each believed the other a curse, and for as long as anyone could remember, they had been at war.

Into this land wandered a bard named Selen,
carrying only a battered harp and a voice like flowing water.
He sang not of kings or battles, but of rain falling on roof tiles,
of a mother's quiet breath as she rocked a child to sleep,
of the single thread that binds every living heart.
Wherever he sang, children would gather, their faces luminous,
while their parents listened from the shadows, afraid to hope.

One spring, both kingdoms heard of Selen and sent emissaries to claim him.

The Northern general offered gold beyond imagining
if Selen would compose a war hymn to stiffen his soldiers' courage.
The Southern general promised him a palace and servants
if he would create a song to strike terror in enemy hearts.
Selen bowed to each in turn,
then vanished into the wilderness before either could bind him.

For months, no one knew where he had gone.
But deep in the valleys, Selen visited small villages that lay beyond the reach of armies.
There, in the dim light of cottages, he sang softly to the children.
He taught them melodies that shimmered like moonlight on water,
harmonies so tender they seemed to heal old wounds simply by being heard.

The children learned quickly, passing the songs among themselves
until they could weave them like garlands of wildflowers.

The war above raged on, ever more senseless.
Castles burned, borders shifted, generals rose and fell.
Yet beneath this storm, something unseen was taking root.
A farmer would hear his child humming
and find his own bitterness melting away.
A soldier, home on leave, would weep
to hear a melody he did not know he remembered.
The song spread quietly, like seeds scattered on the wind.

Years passed. The war, like all wars, collapsed under its own weight.
The last generals died with curses on their lips,

never knowing why their armies had lost their taste for killing.
When the smoke cleared, the two kingdoms lay in ruins —
leaderless, weary, and strangely silent.

Then, from a hillside, a single voice began to sing.
Others joined, timid at first, then stronger,
until the valleys rang with a music no sword could silence.
The children Selen had taught were grown now.
They gathered not to rebuild thrones or armies,
but to weave a new harmony between once-divided lands.
In place of borders, they planted orchards.
In place of war banners, they raised wind chimes to catch the breeze.

As for Selen, no one could say where he had gone.
Some claimed he had walked into the sea, carrying his harp.
Others swore they had seen him among the singers,
smiling quietly before slipping away.
But all agreed on this: his song had not ended.
It lived in them now, a melody that refused to be silenced,
a promise carried from one heart to another.

And whenever the world seemed ready to fall again into darkness,
a child's voice could still be heard —
singing.

-- 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:

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