



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!

October 26, 2025
Presbyterian College Day
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

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

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Michael Praetorius

Words of Welcome

Song of Gathering

Hymn 483, stanza 1

**Sing praise to God, who reigns above, the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation;
with healing balm my soul is filled,
and every faithless murmur stilled:
to God all praise and glory!**

Call to Worship

Our God does not live in a house built by human hands,
Yet our God is present here with us in this place.
Let us worship God in this holy house,
And carry this worship into the world.

***Hymn 457** *I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art* TOULON

*Call to Confession

***Prayer of Confession** Joan S. Gray (PC class of 1973)

**Saving God, your love is unconditional and unbreakable.
We belong to you, and so we come before you in prayer,
exactly as we are—our real selves—to repent of our sin.
We confess our fearful lack of trust, our unwillingness to yield,
and our selfish disposition. Our days are filled with idols that
compete for our time and attention. We thrash around in
complaint and impatience. Yet we know that nothing can
change your faithfulness to us. Our sin does not erase our
relationship with you. Jesus died on the cross so that sin would
not have the last word between us. In your mercy, save us,
redeem us, heal us, and transform us. Send your Spirit to unbind
us and set us free. Amen.**

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

Joan S. Gray was the first woman ordained by Atlanta Presbytery (PCUS) in 1978. She has served as pastor of many churches in Atlanta, GA, taught at Columbia Theological Seminary, and was elected Moderator of the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2006. She has published books on church leadership, including the one from which this prayer is adapted, *Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice*.

**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.

The anthem is an English translation of a text by Martin Luther, set to music by Felix Mendelssohn.

God, Bless Your Church with Strength was written in 1984 by John A. Dalles for the 150th anniversary of First Presbyterian Church, South Bend, Indiana, where he was associate pastor. He wrote the text for the tune Diademata.

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.

***Silent Prayer**
Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

***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

Congregational Prayer for Illumination WILLIAM PLUMER JACOBS
Eternal light, shine in my heart; eternal hope, lift up my eyes; eternal power, be my support; eternal wisdom, make me wise.

First Lesson Isaiah 43:18-21, page 659
This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

11:00 a.m. Anthem *Lord, in Thy Mercy Grant Us Peace* Felix Mendelssohn
Lord, in thy mercy grant us peace throughout all generations;
thou art alone our sword and shield, Lord who dost guide the nations.
Defend us, O God, we pray thee.

Second Lesson Acts 10:1-17, page 1003
This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon *Unlearning: Always Being Reformed* Dr. Buz Wilcoxon

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn insert** *God, Bless Your Church with Strength!* DIADEMATA

***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.**

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

8:45 Offertory *Lord Jesus Christ, Turn to Us* Johann Sebastian Bach

11:00 Offertory *Be Thou with Me* Johann Franck

*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 260** *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* EIN' FESTE BURG

*Charge and Benediction

***8:45 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.**

***11:00 Choral Response** *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* Peter Lutkin

Postlude *We All Believe in One True God* Johann Sebastian Bach

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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.

Before Isaac Watts Christianized the Psalms, Martin Luther had already done so when he wrote text and tune for *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, which is based on Psalm 46.

Nurseries for children 4 years old and younger, available from 9:30 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.

Food Sunday November 2

You may bring donations of **spaghetti sauce, canned soups, and canned tuna** to church on **Sunday, November 2**. You may also bring items to the church office until **Friday, October 31**. Our neighbors in need are very grateful for your donations! Many thanks for your thoughtfulness and generosity!

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

The Rev. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon, *Lassiter Chaplain & Dean of Spiritual Life, Presbyterian College*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*
Mrs. Kipper Ackerman, *Director of Choral Activities, Presbyterian College*
Presbyterian College Vocal Select

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Diane Hartzell
11:00 a.m. Emily LaBoon (head, PC '22),
Chuck Toney (PC '85), Laura Toney (PC '85)

GREETER

11:00 a.m. Kathy Bangle (PC '87)

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Justin Winstanley

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

FLOWERS

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God
and in memory of Del Dunn by his family.

OCTOBER FLOWER TEAM

Greta Covington (chair),
Judy Burch, Sydney Jackson, Wanda Neislar,
Leslye Queen, Judy Scanlon

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.

Presbyterian Promise

The Presbyterian Promise Scholarship is a commitment by Presbyterian College (PC) to recognize students for their merit and affiliation with the Presbyterian Church. PC seeks to develop students academically and spiritually in this signature scholarship. Students who are of members of Presbyterian churches will receive a scholarship for a minimum of \$24,000 per year for up to four years — that's a \$96,000 commitment to you. For more information, scan the QR code or visit: www.presby.edu/admissions/tuition-aid/presbyterian-promise/



Wed@First + LIFT - November 5 - Olive Garden

Join us for Wednesdays@First where we will participate in our intergenerational LIFT (Living in Faith Together) by breaking bread, studying God's word, playing, and praying — all together as a family of faith on **November, 5 and December 3 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.** All are invited to participate!

Please RSVP for dinner in the Atrium, online, or by contacting the church office (e-mail frontdesk@firstpresathens.org or call 706-543-4338) by Monday, November 3, at 12:00 p.m. Price is \$12/person and a \$45/family max (complimentary for children 5 and under).

THIS WEEK

Sunday, October 26 - PC Day

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, The Rev. Dr. Buz Wilcoxon preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Trick-or-Treating for UNICEF and 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

Monday, October 27

- 10:00 a.m. Lay Caller Meeting Hybrid, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Handbell Choir Room
- 5:30 p.m. Campus Kitchen, Main Kitchen

Tuesday, October 28

- 7:00 a.m. Our Daily Bread Breakfast, First Baptist Church
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Campus Kitchen, Main Kitchen
- 6:00 p.m. Athens Area Homeless Shelter, Moses Waddel Room

Wednesday, October 29

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

Thursday, October 30

- 9:05 a.m. Weekday School Chapel, Children's Ministry Suite
- 2:00 p.m. Mellows, Pruitt Health on Hawthorne
- 4:30 p.m. Matthew 25 Resource Pantry, The PIT

Sunday, November 2 - Daylight Saving Ends, Food Sunday, Communion Sunday, All Saints Sunday

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 12:00 p.m. Atrium Refreshments
- 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

Generosity Sunday, November 16

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it -- the world, and all who live in it. Psalm 24:1

“Stewardship is an act of joyful worship.” This has been the theme of our ongoing conversation about the faithful and financial practice of stewardship in support of our mission at First Presbyterian Church of Athens. Psalm 24 is clear in its declaration that all that we have is indeed a gift from God; the parable of the talents in the 25th chapter of Matthew tells us that we are to use those gifts to advance the kingdom on earth. The worship is in the giving, not the gift. On Generosity Sunday, we will present our estimates of giving as an act of faith and finance. We commit to making monetary gifts and we commit our lives as living gifts to God. Thank you for prayerfully considering this opportunity as an act of worship to support the life and mission of First Presbyterian Church.

Recommendations for Elders

The Nominations and Elections Committee encourages your participation in the process for nominating Elders. Elders should be persons of faith, dedication, and good judgment. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian Gospel, both within the church and in the world at large.

Please e-mail your suggestions to Ethelyn Simpson, Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee, at simpsonen@bellsouth.net. You can also fill out the form in the website (www.firstpresathens.org).

Current Elders:
(Not eligible for recommendation)

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 Cowsert
Matt Crim
Jay Holloway
Tom Lane
Joan Pinson
Paige Simmons

CLASS OF 2028

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

I prayerfully recommend the following for Elder:

Name	Reasons	
Name	Reasons	
Name	Reasons	
Name	Reasons	
Name	Reasons	

Members of the Nominations and Elections Committee are Ethelyn Simpson (Chair), Jay Holloway (Vice-Chair), Jeanne Nadenicek, Leslye Queen, and Patrick Sheridan.

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

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

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

457 I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art

TOULON 10.10.10

Attr. John Calvin

French Psalter, Strassburg, 1545

Trans. Elizabeth Lee Smith, 1868

Adapt. from Genevan 124

Genevan Psalter, 1551

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the Tenor and Bass parts providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in four systems, each corresponding to a line of the hymn. The first system contains four lines of lyrics, the second and third systems contain three lines each, and the fourth system contains one line. The score concludes with a double bar line.

1. I greet Thee, who my sure Re - deem - er art,
2. Thou art the King of mer - cy and of grace,
3. Thou art the life, by which a - lone we live,
4. Thou hast the true and per - fect gen - tle - ness,

My on - ly trust and Sav - ior of my heart,
Reign - ing om - nip - o - tent in ev - ery place:
And all our sub - stance and our strength re - ceive;
No harsh - ness hast Thou and no bit - ter - ness:

Who pain didst un - der - go for my poor sake;
So come, O King, and our whole be - ing sway;
Sus - tain us by Thy faith and by Thy power,
O grant to us the grace we find in Thee,

I pray Thee from our hearts all cares to take.
Shine on us with the light of Thy pure day.
And give us strength in ev - ery try - ing hour.
That we may dwell in per - fect u - ni - ty.

5. Our hope is in no other save in Thee;
Our faith is built upon Thy promise free;
Lord, give us peace, and make us calm and sure,
That in Thy strength we evermore endure.

God, Bless Your Church with Strength!

DIADEMATA

John A. Dallas, 1984

George Job Elvey, 1868

1. God, bless your church with strength! Wher - ev - er we may be, up -
2. God, bless your church with life! May all our branch-es thrive, un -
3. God, bless your church with hope! De - spite cha - ot - ic days, may

build your ser - vants as we work in com - mon min - is - try. Urge
blem - ished, whole - some, bear - ing fruit, a - bun - dant - ly a - live. From
we in cha - os shine to light a path - way through life's maze. May

us from fledg - ling faith to ven - ture and to soar through
you, one ho - ly vine, in free - dom may we grow; sus -
just - tice be our aim, and kind - ness ours to share, in

o - pen skies, to sing the praise of Christ whom we a - dore.
tain us in our mis - sion, Lord, your love and peace to show.
hum - ble - ness O may we walk, as - sured our God is there!

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is primarily in the treble staff, with the piano accompaniment in the bass staff. The lyrics are arranged in three systems, each corresponding to a line of music. The first system includes three numbered verses. The second and third systems provide a single line of lyrics for the entire piece. The score concludes with a double bar line.

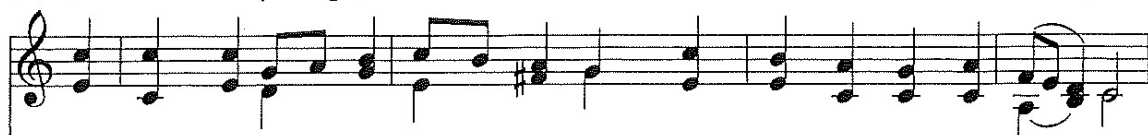
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

EIN' FESTE BURG (isometric) 8.7.8.7.6.6.6.6.7

Martin Luther, 1529

Trans. Frederick Henry Hedge, 1852

Martin Luther, 1529



1. A might - y for - tress is our God, A bul - wark nev - er fail - ing;
 2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, Our striv - ing would be los - ing;
 3. And though this world, with dev - ils filled, Should threat - en to un - do us,
 4. That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, No thanks to them, a - bid - eth;



Our help - er He a - mid the flood Of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.
 Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choos - ing.
 We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to tri - umph through us.
 The Spir - it and the gifts are ours Through Him who with us sid - eth;



For still our an - cient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and
 Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is He, Lord Sab - a -
 The prince of dark - ness grim, We trem - ble not for him; His rage we
 Let goods and kin - dred go, This mor - tal life al - so; The bod - y



power are great, And, armed with cru - el hate, On earth is not his e - qual.
 oth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the bat - tle.
 can en - dure, For lo! his doom is sure, One lit - tle word shall fell him.
 they may kill, God's truth a - bid - eth still, His king - dom is for - ev - er.

