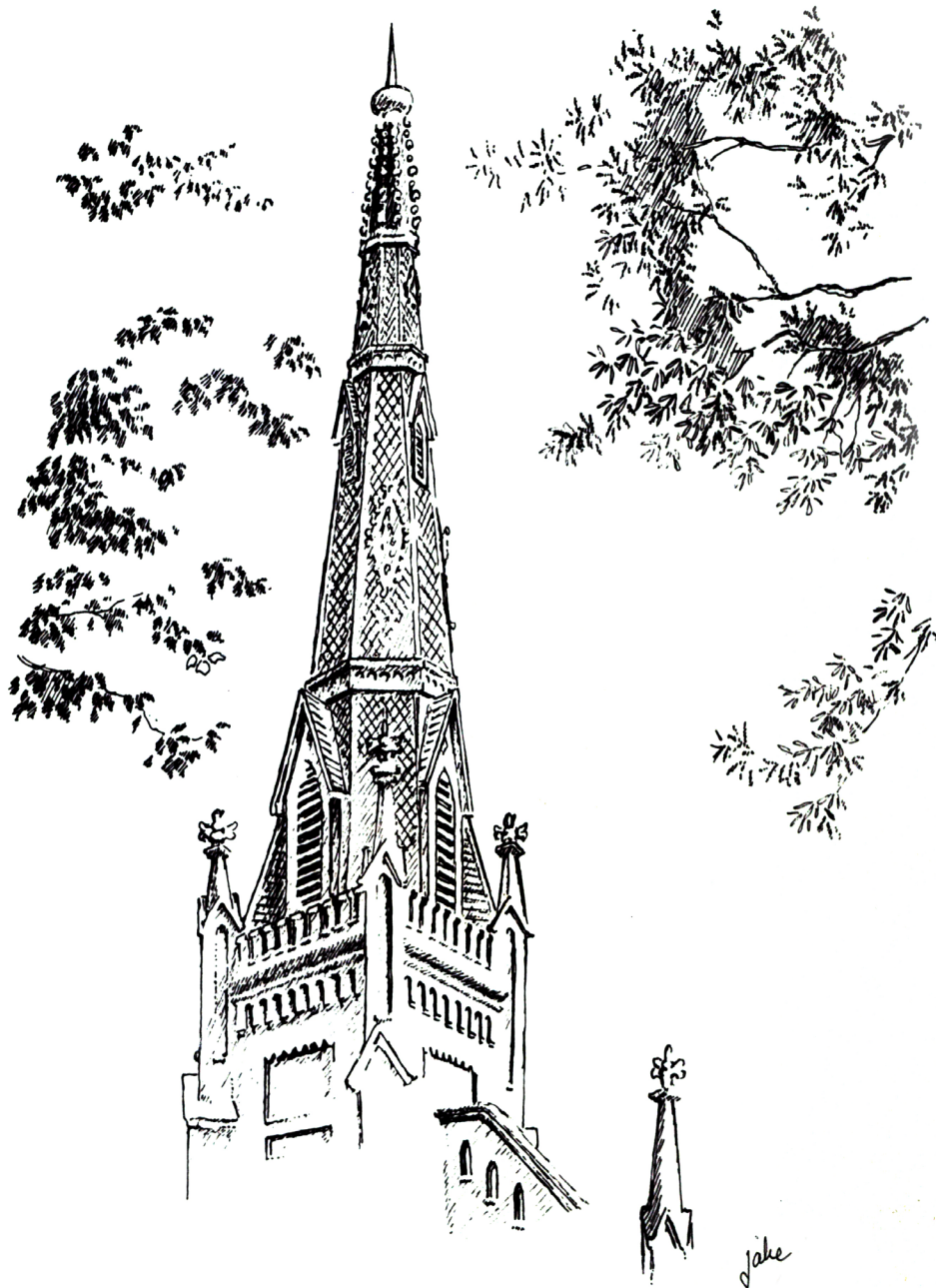


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | OCTOBER 27, 2024
TWENTY-THIRD 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 Andrew Peterson

O Eternal God, we give You thanks for the gift of worship in this place and the opportunity to be in Your presence and in Your love. We acknowledge as we enter this place, that some of us are encumbered by burdens, some caught up by distractions, some weighed down by our shortcomings, some filled up with worry and anxiety, and some carrying deep wounds.

We long to be truly open to You in our time of worship and ask that You help us to set down what is heavy, to give to You what is hard, and to accept the forgiveness that You offer.

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.

Amen.

Meditative Music | “Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Thy Peace” | The Tabernacle Choir

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;
 Where there is hatred; Let me bring love;
 Where there is injury, pardon;
 Where there is doubt, faith;
 Where there is despair, hope;
 Where there is darkness, light;
 Where there is sadness, joy;
 And all for Thy mercy's sake; And all for Thy mercy's sake.
 O Divine Master
 Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
 To be understood, as to understand;
 To be loved, as to love;
 For it is in giving, that we receive;
 It is in pardoning, that we are pardoned;
 And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life, to eternal life.

Prayer for Illumination | Selina Malherbe

Old Testament Reading | Mark 12:28-34 | NRSVUE

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well the scribe asked Jesus, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to Jesus, “You are right, Teacher; You have truly said that ‘God is one, and besides God there is no other’; and ‘to love God with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself’—this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that the scribe answered wisely, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask Jesus any question.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | James 2:1-20 | The Message

My dear friends, don't let public opinion influence how you live out our glorious, Christ-originated faith. If a man enters your church wearing an expensive suit, and a street person wearing rags comes in right after him, and you say to the man in the suit, "Sit here, sir; this is the best seat in the house!" and either ignore the street person or say, "Better sit here in the back row," haven't you segregated God's children and proved that you are judges who can't be trusted?

Listen, dear friends. Isn't it clear by now that God operates quite differently? He chose the world's down-and-out as the kingdom's first citizens, with full rights and privileges. This kingdom is promised to anyone who loves God. And here you are abusing these same citizens! Isn't it the high and mighty who exploit you, who use the courts to rob you blind? Aren't they the ones who scorn the new name—"Christian"—used in your baptisms?

You do well when you complete the Royal Rule of the Scriptures: "Love others as you love yourself." But if you play up to these so-called important people, you go against the Rule and stand convicted by it. You can't pick and choose in these things, specializing in keeping one or two things in God's law and ignoring others. The same God who said, "Don't commit adultery," also said, "Don't murder." If you don't commit adultery but go ahead and murder, do you think your non-adultery will cancel out your murder? No, you're a murderer, period.

Talk and act like a person expecting to be judged by the Rule that sets us free. For if you refuse to act kindly, you can hardly expect to be treated kindly. Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time.

Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup—where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?

I can already hear one of you agreeing by saying, "Sounds good. You take care of the faith department, I'll handle the works department."

Not so fast. You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove.

Do I hear you professing to believe in the one and only God, but then observe you complacently sitting back as if you had done something wonderful? That's just great. Demons do that, but what good does it do them? Use your heads! Do you suppose for a minute that you can cut faith and works in two and not end up with a corpse on your hands?

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Walking the Way of Faith: The Partnership of Faith and Works" | Reverend Mary Bowman

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 | “The Summons” | Composer John L. Bell | Soloist Robert Kochis

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known, will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same? Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare? Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name? Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same? Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen, and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the “you” you hide if I but call your name? Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same? Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around, through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord, Your summons echoes true when You but call my name. Let me turn and follow You and never be the same. In Your company I'll go where Your love and footsteps show. Thus I'll move and live and grow in You and You in me.

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 God, as we prepare to leave our worship, we thank You for Your nourishing and saving ways. Continue to open us to You, to the world and to our neighbors. Open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds that we may truly see You, know You, and follow You. In Christ's holy 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.

IN LOVING MEMORY

The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to Kory Eubank upon the death of her father, Karl Deblitz; and to Anne Egger upon the death of her mother, Mary Norwood Land.



**VIRTUAL
CONNECT
CARD**



**PRAYER
REQUESTS**



**TEXT
TO GIVE**



**GIVE
ONLINE**