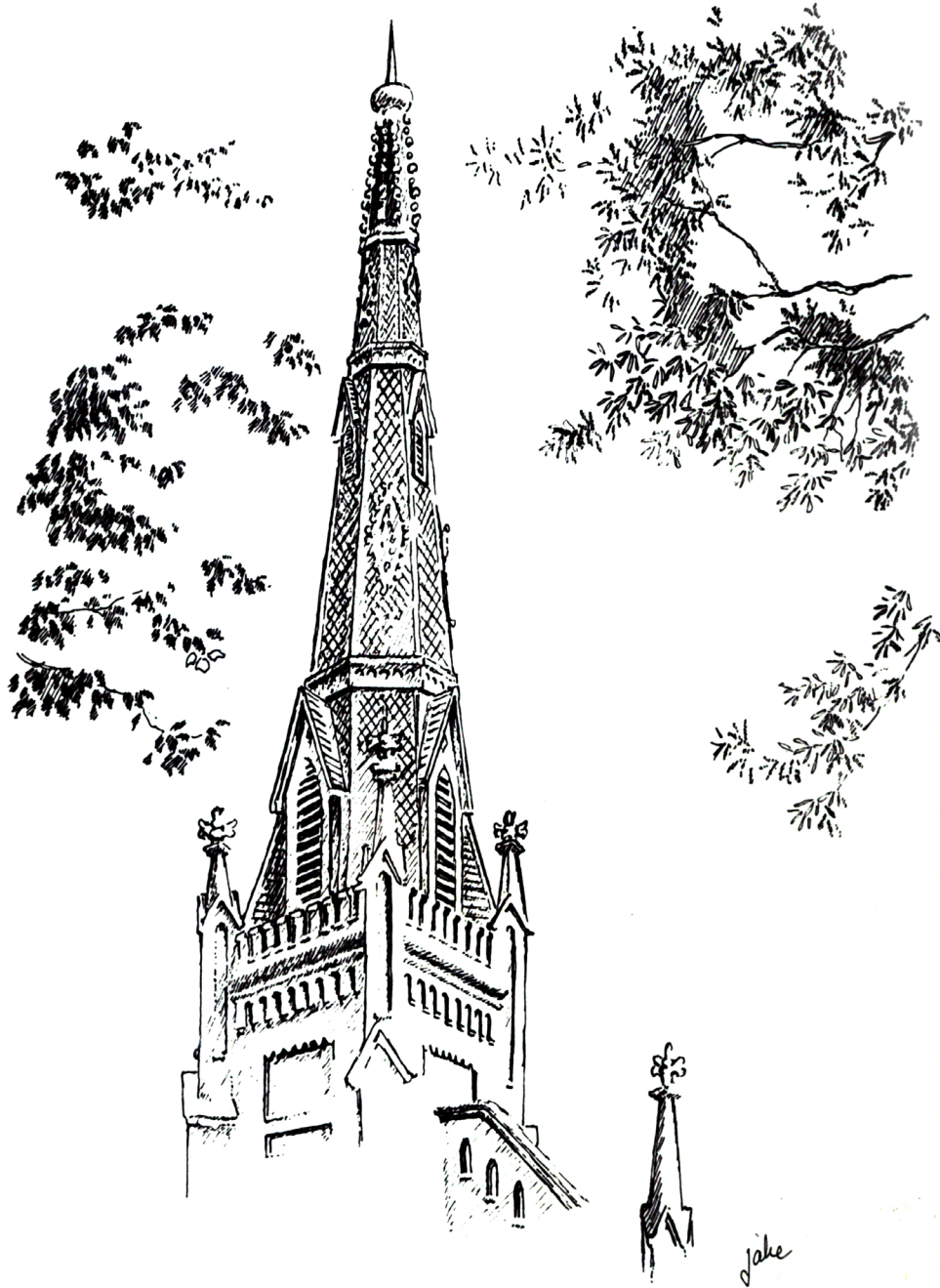


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | OCTOBER 22, 2023
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



We invite you, whoever you are and whoever God is helping you to become, to join First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte in our journey of faith. God is love, and that love is for you. You belong as a child of God, and we welcome you. Come experience how that belonging might change you and our world as we seek to be for Christ in the heart of Charlotte.



First Presbyterian
Church of Charlotte

Time of Quiet Meditation and Reflection | Silence begins in the Chapel at 8:50 a.m.

Words of Welcome | Reverend Mary Bowman

Invocation | Adapted from *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Walk with God*

God of all that is good and just, grant us courage to walk the path of faith with integrity and with wisdom to rely on You to guide our feet toward the level ground of vital Christian community. Strengthen us where we know we are wavering and, above all, create in us pure hearts given fully to love You and Your truth. Amen.

Meditative Music | Take, O Take Me As I Am | David Haas and John Bell

Take, O take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set Your seal upon my heart
and live in me.

Prayer for Illumination | Ann Burton

Old Testament Reading | Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

New Testament Reading | Mark 12:28-34 | The Message | David Burton

One of the religion scholars came up. Hearing the lively exchanges of question and answer and seeing how sharp Jesus was in His answers, he put in his question: “Which is most important of all the commandments?”

Jesus said, “The first in importance is, ‘Listen, Israel: The Lord your God is one; so love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy.’ And here is the second: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment that ranks with these.”

The religion scholar said, “A wonderful answer, Teacher! So clear-cut and accurate—that God is one and there is no other. And loving Him with all passion and intelligence and energy, and loving others as well as you love yourself. Why, that’s better than all offerings and sacrifices put together!”

When Jesus realized how insightful he was, he said, “You’re almost there, right on the border of God’s kingdom.”

After that, no one else dared ask a question.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | “The Two Great Commandments: Loving with All of Our Hearts”

Moment of Reflection

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Holy and merciful God, in Your presence we confess our sinfulness, our shortcomings, and our offenses against You. You alone know how often we have sinned in wandering from Your ways, in wasting Your gifts, in forgetting Your love. In Your great compassion, cleanse us from our sin. Create in us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us.

Moment of Reflection

O Lord, we ask that You forgive what we have been and done, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways, to the glory of Your holy name. We receive Your forgiveness with grateful hearts, and we commit to the work of extending it to others. Amen.

Offering

The Christian life is marked by the offering of one's self to God to be shaped, empowered, directed, and changed by God. In worship, God presents us with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ. We are claimed by Christ and set free. In response to God's love in Jesus Christ we offer God our lives, our gifts, our abilities, and our material goods, for God's service. The offering plates are located at the back of the chapel if you are interested in giving regularly as a spiritual practice.

Invitation to the Table

Meditative Music | More Love to Thee | Fernando Ortega

More love to Thee, oh Christ, more love to Thee!
Hear, Thou, the prayer I make on bended knee.
This is my earnest plea
More love, oh Christ, to Thee
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!

Once earthly joy I craved, sought peace and rest
Now, Thee alone I seek, give what is best.
This all my prayer shall be
More love, oh Christ to Thee
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!

Then shall my latest breath whisper Thy praise
This be the parting cry my heart shall raise
Still all my prayer shall be
More love, oh Christ to Thee
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!
More love to Thee, more love to Thee!

Prayers of the People and The 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.

Sacrament of Communion

To receive the gluten-free bread and the cup, come forward, take a piece of bread, and then dip the bread into the cup. It is still communion if you prefer to take only the bread. Please do not drink out of the cup directly. If for any reason you prefer not to come forward, please raise your hand and the officers will be glad to serve you in your pew.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O gracious and loving God, we thank You for nurturing us at this table. We thank You for loving us so well and for inviting us into the way of Your love, by walking with us and making us Your beloved children. As we move back into the world, may we do so with hearts fully confident of Your love for us, so we can share love with others. Amen.

Charge and Blessing

We have been fed by the presence of God in the silence, by the Word, and through communion. Please feel free to greet one another in a warm and quiet way that allows an easing out of the silence. The minister is available for prayer or conversation after the service. Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m. If you would like to visit longer with other members, you are invited to gather in the Welcome Center.

Announcements

Sunday Readers

The leadership provided by lay members is an important part of the 9 AM service. If you are willing to be a reader, please scan the QR code below to sign up. We appreciate your considering leading worship in this way!

Haiti Ministry Luncheon

October 25, 12 p.m.

Join us for a complimentary lunch and hear an update from Actionnel about the ministry of OFCB in Bayonnais. Register below.

Westerly Hills Academy Community Block Party

October 28, 12 p.m.

We need at least 20 volunteers per shift to help with setup, clean up, and stations (such as face painting, games, and trunk or treat) for this huge family event! Sign up below.



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