



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 17, 2023
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF GOD

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us. As we enter a holy space this morning, please silence your cell phone.

Greeting

Psalm 118:24

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

Prelude

"Jupiter" Theme

Eric H. Thiman

Words of Welcome

Song of Gathering

AZMON

**This is the day the Lord hath made;
the hours are all God's own.
Let heaven rejoice; let earth be glad,
and praise surround the throne.**

Call to Worship

God turns our sorrow into laughter.
God is faithful to us in our doubt.
Come into God's presence with joy.
With God all things are possible!

*Hymn 488

The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

God our Judge, we admit we have double standards. We seek forgiveness for ourselves, but fail to forgive others. We seek relief for ourselves, but fail to seek relief for others. We seek leniency for ourselves, but fail to show that mercy to others. Forgive us, mighty God, and help us to forgive, showing others the same grace and mercy that you have generously shown to us.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

*Assurance of Pardon

**Those who are able may stand.*

Please sign and pass the Fellowship Pad, making note of new and old friends, check in on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram (firstpresathensga).

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.

At "The Peace," worshipers are invited to greet each other by saying, "The peace of Christ be with you," and responding, "And also with you."

After the Passing of the Peace at the 11:00 a.m. service, children, ages Pre-K - grade 5, are invited to Children's Church held in the Children's Ministry Suite on the first floor.

11:00 a.m. Lay Reader:
Anne Marie Miller

The text of the anthem is a hymn written by Michael A Perry, an English student of mathematics and physics turned theologian and ordained clergy. It is set to a tune first used by Gustav Holst in the "Jupiter" movement of *The Planets*. The anthem is an arrangement by American church musician Richard Proulx.

Lord Speak to Me, That I May Speak is informed by two great truths: that the testimony of experience is powerful and persuasive, and that no one should venture to minister on their own strength rather than God's. The tune reflects the 19th-century practice of adapting piano pieces as hymn tunes.

*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

Congregational Prayer for Illumination

PROSPECT



First Lesson

Mark 10:27, page 923

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

Anthem

O God, Beyond All Praising

Richard Proulx

O God, beyond all praising, we worship you today
and sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
for we can only wonder at every gift you send,
at blessings without number and mercies without end:
we lift our hearts before you and wait upon your word,
we honor and adore you, our great and mighty Lord.
The flower of earthly splendor in time must surely die,
its fragile gloom surrender to you, the Lord most high;
but hidden from all nature the eternal seed is sown –
though small in mortal stature, to heaven's garden grown;
for Christ the man from heaven from death has set us free,
and we through him are given the final victory.
Then hear, O gracious Savior, accept the love we bring,
that we who know your favor may serve you as our King;
and whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,
we'll triumph through our sorrows and rise to praise you still:
to marvel at your beauty and glory in your ways,
and make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.

Second Lesson

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7, page 13

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

Sermon

Holy Laughter

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 426

Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak

CANONBURY

*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, (cont.)**

**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.**

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory *Lord Jesus Christ, Turn to Us* Johann Sebastian Bach

***Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Hymn 592

***Prayer of Dedication**

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

***Hymn 268** *God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens* HOLY MANNA

***Charge and Benediction**

***Congregational Response**

Hymn 535

**Go with us, Lord, and guide the way
through this and every coming day,
that in your Spirit strong and true
our lives may be our gift to you.**

Postlude

Postlude on Thaxted

David M. Cherwien

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.



You may mail your check, set up an automatic payment of your estimate of giving through your bank, or donate online using this QR code or at firstpresathens.org/giving. Thank you for your generosity.

Texts and music for hymns and sung responses reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-714861

A special word of welcome to our guests: thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Please fill out the Fellowship Pad so that we may be in touch. We are delighted you are here and look forward to seeing you again.

Nursery Play for children 4 years old and younger is available from 9:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., are located in our Children's Playroom area next to the Children's Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

Children, Pre K – 5th Grade, are invited to Children's Church during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Children's Church will be held downstairs in the Children's Ministry Suite. We will depart for Children's Church following the Passing of the Peace. To pick up your child after the service, please go to the church courtyard entrance of the Children's Ministry Suite.

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*
The Rev. Leigh Bonner, *Interim Associate Pastor*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

Lay Reader

11:00 a.m. Anne Marie Miller

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head),
Michelle Clendenen-Shaw, Diane Hartzell

11:00 a.m. Jimbo LaBoon III (head),
Keith Oelke, Lisa Oelke

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Paulo Santos

FLOWERS

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of her father Thomas Edward Nickles, Jr. by Jennifer Poole.

SEPTEMBER FLOWER TEAM

Betsy Bushnell (chair), Eve Morris,
Lois Neighbors, Beverly Phares,
Jennifer Poole, Gail Wilfong

TO AID IN WORSHIP

If you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium and at 10:00 a.m. is on Facebook and YouTube.

Available in the Narthex or from an usher:

- **Personal hearing receivers** usable anywhere in the sanctuary
- **Large-print** hymnals, Bibles, bulletins, and hymnsheets
- **Sermons** from the previous six weeks

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer requests can be submitted to the church office, 706-543-4338, by the Prayer Request link on our church website (firstpresathens.org) or on the prayer cards in the Fellowship Pads.

Fall Programs 2023

September 20 – November 15

4:00 – 5:30 p.m. Knitting Purls 2, Parlor

4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Shakespeare & Friends Homer's *Odyssey*, Room 308

5:00 – 5:30 p.m. St. Andrews Choir, Room 202

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Dinner, Fellowship Hall

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. “Bumper Sticker Theology” with Ryan Baer,
Moses Waddel Room

6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Chancel Choir, Room 202

Wednesday Night Dinner

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall



\$12/person, \$45 household max (complimentary for children 5 and under). Please RSVP in the Atrium, online at tinyurl.com/WedAtFirst, using the QR code, or by contacting the church office e-mail frontdesk@firstpresathens.org or call 706-543-4338 by Mondays at 12:00 p.m.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, September 17

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Godly Play
- 11:00 a.m. Atrium Refreshments, Atrium
- 3:30 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 3:30 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:20 p.m. Celebration Singers, Room 202
- 5:00 p.m. Middle School Youth Group, The PIT
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Dinner, Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 p.m. High School Youth Group, The PIT

Monday, September 18

- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Room 205

Tuesday, September 19

- 12:15 p.m. Women's Small Group, Brides Room
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 1:30 p.m. Knitting Purls, Parlor

Wednesday, September 20

- 4:00 p.m. Knitting Purls 2, Parlor
- 4:30 p.m. Shakespeare & Friends *Homer's Odyssey*, Room 308
- 5:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Wed@First Supper – Sauce House, Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 p.m. “Bumper Sticker Theology” with Ryan Baer, Moses Waddel Room
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 6:30 p.m. *Companions in Christ* Small Group, Brides Room

Thursday, September 21

- 2:00 p.m. Mellows, TerraBella
- 5:30 p.m. Session Worship, Sanctuary
- 6:00 p.m. Stated Session Meeting, Moses Waddel Room

Sunday, September 24

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. *God's Mission Today* Small Group, Room 309
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Godly Play
- 11:00 a.m. Atrium Refreshments, Atrium
- 3:00 p.m. Middle School Pool Party, Ness Home
- 3:30 p.m. St. Andrews and Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 5:00 p.m. High School Pool Party, Ness Home

M25 Movie and Conversation

The Matthew 25 Commission will be hosting a documentary viewing and PC(USA) conversation series about race and the church on the following Sunday nights: 10/22, 10/29, 11/5, and 11/12. Stay tuned for details and sign-up information.

For more information, please contact Dan Nadenicek at dnadeni@uga.edu.

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOR CHILDREN

Director of Children's Ministries: Natalie Bishop

Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

Nursery Play, 8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Children's Playroom • Infants – 4 Year Olds

Little ones are invited to Nursery Play during worship and Sunday school. Children will enjoy playtime, Bible stories, and a light snack with church friends.

Godly Play, 9:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Children's Ministry Suite • Pre-K – 5th Grade

Children are invited to Godly Play during the Sunday School hour. Godly Play is an innovative way of teaching and learning that helps children “discover” who God is rather than being “told” who God is. The structure and routine of Godly Play offer children a safe and nurturing space to explore, connect, wonder, and worship God.

Children and Worship, 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

All children are welcome to remain in worship with their families every Sunday. Children's bulletins, Bibles, and books are available at the children's tables located in the Narthex and on both sides of the choir loft.

Children's Church, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service
Children, Pre-K – 1st Grade are invited to Children's Church to continue worshipping together by listening to God's Word, singing to God, praying to God and giving to God. On the last Sunday of the month, children, Pre-K–5th Grade are invited to a special Children's Church in the Children's Ministry Suite.

**All children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on the 1st Sunday of the month to take part in worship and Communion with family.*

SUNDAYS FOR YOUTH

Director of Youth Ministries: Kim Ness

Middle School Coordinator: Erin Osborne

The PIT (basement level) • 6th – 12th Grade

Sunday School (9:45 a.m.)

Middle School class is using the Sparkhouse curriculum called Echo: The Story. Each class begins with a video, then we delve into the Bible. In just 36 weeks, we'll travel from Genesis to Revelation, through stories, games and activities!

Youth Group

Sunday night youth group is a fast hour of games, get-to-know you activities, devotionals and discussion. This year our theme is Pieces of Faith. Youth will gather in the PIT to talk about different aspects of faith and the spiritual practices we need to help our faith grow stronger.

Middle School meets 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

High School meets 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Combined Youth Dinner (6:00 p.m.)

Between MS and HS youth groups, everyone will gather in Fellowship Hall for a shared meal. If you'd like to help provide a meal for our youth, please email Kim at kness@firstpresathens.org.

For more information about youth ministry at FPC, visit www.fpcathenspit.com.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45–10:40 a.m.

IN PERSON

Builders • Room 301

This class is an invitation for parents of children and youth to come join for a time of fellowship and support. This fall, the Builders will study the Hebrew Bible – commonly called the Old Testament – by engaging with the *DISCIPLE Fast Track* Bible study.

Coordinator: Dr. Ryan Baer (ryan@firstpresathens.org)

College Connections • Room 302

How does your life intersect with the stories we call Holy Scripture? We will take a deep dive into the writings of the New Testament with the goal of journeying from Matthew to Revelation. Grad and undergrad students are welcome to join at any time.

Coordinator: The Rev. Will Norman (will@pscuga.org)

HYBRID (in person and over Zoom)

Del Dunn Sunday School Class • Room 308

An in-depth study and discussion of scripture, offering a collegial environment and welcoming all who seek to enrich their understanding of the Bible and its application to our daily lives. This fall, we will continue a chapter-by-chapter reading and discussion of the Gospel of Matthew.

Coordinator: Susan Landrum (slandrum@uga.edu)

Zoom ID: 875 216 0708, PW: 634175

New Voices • Room 310

This class explores theological and church issues. Class leaders engage participants by inviting them to share their stories and perspectives on the topics being discussed. This fall, we will get to know some similar Biblical women (and some evangelically maligned men) through the discussion of the book *The Making of Biblical Womanhood* by Beth Allison Barr.

Led by: Lewis Hudgins (lewisahudgins@gmail.com)

Zoom ID: 674 533 8902

Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class

Bride's Room, Tinsley Stern

Open and honest discussion in a nonjudgmental atmosphere about various aspects of Christianity. This fall, we will be watching and discussing the series *From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity* by UNC-Chapel Hill professor Bart D. Ehrman.

Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com), Jim Scanlon (jjtscanlon@yahoo.com)

Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI 6.6.8.4 D

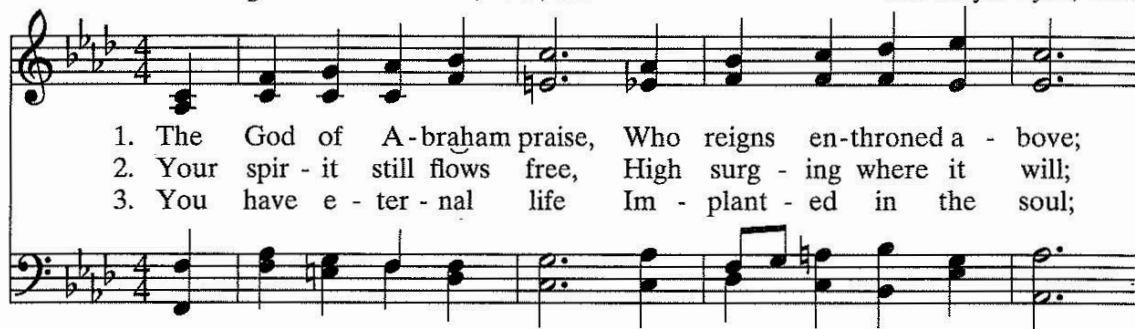
Daniel ben Judah, 1404

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

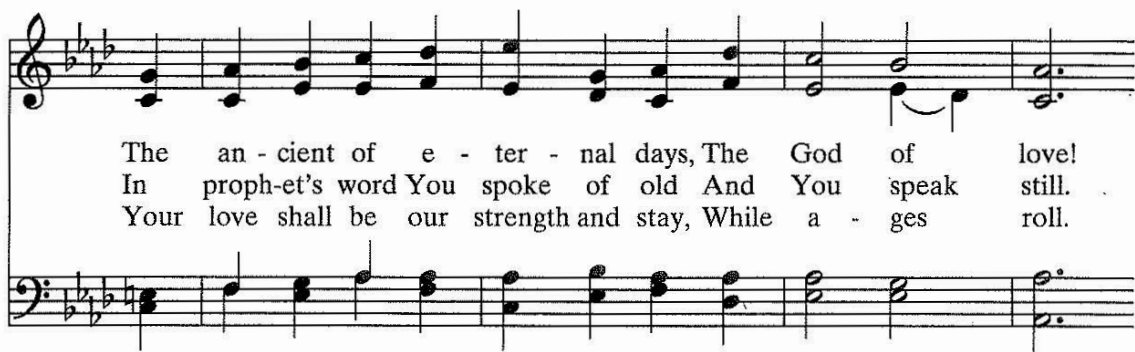
Hebrew melody

Adapt. Thomas Olivers

and Meyer Lyon, 1770



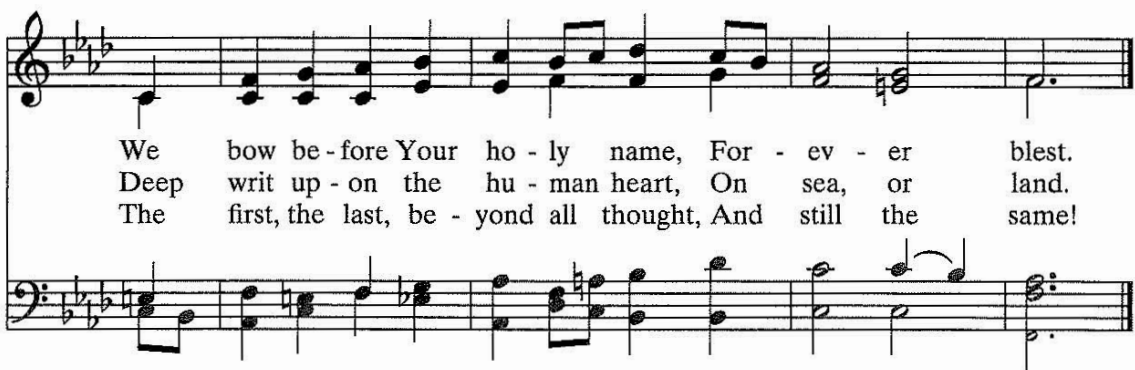
1. The God of A-braham praise, Who reigns en-throned a - bove;
 2. Your spir - it still flows free, High surg - ing where it will;
 3. You have e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;



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;



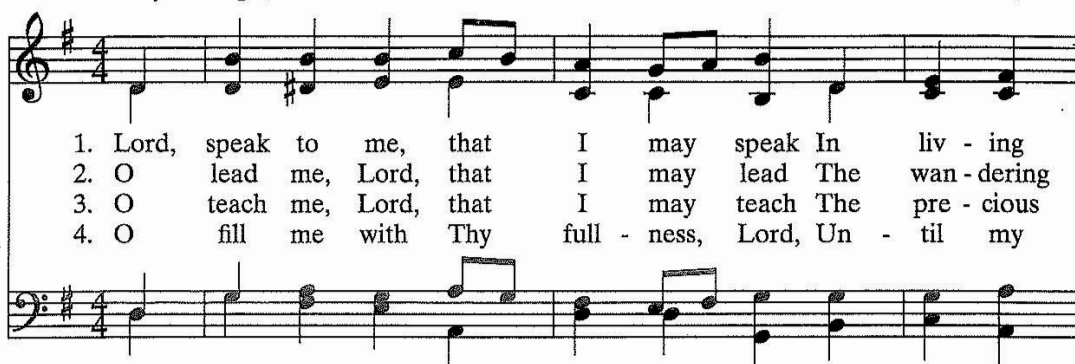
We bow be - fore Your ho - ly name, For - ev - er blest.
 Deep writ up - on the hu - man heart, On sea, or land.
 The first, the last, be - yond all thought, And still the same!

Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak 426

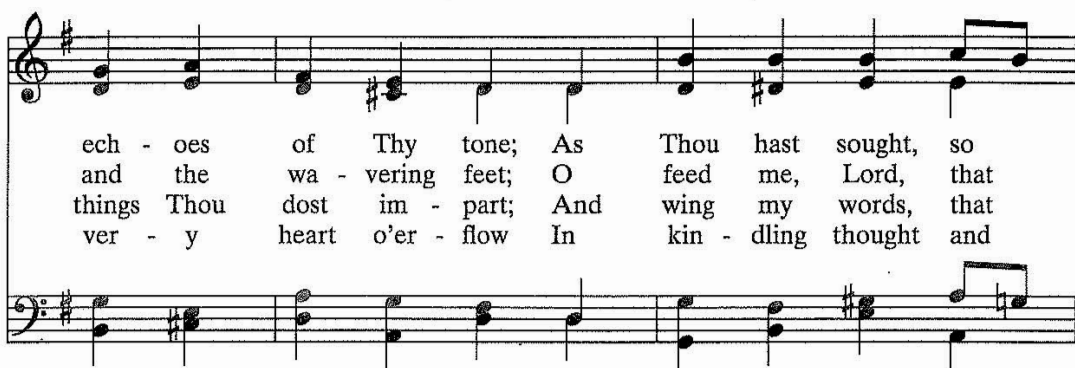
Frances Ridley Havergal, 1872

CANONBURY LM

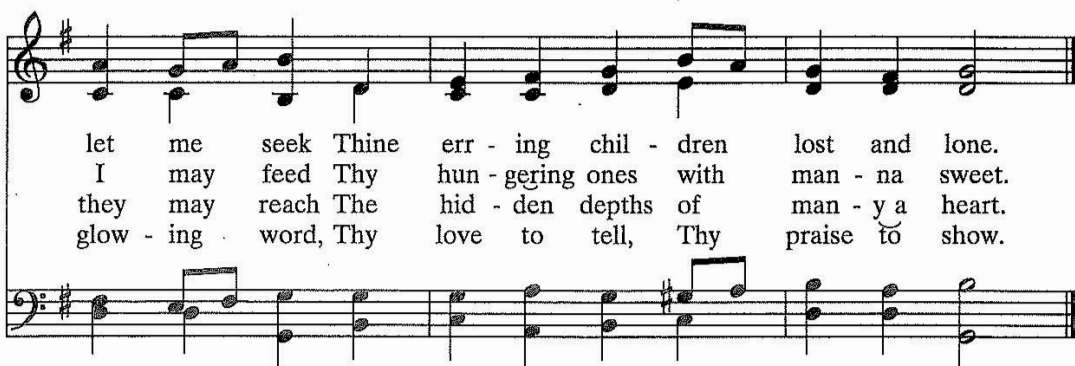
Robert Schumann, 1839



1. Lord, speak to me, that I may speak In liv - ing
2. O lead me, Lord, that I may lead The wan - dering
3. O teach me, Lord, that I may teach The pre - cious
4. O fill me with Thy full - ness, Lord, Un - til my



ech - oes of Thy tone; As Thou hast sought, so
and the wa - vering feet; O feed me, Lord, that
things Thou dost im - part; And wing my words, that
ver - y heart o'er - flow In kin - dling thought and



let me seek Thine err - ing chil - dren lost and lone.
I may feed Thy hun - gery ones with man - na sweet.
they may reach The hid - den depths of man - y a heart.
glow - ing word, Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.

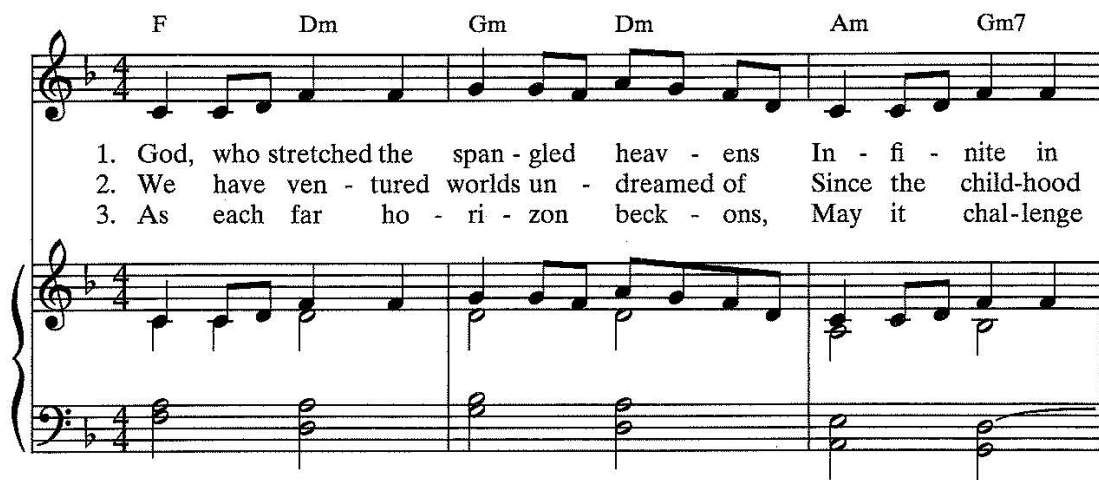
5. O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where;
Until Thy blessed face I see,
Thy rest, Thy joy, Thy glory share.

268 God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

HOLY MANNA 8.7.8.7 D

Catherine Arnott Cameron, 1967; alt.

Attr. William Moore, 1825
Harm. Charles Anders, 1969



1. God, who stretched the span - gled heav - ens In - fi - nite in
2. We have ven - tured worlds un - dreamed of Since the child - hood
3. As each far ho - ri - zon beck - ons, May it chal - lenge

B $\flat$ 7 Dm C Dm C B $\flat$ 7

time and place, Flung the suns in burn - ing ra - diance
 of our race; Known the ec - sta - sy of wing - ing
 us a - new: Chil - dren of cre - a - tive pur - pose,

Am B $\flat$ 7 C F F Dm7

Through the si - lent fields of space: We, Your chil - dren
 Through un - trav - eled realms of space; Probed the se - crets
 Serv - ing oth - ers, hon - oring You. May our dreams prove

B $\flat$ 7 Gm7 B $\flat$ 7 Am7 B $\flat$ 7 Gm7 C

in Your like - ness, Share in - ven - tive powers with You;
 of the at - om, Yield - ing un - i - mag - ined power,
 rich with prom - ise, Each en - deav - or well be - gun;

F Dm C Gm7 Am B $\flat$ 7 C6 C F

Great Cre - a - tor, still cre - at - ing, Show us what we yet may do.
 Fac - ing us with life's de - struc - tion Or our most tri - um - phant hour.
 Great Cre - a - tor, give us guid - ance Till our goals and Yours are one.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Moderator Pat Waldrup, Clerk of Session

CLASS OF 2023

Sarah Bryan
Judy Burch
Kent Burel
Rod Canfield
Melinda DeMaria
Jim Dove
Mark Hopkins
Matt Jones
Keith Oelke

CLASS OF 2024

Shannon Brooks
Phyllis Crowell
Kemp Gaskill
Denise Horton
Paul Lee
Sharon Logan Neff
Bruce Middendorf
Randy Riner
Chuck Toney

CLASS OF 2025

Lindsay Griffeth
Angela Hunt
Dan Nadenicek
Karen Phillips
Ethelyn Simpson
Jeffrey Trapnell
Pat Tritt
John Turner
Pat Waldrup

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Leigh Bonner, *Interim Associate Pastor* (lbonner@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Kim Ness, *Director of Youth Ministries* (kness@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Natalie Bishop, *Director of Children's Ministries* (natalie@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Lucy Bell Johnson, *Office Administrator* (lbell@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Director of Communications* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Jennifer Sunderlin, *Receptionist/Accounting Assistant* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Marcy Fabris, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
Mrs. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotteposs@gmail.com)
Mrs. Madeline Van Dyck, *Parish Nurse*
Mr. Wayne Brock, *Sexton*