



# First Presbyterian Church of Athens

*In response to God's grace, the mission of First Presbyterian Church is to create a community where people seek the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world!*

September 20, 2020  
10:00 a.m. Livestream  
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

## GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

### Greeting

Psalm 118:24

This is the day the Lord has made; **let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

### Prelude

*The God of Abraham Praise*

Richard Proulx

### Words of Welcome and Concerns of the Church

### Song of Gathering

Hymn 470, stanza 1

**O day of radiant gladness, O day of joy and light,  
O balm of care and sadness, most beautiful, most bright;  
this day the high and lowly, through ages joined in tune,  
sing "Holy, holy, holy" to the great God triune.**

### Call to Worship

Draw near to the Lord, who hears our please and our praise.

**We come to rest in God's holy presence.**

Here is bread that the Lord provides; here is manna to nourish our souls.

**We gather to feast on God's sustaining Word.**

Remember the Lord's wonderful works each evening; see God's glory with the morning's light.

**Come, let us worship the Lord! !**

### Hymn 488

*The God of Abraham Praise*

LEONI

### Call to Confession

### Prayer of Confession

**Lord, your generosity surprises us. For you do not mete out grace according to how hard we work, or how often we worship, or how closely we follow the rules. No, you lavish grace upon us according to your steadfast desire. But we insist on deciding who is deserving and who is not. We grumble that some receive too little while others have more than they deserve. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to live with humility and gratitude so that our words and deeds might embody your grace.**

### Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

### A special word of

**welcome:** thank you for being with us online for worship this morning. We are delighted and hope that you will join us again next Sunday.

Shaped by its traditional Jewish tune, *The God of Abraham Praise* conveys the essence of the *Yigdal*, a canticle based on a medieval Hebrew statement of faith about the nature of God often used in synagogue worship, alternately chanted by the cantor and congregation.

## Assurance of Pardon

### Congregational Response

Hymn 579

**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.**

### The Peace

Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.  
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

### Prayer for Illumination

#### First Lesson

Luke 3:8

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

#### Solo

*Laudate Dominum*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Translation:* Praise the Lord, all nations, praise him all peoples. For his loving kindness has been bestowed upon us, and the truth of the Lord endures for eternity. Glory 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.

#### Second Lesson

Genesis 15:1-6

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

#### Sermon

*The Power of a Promise*

Dr. Ryan Baer

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

#### Hymn 379

*My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less*

SOLID ROCK

#### Affirmation of Faith

*The Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,**

**and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### 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.**

*Laudate Dominum*  
is transcribed from  
Mozart's *Solemn Vespers*.  
The text is Psalm 117.

*My Hope Is Built on  
Nothing Less* develops  
the imagery of Jesus'  
remark (Matthew  
7:24-27/Luke 6:47-49)  
that those who believe  
in him and act on that  
belief are like someone  
who builds a house on a  
rock. The text is set to  
a tune created for it by  
a prolific 19th-century  
composer and editor.

Next to the Nicene  
Creed, The Apostles'  
Creed is the most  
universally accepted  
doctrinal statement in  
Christendom. Although  
not written by apostles,  
it reflects the theological  
formulations of the first  
century church. Arising  
from an early baptismal  
creed, it underwent  
development, attaining  
its present form in the  
eighth century.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PRAYER EXERCISES

#### Wednesdays at noon

Is your prayer life stagnant? Would you like to learn new ways to pray? Join us on Wednesdays at 12:00 p.m. to experiment with some different ways to connect with God. The sessions will last 20-30 minutes. Each will be stand-alone, so feel free to participate in as many or few as you like.

Zoom ID: 706-543-4338 (PW: 185185)

Led by Dr. Carol Strickland ([cstrickland@firstpresathens.org](mailto:cstrickland@firstpresathens.org))

### WALK THE LABYRINTH

We have a new cloth labyrinth that is now displayed in Fellowship Hall. All members are invited to come to the church to have a few moments of peace and prayer as you walk the labyrinth and/or sit in the sanctuary.

Reservations and masks are required. The labyrinth and sanctuary will be open to church members (with reservations) on Saturday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. A staff member will be available to greet church members at the atrium doors, front of the church. To sign up, click on the Signup Genius link on [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org) or contact the church office at (706) 543-4338.

### SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEW FPC YOUTUBE CHANNEL!

We have launched our YouTube channel. If you don't have Facebook, this is another way for you to follow worship live. To subscribe to our channel, go to [youtube.com/c/firstpresathensga](https://youtube.com/c/firstpresathensga) or click on the button on the FPC website. If you have any questions, please contact Paulo Santos at [paulo@firstpresathens.org](mailto:paulo@firstpresathens.org).

### BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

#### October 3, 10:00 a.m., FPC Courtyard

Please use mask, leash/cage, and social distancing as we thank God for our furry, feathered, and scaled companions.

### BOOK STUDY: *Strength to Love*, MLK Jr. Tuesdays at noon, starting on September 29

Martin Luther King's sermons seem as relevant today as they've ever been. Each week we will discuss one or more of his sermons that deal directly with racial justice, reflecting on what his words call us to do. Join for one or all sessions.

**Tuesdays: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**

**Zoom ID: 894-7644-7825**

For more information, contact Erik Ness ([erikcness@yahoo.com](mailto:erikcness@yahoo.com)) or Carol Strickland ([cstrickland@firstpresathens.org](mailto:cstrickland@firstpresathens.org)).

### ATHENS COMMUNITY COUNCIL ON AGING

Would you like to help deliver food for those who are homebound? Athens Community Council on Aging is requesting help from First Presbyterian on Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. You will load multiple bags of groceries into your vehicle at the Cotton Press at 149 Oneta St. and unload them at the Columbia Brookside office. The route takes no more than 1 hour. There is very little contact, and masks are worn for each pickup and delivery. A large SUV or truck is helpful. If you are interested, contact Sally Vandiver at [sally.vandiver@gmail.com](mailto:sally.vandiver@gmail.com) and she will put you on the schedule.

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## You Can Play an Important Role in Our Stephen Ministry...

...Because you may know of a friend, neighbor, co-worker, or relative who is going through a difficult time and who could benefit from the focused care, encouragement, and support of a Stephen Minister. If you know of someone who is hurting, talk with one of our Stephen Leaders:

Dawn Frisch: [dawnmfrisch@aol.com](mailto:dawnmfrisch@aol.com), 914-255-3447

Bob Frisch: [rpfrisch@aol.com](mailto:rpfrisch@aol.com), 914-262-1078

Lisa Oelke: [lisakoelke@gmail.com](mailto:lisakoelke@gmail.com), 706-540-4251

Carol Strickland: [cstrickland@firstpresathens.org](mailto:cstrickland@firstpresathens.org), 706-765-7671

They can talk with you about how we can connect the person you know with one of our Stephen Ministers.

It's a great way to show how much you care!

## THIS WEEK

### Sunday, September 20

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (*please check [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org) for more information*)
- 10:00 a.m. Service Livestream on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 11:30 a.m. "Sunday Conversations" with Dr. Ryan Baer, (*Zoom ID: 706-543-4338, PW:185185*)
- 4:00 p.m. Mission & Outreach Commission Meeting via Zoom
- 7:00 p.m. Youth Family Game Night, "Name That Tune" (*Zoom ID: 725-346-682*)

### Tuesday, September 22

- 1:00 p.m. Athens Community Council on Aging Food Pickup & Delivery
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting via Zoom

### Wednesday, September 23

- 12:00 p.m. "Prayer Exercises" led by Dr. Carol Strickland, (*Zoom ID: 706-543-4338, PW:185185*)

### Saturday, September 26

- 9:00 a.m. Labyrinth open until noon (*please go to [FirstPresAthens.org](http://FirstPresAthens.org) to make a reservation*)

### Sunday, September 27

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (*please check [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org) for more information*)
- 10:00 a.m. Service Livestream on Facebook and YouTube, Dr. Carol Strickland preaching
- 11:30 a.m. "Sunday Conversations" with Dr. Ryan Baer, (*Zoom ID: 706-543-4338, PW:185185*)
- 5:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group (*Zoom ID: 8433-066-1223*)
- 7:00 p.m. High School Youth Group (*in person - RSVP at [www.fpcathenspit.com](http://www.fpcathenspit.com)*)

## LOOKING AHEAD

**September 29** - Book Study Begins (*Strength to Love*, by Martin Luther King Jr.)

**October 3** - Blessing of the Animals, 10:00 a.m. at FPC Courtyard

**October 4** - World Communion Sunday, Peace and Global Witness Offering

**October 11** - Called Congregational Meeting via Zoom for Electing Officers



**FPC Athens: Fall 2020**  
**September 13 – November 22**

**One with God;  
One with each other**  
*... that they may all be one. - John 17:21*

**Fall@First 2020**  
*For more information about FPC Fall Programs, please go to [firstpresathens.org](http://firstpresathens.org) and look for the Fall@First brochure in the home page.*

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## The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI 6.6.8.4 D

Daniel ben Judah, 1404

Trans. Max Landsberg and Newton Mann, 1885; alt.

Hebrew melody  
Adapt. Thomas Olivers  
and Meyer Lyon, 1770

1. The God of A - braham praise, Who reigns en - throned a - bove;  
2. Your spir - it still flows free, High surg - ing where it will;  
3. You have e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;

The an - cient of e - ter - nal days, The God of love!  
In proph - et's word You spoke of old And You speak still.  
Your love shall be our strength and stay, While a - ges roll.

The Lord, the great I Am, By earth and heaven con - fessed,  
Es - tab - lished is Your law, And change - less it shall stand,  
We praise You, liv - ing God! We praise Your ho - ly name;

We bow be - fore Your ho - ly name, For - ev - er blest.  
Deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, On sea, or land.  
The first, the last, be - yond all thought, And still the same!

## 379

## My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

SOLID ROCK LM with refrain

Edward Mote, c. 1834

William Batchelder Bradbury, 1863

1. My hope is built on noth-ing less Than Je - sus' blood and  
 2. When dark-ness veils His love - ly face, I rest on His un -  
 3. His oath, His cov - e - nant, His blood Sup - port me in the  
 4. When He shall come with trum-pet sound, O may I then in

right - teous-ness; I dare not trust the sweet-est frame, But whol-ly  
 chang-ing grace; In ev - ery high and storm-y gale, My an - chor  
 whelm-ing flood; When all a-round my soul gives way, He then is  
 Him be found, Dressed in His righ - teous - ness a - lone, Fault - less to

*Refrain*

lean on Je - sus' name.  
 holds with - in the veil. On Christ, the sol - id Rock, I stand; All  
 all my hope and stay.  
 stand be - fore the throne.

oth - er ground is sink-ing sand, All oth - er ground is sink-ing sand.

Alternate tune: MELITA, 562

## How Firm a Foundation

361

"K" in *A Selection of Hymns, 1787*  
Ed. John Rippon; alt.

FOUNDATION 11.11.11.11

American folk melody  
Funk's *Genuine Church Music, 1832*

1. How firm a foun - da - tion, ye saints of the Lord,  
2. "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dis - mayed,  
3. "When through the deep wa - ters I call thee to go,  
4. "When through fi - ery tri - als thy path - way shall lie,

Is laid for your faith in God's ex - cel - lent Word!  
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
The riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;  
My grace, all - suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;

What more can be said than to you God hath said,  
I'll strength - en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
For I will be near thee, thy trou - bles to bless,  
The flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign

To you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?  
Up - held by My righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.  
And sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress.  
Thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine.

5. "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake."