

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

June 21, 2026

10:30 a.m. Worship



Website: Aging Capriciously

When Ananias heard these words, he dropped dead. Everyone who heard this conversation was terrified.

Acts 5:5

First Presbyterian Church

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MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT: REV. DR. 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 Sunday, July 5th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Rebecca Allen

REFLECTION BEFORE THE SERVICE

This story serves as a cautionary tale about hypocrisy, deceit, and the sanctity of communal trust. The early church valued transparency and integrity, and the narrative contrasts the selfless generosity of believers like Barnabas with the deceptive actions of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:36-37). Their deaths are not merely about money but about misrepresenting one's faith and undermining the relational and spiritual trust of the community. The passage challenges readers to examine their own motives, emphasizing that authenticity and truthfulness are essential in a Spirit-led life.

--Summary by Microsoft Copilot

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

Festival Antiphon

W. Zeitler

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

INTROIT

With A Voice of Singing

Martin Shaw

With a voice of singing, declare ye this and let it be heard, Alleluia.

*CALL TO WORSHIP *(from Matthew 10:29-31)*

Not one sparrow will fall to the ground apart from their Creator.

✠ **God tells us we are of more value than many sparrows.**

God knows us and loves us. Even the hairs of our head are all counted.

✠ **We praise you, O God! Grateful are we for your love and care!**

*HYMN 275

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

EIN' FESTE BERG

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Before we hear the Word read and proclaimed, let us prepare our hearts through the confession of our individual and collective sins. First in silence and then together.

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

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

(Silent confession)

- ✘ You send us, God of the Great Commission, but we hedge and hesitate. Forgive our fear and our excuses. We are witnesses of your grace and glory but allow others to silence our praise. We imprison ourselves with doubt and shame and fail to shine your light for all to see. Forgive our fears. Free our testimony. Help us be your faithful disciples. Amen.

Through Christ's death and resurrection, we are a new creation, ready to sing God's glory and testify to God's grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and freed. Amen.

(We stand and sing the Response)

***SUNG RESPONSE 587**

Alleluia

CELTIC ALLELUIA

TIME with the YOUNG DISCIPLES

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANTHEM *We Sing Your Mighty Power, O God!* John Carter

We sing your mighty pow'r, O God, that made the mountains rise, that spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies. We sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day. The moon shines full at your command and all the stars obey. We sing your goodness sov'reign God, who filled the earth with food; you formed the creatures with your word, and then pronounced them good. Oh! how your wonders are displayed, where e'er we turn our eyes; if we survey the ground we tread, or gaze upon the skies. There's not a plant or flow'r below, but makes your glories known; and clouds arise and tempests blow, by order from your throne. While all that borrows life from you is ever in your care, and ev'rywhere that we can be, you are present there. God is present there.

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

- ✘ Savior God, your Word is a lamp to our feet on this discipleship road. Walk with us. Guide us with your wisdom and grace. Open us to discerning your will and your way. Amen.

¹ Text: Isaac Watts, 1715, alt. Music: John Carter. ©2002 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONELICENSE #A706254. All rights reserved.

SCRIPTURE

Acts 5:1-11 (CEB)

However, a man named Ananias, along with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. With his wife's knowledge, he withheld some of the proceeds from the sale. He brought the rest and placed it in the care and under the authority of the apostles. Peter asked, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has influenced you to lie to the Holy Spirit by withholding some of the proceeds from the sale of your land? Wasn't that property yours to keep? After you sold it, wasn't the money yours to do with whatever you wanted? What made you think of such a thing? You haven't lied to other people but to God!" When Ananias heard these words, he dropped dead. Everyone who heard this conversation was terrified. Some young men stood up, wrapped up his body, carried him out, and buried him.

About three hours later, his wife entered, but she didn't know what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her, "Tell me, did you and your husband receive this price for the field?"

She responded, "Yes, that's the amount."

He replied, "How could you scheme with each other to challenge the Lord's Spirit? Look! The feet of those who buried your husband are at the door. They will carry you out too." At that very moment, she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men entered and found her dead, they carried her out and buried her with her husband. Trepidation and dread seized the whole church and all who heard what had happened.

This is the word of faith that we proclaim,

✘ **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

Who Are You Fooling? Rev. Dr. Brian S. Symonds

AFFIRMATION of FAITH (from *A Brief Statement of Faith*)

✘ **Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing**

child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

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**

Take our hearts, our hands, our gifts, Holy God. Mold us, shape us, send us, so that we might be your body in the world you so love,

✘ Amen.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE and 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 697**

Take My Life

HENDON

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

RESPONSE

Sevenfold Amen

John Stainer

POSTLUDE

Nun Danket Alle Gott

arr. William Zeitler

Musicians

Norm Wallis, trumpet
Caitlin Curran, trumpet
Curtiss Allen Jr., French horn
Jeremy Allen, trombone
Lloyd Sherman, trombone
Asher Gano, tuba

GREETER: Jeanne Clark

USHERS: Lynn Usher, *Lead Usher*

Tim Usher, Mark Adelson, *Hospitality Ushers*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM TEAM: James Welte, Kevin Lamb,
Oliver Lamb, Lynn Usher

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Debora Holk, Ron & Ruby Kraft

Elders: Jon Horstmann, Lynda Savage, Sue Alexander

Deacons: Joanna Nord, Mindy Rueda, Kristine French

This Weeks' Celebrations

Jun 22 Rachel Corpus

Jun 23 Jorge Carlos

Jun 25 Randy & Kristine French

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Hymn Sing Sunday will be held next week. We want everyone to have a chance to sing their favorite hymn, so fill in the slip in your bulletin, and we will make it happen.

On the same Sunday we will move our worship service to Fellowship Hall for the summer to conserve energy.

AND Our Annual Ice Cream Social will follow worship on Sunday, June 28th. The Deacons will serve up some delicious cold treats, so don't miss it!

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 jars (~16 oz) of peanut butter or pop-top cans or cups of fruit.**

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How Can We Reclaim Jesus from Empire? How did Western Christianity become intertwined with systems of empire — and how can we reconnect to the heart of Jesus' teachings? Explore this question and more at The Center for Action and Contemplation's next online gathering. Secure your online seat by July 9 to get access to the live event and the recording. You are invited into a deeper exploration of faith, power, and compassion.

HOW CAN WE RECLAIM JESUS FROM EMPIRE?

Featuring: Brian McLaren, Randy Woodley, and Edith Woodley

Date and Time: Friday, July 10, 10:00-11:30 a.m. Pacific Time

Location: Online via Zoom with Recorded Replay

Cost: \$95, \$30, \$10, or \$5

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Or copy and paste the following into your browser

https://cac.org/event/how-can-we-reclaim-jesus-from-empire/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=registration+open&utm_campaign=VG+3+Empire&utm_content=registration

Music Box

Mary did not know her father Melchizedek was mysterious until he was gone.

She had grown up in Salem, watching her father move through his days the way a stone stands in a river: not swept, not resisting, simply present. He rose before dawn and set out bread and wine on the altar at the center of a walled garden, open to the sky. People came, and he received them in silence, for Melchizedek never spoke. No one had ever seen his face either, for he wore a scarf wound close, and his eyes above it were dark and still — without beginning of days, or so it seemed to her. He was a priest forever, her mother had said once. They lived in a modest hut just outside the garden.

People came from everywhere. That was the other thing she had always taken for granted — that troubled people found their way to her father's garden the way water finds low ground. They arrived carrying what they tried to hide: the old man whose wrong choice still haunted him after twenty years, the young soldier who had seen what soldiers see and struggled to find his way back to normal life, the farmer dreading another year of drought. They knew there was no healing. They came because something had drawn them — the rumor of a priest at Salem, a man of El Elyon, God Most High, who would receive whatever they brought without flinching.

Melchizedek received them all. He would take the bread and the cup of wine and lift them toward heaven as he knelt before the altar — holding them there a long moment, perfectly still — then dipping a piece of bread into the wine and placing it in their hands. Then he would bow his head, whisper an inaudible blessing, dip his finger in the sacred oil, and draw the sign of El Elyon on their foreheads — a slow, deliberate mark, unhurried. Then they would leave. Not healed. Not given any answer to the unanswerable. But witnessed. Held for a moment by something that did not shrink at the sight of their sorrow. Marked, as if to say: El Elyon has seen this. You are not alone in the dark with it.

Mary watched this her whole life and thought it was simply what fathers did.

The chieftain Abram came once from the south, dusty from battle. Her father brought out bread and wine as always, marked the man's

forehead with oil as always, and Abram wept – which she found surprising.

Then one morning, her father was gone.

Not dead – she searched and found no body, no hint of ending. The bread was set out as always. The wine was poured. He was simply elsewhere, or elsewhen. Or whatever word belongs to a man without end of life, who had always stood askew to ordinary time and had finally, quietly, stepped all the way out. Without genealogy, the old women of Salem said, shaking their heads – meaning he had left no sons, no line, nothing to show for his years.

She waited three days. On the fourth day a woman appeared at the gate.

Mary could see from across the courtyard – the way the woman held herself, the particular exhaustion of someone who has been carrying a grief too long and too alone. She had walked a long way. She stood at the gate with the fear that the priest might not receive her, that she might be turned away, that she would have to walk back into the dark unmarked, uncomforted, and unseen.

The scarf was on the hook by the door. The oil was in its alabaster. The bread was there, and the wine.

Mary did not deliberate. She wrapped the scarf close and went to the gate.

She doesn't speak. She doesn't show her face. She sets out the bread before dawn and receives whomever comes, and she kneels before the altar, lifts the bread and wine to heaven, then dips the bread in the wine and places it in their hands. She draws the sign of El Elyon on their foreheads with the sacred oil, slowly, unhurried. And they leave not healed but witnessed, not fixed but held, marked with something they cannot name and do not need to.

She is the daughter of the most mysterious man who ever lived, and she carries what he carried in the only way it has ever been carried – not handed down but kindled, not inherited but recognized, alone, before dawn, with bread and wine on the altar, and the broken world still making its way to her garden.

-- William Zeidler

PERSEVERING *Forward* WHOLENESS

The 227th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) convenes June 22-July 2, 2026, with online committee meetings followed by in-person plenaries. While this year's gathering remains hybrid, GA will consider reinstating a fully in-person format, including the return of exhibit halls, beginning in 2028.

Saturday, June 27, will be a **community day of service** and witness in the Milwaukee area. A **mission fair** will be held on that day from 2-5 p.m. in response to calls to bring the exhibit hall back.

The **election for co-moderator** will be held at the end of the assembly, on July 2. The Rev. CeCe Armstrong and the Rev. Tony Larson, co-moderators of GA226, will preside over the GA227 plenaries.

Eight pastors have announced they will stand for co-moderator:

- The Rev. Dr. Barbara Barkley will stand with the Rev. Dr. William C. Myers.
- The Rev. Rebecca Luter will stand with The Rev. Chris Peters.
- The Rev. Dr. Frances Lin will stand with the Rev. Dr. Sean Chow.
- The Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer will stand with the Rev. Marta Pumroy-Cordero.

Overtures on unification

The Unification Commission guided the formation of the **Presbyterian Life & Witness** (formerly the Interim Unified Agency), and GA227 will determine whether the current model becomes the denomination's permanent form of shared life.

Commissioners will hear the UC's report and vote on the 2027-2028 budget. Overtures recommend a new introduction to the Manual of the General Assembly, the reinstatement of the Office of Theology and Witness, and the reinstatement of the immigration attorney position.

24-A and 24-C oversight

Clarification is sought regarding **Amendments 24-A and 24-C**, widely referred to as the Olympia Overture, which added "gender identity" and "sexual orientation" to the categories protected from discrimination in the *Book of Order*. The passage of 24-C requires councils of the church to determine a candidate's commitment to fulfill all requirements outlined in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation. GA227 is asked to establish a committee to study 24-C to assess whether its implications impair freedom of conscience.

Mission co-workers and missiology

Three overtures address interconnected questions following the **closure of World Mission** and the elimination of 54 co-worker positions: whether non-disclosure covenants silenced mission co-workers, whether the process violated the denomination's own policies, and what missiology will guide the PC(USA)'s global engagement going forward. A group of denominational leaders, former mission co-workers, and academics gathered in March to begin drafting a missiological statement to present if RIW-02 passes and directs staff to develop a new formal theology of mission.



MRTI and fossil fuels

Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has recommended **divesting from ConocoPhillips and Duke Energy**, citing a lack of meaningful policies and practices regarding greenhouse gas emissions and continued fossil fuel development. The recommendation would place both companies on the denomination's divestment/proscription list, prohibiting further investment until they meet the church's environmental standards. A separate business item (COM-001) would direct MRTI to continue engaging additional Climate Action 100+ companies, with possible further divestment recommendations to be considered by the 228th Assembly. Another item (CLJ-02) goes further, seeking full divestment as soon as 2030.

LGBT+ advocacy

GEN-02, "On Access to Healthcare," calls on GA to declare that the PC(USA) supports all individuals, including minors, in accessing medically necessary, **evidence-based gender-affirming healthcare**. The overture builds on POL-01 from GA226, which added gender identity and sexual orientation to the denomination's non-discrimination language. The ongoing implementation of the Olympia Overture amendments continues to shape how the denomination approaches inclusion in ordination.

Israel/Palestine

Commissioners are asked to condemn the **Israeli government's actions** in Gaza as violations of the United Nations Genocide Convention and to call on members of the

church to contact Congress and the president to block U.S. military sales to Israel until Israel complies with international human rights law. The stated clerk, the Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C., and church members are called upon to urge the U.S. government to enact a trade embargo on Israel until certain humanitarian conditions are met.

The new confession

A special committee has proposed a **new confession** for the PC(USA) addressing contemporary issues such as racism, intersectionality, colonialism and ecological justice. The four-part document is described as "both a declaration of our faith and a confession of our sins." If GA227 approves the draft, a separate committee would study and potentially amend it before a subsequent assembly votes on its inclusion in the Book of Confessions.

Christian nationalism

COM-033 recommends that the assembly formally repudiate the ideology and practices of **White Christian nationalism** "in all its forms," distinguishing patriotism from nationalism and arguing that White Christian nationalism is fundamentally about power rather than genuine Christian faith. A companion overture would amend the *Book of Order* to prohibit the denomination from aligning with any theology that privileges a particular faith tradition in civic life.



Stay informed on updates from GA:

Visit our website: pres-outlook.org for stories and to **download** *The Presbyterian Outlook's Guide to GA227*

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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.