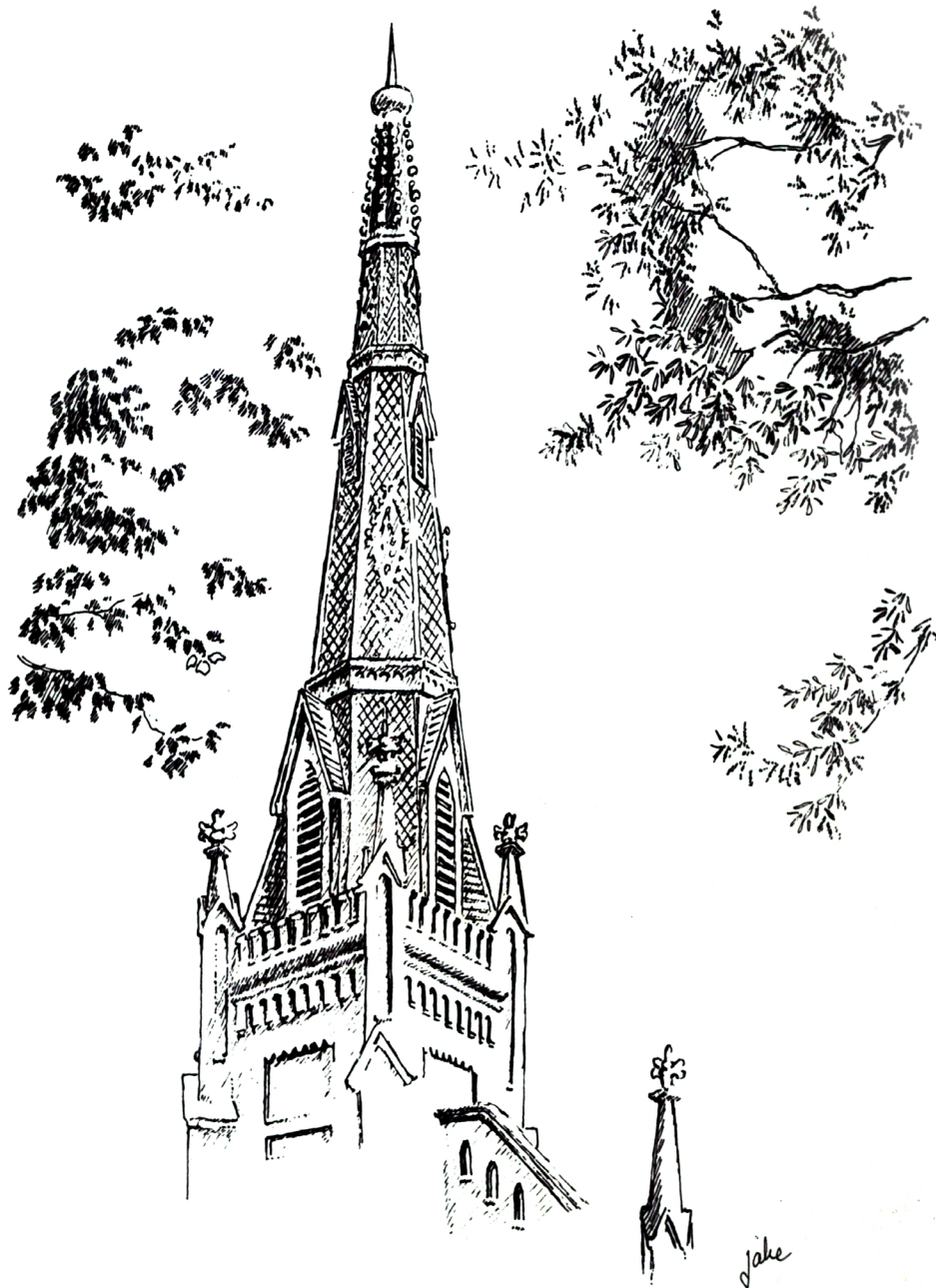


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | SEPTEMBER 22, 2024
EIGHTEENTH 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 Douglas Kaine McKelvey

O Holy God, we open our hearts to worship You, and we are reminded that You are the constant in our lives, that You know absolutely everything about us, and still You love us dearly.

We do not enter this space empty. We carry the burdens, the distractions, the sins, and the wounds of a broken 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

These are not things that are new to You and yet to acknowledge them in this place allows us to be open to You anew during worship.

We ask that You hold what is heavy, that You forgive our sins, that You help us forgive those who have hurt us, and that You open us anew to Your loving presence as we worship. In Christ's holy name. Amen.

Meditative Music | "O Christ, Surround Me" | Richard Bruxvoort Colligan and the River's Voice

God be the love to search and keep me
 God be the prayer to move my voice;
 God be the strength to now uphold me
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Bind to myself the name of Holy
 Great cloud of witnesses enfold;
 Prophets, apostles, angels witness
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Brightness of sun and glow of moonlight
 Flashing of lightning, strength of wind;
 Depth of the sea to soil of planet
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Walking behind to hem my journey
 Going ahead to light my way;
 And from beneath, above, and all ways
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Christ in the eyes of all who see me
 Christ in the ears that hear my voice;
 Christ in the hearts of all who know me
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.
 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

Prayer for Illumination | Lisa Dillard

Old Testament Reading | Psalm 85:7-13

Show us Your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation. Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His faithful, to those who turn to Him in their hearts. Surely His salvation is at hand for those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him and will make a path for His steps.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | Ephesians 2:11-22 | The Voice | David Dillard

So never forget how you used to be. Those of you born as outsiders to Israel were outcasts, branded “the uncircumcised” by those who bore the sign of the covenant in their flesh, a sign made with human hands. You had absolutely no connection to the Anointed; you were strangers, separated from God’s people. You were aliens to the covenant they had with God; you were hopelessly stranded without God in a fractured world. But now, because of Jesus the Anointed and His sacrifice, all of that has changed. God gathered you who were so far away and brought you near to Him by the royal blood of the Anointed, our Liberating King.

He is the embodiment of our peace, sent once and for all to take down the great barrier of hatred and hostility that has divided us so that we can be one. He offered His body on the sacrificial altar to bring an end to the law’s ordinances and dictations that separated Jews from the outside nations. His desire was to create in His body one new humanity from the two opposing groups, thus creating peace. Effectively the cross becomes God’s means to kill off the hostility once and for all so that He is able to reconcile them both to God in this one new body.

The Great Preacher of peace and love came for you, and His voice found those of you who were near and those who were far away. By Him both have access to the Father in one Spirit. And so you are no longer called outcasts and wanderers but citizens with God’s people, members of God’s holy family, and residents of His household. You are being built on a solid foundation: the message of the prophets and the voices of God’s chosen emissaries with Jesus, the Anointed Himself, the precious cornerstone. The building is joined together stone by stone—all of us chosen and sealed in Him, rising up to become a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you are being built together, creating a sacred dwelling place among you where God can live in the Spirit.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | “Rooted in Christ: Christ’s Reconciling Action - Our Unity”

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 | “Love One Another” | The Cathedral Singers

Love one another, for love is of God; Those who live in love, God lives in them.

Love one another, for love is of God; Those who live in love, God lives in them.

Those who show love are the children of God. Father and Mother is God to each of them.

Refrain

God showed His love in the face of the Son; Christ lives in us so that we might live through Him.

Refrain

Love has no place for the menace of fear; fear is abandoned where love is found.

Refrain

Love has its purpose in God’s holy will; we learn to love from the One who loved us first.

Refrain

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