

Christ the King/ Thanksgiving Sunday
November 23, 2025 10:30 a.m. Worship



"Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply."

--Jeremiah 23:3

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: Susan Addington

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

Jeremiah reminds us that shepherds of all kinds will be held accountable for how they treat their flocks. Maybe within scripture we could make a safe assessment that we are to understand this within the context of our Abrahamic beliefs of who God calls us to be. And, the argument could be made that the shepherds could be of any other fold – education, banking, medicine, public policy, legislatures, etc. Would that we spend a moment encouraged that God through Jeremiah brings a message of a future "righteous branch" offering hope for just and compassionate solutions. Where and how can we participate in just and compassionate solutions?

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Andante from Flute Concerto in D (K314)* W. A. Mozart
Susan Addington, Flute
Allow the music to usher you into sacred space and time.

***INTROIT** *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come* ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR
Come, ye thankful people, come; raise the song of harvest home. All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin. God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied. Come to God's own temple, come; raise the song of harvest home.

***CALL to WORSHIP** *(based on Luke 1:68-79)*

We gather to worship God, who looks favorably on all the humans he created.

✠ We sing blessings to God, who stands with us for justice and salvation.

We gather to worship God, who worked with many prophetic humans in every time and place.

✠ We sing blessings to God, who makes faithful promises, to us and our ancestors.

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

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

✠ We sing blessings to God, who guides our feet on paths of peace.

DIADEMATA

As humans, we are all prone to error: when we are entrusted with power, we make mistakes. Let us confess together as a way of holding ourselves accountable to God and each other.

(Take a moment to silently name your longing.)

(based on Jeremiah 23:1-4)

God promised to deal wisely with a scattered people who made compromised choices while living under an empire's occupation. God promised to save them by bringing justice and righteousness to the land. Hear the good news: Jesus's death and resurrection confirm God's faithful promises extended to us. God forgives and calls us to keep striving to do justice. Amen! *(based on Jeremiah 23:5-6)*

(We stand and sing 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. There is KidSpace today in Room 10 following the Time with the Children.]

ANTHEM *Amazing Grace/Pachelbel's Canon*¹ arr. J. A. Shafferman

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now am found; was blind, but now I see! 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed, first believed. When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days, Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Luke 1:68-79

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his child David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all
who hate us.

¹ Text: W. Kethe (Daye's Psalter, 1560-1). Music: R. Vaughn Williams. ©1953 Oxford University Press. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-706254. All rights reserved.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us
that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear,
in holiness and righteousness
in his presence all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON *Just and Compassionate Solutions: Rev. Brian S. Symonds*
A Living Theology

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.**

***PRAYER OF THANKS**

Bless these gifts, God who fills our lives with joy and hope; use them to fulfill your promises and bring your justice to all creation.

✠ **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 463

How Firm a Foundation

FOUNDATION

*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

*RESPONSE *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come* ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR

Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest home. Gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin, there forever purified, in thy presence to abide: come, with all thine angels, come; raise the glorious harvest home!

POSTLUDE

Improvisation

GREETER: Lynda Savage

USHERS: Margaret Doane, *Lead Usher*

Marilyn Kraft, Jim Siegmund, *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

Bob Saenz, Nancy Sellas, Judy Steppins

Elders: Phyllis Hough, Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark

Deacons: Kristine French, Joyce Lyons, Rick Rodriguez

This Weeks' Celebrations

Nov 23	Dan Direen	Nov 25	William Zeitler
	Chase Preciado	Nov 26	Brad Smith
	Wade Preciado		Chris Wright-Thomas
	Joyce Seeger	Nov 27	Abigail Grace Willis
Nov 24	John-Paul & Stephanie	Nov 28	Raymond Olivarez
	Fletcher	Nov 29	Norm Wallis
	Larry Kistner		
	Matthew Garcia		

A-Caroling we will go! Everyone-of any age- is invited to join the Annual Intergenerational Car Caravan Christmas Caroling Mission. **We will meet after church on December 7th** for a light lunch and a little bit of practice before we take the show on the road. Two or three different teams will then caravan to some of the homes of our homebound members and friends. You may have the energy for only a couple of stops or you may feel able to go to everyone on your team's list---you will be appreciated for whatever you are able to do! **Please let Mary Bolaños or Robin Edwards know if you are able to join the fun so that there will be enough lunch.**

SAVE YOUR BLOOD. Our second blood drive in association with Lifestream will be next **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.

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

Once upon a time there was a shepherd named Lior, who lived happily in the mountains with his wife and young son. Their life was simple and hard. Yet they had each other, and their sheep, and the mountains and valleys were so beautiful — beautiful beyond words.

One day Lior came home after grazing the flock, only to discover there had been an avalanche. Where his cottage had stood now lay a tumble of rocks and debris. His home and family were gone without a trace — swallowed by the mountainside. All that was left was a little lamb, whom his wife and son had been caring for, who had somehow survived. He named her "Flower".

After that, Lior lived as one half-alive. He tended Flower and his sheep, spoke little, and slept by a fire that burned low in a simple hut he built near where his cottage had been. The villagers left him food but no questions. "He's already part ghost," they whispered.

One clear winter's night, Lior was foraging for firewood when a blizzard took him by surprise. Snow whirled so thick that up and down traded places. Disoriented, he stumbled and fell into a drift, and the cold took him quickly. His heartbeat quieted, faltering. And in that stillness, he saw two figures in the whiteness — his wife and son — smiling, patient. They didn't beckon him closer; they simply waited as if to say not yet. Their peace startled him awake.

At dawn, he crawled out of the snowdrift — alive and aching. Near him, wedged between stones, lay an old shepherd's flute carved of mountain ash, crusted with ice. He didn't know who had left it there, only that it felt at home in his hands.

At first, he couldn't make a sound. Eventually, notes came out, cracked and wind-torn. Over the long days of watching his sheep, he let the flute slowly show him what it wanted to sing. Sometimes he wondered who was playing whom.

The villagers noticed the shepherd who had never smiled now played in the twilight — and the sheep gathered close as if listening to prayer. He played through sun and rain, through silence so wide the echoes seemed to breathe. The sheep learned to follow the sound; the birds grew unafraid. And in time, his own heart began to keep time with the otherworldly music.

When the fever came to the village, Lior came, carrying herbs and his flute. "Sometimes compassion is the only medicine left," he said. He played for the sick, for the frightened, for the dying. The melodies sang of

sorrow to tenderness, and from tenderness to a strange, fierce joy. Some who heard it survived. Those who didn't, passed away loved.

When Flower too fell ill, he played through the night. The flute's tone grew raw — human, pleading. When at last her small body stilled, the wind rose and carried the melody down the valley like a benediction. At dawn, he carried Flower to where his family had died, and laid her to rest in a small grave adorned with stones.

Weeks later, the fever took Lior. On his last evening, he asked the villagers to open the window, so the wind could find him. They buried him next to Flower, his flute resting on his chest.

That spring, when storms swept down the valley, the wind carried music — faint, but unmistakable. It was never quite the same tune twice. The villagers called it Lior's Song. And when someone died, they would say,

“Listen — Lior has come to carry them home.”

Now a shepherd of souls, not sheep.

-- 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.