



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 14, 2025
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Fourteenth 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

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

Psalm 118:24

Prelude

The God of Abraham Praise

Richard Proulx

Words of Welcome

Moment for Mission *Matthew 25 Linnentown Conversation*

Song of Gathering

From all that dwell below the skies
let the Creator’s praise arise: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let the Redeemer’s name be sung
through every land, in every tongue.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Hymn 229, stanza 1

Call to Worship

All that we have belongs to God.
Let us return our gifts to God with thanksgiving.
All that we are belongs to God.
We give ourselves to God with joy.

***Hymn 488**

The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

Holy God, you have created us in your image, protected and nourished us, and called us into your work of justice. Yet while we profess these truths, we forget who we are and whose we are. We put our trust in ourselves, in material goods, and in worldly powers instead of trusting you. We prioritize our comfort over our neighbor’s needs. Call us back to you, God. Forgive us our failings, and direct us back onto the path you would have us tread.

***Silent Prayer**

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

***Assurance of Pardon**

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

The God of Abraham Praise, set to a traditional Jewish tune, is an English translation of the Yigdal, a canticle based on a medieval Hebrew statement of faith used in synagogue worship.

**Those who are able please stand.*

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 2, are invited to Children's Church held in the Children's Ministry Suite on the first floor.

Lay Reader:
11:00 a.m.:
Jean Martin-Williams

We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight begins with a quote from 2 Corinthians 5, which is fleshed out by references to the appearance of the risen Christ to Thomas. The rugged shape note tune is named for a stream in Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

*Congregational Response

David Ogden



*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

PUER NOBIS NASCITUR

**Your Word, O Lord, a lamp shall be
to guide our feet, to light our way;
the darkest path unto our prize
by your rich grace is bright as day.**

First Lesson

John 1:29, page 968

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

11:00 Anthem *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* Roland E. Martin

Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace!
Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! Oh, fix me on it, mount of God's unchanging love.
Here I find my greatest treasure, hither by thy help, I've come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.
O, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee:
prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

Second Lesson

Genesis 21:1-3, 22:1-19, page 16

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

Sermon

Tested

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 399 *We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight* DUNLAP'S CREEK

*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.**

**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.**



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.

Offertory *O Lamb of God* Johann Sebastian Bach

***Doxology** Hymn 592
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.

*Prayer of Dedication

SENDING IN THE NAME OF GOD

*Hymn 275 *God of Our Life* SANDON

God of Our Life was written for the fiftieth anniversary of Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. The text was written specifically for this tune.

*Charge and Benediction

***Congregational Response** AR HYD Y NOS

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son's story;
here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

***Postlude** *Processional* Grayston Ives

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

Nurseries for children 4 years old and younger, available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:10 p.m., are located next to the Children's Ministry Suite and are accessible down the stairs in the Atrium and through the glass door.

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.

Children, Pre K – 2nd 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.

Young Adult Brunch

This month's outing will be today, September 14 following the 11:00 worship service. We'll meet up in the Atrium after worship and walk to Taco Mama. Please e-mail Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard (whitney@firstpresathens.org) if you plan to join – all are welcome!

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*

The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate*

Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

Lay Reader:

11:00 a.m. Jean Martin-Williams

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Carl Bergman

11:00 a.m. Jimbo LaBoon(head),
Stephen Covington, Jeffrey Trapnell

GREETERS

8:45 a.m. Melinda Miller

11:00 a.m. Denise LaBoon

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Justin Winstanley

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

FLOWERS

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God.

SEPTEMBER FLOWER TEAM

Betsy Bushnell (chair), Eve Morris, Lois

Neighbors, Beverly Phares, Lucy Bell Johnson

TO AID IN WORSHIP

If you need to leave the sanctuary during the service, a live video feed is available in the Atrium, 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.

Stephen Ministry Program

Tuesday, September 16, 6:00 p.m., Moses Waddel Room

Join us on September 16 at 6:00 p.m. as we host Dr. Dipal Patel and Laura Horne Lowery of Piedmont Athens Regional. Dr. Patel will provide vital information regarding the Tumlin Addiction Medicine Program at Piedmont's Clay Community Care Clinic and address general questions related to drug addiction. She will be joined by Ms. Laura Lowery, Manager of Major Gifts Programs at Piedmont Athens Regional Foundation. Ms. Lowery will supplement the presentation with information regarding additional programs offered through Piedmont Athens Regional that are funded through donor gifts.

This session is open to the congregation and will be held in Moses Waddel Room. Please RSVP by emailing Becky Hartman at hartmanbecky494@gmail.com.

Habitat For Humanity Building Day

September 20, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

We need 10 volunteers to work side-by-side with future homeowners on a new Habitat home build in Athens on **Saturday, September 20**. Volunteers must be 16 years or older. Lunch is included! E-mail Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard (whitney@firstpresathens.org) to sign up.

Red Cross Blood Drive

September 21, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall and help save a life! Reserve an appointment online at redcrossblood.org (sponsor code AFPC), or contact the church office (call 706-543-4338 or e-mail frontdesk@firstpresathens.org). If you cannot give blood but would like to help check-in donors, please contact Joe Neighbors to volunteer (jbneighb@bellsouth.net).

THIS WEEK

Sunday, September 14

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 12:15 p.m. Young Adult Brunch, meet in Atrium
- 4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:45 p.m. Youth Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

Tuesday, September 16

- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Campus Kitchen, Main Kitchen
- 6:00 p.m. Stephen Minister Program, Moses Waddel Room

Wednesday, September 17

- 4:30 p.m. Shakespeare and Friends Class, Staff Conference Room
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, September 18

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

Saturday, September 20

- 8:15 a.m. Youth Ziplining, meet in church parking lot
- 9:00 a.m. Athens Area Habitat for Humanity Building Day

Sunday, September 21

- 8:00 a.m. Red Cross Blood Drive, Fellowship Hall
- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 4:00 p.m. Cherub Choir Rehearsal, Room 203
- 4:00 p.m. St. Andrews Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 4:45 p.m. Youth Choir Rehearsal, Room 202
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

A Conversation with Hattie Thomas Whitehead September 21, 12:30 p.m.

On September 21, the Matthew 25 Commission is sponsoring “A Conversation with Hattie Thomas Whitehead,” the author of *Giving Voice to Linnentown*. Her book is the source of information for “Linnentown: The Musical” the second production of which takes place on September 12, 13, and 14 at the Classic Center.

Ms. Whitehead will begin with a presentation and then open the floor to questions and comments beginning after our 11:00 a.m. worship service in Moses Waddel Room. Participants are encouraged to bring a brown bag lunch. Beverages and dessert will be provided.

Diapers Donations Needed - Athens Area Diaper Bank Diaper Drive

For the month of September, FPC Youth will be collecting donations for the Athens Area Diaper Bank (AADB). Any size of diapers or pull ups and open packs are accepted! Donations can be dropped off in designated boxes in the Atrium or the church office **through September 28**. Diaper drives bring in a significant number of the diapers that AADB is able to distribute to families in need. Thank you in advance for your support of the Athens Area Diaper Bank! Contact Hannah Knight (hannah@firstpresathens.org) with any questions.

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

SUNDAYS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Director of Children and Youth Ministries: Hannah Knight
Interns: Morgan Cassidy, Devon Smith
Nursery Coordinator: Rita Raines

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, Busy Bags, and books are available at the children's tables located in the Narthex and on both sides of the choir loft.

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.

Children's Church, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Children, Pre-K – 2nd Grade are invited to Children's Church after the passing of The Peace. We will continue worshipping together in the Children's Ministry Suite by listening to God's Word, praying to God, and responding through art and worship.

**No Children's Church on the first Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday. All children are invited to remain in the sanctuary on this special Sunday to take part in worship and Communion with family.*

For any questions, please contact Hannah at
hannah@firstpresathens.org

Children and Youth Ministries – Sunday School **Godly Play (4 years–2nd grade)** **Explorers (3rd–5th grade)** **Youth (6th–12th grade)**

Children's Sunday School meets in the Children's Ministry Suite each Sunday starting at 9:45am. Our younger kiddos will be participating in **Godly Play**—an interactive, hands-on, reflective method of learning about God by modeling Bible stories and responding. Our **Explorers Class** is for our 3rd–5th graders and is new this year! This group will spend time learning more about Bible basics and hear the stories of God's people, following the Narrative Lectionary text.

Youth Sunday School meets in the PIT and kicks off each Sunday with donuts & fellowship at 9:45am! We use the Living the Word curriculum from Spirit & Truth Publishing—it directly follows the Narrative Lectionary Text each week. There is time for games, intentional discussion, and hearing the sacred stories of old!

Youth Group (5:30–7:00 p.m.)

Sunday night youth group is a safe space for youth to come as they are! We will split into middle and high school groups, eat a yummy meal, and finish the evening as a large group. There will be games, Bible study, creative response time, and lots of laughs as we spend intentional time together. The theme for this year is “Back to Basics”—we will spend time learning more about key Biblical figures, hearing the stories of old, and diving deeper into prayer. As Jesus reminds us—He is the vine and we are the branches (John 15)! There is value in abiding in the One who knows and loves us fully. Come join us— all are welcome!

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45–10:40 a.m.

IN PERSON

Bible Basics • Moses Waddel Room – *begin September 7*

Bible Basics is an intergenerational class that, as the name suggests, focuses on the Bible. This fall, the class is studying the gospel of Luke. If you interested in grappling with questions about this ancient text, please join us in Moses Waddel Room.

Contacts: David Dantzler (jdaviddantzler@gmail.com) and Elaine Johnson (elaine@firstpresathens.org)

Builders • Room 301

This class is a space for anyone navigating the complexities of family life, relationships with children and youth, or careers. Our time together will offer a blend of fellowship, mutual support, Bible study, and service.
Contacts: Dr. Ryan Baer (ryan@firstpresathens.org) or Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard (whitney@firstpresathens.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. We'll begin this year

with “Good & Evil.” This eight-lesson study guide explores challenges to our faith journey and suggests O.T and N.T. passages to help us deal with them.

Coordinator: Jerry Rogers (jrogerswtw@aol.com)

Zoom ID: 380 330 5940, PW: 245449

New Voices • Room 310 – *begin September 7*

The New Voices class is a discussion based class. Our goal is to create joy through art, food, music, prayer, scripture, class led discussion, community and inclusion. We're starting with Karen Armstrong's book, “St. Paul, The Misunderstood Apostle.” Themes for this study: The reality of sin, The love of God, Effective grace, Salvation, Prayers in real life.

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

Zoom ID: 674 533 8902

Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class

Bride's Room, Tinsley Stern

The class features open and honest discussion in a nonjudgmental atmosphere about various aspects of Christianity. This year, the class will have a study and discussion of the course *Jesus and His Jewish Influences*, by Dr. Jodi Magness, professor at UNC Chapel Hill.

Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com)

Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI 6.6.8.4 D

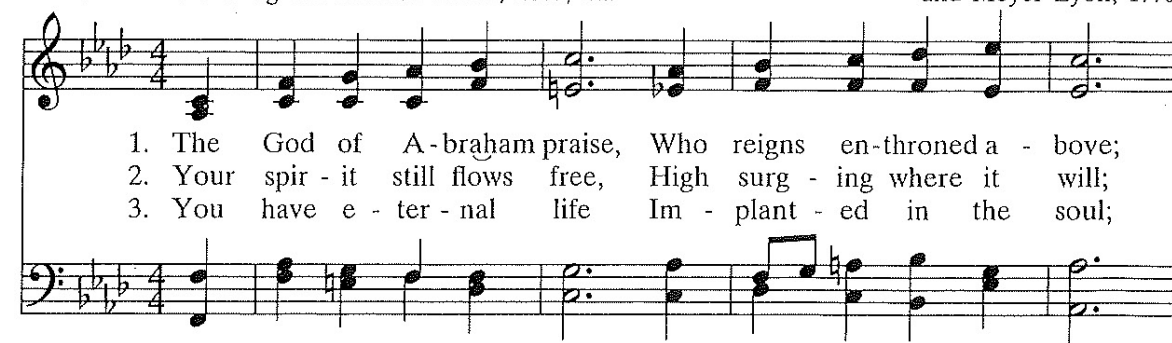
Daniel ben Judah, 1404

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

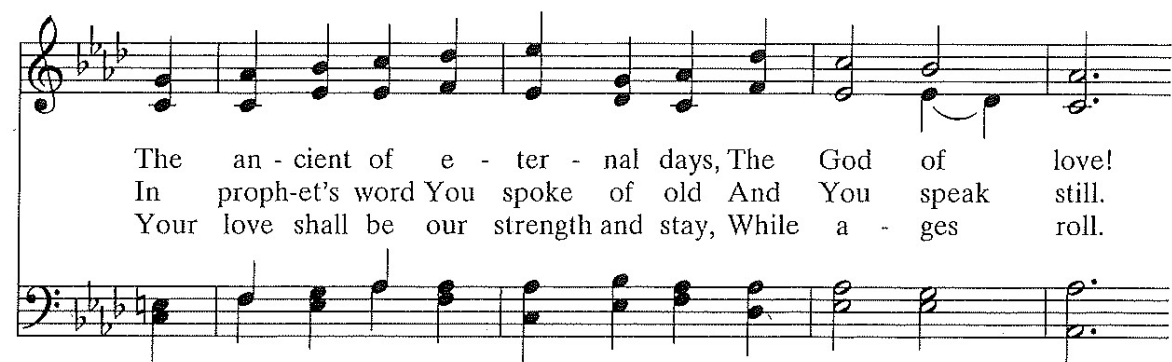
Hebrew melody

Adapt. Thomas Olivers

and Meyer Lyon, 1770



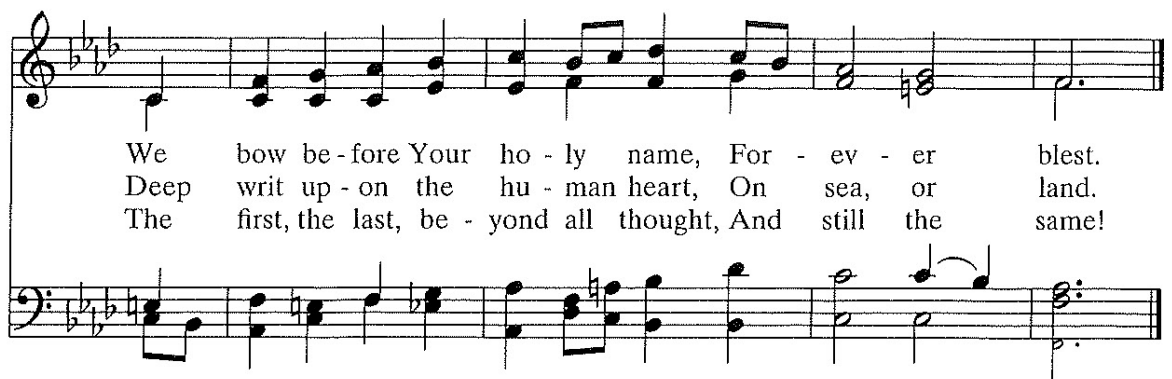
1. The God of A-braham praise, Who reigns en-throned a - bove;
 2. Your spir - it still flows free, High surg - ing where it will;
 3. You have e - ter - nal life Im - plant - ed in the soul;



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!

We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight

DUNLAP'S CREEK CM

Henry Alford, 1844; alt.

Samuel McFarland, c. 1816
Harm. Richard Proulx, 1986

1. We walk by faith and not by sight; No
 2. We may not touch His hands and side, Nor
 3. Help then, O Lord, our un - be - lief; And
 4. That, when our life of faith is done, In

gra - cious words we hear From Christ, who spoke as
 fol - low where He trod; But in His prom - ise
 may our faith a - bound To call on You when
 realms of clear - er light We may be - hold You

none e'er spoke; But we be - lieve Him near.
 we re - joice, And cry, "My Lord and God!"
 You are near And seek where You are found:
 as You are, With full and end - less sight.

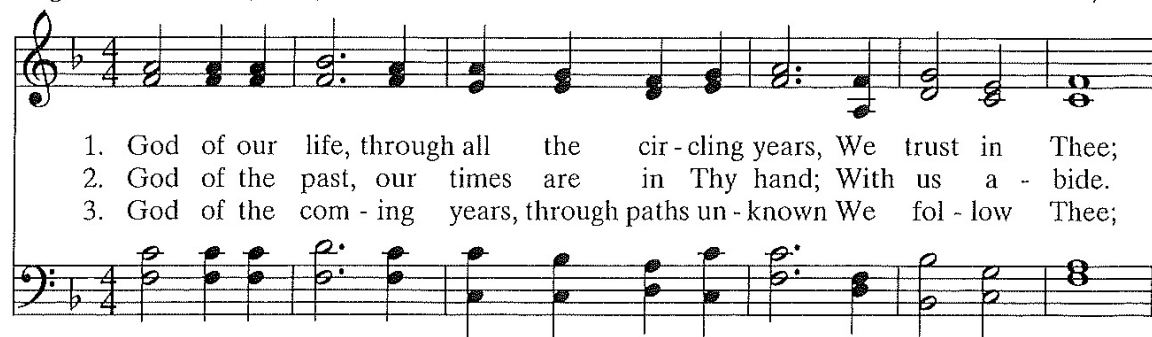
God of Our Life

275

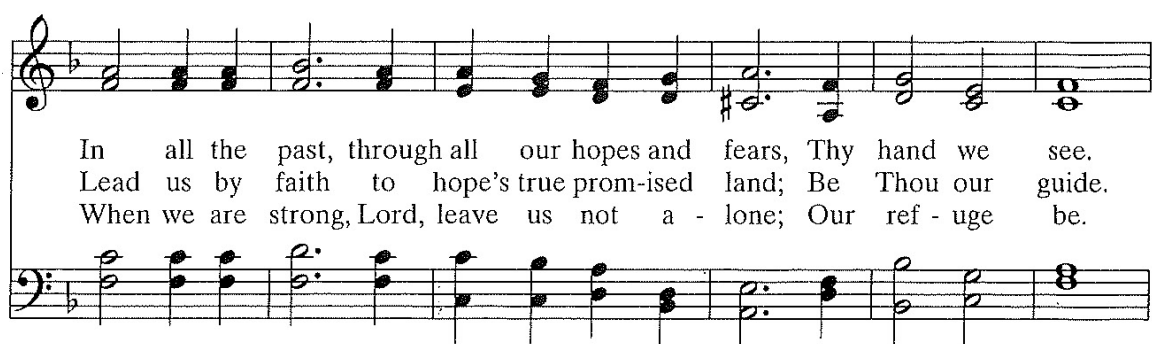
SANDON 10.4.10.4.10.10

Charles Henry Purday, 1860
Harm. John Weaver, 1986

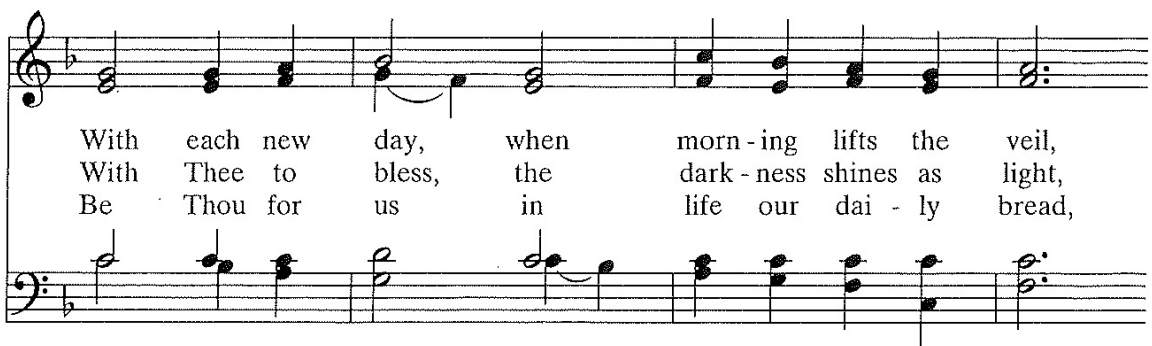
Hugh Thomson Kerr, 1916; alt. 1928



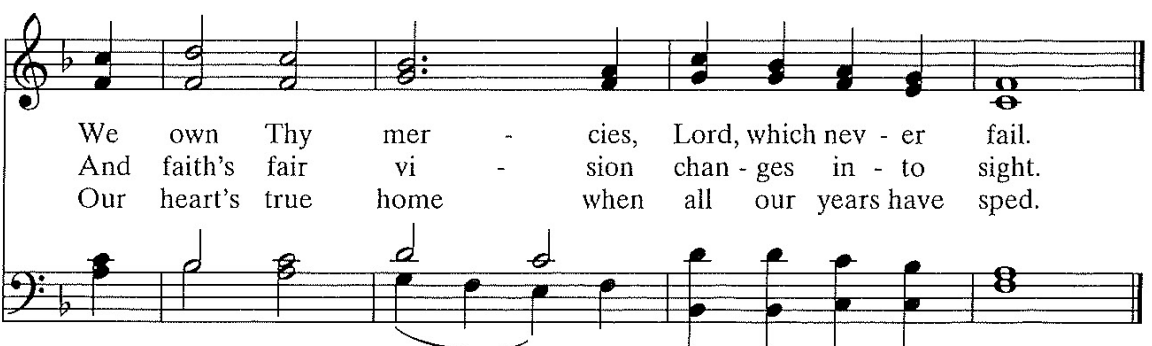
1. God of our life, through all the cir - cling years, We trust in Thee;
2. God of the past, our times are in Thy hand; With us a - bide.
3. God of the com - ing years, through paths un - known We fol - low Thee;



In all the past, through all our hopes and fears, Thy hand we see.
Lead us by faith to hope's true prom-ised land; Be Thou our guide.
When we are strong, Lord, leave us not a - lone; Our ref - uge be.



With each new day, when morn - ing lifts the veil,
With Thee to bless, the dark - ness shines as light,
Be Thou for us in life our dai - ly bread,



We own Thy mer - cies, Lord, which nev - er fail.
And faith's fair vi - sion chan - ges in - to sight.
Our heart's true home when all our years have sped.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

Ryan Baer, Senior Pastor Pat Waldrip, Clerk of Session
Whitney Booth Lockard, Associate Pastor

CLASS OF 2026

Lindsay Griffeth
Dan Nadenicek
Karen Phillips
Ethelyn Simpson
Jeffrey Trapnell
Pat Tritt
John Turner
Pat Waldrip

CLASS OF 2027

Susan Baldwin
Bill Bushnell
Amy Cowser
Matt Crim
Jay Holloway
Tom Lane
Joan Pinson
Paige Simmons

CLASS OF 2028

Steven Brooks
Courtney Dantzer
Shannon Ferguson
Edward W. (Ned) Phares
Holly Sheats
Lawton Stephens
Madeline Van Dyck
John Webster

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor* (ryan@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor* (whitney@firstpresathens.org)
The Rev. Margaret Davis, *Parish Associate* (margaret@firstpresathens.org)
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist* (jcoble@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Hannah Knight, *Director of Children and Youth Ministries* (hannah@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Elaine Johnson, *Director of Weekday School* (elaine@firstpresathens.org)
Mr. Paulo Santos, *Office Administrator* (paulo@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Jennifer Adams, *Church Accountant* (jadams@firstpresathens.org)
Mrs. Joli Winstanley, *Administrative & Communications Assistant* (frontdesk@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Deanna Rollins, *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*
Mr. Justin Winstanley, *Sunday Morning Manager*
Ms. Morgan Cassidy, *Children and Youth Ministries Intern*
Mr. Devon Smith, *Children and Youth Ministries Intern*