



SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00 am
September 27, 2020

From a Christian point of view, theory and praxis can be understood today only in their unity, which means truth is not something we find or by which we are found, but something that we make true.

- Dorothee Soelle

Our Mission Statement

Called to love God and one another, First Presbyterian Church responds to God's grace by following Christ with ministries of hospitality, worship, faith development, service and generosity.

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church

We're glad you're here with us today. We fondly refer to this community of Christ-followers as "First Pres," and you being here is one of God's blessings for our fellowship. If you wonder what we're up to at First Pres, it's actually pretty simple. In fact, we use a short phrase to remind ourselves of our shared purpose: "Above all, love." Drawn from a New Testament text (1 Peter 4:8-11), those brief words challenge us to focus everything we do on loving God and loving every single person we encounter. So every day we're learning how to do just that, as God's Spirit keeps working in our lives.

By the way, we can't take credit for this idea. It goes as far back as Jesus. He was once asked to sum up what it looks like to really be alive; what we should aim for in our lives if we want to live as fully as we can. His answer? Love God with every fiber of your being, and love the people around you.

Welcome

Prelude

Canzon Septimi Toni
Giovanni Gabrieli; arr. David Marlatt

Call to Worship

What does the Lord require of you?

**To do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with our God.**

What does God command of us?

**To love God with all our heart,
and all our soul,
and all our mind,
and all our strength,
and to love our neighbor as ourselves.**

God does not call us to ease or to comfort,

**but to presence, and abundance,
and grace in our struggle.**

Let us worship the God who believes in us,
and trusts in us, and abides with us.

**Let us worship the God who will ask much of us,
but will be beside us every step of the way.**

Hymn #307

God of Grace and God of Glory
CWM Rhondda

Prayer of Confession

**Awesome and compassionate God,
you have loved us with unfailing, self-giving mercy,
but at times we have not loved you.**

You constantly call us, but we do not listen.

**You ask us to love, but we walk away from neighbors in need,
wrapped in our own concerns.**

**We have been called your own,
and too often we fail to see the world the way you do.**

We condone evil, prejudice, warfare, and greed.

**God of grace, as you come to us in mercy, we repent in spirit and in truth,
admit our sin, and gratefully receive your forgiveness
through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

**In the name of Jesus Christ, we are pardoned.
In our forgiveness, may we blossom with purpose and resolve,
so that the world will know us by our love. Amen.**

Response

Meineke

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Children's Message

Ministry Updates

Confirmation

Scripture Reading

Amos 5:18-24

Special Music

Just a Closer Walk with Thee
arr. Don Gillis

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.**

Offertory

To a Wild Rose
Edward MacDowell

Hymn #362

Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers
Llangloffan

Scripture Reading

Matthew 25:1-13

Sermon

"Empty Religion"

Eric Hankins

Hymn #351

All Who Love and Serve Your City
Charlestown

Blessing

Response

Seven Fold Amen

Postlude

Allegro from the 1st Symphony
Johannes Brahms

FIRST PRES MATTERS

Leading us in worship today are Rev. Caroline Cupp, Executive Pastor; Eric Hankins, Creative Arts Director; Sándor Kádár, Director of Music; Kira Boros, Choir Accompanist; Reid Simmons, organ scholar; Miner Street Brass: Doug Congdon-Martin, French horn; Brendan Egan (Brass Scholar), trombone; Ron Ford, trumpet; Pete Galloway, tuba; Charity Harter, bass trombone; Jim Haughton, trumpet; Dave Kolonauski, trombone.

Organ scholar, Reid Simmons is a freshman at West Chester University studying organ and music education. He is originally from Honey Brook, PA and grew up worshipping at Messiah Lutheran Church in Downingtown, PA. Reid was very involved with the music program there and served as Saturday organist for about three years. In addition to playing the organ, he has also studied piano, trumpet, and violin.

Congratulations - We give thanks for the birth of Ellery Jo Westhafer, born September 21, daughter of Ryan and Katie Westhafer, granddaughter of Dennis and Kathy Westhafer.

Fall New Members Class - October 1 - If you would like to find out more about membership at First Presbyterian Church, we will be having an online New Members Class on Thursday, October 1 at 7:30 p.m. There is no pressure to join at the close of the class but it will be an opportunity to find out more about First Pres. To register, please email Elizabeth Hess, Director of Engagement, at ehess@firstpreswc.com if you are interested.

Zoom Sunday School for Kids Starting in October - Preschool and elementary Sunday School classes will begin meeting live on Zoom starting Sunday, October 4. Each class will meet once a month, starting with the preschool class on October 4 at 10 a.m. Parents and grandparents with children who want to participate should watch their email for the Zoom link or contact Sara Pantazes at spantazes@firstpreswc.com.

Bibles for Third Graders - First Pres has a tradition of giving Bibles to elementary age children so they can begin to explore God’s Word on a deeper level as their own reading and comprehension skills grow. If you are a parent, grandparent, or caring adult in the life of a 3rd grader and would like your child to receive a Bible this year, please contact Sara Pantazes (spantazes@firstpreswc.com) by the end of September.

Bridge Adult Study is Back - Although the Bridge program is on hold, the Wednesday night adult class has resumed meeting on Zoom, Wednesday nights from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Please join us for a 6-week study of *Sermon on the Mount: A Beginner’s Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven* by Amy-Jill Levine. The text may seem familiar, but this thought-provoking study will frame Jesus’ instructions in a new light and “provide instruction on how best to live into the kingdom of heaven.” Participants are encouraged (but not required) to purchase the book for this study. If you wish to join the email list for this study group, please contact Sara Pantazes, Director of Christian Education, at spantazes@firstpreswc.com.

Let us know – As local hospitals slowly ease visiting restrictions, we are anticipating a gradual return of the Agape visitation ministry. If you anticipate a hospital stay or have a loved one who is hospitalized and a visit, call, or card would be of comfort, please contact Ellen Landis (elandis60@gmail.com) or Judy Mackleer (judymackleer@verizon.net).

Like to knit? A group is forming of knitters and stitchers of all experience levels. Experts and novices welcome! Meeting days and times will be determined based on interest. To learn more, contact Trisha Minicozzi at knitknitgoose@gmail.com.



The above shows the giving amount as of 9/23/2020 compared to the 2020 full year goal. This chart will be presented each week to keep the congregation well-informed of our progress. Further details can be found on the Financial Reporting page on our website.