

Fourth Sunday of Epiphany
February 1, 2026 10:30 a.m. Worship



"One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them."

—*Matthew 5:1-2*

First Presbyterian Church

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www.fpcsb.net

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

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 Wednesday, February 18th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Brooke Dvorak

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

"When we begin to consider who and how God calls us to be, we already know that it must be counterculture. Our culture, all too often, leads us to focus on the individual, rather than the communal. And, when we do, offering compassion is sometimes seen as naive, rather than being Christ-like. To hope for and see what gifts can come from using the Beatitudes as a way to live more Christ-like in community, helps all of us together realize the kingdom of God here and now. It can be difficult, yet it is what is asked of each of us."

-Rev. Brian Symonds

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Canzona

D. Buxtehude

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

INTROIT

From the Rising of the Sun

Eric H. Thiman

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name be praised, the Lord's name be praised.

* CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on Psalm 15)*

Lord, we come into your sanctuary with eagerness.

✠ **May we hear your call and speak your truth.**

Lord, we come to abide with you in love.

✠ **Gather us in honest and faithful community.**

Lord, prepare us to be people of hope and grace.

✠ **Kindle in us courage to live as brave and faithful disciples.**

Let us worship our God together in this holy place.

✠ **Alleluia. Amen.**

*HYMN 450

Be Thou My Vision

SLANE

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

* Stand if you are able

✠ The congregation will read.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

With what shall I come before the Lord? We come, knowing we've lived imperfectly, knowing we need forgiveness, and we ask what we could possibly offer for such a gift. But when we come in honesty and repentance, we find a God who is ready to love, ready to forgive, and ready to renew us as children of God. Trusting in that grace, let us confess our sin, first together and then in silent prayer.

(Take a moment to silently name your longing.)

✠ **Merciful God, we come before you in confession. You have showered us with blessings, but we hoard those gifts, refusing to share with our neighbors in need. You have given us freedom to live justly, but we choose to oppress and judge others. You have called us to live in peaceful community, but we sow discord and breed fear among ourselves. Forgive us. Soften our hearts and open our minds to hear your call. Inspire us to act justly, love fiercely, and walk in your way each and every day. Amen.**

(based on Micah 6:1-8)

The mercy of the Lord is deeper than the depths of the sea and wider than the whole of the earth. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, healed and made whole. Alleluia.

✠ **Amen.**

(We stand and sing the Response)

***SUNG RESPONSE 726 *The Summons*¹ John L. Bell**

**Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?**

TIME with the CHILDREN

[After Time with the Children, our children are encouraged to worship with us. There are activity bags and books in the Narthex.]

¹ Tune: Arr. by John L. Bell; © 1987, WGRG c/o Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent
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SCRIPTURE

Micah 6:1-8

Hear what the Lord says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.

Hear, you mountains, the controversy of the Lord,
and you enduring foundations of the earth,
for the Lord has a case against his people,
and he will contend with Israel.

“O my people, what have I done to you?

In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

For I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,
and I sent before you Moses,

Aaron, and Miriam.

O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the saving acts of the Lord.”

“With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow myself before God on high?

Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven/

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

This is the word of faith that we proclaim

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON *On Being the Church:* *Rev. Brian S. Symonds*
Reflecting on How We’ve ‘Done’ Church

ANTHEM *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light?* *Thomerson*
I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus. *In Him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike. The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.* I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus. Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father. *In Him there is ...* I’m looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus. When we have run with patience the race, we shall know the joy of Jesus. *In Him there is ...*

DEACONS’ MINUTE for MISSION *Kyle Smith & Adam Nord*

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

***PRAYER OF THANKS**

Gracious God, thank you for the many blessings of our lives. Bless these gifts we give today.

May they be used to bring about justice and joy for those who need them most. ✠ **Amen.**

CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION to the LORD'S TABLE

Here, at this table, Christ is the host.

Those who wish to serve him must first be served by him,

Those who want to follow him must first be fed by him.

This is the table where Christ offers to make us new.

So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world. Come: it is Christ himself who invites you.

SURSUM CORDA

The Lord be with you.

✠ **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

✠ **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

✠ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

GREAT PRAYER of THANKSGIVING

You, Holy One, came to us as a child in Bethlehem– and there was no room for you.

We pray for all for whom there is no home, no room. Deepen in us a desire to make room for them, and so make room for you.

God, in your mercy

✠ **Hear our prayer.**

You, our Lord, fled to Egypt as a refugee.

we pray for all who flee their homeland in fear,

leaving behind all that is familiar.

Help us to welcome and support them; and know the meaning of

Welcome in a new way.

God, in your mercy

✠ **Hear our prayer.**

You, our Prince of Peace, call us to be peacemakers.

We pray for peace in our world. We pray especially at this time for Ukraine and Venezuela and Nigeria

We pray for the leaders of the nations,

for those who have power to bring an end to violence and war-

God, in your mercy

✠ **Hear our prayer.**

You, who call us to be Church, we pray for our congregation and our neighborhood.

Help us to show hospitality- knowing that in showing love and respect to a member of your family, we are showing it to you.
God, in your mercy

✕ **Hear our prayer.**

With angels and saints and the company of heaven, we sing your praise:

SANCTUS

James C. Huffstutler

✕ **Holy, holy, Lord Almighty, God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory, Glory in the highest.
Blessed, blessed,
blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna, hosanna,
Hosanna in the highest.**

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE, OUR LORD'S PRAYER

We pray for people who are sick in body or mind,
for those who are grieving//those who long for comfort
and especially for... [names]
In their need may they know your healing touch.
God, in your mercy

✕ **Hear our prayer.**

And now we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us

✕ **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.**

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

Spirit of the living God, present with us now,
breathe in us and on these your gifts of bread and wine,
that sharing your blessing and your broken life,
we may share in your presence and reality,
and together, as your body, remain in your love.

THE WORDS of INSTITUTION

(As the bread is broken, the minister says this or something like it:)

Among friends gathered around a table,
Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it,
and gave it to his disciples, saying,
“This is my body which is given for you.
Do this to remember me.”

(As the cup is poured, the minister says this or something like it:)

Later, after they’d eaten, he took a cup
and said, “This cup is our new relationship,
made possible by my life and death.
Whenever you drink it, remember me.”

Look, here is your Lord, coming to you in bread and cup.
The gifts of God for the people of God.

WE SHARE GOD’S GIFTS

(Communion will be served by intinction at two stations. As you feel ready, please come up the center aisle to a station, receive a piece of bread, dip it in the cup, eat it, and return to your seat by the side aisle. The cup is non-alcoholic. Gluten-free bread can be found at the station by the pulpit. There will be rovers to bring the elements to you if you do not wish to come forward. We sing as we commune.)

SUNG PRAYERS

As we go forward, as we wait and pray before & after, we sing our prayers together. The refrains are sung over & over as we make them our own.

SUNG REFRAIN 527

***Eat This Bread*³**

Jacques Berthier

**Eat this bread, drink this cup,
come to me and never be hungry
Eat this bread, drink this cup,
trust in me and you will not thirst**

SUNG REFRAIN 205

***Ubi Caritas*⁴**

Jacques Berthier

**Ubi caritas et amor,
ubi caritas Deus ibi est.**

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SUNG REFRAIN 544 *Bless the Lord, My Soul*⁵ *Jacques Berthier*
Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life...

PRAYER after COMMUNION

✕ Here we have tasted your goodness and grace,
felt the nearness of your Spirit and the power of Community.
Help us to follow wherever you lead
And share the gifts we've been given. Amen.

***HYMN 829** *My Faith Looks Up to Thee* OLIVET

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

***RESPONSE** *Sevenfold Amen* *John Stainer, 1873*

POSTLUDE

GREETER: Meryll Davis

USHERS: Margaret Doane, *Lead Usher*

Jim Siegmund, Chris Thomas, *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

Ron & Ruby Kraft, Bob Saenz

Elders: Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jon Horstmann

Deacons: Dave Thomas, Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda

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This Weeks' Celebrations

Feb 2 Brian & Amy Gano
Feb 4 Steve Smith
Feb 6 Kiera Everly French
Feb 7 Stephanie Fletcher
 Clara Gresham
 Frank Thomas

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will be held next **Sunday, February 8th** immediately after worship. We will review the Annual Report, elect our new Nominating Committee, and conduct other business as needed. Please plan to attend.

Super Bowl Bake Sale. **Sunday, February 8th in the Fellowship Hall after worship.** The amazing bakers of PW will tempt you with amazing treats to enhance your Super Bowl Experience! (Or whatever experience you do instead—we're not judging.) Helen will make her special treat, so get there early!

Souper Bowl of Caring. On Sunday February 8th, we ask the congregation to bring in cans of food for our Food Program.

Leonard Scholarship Applications for Fall 2026 are available in the church office and on the church website. All applications must be in the church office by February 28, 2026. Any questions can be emailed to Lynda Savage. LKSavage3@gmail.com

2026 Companions on the Inner Way Retreat Opportunity.

This spring, *Companions on the Inner Way* will once again offer a safe communal place to explore deep longings for the Holy. Grounded in the Christian tradition, the guided retreats incorporate body, mind, and soul through presentations, dialogue, spiritual practices, art, music, movement, and worship with Eucharist. The retreats strive to create an environment that is theologically curious, radically welcoming, and liturgically vibrant.

The retreat will take place from Sunday, March 8, 2026 to Friday, March 13, 2026 at Serra Retreat Center in Malibu, California.

Registration information can be accessed at www.cotiway.org
Please contact Christa Wallis chriwallis@aol.com if you'd like to apply for a scholarship to help defray the cost of attending.

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 cans or bags of beans (pinto, navy, red, etc.).**

Winter Camp will take place on the weekend of March 13th-15th. Registration begins now. We're inviting you to an awesome winter camp weekend designed just for 6th thru 12th graders! Our theme this year is ***Warm Hearts, Renewed Spirits***, and it's all about experiencing God's life-giving warmth in the middle of a cold, crazy season. You can look forward to powerful worship & messages, winter fun & chill time, real community and so much more. Call (877)285-0199 or email **registration@bblccc.com** for more information. Cost is \$165 per camper. Financial help is available.

Music Box

One morning, Maribel's husband went to the well for water and did not come back. They found him dead on the path. No accident anyone saw. No illness anyone could name. No cause anyone could discern.

After that, Maribel began hearing people differently.

A neighbor said, "I'm glad my brother moved away," and Maribel heard the void of loss in her heart. A cousin said, "It was necessary..." and she heard the yearning — "If only..."

She was hearing what people meant, not what they said.

At first, she thought it was grief. Grief scrambles the gizzards of one's soul. Yet, the feeling did not fade — it sharpened.

She answered people with less than she used to: a wordless nod, a longer look, a cup of tea poured more slowly.

When the baker said, "Business is fine," Maribel noticed how his hands shook and steadied them with her own. When her sister said, "I don't mind being alone," Maribel saw — and asked her to stay for supper.

People noticed.

They began stopping by in the evenings — not formally, just lingering on her patio, sitting on her husband's stool, talking sideways about things.

A woman said she was angry at her mother and did not know why. A man said he was proud of his son and then stared into his cup as if waiting for something to float up.

Maribel did not resolve anything. She made space for sentences to finish themselves.

It became known, in a small way, that if you did not want advice, you went to Maribel. If you did not want to be told what you should feel, you went to Maribel. If you wanted to hear your own voice slowed down until it sounded like yours, you went to Maribel.

This was not a gift she asked for. It cost her sleep. It cost her appetite. It cost her the feeling of being finished at the end of the day.

Sometimes, after everyone left, she would just sit in the waning light with both hands palms down on the table, feeling as though something had been poured into her that had no container.

One afternoon, a young couple came. They had been married less than a year and were already tired in a way that looked old.

He spoke first. She corrected him. He tried again. She folded her arms.

They both looked at Maribel — for the pointless victory of being right.

Maribel felt the familiar pressure behind their words, two versions of the same loneliness wearing different coats.

If she spoke, one of them would hear themselves as betrayed. If she stayed silent, both would feel abandoned. She poured more tea.

“So you think I’m wrong,” the wife said.

“I think your words are crumbly,” Maribel said.

“So you agree with her,” the husband said.

“I think your words are powdery,” Maribel said.

They blinked at her as if she had rearranged the furniture while they were sitting on it.

After that, fewer people came with disputes. More came with stories.

Someone talked about a childhood friend whose face they could no longer remember. Someone confessed they were afraid of being happy because it felt like tempting something.

Maribel’s house changed. Not in size — in temperature. Words behaved differently there. They arrived less armored.

Some people stopped coming. They said she was hard to read, that she didn’t take sides, that she made everything complicated.

Maribel did not argue. Her days became quieter. Her nights heavier.

Sometimes she wished she could go back to the old way of hearing, when a sentence was just a sentence, when “fine” meant fine. But

she also knew she would never again trust a word that arrived without its shadow.

It was not that she could hear people better. It was that she could wait longer — wait for the second sentence inside the first, wait for the feeling searching for its own grammar.

She remembered the young couple's faces and understood something without turning it into a rule:

There are truths that heal by being spoken.
And truths that heal by being held.

Her house became known for neither.

Instead, it became known for the pregnant space between.

-- 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:

Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman, Norm Wallis,
Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund, Katie Smith, Neal Williams,
Robin Edwards, John-Paul Fletcher, Jon Horstmann, Lynda Savage,
and Clerk of Session Amy Smith

and supported by our Board of Deacons:

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