



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 27, 2020
10:00 a.m. Livestream
Seventeenth 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

FOREST GREEN

Craig Phillips

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

Listen, O people, to holy teaching; tune your ears to hear God's word.

We gather to proclaim our sacred story, to tell of God's wondrous deeds.

Come, O people, into holy space to worship the Lord, our sustainer and guide.

Let us turn to God in prayer and praise.

Hymn 477

Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim

HANOVER

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.**

Assurance of Pardon

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.

Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim resembles many 18th-century drawings that show parallels between worship on earth and worship in heaven, especially as described in Revelation 7:9-11. The 18th-century tune has had many names; the one used here honors the dynasty of British monarchs, 1714-1901.

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 6:35

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

Solo *How Can I Keep from Singing?* Mark Schweizer

My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentations.
I hear the real, though far off hymn that hails a new creation.
Above the tumult and the strife, I hear its music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?
When tyrants tremble, sick with fear, and hear their death knell ringing;
when friends rejoice, both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile, our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?
What though the tempest 'round me roars, I know the truth, it liveth.
What though the darkness 'round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

Second Lesson Genesis 37:2a-8, 17b-22, 26-34; 50:15-21

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

Sermon *The Hand of God* Dr. Carol Strickland

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Hymn 414 *As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought* FOREST GREEN

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.**

The text of the solo appeared with the title "Always Rejoicing" in the *New York Observer* in 1868. It was attributed to "Pauline T." Baptist pastor and musician Robert Lowry is usually given credit for both text and tune which he later published. This arrangement is by North Carolina composer Mark Schweizer.

The text *As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought*, by a Presbyterian pastor in California, expresses the conviction that being a good steward is an essential part of the Christian life, for self-giving is God's own nature. The tune is named for the village in Surrey where the arranger collected the tune in 1903.

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

WALK THE LABYRINTH

Mondays: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturdays: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

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 and Monday afternoons. 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 or contact the church office at (706) 543-4338.

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. On September 29 we will read the first three sermons and will focus primarily on Chapter 3: On Being a Good Neighbor.

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

Zoom ID: 894-7644-7825

For more information, contact Erik Ness (erikness@yahoo.com) or Carol Strickland (cstrickland@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.

ATHENS COMMUNITY COUNCIL ON AGING FOOD PICKUP & DELIVERY

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 and she will put you on the schedule.

PRAYER EXERCISES

Wednesdays at noon

Join Carol Strickland on Wednesdays at noon via Zoom for "Prayer Exercises." In these weekly sessions we'll be introduced to a variety of ways to pray, e.g. Lectio Divina, Celtic Prayer, Collects, Examen, and more. The sessions last 20-30 minutes. Join us next Wednesday, September 30 to practice Lectio Divina, a way to pray the scriptures. Have paper and colored markers on hand.

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

Led by Dr. Carol Strickland (cstrickland@firstpresathens.org)

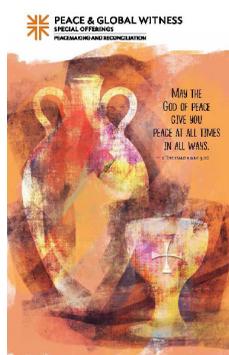
FOOD SUNDAY

You may bring donations of **canned salmon, plain white rice, and saltine crackers** to church 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. on **Friday, October 2**. Please bring food in plastic bags and put them in the open trunk.

Alternatively, you may take your donations directly to the Athens Area Emergency Food Bank between 9:00 a.m.-noon, Monday-Friday at 640 Barber Street, Athens, 30601 (don't confuse this with the Northeast Georgia Food Bank on Newton Bridge Rd). Please put food on loading dock at far end of building. Thanks for your donations in September - our neighbors in need are grateful.

PEACE AND GLOBAL WITNESS OFFERING

October 4



World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday in October, marks the day we receive a special offering for Peace and Global Witness. Your gift will enable the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Mid councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness. Please note your gift to FPC is for "Peace & Global Witness." If you are making your contribution through FPC website, select "Peacemaking" fund.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, September 27

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (*please check firstpresathens.org for more information*)
- 9:00 a.m. Godly Play on YouTube (*please e-mail Natalie Bishop at natalie@firstpresathens.org for link*)
- 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.fpcathenspitt.com*)

Monday, September 28

- 3:00 p.m. Labyrinth open until 6:00 p.m. (*please go to FirstPresAthens.org to make a reservation*)
- 8:00 p.m. Parent Support Circle via Zoom

Tuesday, September 29

- 12:00 p.m. Book Study: *Strength to Love*, by Martin Luther King Jr.
- 1:00 p.m. Athens Community Council on Aging Food Pickup & Delivery
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting via Zoom

Wednesday, September 30

- 12:00 p.m. "Prayer Exercises" led by Dr. Carol Strickland, (*Zoom ID: 706-543-4338, PW:185185*)
- 7:00 p.m. Children's Ministry Storytime Circle via Zoom
- 8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class and Mentors via Zoom (*Zoom ID: 832-1214-1438*)

Saturday, October 3

- 9:00 a.m. Labyrinth open until noon (*please go to FirstPresAthens.org to make a reservation*)
- 10:00 a.m. Blessing of the Animals, FPC Courtyard

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

- 9:00 a.m. Sunday School (*please check 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*)

LOOKING AHEAD

October 11 - Called Congregational Meeting 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 and look for the Fall@First brochure in the home page.

Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim 477

HANOVER 10.10.11.11

Charles Wesley, 1744

Attr. William Croft, 1708
A Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms, 1708

1. Ye ser - vants of God, your Mas - ter pro - claim,
 2. God rul - eth on high, al - might - y to save;
 3. "Sal - va - tion to God, who sits on the throne,"
 4. Then let us a - dore, and give Him His right,

And pub - lish a - broad His won - der - ful name;
 And still He is nigh— His pres - ence we have;
 Let all cry a - loud, and hon - or the Son;
 All glo - ry and power, all wis - dom and might,

The name all - vic - to - rious of Je - sus ex - tol;
 The great con - gre - ga - tion His tri - umph shall sing,
 The prais - es of Je - sus the an - gels pro - claim,
 All hon - or and bless - ing, with an - gels a - bove,

His king - dom is glo - rious, He rules o - ver all.
 As - crib - ing sal - va - tion to Je - sus our King.
 Fall down on their fac - es, and wor - ship the Lamb.
 And thanks nev - er ceas - ing, and in - fi - nite love.

414 As Those of Old Their Firstfruits Brought

FOREST GREEN CMD

English folk melody

Frank von Christierson, 1960; alt.

Arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

1. As those of old their first - fruits brought Of vine - yard, flock, and field
 2. A world in need now sum - mons us To la - bor, love, and give,
 3. With grat - i - tude and hum - ble trust We bring our best to You,

To God, the giv - er of all good, The source of boun - teous yield,
 To make our life an of - fer - ing To God that all may live.
 Not just to serve Your cause, but share Your love with neigh - bors too.

So we to - day our first - fruits bring, The wealth of this good land:
 The church of Christ is call - ing us To make the dream come true:
 O God who gave Your - self to us In Je - sus Christ Your Son,

Of farm and mar - ket, shop and home, Of mind and heart and hand.
 A world re - deemed by Christ - like love, All life in Christ made new.
 Help us to give our - selves each day Un - til life's work is done.

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Music: Arrangement from the *English Hymnal*, 1906. Used by permission of Oxford University Press.

O God of Every Nation

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Welsh folk melody

Evans' *Hymnau a Thonau*, 1865As in *English Hymnal*, 1906

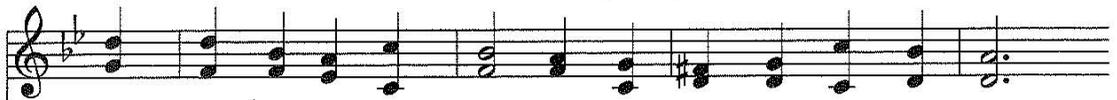
William W. Reid, Jr., 1958; alt. 1972



1. O God of ev - ery na - tion, Of ev - ery race and land,
2. From search for wealth and pow - er And scorn of truth and right,
3. Lord, strength-en those who la - bor That all may find re - lease
4. Keep bright in us the vi - sion Of days when war shall cease,



Re - deem the whole cre - a - tion With Your al - might - y hand;
 From trust in bombs that show - er De - struc-tion through the night,
 From fear of rat - tling sa - ber, From dread of war's in - crease;
 When ha - tred and di - vi - sion Give way to love and peace,



Where hate and fear di - vide us And bit - ter threats are hurled,
 From pride of race and sta - tion And blind-ness to Your way,
 When hope and cour-age fal - ter, Your still small voice be heard;
 Till dawns the morn-ing glo - rious When peace on earth shall reign



In love and mer - cy guide us And heal our strife - torn world.
 De - liv - er ev - ery na - tion, E - ter - nal God, we pray.
 With faith that none can al - ter, Your ser - vants un - der - gird.
 And Christ shall rule vic - to - rious O'er all the world's do - main.

