

Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time
November 9, 2025 10:30 a.m. Worship



“Now he is God not of the dead but of the living, for to him all of them are alive.”
--Luke 20:38

First Presbyterian Church

Mailing address: P.O. Box 2729; San Bernardino, California 92406

909.882.3308

www.fpcsb.net

MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: REV. BRIAN S. SYMONDS

COMMISSIONED LOCAL 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, December 7th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Mimi Lange

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

“Reflecting on the resurrection involves understanding it as a demonstration of hope, a promise of new life, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. It offers assurance of victory over death, giving believers an eternal perspective on suffering and a call to live transformed lives characterized by love, forgiveness, and new spiritual life.”
-Google AI Overview Generator

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

*The Girl with
the Flaxen Hair* C. Debussy (1862-1918)

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

*INTROIT

Let All Things Now Living¹

ASH GROVE

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving to God our Creator triumphantly raise; who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us, by guiding us on to the end of our days. God's banners are o'er us; pure light goes before us, a pillar of fire shining forth in the night: till shadows have vanished, all fearfulness banished, as forward we travel from light into light.

*CALL to WORSHIP (based on Psalm 98)

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

✠ **We will break forth into joyous song, and sing praises.**

Sing praises to the Lord;

✠ **Make a joyful noise with trumpet and the sound of the horn.**

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it.

✠ **The floods clap their hands and the hills sing out together;**

Let us join in the joyful song of creation.

*HYMN 643

Now Thank We All Our God NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT

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

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

¹ Text: Katherine K. Davis, 1939, alt. ©1939, 1966 E. C. Schirmer Music Company. Music: Welsh folk melody; harm. Gerald H. Knight. Music Harm. ©1973 Royal School of Music. Reprinted with permission under ONELICENSE #A706254. All rights reserved.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Though we are prone to wander, the spirit of God abides among us.
Trusting in God's persistent love and mercy, let us confess our sin.

(Take a moment to silently name your longing.)

✠ Gracious God, we confess that we are too easily influenced by peddlers of despair and alarm, too quick to sink into numbness and apathy, too tired to imagine another way. Our hopes have crumbled, and our hearts are faint. Breathe new life into us, we pray. Help us to be mindful of your promises, your faithfulness, and your presence as we face the challenges of our lives. Restore our vision and give us courage to live in your truth. Amen.

God's ways are just, and God's kindness is constant. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. Beloved, God draws near to us with compassion and forgives our sins. Thanks be to God, we are a forgiven people.

✠ Amen.

(We stand and sing Alleluia)

*ALLELUIA

William Zeitler



TIME with the CHILDREN

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

ANTHEM

Down to the River to Pray² arr. Sheldon Curry

As I went down to the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way and who shall wear the starry crown. Good Lord, show me the way. Oh, sisters, *lets go down, let's go down, come on down. O sisters, let's go down, down to the river to pray.* As I went down to the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way and who shall wear the robe and crown. Good Lord, show me the way. O brothers *let's go down, ...* As I went down to the river to pray, studyin' about

² Traditional hymn arranged by Sheldon Curry. ©2002 Hal Leonard Corporation.

Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-7062545. All rights reserved.

that good ol' way and who shall wear the starry crown. Good Lord, show me the way. O fathers, *let's go down*, . . . As I went down to the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way and who shall wear the robe and crown. Good Lord, show me the way. O mothers let's go down, come on down, don'tcha wanna go down. Come on mothers, let's go down, down to the river to pray. As I went down to the river to pray, studyin' about that good ol' way and who shall wear the starry crown. Good Lord, show me the way. O sinners, *let's go down*, . . .

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 17:1-9

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.
From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.
If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.
As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.
My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.
I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me; hear my words.
Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.
Guard me as the apple of the eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,
from the wicked who despoil me,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

Luke 20:27-38

Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first married a woman and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her."

Jesus said to them, “Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage, but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed, they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead but of the living, for to him all of them are alive.’

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✘ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Hope in the Absurd

Rev. Brian S. Symonds

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 238**

Thine Be the Glory

JUDAS MACCABEUS

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

***RESPONSE**

Let All Things Now Living¹

ASH GROVE

By law God enforces, the stars in their courses, the sun in its orbit obediently shine; the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains, the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine. We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing; with glad adoration, a song let us raise, till all things now living unite in thanksgiving: to God in the highest, hosanna and praise!

POSTLUDE

Improvisation

GREETER: Jeanne Clark

USHERS: Mark Adelson, *Lead Usher*

Marilyn Kraft, Rick Rodriguez, *Security Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM ENGINEER: James Welte

CAMERA OPERATORS: Kevin Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Noé Falconi, Marianna Fowles, Sandy Garza

Elders: Katie Smith, Neal Williams, Amy Smith

Deacons: Rebecca Allen, Brad Smith, Dave Thomas

This Weeks' Celebrations

Nov 9 Deb & Joy Burgan-Price

Nov 10 Martin Luther

Nov 13 Susan Zeitler

Nov 15 Alyssa Arellano

Today following worship we will have ***a short silent film during Coffee Hour accompanied on the Kraft organ in Fellowship Hall.*** We plan to do this on the second Sunday each month. This month, we have ***"Soup to Nuts"***, a Laurel & Hardy film (*18 minutes*) about them being waiters at a posh restaurant. **Come join the classic fun.**

Congregational Meeting. There will be a Congregational Meeting to elect new officers on **Sunday, November 16** immediately following worship.

Brandon Turner will receive his **Eagle Scout award** in a ceremony on **Saturday, November 22 at 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.** All are invited. Come support the creator of our lovely kitchen garden!

SAVE YOUR BLOOD. Our second blood drive in association with Lifestream will be on **Sunday, November 30**. If you are a regular donor, a reminder: you can only give every 60 days. For those of us that are regular donors to Lifestream, please try to be here with an open arm. **Remember your iron!** Sign ups begin immediately after worship today in Fellowship Hall.

Deacon Fundraiser. The Deacons are having a fundraiser on Tuesday, Nov 18th at Red Robin at Citrus Grove to support the Food Closet. Please pick up a flyer in Fellowship Hall after worship. Spread the word to your family and friends and enjoy a meal out together. You will need the paper flyer (or one on your phone) in order for the Food Closet to receive its share.

Thank you for your generous support of our food participants. Thank you for your generous donations of shelf-stable foods. A suggestion list is 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.**

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

The Cartographer was famous for her maps.

Not the ordinary kind — she cared nothing for mountains or rivers or the tedious borders of today's kings. Her passion was the hidden geography of human feeling. For decades she charted the terrain of joy and sorrow, of longing and hope, until her magnum opus was complete: *the Atlas of the Human Heart*.

It was exquisite. Every emotion had its precise latitude and longitude. Grief was a gray valley carved between two solemn hills. Contentment lay on warm plains near the Sea of Comfort. Love was a wide river, slow and predictable, flowing north toward serenity. No surprises. Nothing wild. Nothing uncharted.

Everyone adored the Atlas. Teachers built lessons around it. Counselors measured feelings with rulers and compasses. “At last,” they proclaimed, “we understand the heart.”

One day, a woman came to the Cartographer. Her father had recently died. Her grief was deep and raw, and she found herself wandering the Valley of Sorrow just as the Atlas predicted. Everything was as it should be — until she met someone who made her laugh. Someone who brought warmth she didn't think possible. Someone who caused something wild to blossom in her chest.

The Atlas offered no route from grief to love. The two lay on opposite sides of the chart. The Cartographer explained kindly that the woman must be mistaken. “One cannot stand in the river and on the mountaintop at the same time.”

“But I do anyway,” the woman whispered.

The Cartographer frowned. “Impossible. You are confusing sadness with attachment, or affection with longing. Tell me precisely what you feel.”

The woman tried, but her words were messy and mingled and beautiful. The Cartographer cataloged each one, tracing lines on the Atlas to show why her descriptions could not be true. At last, the woman bowed her head and said, very softly, “Perhaps something is wrong with me.”

As she turned to leave, she wept.

Her tears were not polite tears. They were fierce, volcanic, unstoppable. They flowed onto the table where the Atlas lay open. Drops splashed the ink.

At once, the map changed.

The black lines shimmered. Colors bled into one another. The tidy borders between emotions dissolved like salt in water. The river of love curved toward the valley. The valley opened into a canyon of marvel. New coastlines appeared — strange and beautiful — where sorrow and tenderness braided together like strands of gossamer hair.

The Cartographer stared in shock. Her perfect system was dissolving before her eyes.

She tried blotting the ink. She tried redrawing the lines. But the more she fought, the more the Atlas bloomed with impossible landscapes: mountains of nostalgia, forests of bittersweet wonder, thunderstorms of joy that rained tears of sorrow.

She realized the Atlas was not breaking. It was awakening.

At dawn, she called the woman back.

“I have a confession,” the Cartographer said. “My map was too small.”

The woman looked uncertain. “For grief?”

“And love,” the Cartographer replied, and after a long pause: “For everything.”

The Cartographer spent the next year revising the Atlas, but not by adding more lines or stricter boundaries. She left blank regions — vast and wordless — where she wrote only: *Cor Incognitum*, meaning *The Unknown Heart*.

And when at last she closed the great book, she smiled to herself.

The ancient phrase came to mind:

“You must be born again.”

To which she realized one must add:

“Born again. And again. And again.”

She discovered that every human heart was shaped slightly differently, with its own ravines and rivers, its own miracles and contradictions. Her Atlas, once a monument to control, became a testament to mystery.

People still came to consult it, but now they left with wonder instead of certainty. They learned to expect the unpredictable. They learned that love could coexist with sorrow, that laughter could rise from grief, and that being human meant dwelling in places no map could fully capture.

And sometimes, if one looked closely, one could see places where tiny drops of ink had blossomed into constellations — stars charting sky where once there had only been blank paper.

It turned out the human heart was not a country to be measured.

It was, instead, a vast, mysterious, ever-expanding universe, born anew every moment.

-- *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.