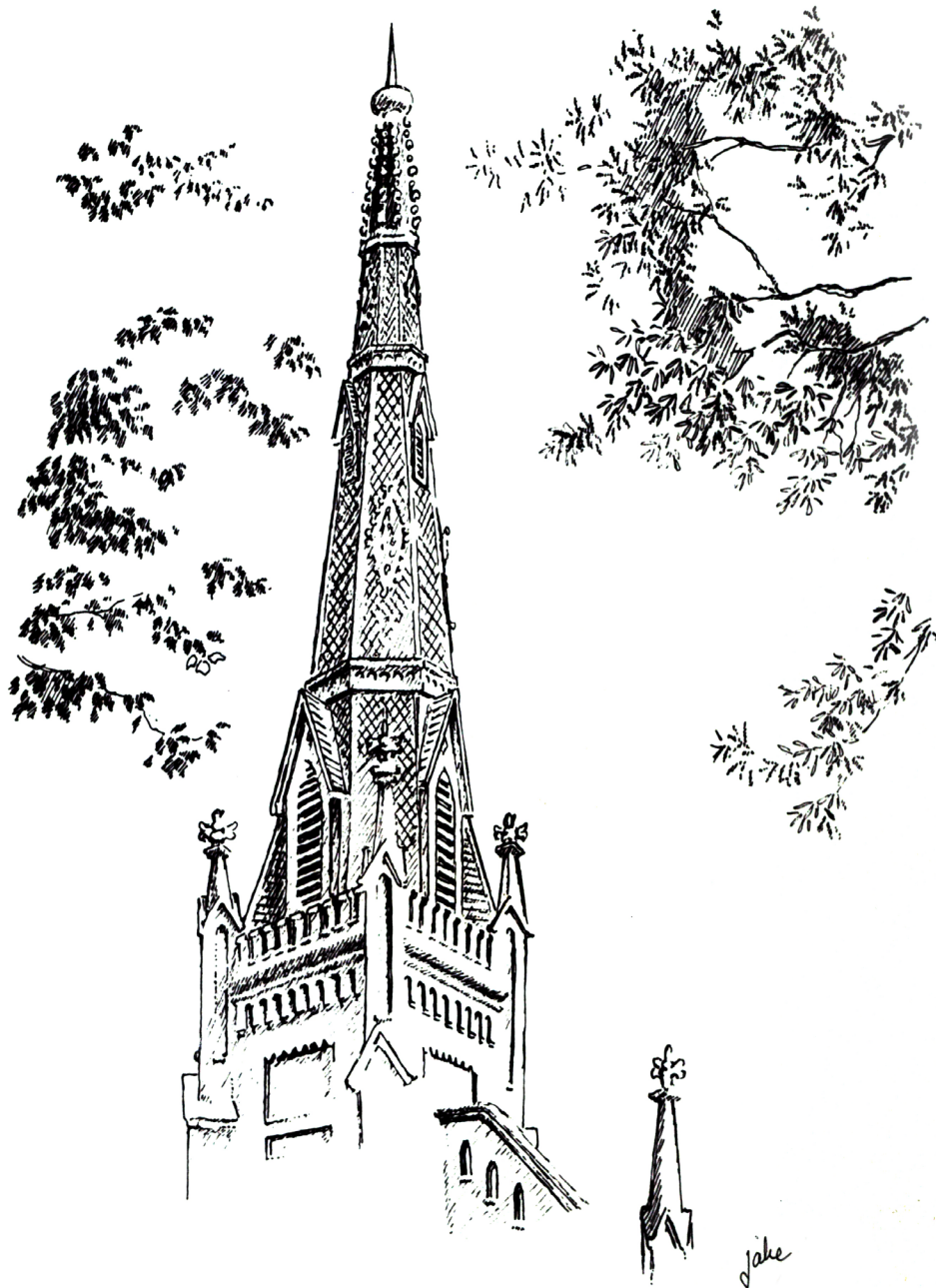


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | APRIL 28, 2024
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



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 *The Book of Common Order*

God of wisdom and love, Giver of all good things, we thank You for Your loving kindness, and for Your constant care over all creation. We bless You for the gift of life, for Your shepherding hand upon us, and Your sustaining love within us. In our weakness, You are our strength; in our darkness, light; in our sorrows, comfort and peace. From everlasting to everlasting, You are our God, glorified forever. Amen.

Meditative Music | The King of Love | Jean Watson

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul He leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love He sought me,
And on His shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction, grace bestoweth:
And O what transport of delight
From Thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing Thy praise
Within Thy house for ever.

Prayer for Illumination | Linda McKnight

Old Testament Reading | Ezekiel 34: 2a-6, 11-16a, 31

To the shepherds—thus says the Lord God: Woe, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat; you clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatted calves, but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak; you have not healed the sick; you have not bound up the injured; you have not brought back the strays; you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep, so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of

Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak.

You are my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | John 10:11-18 | Claire Tate

Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Images of Jesus: The Good Shepherd"

Moment of Reflection

Prayer of Confession | Adapted from *The Book of Common Order*

Gracious God, we are a scattered flock, failing to follow our Good Shepherd. We are often impatient, complaining about the faults of others and failing to see our own. We are often selfish, neglecting the interests of You and others, and instead pursuing only our own interests. We are often faithless, ignoring the strength and guidance You offer and relying instead on our own. Lead us back to You.

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 | The Good Shepherd | Fernando Ortega

I Am the Good Shepherd. I lay down My life for you.

Enter in, enter in, enter in.

I Am the Good Shepherd. As the Father knows Me, I know you. I know you, I know you, I know you.

And no one can take you away; And no one can take you away.

You are the Good Shepherd. You lay down Your life for me.

Enter in, enter in, enter in.

You are the Good Shepherd. As the Father knows You, You know me.

You know me, You know me, You know me.

And no one can take You away; And no one can take You away.
And no one can take You away; And no one can take You away.

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

Holy God, thank You for again meeting us in Your Word and at Your table. As we depart, fill us with Your Spirit and bless us with a reverent sense of Your shepherding presence in our lives, that we may be at peace, carry Your love, and work for Your justice. In Christ's name. 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.



VIRTUAL
CONNECT
CARD



PRAYER
REQUESTS



ANNOUNCEMENT
LINKS



TEXT
TO GIVE



GIVE
ONLINE