

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost  
September 20, 2026 10:30 a.m. Worship



*AI generated by Jose Wesley*

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Abraham named that place “the Lord sees.” That is the reason people today say, “On this mountain the Lord is seen.”

*Genesis 22:14*

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## **First Presbyterian Church**

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

**909.882.3308**

[www.fpcsb.net](http://www.fpcsb.net)

**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](http://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 4<sup>th</sup>.**

# Morning Worship†

Lector: Lynda Savage

“We participate in the love of God in God’s world with and among those persons God has placed before us and around us. So, what does this tell us about God? The experience of the Spirit, who enables us to see God’s work and to live in the world in a way that testifies to the fact that Jesus is Lord, affirms our participation in the love of God. We know God’s love because God sent the Son: we testify to this love because God has given us the Spirit; we experience and participate in this love as we learn to see and respond in love to those others God has given us.”

-- Dr. Scott Hagley, *Eat What Is Set before You*

## GATHERING MUSIC

### WELCOME

#### PRELUDE

*The Disciple's Resolve*

*W. Zeitler*

#### INTROIT

*From the Rising of the Sun*<sup>1</sup>

*Eric H. Thiman*

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

#### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP** (*Inspired by Psalm 145:1-8*)

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.

✠ **God’s greatness is unsearchable.**

From generation to generation, we sing of your righteousness.

✠ **The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

#### **\*HYMN 402**

*How Lovely, Lord*

MERLE’S TUNE

### PRAYER of CONFESSION

God loves us and calls us by name. Too frequently, we stake our claim on that tenderness and use it as a weapon against others,

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

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

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forgetting that God's love does not build walls but knocks them down. Let us set down our burdens and our defenses as we confess our sins in front of God and one another. First in a moment of silent confession and then together.

*Moment of silent prayer*

✠ Almighty God, when we follow the path of Jonah and allow our anger and frustration to cut us off from others, you sit next to us and call us back to your way of mercy, love and redemption. It is one thing to accept these gifts for ourselves; it is another to extend them to those who frustrate us. Forgive us for our anger, resentment, and desire to hoard. We lay these impulses at your feet and ask that you create a new heart within us, one modeled after your steadfast love and generosity. Help us to see the world in new ways. Amen.

### **ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS**

Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old has gone; a new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

✠ Thanks be to God.

*(We stand and sing the Response)*

**\*SUNG RESPONSE 205      *Live in Charity*<sup>2</sup>**

UBI CARITAS

*(Sing English, then Latin, two times through.)*

**Live in charity and steadfast love.**

**Live in charity; God will dwell with you.**

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

### **TIME with the YOUNG DISCIPLES**

*[After Time with the Young Disciples,  
There is KidSpace today in Room 10.]*

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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<sup>2</sup> Text: Latin, 8<sup>th</sup> cent.; English trans. Taizé Community. Music: Jacques Berthier. ©1979 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, agent. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-7062545. All rights reserved.

## **ANTHEM**

## ***Spirit of Life*<sup>3</sup>**

*Jane M. Marshall*

Spirit of Life, in this new dawn, Give us the faith that follows on, Letting Thine all pervading pow'r Fulfill the dream of this high hour. Spirit Creative, give us light, Lifting raveled mists of night; Touch Thou our dust with spirit hand And make us souls that understand. Spirit Consoling, let us find Thy hand when sorrows leave us blind; In the grey valley let us hear Thy silent voice: "Lo, I am near." Spirit Redeeming, give us grace When crucified to seek Thy face; To read forgiveness in thine eyes Today with Thee in Paradise. Spirit of Love, at evening time, When weary feet refuse to climb, Give us Thy vision, eyes that see Beyond the dark, beyond the dark, that see the dawn and Thee.

## **PRAYER for ILLUMINATION**

✠ **Eternal God, you know our hearts and minds. Bless this time together that in reading, hearing and reflecting on your Word together, we may be changed. We surrender this time to you and ask for your blessing upon it. Amen.**

## **SCRIPTURE**

### **Genesis 22:2, 9-12 (CEB)**

God said, "Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you."

They arrived at the place God had described to him. Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. But the Lord's messenger called out to Abraham from heaven, "Abraham? Abraham?"

Abraham said, "I'm here."

The messenger said, "Don't stretch out your hand against the young man, and don't do anything to him. I now know that you revere God and didn't hold back your son, your only son, from me."

### **2 Samuel 24:18-19, 24-25 (CEB)**

That same day Gad came to David and told him, "Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah from Jebus." So David went up, following Gad's instructions, just as the Lord had commanded.

"No," the king said to Araunah. "I will buy them from you at a fair price. I won't offer up to the Lord my God entirely burned offerings

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<sup>3</sup> Text: Earl Marlatt. Music: Jane M. Marshall. ©1959 The H. W. Gray Co., Inc. Reprinted with permission under ONELICENSE #A706254. All rights reserved.

that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. David built an altar there for the Lord and offered entirely burned offerings and well-being sacrifices. The Lord responded to the prayers for the land, and the plague against Israel came to an end.

### **John 2:13-17 (CEB)**

It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple those who were selling cattle, sheep, and doves, as well as those involved in exchanging currency sitting there. He made a whip from ropes and chased them all out of the temple, including the cattle and the sheep. He scattered the coins and overturned the tables of those who exchanged currency. He said to the dove sellers, “Get these things out of here! Don’t make my Father’s house a place of business.” His disciples remembered that it is written, *Passion for your house consumes me.*

This is the word of faith that we proclaim,

✠ **Thanks be to God.**

### **SERMON**

***We Are a Sent People:  
The Mission of Sacred Place***

*Rev. Dr. 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 give your offering 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**

Almighty God, we offer you these gifts and our hearts alongside them. May they be blessed to do your bidding. May our expectations of what is right and what is wise always be governed by your unruly 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 69

*I, the Lord of Sea and Sky*

HERE I AM

\*MOMENT for REFLECTION

*Where have you seen or experienced Christ in this service?*

\*CHARGE and BENEDICTION

RESPONSE

*Sevenfold Amen*

*John Stainer*

POSTLUDE

**GREETER:** Jeanne Clark

**USHERS:** Lynn Usher, *Lead Usher*

Tim Usher, *Hospitality Usher*

**SOUND ENGINEERS:** Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

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

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Ron & Ruby Kraft, Bob Saenz

*Elders:* Sue Alexander, Jeanne Clark, Kathy Showman

*Deacons:* Joyce Lyons, Chris Thomas, Rick Rodriguez

## **This Weeks' Celebrations**

*Sep 22* Al Rueda

*Sep 23* Michael Cummings

*Sep 24* Kyle Smith

*Sep 26* Jim Siegmund

Kelli Vasquez

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***If you are interested in learning how/helping with the audio tech*** for our services, contact James Welte. We could use a few more people to help.

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***Building, Becoming, Widening - The Beloved Community  
FPCSB Stewardship 2026***

***You Are Invited!***

***October 4, 2026 @ 11:45AM (in the Fellowship Hall)***

Following the first worship service of our Stewardship Season, the Stewardship Planning Team would like you to join them for a Luncheon and Workshop. Come for lunch, stay for an informative workshop on the creative act of faithful giving, and then pick up your gift along with your stewardship packet. *Symphonie Jeunesse* will provide delightful musical selections for our luncheon. Pastor Brian, Philip Savage IV, and a representative from Bobbit Memorial Chapel will help us explore what giving to our church today and for tomorrow looks like as we build, become, and widen the beloved community. ***See you there!***

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***Bakers needed!*** We would like to have some loaves of homemade bread, particularly breads from around the world, for our World Communion celebration on October 4<sup>th</sup>. If you are a baker, contact the church office and let us know if you can help.

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***Thank you for your generous support of our food participants.***

We are using all of your helpful donations. Right now, we most need **pop-top meals-in-a-can (e.g. spaghetti-os) or pop-top or pouched tuna & chicken for non-cooking bags.**

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***Available for Food Work?***

If yes, please contact Rick so we can add you to a list we can call when we need more workers for sorting, organizing, shelving, bagging or distributing food, photocopying and folding handouts, assembling kits, or maintaining food storage spaces. Thanks!

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## ***World Communion Offering, October 4***



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***The Pastor's Book Club*** will meet **Thursday, October 8 at 5:00 p.m. at DJ's Coffee Shop, 265 E. 40<sup>th</sup> Street.** The book club will use scripturally provocative and institutionally controversial writings to generate real conversations with each other. The book for discussion is ***Migrant God*** by Isaac Samuel Villegas.

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### ***Music Box***

An old argument for the existence of God goes like this: everything that happens has a cause. That cause had a cause. But this chain can't go back forever — there must be a first cause, uncaused, and that's God.

It's a tidy argument. But it rests on a quiet assumption: that an endless chain of causes is impossible. Says who? We trace things back to the Big Bang and call it the beginning — but ask a cosmologist what caused that, and you'll find the question isn't settled. Some take seriously the possibility that our universe is one bounce in a longer cycle, or that "before the Big Bang" is a meaningful question after all. Maybe it's an infinite chain of causes. It would be a strange thing to be true — but strange isn't the same as impossible. We live surrounded by infinities with which we've made our peace: the endless string of numbers, the infinite points packed

into a single inch of ruler. Why should an infinite chain of causes be the one infinity too outrageous to entertain?

I raise this not to settle the question, but to loosen its grip. And loosening it opens up something more interesting than the argument itself.

Because notice what "first cause" was trying to do: replace trust with proof. Find the one fact so certain it needs no faith at all, and build everything on that unshakable foundation. It's a very old dream — Descartes had it too, hunting for the one thought he couldn't doubt. But it's worth asking whether any of us actually live that way, even the staunchest rationalist among us.

We don't. We swim in trust, all day, without noticing the water. You trust the driver coming the other way to stay in her lane. You trust the restaurant cook you've never met to cook the chicken properly. You trust the ingredients on a food label, the strangers managing your bank's computers, the friend who says she'll be there. None of this is proven to you. It's extended — on the reasonable presumption that the world mostly holds together. When that trust breaks — when the driver drifts, when the label lies — something worse than an inconvenience happens. A little bit of the world stops working. We notice trust mainly in its absence, the way we notice air mainly when it's gone.

So when someone says religious faith is the soft, unrigorous cousin of "real" knowledge — trust standing in shamefully for evidence — it's worth asking what they think they're standing on instead. Not nothing, but trust — which they've stopped noticing.

At the same time we can have faith in bonehead ideas. People trust con men. People trust conspiracy theories. So "faith is everywhere" can't be the whole answer — it dodges the real question, which isn't whether to trust, but what makes someone or something trustworthy.

I'd offer this: warranted trust tracks something real. You trust the driver because you've watched thousands of drivers do this exact thing, day after day, you do it yourself, and the system holds. You trust the label because there's a whole apparatus of accountability behind it, however imperfect.

And you can trust scripture too, the same way you'd trust a map: because it has gotten countless travelers to where they needed to go. A map earns your trust by working — by getting you there, trip after trip. A thousand years of witnesses — kings and exiles and poets and prophets who never met each other — drew the same map of the same terrain, book after book. Sacred Stories do this: they chart real ground, ground you can reliably travel.

Which brings me back to where I started. A God who is an infinite chain of being isn't a tidier idea than a First Cause — it's a stranger one. But we already live inside stranger things than that — an ocean of trust so ordinary we forget it's there, holding up everything we do, one unproven handshake at a time. Faith doesn't need an apology. It needs what any trust needs — a track record, honestly examined. Ask of your faith what you'd ask of a friend before trusting them with something that matters: not "can they be logically proven," but "have they come through when I've leaned on them?" That's not a lesser question than proof. It's just a different one — and it's one you've been answering every day about a hundred times before breakfast.

*-- 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.