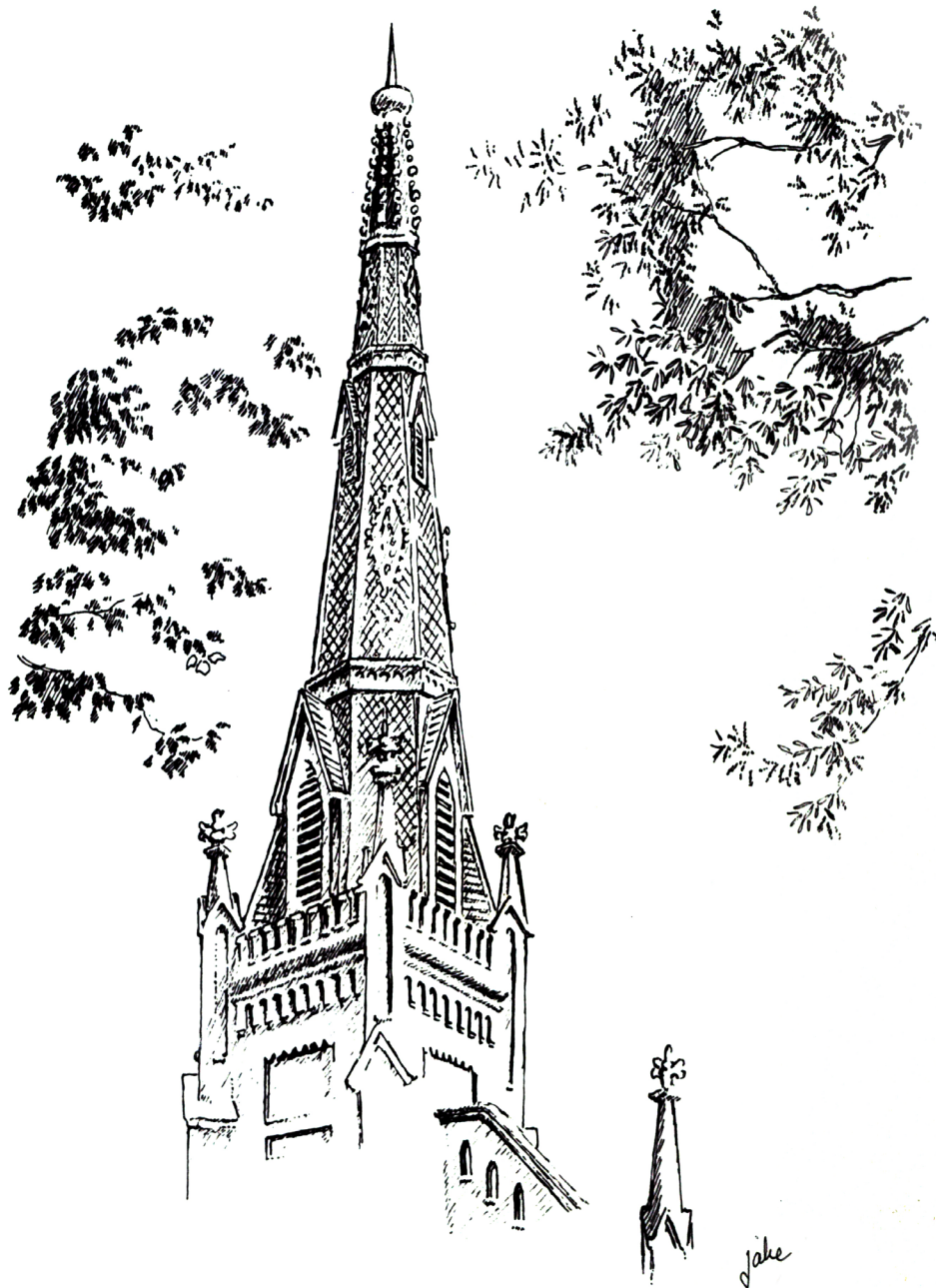


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | SEPTEMBER 15, 2024
SEVENTEENTH 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

Opening Prayer | Adapted from Christine Sine

O Gracious God, we lift Your name above every other name, and as we move into worship with You, we ask for Your help so we may be fully awake and open to Your loving presence. May You help us to let go of all that distracts us, discourages us, weighs us down, and holds us captive. May You help us attune our ears and hearts to Your words so they may echo in the depths of our being. May we allow You to transform all that we are and all that we do so we can live life to the full in Your resurrection and created world. As we take time to silently name what we are carrying, help us to release them or give them to You so we can be open to what You have for us in this space.

Moment of Reflection

**Meet us, O Christ, in the stillness of morning worship.
Move us, O Spirit, to quiet our hearts.
Mend and forgive us, O Father, from past harms and sins. Amen.**

Meditative Music | There's A Wideness in God's Mercy | Kate Higgins

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.
There's a kindness in His justice, which is more than liberty.
There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good.
There is mercy with the Savior, there is healing in His blood.
There is no place where earth's sorrows, are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings, have such kindly judgment given.
There is plentiful redemption, in the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members in the sorrows of the Head.
For the love of God is broader, than the measure of the mind;
And the heart of the Eternal, is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we should take Him at His word;
And our life would be thanksgiving for the goodness of the Lord.

Prayer for Illumination | Elise Barksdale

Old Testament Reading | Psalm 103:1-13 | The Message

O my soul, bless God. From head to toe, I'll bless God's holy name! O my soul, bless God, don't forget a single blessing! God forgives your sins—every one. God heals your diseases—every one. God redeems you from hell—saves your life! God crowns you with love and mercy—a paradise crown. God wraps you in goodness—beauty eternal. God renews your youth—you're always young in God's presence. God makes everything come out right; God puts victims back on their feet. God showed Moses how God went about God's work, opened up God's plans to all Israel. God is sheer mercy and grace; not easily angered, God is rich in love. God doesn't endlessly nag and scold, nor hold grudges forever. God doesn't treat us as our sins deserve, nor pay us back in full for our wrongs. As high as heaven is over the earth, so strong is God's love to those who fear God. And as far as sunrise is from sunset, God has separated us from our sins. As parents feel for their children, God feels for those who fear God. God knows us inside and out, keeps in mind that we're made of mud.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | Ephesians 2:1-10 | The Message | Thold Gill

It wasn't so long ago that you were mired in that old stagnant life of sin. You let the world, which doesn't know the first thing about living, tell you how to live. You filled your lungs with polluted unbelief, and then exhaled disobedience. We all did it, all of us doing what we felt like doing, when we felt like doing it, all of us in the same boat. It's a wonder God didn't lose God's temper and do away with the whole lot of us. Instead, immense in mercy and with an incredible love, God embraced us. God took our sin-dead lives and made us alive in Christ. God did all this on God's own, with no help

from us! Then God picked us up and set us down in highest heaven in company with Jesus, our Messiah. Now God has us where God wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all God's idea, and all God's work. All we do is trust God enough to let God do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make, nor save, ourselves. God does both the making and saving. God creates each of us by Christ Jesus — to join Jesus in the work He does, the good work He has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | Rooted in Christ: God's Everlasting Mercy - Christ's Sacrificial Love

Moment of Reflection

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 | How Deep The Father's Love For Us | Kathy Troccoli

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure; That He should give His only Son to make a wretch His treasure How great the pain of searing loss; The Father turns His face away As wounds which mar the Chosen One bring many sons to glory. Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders; Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath has brought me life; I know that it is finished. I will not boast in anything; no gifts, no power, no wisdom; But I will boast in Jesus Christ; His death and resurrection. Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer. But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom, His wounds have paid my ransom.

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.

Sabbath Blessing | Ephesians 3:16-21

O Gracious God, we pray that, according to the riches of Your glory, You may grant that we may be strengthened in our inner beings with power through Your Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, as we are being rooted and grounded in love. We pray that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ, that surpasses knowledge, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to You, Lord, Who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to You be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. 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**



**TEXT
TO GIVE**



**GIVE
ONLINE**