

Reformation Sunday

October 25, 2026

10:30 a.m. Worship



*Photo by
Christa Wallis*

He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ”

Matthew 22:37-39

First Presbyterian Church

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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, 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, November 8th.

Morning Worship†

Lector: Susan Skoglund

“The commands to love God fully and our neighbors as ourselves are not just religious duties but pathways to a fulfilling and harmonious life. They invite us to examine our priorities, actions, and relationships, ensuring they align with God’s will and reflect God’s love. In short: Matthew 22:37–39 is both a theological summary and a practical call—love God completely, and let that love radiate in how you treat others. The “messy” parts lie in how these two loves interact, challenge, and sometimes conflict in real life. How might you embody these commandments in your daily life? What steps can you take to deepen your love for God and extend that love to those around you?”
(Rev. Michael Johnson, godsblessing.com)

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

*Symphonic Meditation on
"A Mighty Fortress"*

W. Zeitler

*CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on Psalm 90)*

“The condition of all people is unstable upon earth” but God is “an abode...to poor fugitives who are continually wandering.”

Before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world,

✠ Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

God is steadfast in power, truth, righteousness, and goodness,

✠ even as God has been from the beginning.

*PIPING of BANNERS; PRESENTATION of the BIBLE

*HYMN 366

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

HYFRYDOL

PRAYER of CONFESSION

Jesus says, If you continue in my word, you are my disciples; and you will know my truth, and the truth will make you free. We try to live

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

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

in Christ's truth, but we still fall short and find ourselves bound. Let us pursue God's word through our confession. Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sins, first in silent prayer and then together.

Moment of silent prayer

✠ God of the ages, you have been faithful to us, but we have not been faithful to you. You have established covenants with us, but we have not upheld our part. We have distorted your word for our own gain. We have claimed you as exclusively ours. We have focused on power more than discipleship. We beg your forgiveness. Reform us again and make us into the image of your true church.

ASSURANCE of FORGIVENESS

I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more, says the Lord.

✠ The story continues. God is not done with us.
We are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

(We stand and sing the Response)

***SUNG RESPONSE 649** *Amazing Grace*

AMAZING GRACE

TIME with the YOUNG DISCIPLES

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANTHEM

O God Beyond All Praising

arr. Mark Hayes

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION

✠ Sovereign God, let your Word rule in our hearts and your Spirit govern our lives until at last we see the fulfillment of your realm of justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Psalms 90:1-6, 13-17 (CEB)

Lord, you have been our help,
generation after generation.

Before the mountains were born,

before you birthed the earth and the inhabited world—
from forever in the past

to forever in the future, you are God.

You return people to dust,
saying, "Go back, humans,"
because in your perspective a thousand years
are like yesterday past,
like a short period during the night watch.
You sweep humans away like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning.
True, in the morning it thrives, renewed,
but come evening it withers, all dried up.

Come back to us, Lord!
Please, quick!
Have some compassion for your servants!
Fill us full every morning with your faithful love
so we can rejoice and celebrate our whole life long.
Make us happy for the same amount of time that you afflicted us—
for the same number of years that we saw only trouble.
Let your acts be seen by your servants;
let your glory be seen by their children.
Let the kindness of the Lord our God be over us.
Make the work of our hands last.
Make the work of our hands last!

Matthew 22:34-36

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had left the Sadducees speechless, they met together. One of them, a legal expert, tested him. "Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."

Now as the Pharisees were gathering, Jesus asked them, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "David's son," they replied.

He said, "Then how is it that David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, called him Lord when he said, The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right side until I turn your enemies into your footstool'? If David calls him Lord, how can he be David's son?" Nobody was able to answer him. And from that day forward nobody dared to ask him anything.'

SERMON

*Why I Give Rev. Dr. Brian S. Symonds
to Christ's Church, Pt. 4*

MOMENT for STEWARDSHIP*Why I Give to Christ's Church**Norm Wallis***WE RESPOND to GOD'S LOVE with COMMITMENT**

Pledge cards are in the pew racks. As the gift of music is offered, you are invited to write your pledge on your card and when you feel ready, to bring it forward and place it on the communion table. You may wish to pray for others as you see them go forward. If you would prefer not to leave your seat, an usher will come to you.

BELL MEDITATION*Praise for the Morning**Michael A. Akers***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 up front, or give it to the usher. You may always send gifts by mail or online.)

OFFERTORY*Highland Cathedral**Michael Korb/Ulrich Röver****ALLELUIA***William Zeitler*
***PRAYER OF THANKS**

God of the harvest, you are continually planting the seeds of your love in our world and in our lives. As we bring our gifts to you, may they be seeds of your grace, peace, and hope, planted deeply in our community.

✠ **Amen.****PRESENTATION of BIBLE***Valentina Valenzuela**Students receive their Bibles as a gift from the congregation.***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 275**

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
Brass: Caitlin Curran, Norm Wallis

EIN' FESTE BURG

***MOMENT for REFLECTION**

Where have you seen or experienced Christ in this service?

***CHARGE and BENEDICTION**

Miriam Lange

Grandfather Mountain Highland Games

May the blessing of light be on you –
light without and light within.

May the blessed sunlight shine on you
and warm your heart till it glows like a great peat fire,
so that strangers may come and warm themselves at it,
and also friends.

And may the light shine out of your two eyes
like a candle set in the windows of a house,
bidding the wanderer to come out of the storm.

And may the blessing of the rain be on you:
the soft, sweet rain; may it fall upon your spirit
that all the little flowers may spring up
and shed their sweetness on the air.

And may the blessing of the great rains be on you;
may they beat upon your spirit
and wash it fair and clean
and leave there many a shining pool
where the blue of Heaven shines –
and sometimes a star.

And may the blessing of the earth be on you –
the great, round earth.

May you ever have a kindly greeting for those you pass
as you are going along the roads.

May the earth be soft under you
when you rest out upon it, tired at the end of a day;
and may it rest easy over you when, at the last,
you lie out under it.

May it rest lightly over you that your soul

may be off from under it quickly,
and up, and off, and on its way to God.

And now may the Lord bless you all,
and bless you kindly. Amen.

POSTLUDE

*We invite you to the Fellowship Hall for shortbread, and to hear
more from the Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Pipe Band.*

*We are delighted to have the Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Pipe Band
with us again to play for our Reformation Sunday celebration.*

*Kevin Blandford and Jeffrey Rickard
wrote arrangements for bagpipes with organ.*

*Mary Newman, Susi (Huffstutler) Jacobsen, Marsha Gallup, and
Merry Beth Grindahl made banners and pennants.*

GREETER: Linda McCarl

USHERS: Katie Smith, *Lead Usher*

Marilyn Kraft, *Hospitality Usher*

SOUND ENGINEERS: Dan Direen, Brent Nord, Brandon Turner

LIVESTREAM TEAM: James Welte, Kevin Lamb,
Oliver Lamb, Lynn Usher, Axel Gaeta-Symonds

REMEMBER IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

Lorraine Bishop, Noé Falconi

Elders: Norm Wallis, Pat Morris, Susan Skoglund

Deacons: Jim Siegmund, Kyle Smith, Rebecca Allen

This Weeks' Celebrations

Oct 28 Joshua Fletcher

Oct 30 Mario & Mary Bolaños
Rebecca Allen

Oct 31 Brooke Dvorak

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

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The Deacons are having a ***Fundraiser at Mimi's Restaurant***-on **TOMORROW, October 26- all day long.** Take a flyer (available in the reception area) with you for breakfast, lunch or dinner (or all three?) and 20% comes back to the church!

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Symphonie Jeunesse Orchestra will perform a ***Halloween concert on Saturday, October 31st at 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.*** The price of admission is one donation of canned food per person. Enjoy beautiful music and help the Food Program here at FPC!

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The Pastor's Book Club will meet **Thursday, November 12 at 5:00 p.m. at the Lamplighter, 255 E. 40th Street.** The book club will use scripturally provocative and institutionally controversial writings to generate real conversations with each other. The book for discussion is ***Everything Is Tuberculosis*** by John Green.

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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.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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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Music Box

Moses wanted to see God (Exodus 33).

God agreed — sort of. He tucked Moses into a cleft in the rock, covered him with His hand, and passed by. Only afterward could Moses look out and see God's back. His face, God explained, no human could see and live.

It's a wonderfully peculiar story. And it raises an equally peculiar question: What does it mean to know a God who dare not be seen?

That question has occupied Christian thinkers for centuries.

Around 500, a mysterious writer called Pseudo-Dionysius argued that God transcends not only our descriptions but our very categories of thought. We can say God is good, wise, or powerful. But whatever we mean by those words, God exceeds them.

This became known as apophatic theology, from a Greek word meaning denial or negation. Rather than describing what God IS, it explores what God is NOT — ultimately discerning that even our negations fall short.

Centuries later, an anonymous English mystic wrote *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Its counsel was startling: God cannot finally be grasped by thought, but may be encountered through love.

The Cloud wasn't an obstacle to encounter. It's an invitation to a different kind of encounter.

Then things changed.

Beginning especially with the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment, Western civilization developed extraordinary confidence in human reason.

And with good reason! The achievements astonished. The motions of planets, the behavior of light, the mechanics of matter — mysteries became increasingly intelligible.

The universe began to look explainable. Maybe completely.

Theologians had long employed reason themselves. Medieval scholasticism produced elaborate intellectual systems centuries before the Scientific Revolution.

Apophatic theology never disappeared. Nevertheless, systematic explanation increasingly shaped Western intellectual culture. Theology, too, could become an exercise in arranging propositions into comprehensive Systematic Theologies.

One might almost imagine that, given enough time, every question about God, the Universe, and Everything could be answered.

Meanwhile, physics itself encountered some peculiar difficulties.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, quantum mechanics in particular overturned familiar assumptions about the physical world.

Consider an electron.

Classical physics suggests that an electron always has a definite position and momentum— we just need to measure them with sufficiently precise instruments.

But Heisenberg's uncertainty principle tells us something astonishing: we can't know both a particle's precise position and momentum at the same time. Not because our instruments aren't good enough. Because it's baked into how the universe works.

And then there's quantum entanglement. Two particles interact and then fly apart, perhaps to opposite ends of the galaxy. Measure a property of one, and you can predict the corresponding result for the other. It's almost as though the particles remain connected across the entire galaxy.

Einstein famously called this "spooky action at a distance." He spent decades arguing that something must be missing from quantum mechanics. Yet, experiments continue to confirm these astonishing predictions.

The universe, apparently, is under no obligation to conform to human "common sense."

Now, quantum mechanics is emphatically NOT evidence for God's existence. Nor did medieval mystics somehow anticipate twentieth-century physics.

But there's an intriguing parallel.

The apophatic theologian discovers that our concepts cannot exhaust the Divine. The physicist discovers that some deeply

rooted conceptual assumptions cannot adequately describe the physical world.

In both cases, Reality challenges categories we thought were settled.

Notice what the physicists did next.

They didn't abandon science. Instead, they developed new mathematics, devised new experiments, and kept investigating. The inadequacy of familiar explanations opened the door to even more extraordinary discoveries.

Which brings us to Reformation Sunday.

In 1517, Martin Luther challenged Church practices and claims of authority he believed urgently needed reconsideration. Across Europe, reformers undertook the difficult, often dangerous work of challenging inherited answers.

They didn't get everything right. How could they? They worked within the intellectual horizons of their time.

But they recognized that inherited answers sometimes need reconsidering.

Five centuries later, we inhabit a world they could scarcely have imagined. Our understanding of the cosmos, human history, the Bible's origins, and even our own minds has changed enormously.

And yet we sometimes treat the theological conclusions of the sixteenth century as though the great work of reconsideration is already complete.

So, perhaps Reformation Sunday ought to be more than a celebration of reforms accomplished long ago.

Perhaps it should invite us to ask what needs reforming NOW.

And perhaps one place to begin is with that ancient Christian recognition that God is not an object we can finally capture in our explanations.

The physicist doesn't stop investigating when the universe proves stranger than expected. Why should the theologian?

The Reformers understood that faithfulness sometimes demands change.

So we honor them not by enshrining what they thought, but by continuing what they did.

A seventeenth-century Reformed motto expresses it beautifully:

Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda: The church reformed,
always being reformed.

-- William Zeidler

The Kevin R. Blandford Memorial Pipe Band
was provided this year by

Sue Alexander
in memory of Jerry Alexander
and in memory of Don & Arleen Peters

Shelby Obershaw
in memory of Chuck Obershaw

Susan Addington
in memory of John & Fran Addington

Jon & Nancy Horstmann
in memory of their parents

Laurie Stafford
in memory of Doris Reese

Chris & Dave Thomas
in memory of Christian & Bonnie Hansen
and in memory of Frank & Betty Thomas
and in memory of Rena Nolin

Mini Lange
in memory of Bill Lange

Rose King
in appreciation of
the Clan Rose Society of America

Norm & Christa Wallis
in memory of
Charles & Beatrice MacPherson
Tom & Patricia MacPherson Snyder
Sanford Howard Wallis

Martha Pinckney
in memory of Paul Pinckney

Kathy Showman
in memory of Dale Showman



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.