



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

The Service for the Lord's Day

September 17, 2023
11:00 am Worship Service
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost



"Hopscotch" by an unknown artist in South Carolina

The scene depicts the innocence of childhood where kids decide for themselves what they will do and who can participate and what kind of rules they will follow.

This piece is part of Margaret Whitt's collection: "Well, You Have To Have It," currently displayed in the FPCA Gallery.

Prayer of Preparation:

"God's love is love that empowers us to become different people, 'new' people who realize our own true humanity as we learn to live in a right relationship with God and with our fellow human beings."
—Shirley Guthrie, Christian Doctrine

We believe God loves everyone without exception. All are welcome here.

Our mission is to experience the love of Jesus Christ by practicing radical hospitality, forming deep relationships, and joining in shared ministry.

WELCOME TO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASHEVILLE

We hope that you experience the boundary-breaking love of Jesus Christ in our worship service and ministries.

If you are interested in learning more about FPCA, please scan here for the “I’m New” page on our website. Children are welcome in services and you can find worship bags for them in the narthex. Nursery care is also available as needed.



Please speak with an usher if you would like a large print bulletin.

 Today's guest preacher is Rev. Merriam (Merri) Alexander, a retired minister, who specializes in transitional ministry, serving congregations in North Carolina and Tennessee as they journey through changes in pastoral leadership. Merri is an active participant at FPCA and usually attends the 11:00 am worship service.

*The Chancel flowers are given to the glory of God and
in honor of Pat Williams by Jansen McCreary.*

Leading in Worship Today:

Pastors: Merri Alexander, David Germer, Shannon Jordan

Liturgist: Beverly Williamson

Organist: John Crawley

Choir: FPCA Chancel Choir

GATHERING IN

VOLUNTARY

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

David Germer

*CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, bless the Lord,

bless God's holy name.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,

so great is God's steadfast love for us.

**Please stand if able*

*HYMN 307

God of Grace and God of Glory

CWM RHONDDA

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Shannon Jordan

Loving God,
We confess that we have failed to live in harmony
with our sisters and brothers.
We have been self-righteous in our attitudes,
close-minded in our beliefs,
and judgmental in our opinions.
We have shunned those whose ways we
do not understand,
and we have despised those who do not
endorse our convictions.
Forgive our sins of discord and conceit,
and heal our divisiveness and quarreling.
Help us to be charitable in our regard for others
that we may dwell in peace with Christ,
who is Lord of all.

(Silent prayer of confession)

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

**Siblings In Christ, declare with me the good news of the gospel:
In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

RESPONSE TO FORGIVENESS

*HYMN 582 Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

GLORY TO GOD

Our Lord Jesus said:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

This is the greatest and first commandment.

And the second is like it:

you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

*PASSING OF THE PFACE

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

HEARING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Beverly Williamson

SCRIPTURE READINGS

SERMON Kindness Merri Alexander

*HYMN 300 We Are One in the Spirit THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

RESPONDING IN FAITH

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**The Church is the body of Christ.
Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary
to be his body.**

The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.

The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God's transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.

*From the Book of Order of
the PC(USA)*

MOMENT FOR MISSION

Bo Branden

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & 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.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Every generous act of giving,
is itself a gift from God above.

To give online, use the QR code. The gifts we offer express our stewardship of creation, demonstrate our care for one another, support the ministries of the church, and provide for the needs of the poor.



OFFERING

ANTHEM

Love One Another

John Bell

*Love one another for love is of God.
Those who live in love live in God,
and God lives in them.*

*Those who show love are the children of God;
Father and mother is God to each of them.*

*God showed love in the face of the Son;
Christ lives in us so that we might live through him.*

*Love has no place for the menace of fear;
Fear is abandoned where perfect love is found.*

*Love has its purpose in God's holy will;
We learn to love from the one who loved us first.*

*DOXOLOGY

*HYMN 608

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

PRAISE GOD

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below; praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Tri-une God, whom we adore.

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Almighty God,
You have given us everything that we need
to worship You,
to live in love as Your people,
to work for justice and peace, in community.
Strengthen us as we go out,
striving to imitate Jesus,
confident that Your Spirit is with us.

SENDING

*HYMN 306

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

DENNIS

*BLESSING

VOLUNTARY

Go now in peace to love and serve the Lord.
The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

We invite you to remain seated for the voluntary as we prepare to be sent from worship.

After the service today, you are invited to join us for fellowship
on the front lawn, weather permitting. Otherwise we will be in the
Wallace Foyer on the ground floor.

We are glad you worshiped here today.

We believe God loves every person without exception. As followers of Christ, we strive to be a holy community that reflects the diversity of God's creation through the welcome and full participation of every age, ability, socioeconomic status, family background, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, skin color, and racial identity. We lament the history of exclusion in the church. We rejoice in the wholeness that comes when we are all in relationship together. We invite you to join us in ministry at FPCA.

COMMUNITY JOYS & CONCERNS

Please join the FPCA Family as we celebrate joys among us and pray for loved ones. If you have a prayer request, please call the church office at 828-253-1431 or email life@fpcasheville.org. If it's an emergency, call the church office, and if after hours, choose option 5 to reach the pastor on call.

Prayers for:

Violet Basil, granddaughter of **Sam Cook and Anita Rose**, as she recovers from surgery.

Emily and Jonathan Gaddis; Emily is the daughter-in-law of **Susan Gaddis**. They are waiting for news about a lung transplant that is needed as a result of leukemia.

Athena Gossett, as she grieves the death of her grandmother.

Janet Graham, who moved to Atlanta to be closer to her daughter.

Lucy Hazlehurst and her family, as they grieve the death of her father.

Beth Himes, who is recovering at home from minor injuries due to a car accident.

Doug Huntley, who is hospitalized with an infection.

Michael, son-in-law of **Micki and Jerry Argall**, who has brain cancer. Prayers for strength for the family and wisdom for the doctors.

Rev. Beth Duttera Newman, who is currently in Atlanta receiving chemo in preparation for an eventual stem cell transplant.

Fran Ogasawara, who is recovering from a recent hospitalization.

Karen Punta, as she experiences long-term effects from a reaction to medication.

Margaret Whitt, a member of our Women's Studies, who is recovering from knee surgery.

Nishan Wijesinghe, as he recovers from a bicycle accident.

Pat Williams, friend of **Jansen McCreary**, who is receiving hospice care for an aggressive form of cancer.

Those who are living with dementia and their loved ones and caregivers.

We Celebrate:

With **Mark and Deaune Reeves**, the marriage of their daughter **Abigail**, to **Matt Garofalo** in a ceremony on September 2.

With **Robert and Margaret Black**, the marriage of their son **Bobby**, to **Mary Helen Porter** in a ceremony on September 9.

That **Rieley Bennett** is back at work and recovering from knee surgery!

Stewardship Celebration! This week's stewardship celebration comes from youth elders Reese Carlton and Conrad Traylor. Stewardship has played a big role in youth group! The congregation's gifts support youth dinners and help us learn about our faith! Thanks be to God!

 Below are some of our upcoming church events. For a full list, scan to see our most recent *Thursday News*.

For information on our Staff and Leadership, please scan here: 

Sunday, September 17, 2023

Rev. Merri Alexander will be preaching at 8:45 am and 11:00 am.
Text Talk, Faith & Fellowship, and Godly Play faith formation classes will take place at 9:45 am.
The Percolating Presbies youth group will meet in Room 209/210 at 9:50 am.
Parents of children will be meeting in Room 214 at 9:45 am.
New Members will be welcomed in the Library, Room 108, at 9:45 am.
The Choir will warm up in the Choir Room at 10:15 am.
An information meeting for the Guatemala trip will be at 12:15 pm in the Fellowship Hall.
Youth Choir meets at 4:15 pm and Youth Group (with dinner) meets from 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm.
Club 345 will meet at Tropical Gardens on Patton Avenue for mini golf at 4:30 pm.

Monday, September 18, 2023

The Men's Steak Out will be on the Patio from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

The Children's Choirs will meet for dinner and practice from 5:15 pm - 6:45 pm.
The Parent's Koinonia Group will meet from 5:45 pm - 6:45 pm.
The Bell Choir will meet from 5:45 pm to 6:45 pm in the Music Library.
The Chancel Choir will meet from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm.

Thursday, September 21, 2023

There will be a Women's Studies program and pot-luck in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30 pm.

Friday, September 22, 2023

The Still Flo Young Adult's group will have a game night at David Germer's house from 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm.

Sunday, September 24, 2023

Rev. Dr. Ted Wardlaw will be preaching at 8:45 am and 11:00 am.
Text Talk, Faith & Fellowship, and Godly Play faith formation classes will take place at 9:45 am.
The Percolating Presbies youth group will meet in Room 209/210 at 9:50 am.
The Choir will warm up in the Choir Room at 10:15 am.
There will be a Patio Lunch at 12:20 pm in the Fellowship Hall and on the Patio.
The Youth group will be at Montreat for the Presbytery Pathways event from 10:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Partners at 40 Church Street



FPCA Affiliations



More Light Presbyterians