



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!

January 18, 2026
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Second Sunday after Epiphany

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

Air

Gerre Hancock

Words of Welcome

Song of Gathering

Hymn 474, Stanza 1

**O splendor of God's glory bright,
from light eternal bringing light;
thou light of life, light's living spring,
true day, all days illumining.**

Call to Worship

Come into this holy house, built by love.

Our God has built this holy house.

Not a church building made by human hands,

But this community, the Body of Christ.

Come into this place with your siblings in Christ.

We come with joy to worship our God.

***Hymn 417** *Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation* REGENT SQUARE

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

God of grace and mercy, we who have seen the signs of Jesus' presence in the world still fall into doubt and despair. We put our trust in ourselves and in the powers of the world, in material goods and in finite and fallible people. In our fear we act out against our neighbors, and hurt those most in need of our help. Restore our faith, O God. Forgive us for our failings and make us one with our beloved siblings throughout creation.

*Silent Prayer

Lord, have mercy. **Amen.**

**Those who are able please 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).

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation is often used at church dedications, but the first stanza clearly refers to the people of God, and the second to the place where they meet. The tune is named after a prominent Presbyterian Church in London, sometimes referred to as the "Presbyterian cathedral."

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 - 2nd Grade, are invited to Children’s Church held in the Children’s Ministry Suite on the first floor.

Lay Reader:
11:00 a.m. Anne Dantzler

The anthem, by South Carolina composer Robert Powell, was written for Marilyn Keiser on the tenth anniversary at All Souls’ Episcopal Church, Asheville, NC.

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord was written for a pre-existing tune, and the poet crafted the words so well, the two mesh smoothly. The tune is named for a noted British boarding school, whose music director was a friend of the composer.

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.

*Assurance of Pardon

*Congregational Response

Jaques Berthier



*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

Hymn 68, stanza 3

**O Jesus, while the star of grace impels us on to seek your face,
let not our slothful hearts refuse the guidance of your light to use.**

First Lesson

Psalm 127:1-2 , page 561

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

11:00 a.m. Anthem

Behold, the Tabernacle of God

Robert J. Powell

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with you,
and the Spirit of God dwelleth within you;
for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye;
for the love of whom ye do this day celebrate the joys of the temple
with a season of festivity. Alleluia.

Second Lesson

John 2:13-25, page 969

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

Sermon

Attention Getter

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 419

How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

REPTON

*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, (cont.)**

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 Improvisation on Repton John Coble
*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 563 Lift Every Voice and Sing LIFT EVERY VOICE

*Charge and Benediction

*Congregational Response Hymn 68, Stanza 4
To God the Father, God the Son, and Holy Spirit, three in one,
may every tongue and nation raise an endless song of thankful praise.

Postlude Fugue in C Major Felix Mendelssohn

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Lift Every Voice and Sing was written for a school assembly at which Booker T. Washington spoke on Lincoln’s birthday in 1900. It has gained national recognition not only within the African American community, but among all who seek liberation from oppression.

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 Sacrament of Baptism. 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*
Ms. Hannah Knight, *Director of Children and Youth Ministries*
Dr. John Coble, *Director of Music and Organist*

Lay Reader

11:00 a.m. Anne Dantzler

USHERS

8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head),
Michelle Clendenan-Shaw
11:00 a.m. Chuck Toney (head), Laura Toney,
John Turner

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Justin Winstanley

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

FLOWERS

The Sanctuary flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of Wayne Middendorf by the Middendorf family.

JANUARY FLOWER TEAM

Denise LaBoon (chair),
Ethelyn Simpson, Isabelle Wallace

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.

Project Safe Workday
Today, January 18, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Join us to support Project Safe by helping to sort clothes, clean shelves, and tidy up the thrift store. Project Safe works to end domestic violence through crisis intervention, supportive services, advocacy, prevention, and education. For more information, please contact Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard at whitney@firstpresathens.org. The Project Safe thrift store is located at 995 Hawthorne Ave #7, Athens, GA 30606 (in the Bell's Shopping Center).

Be a part of the 2026 MLK Day of Service in Athens!
Monday, January 19

The Athens MLK Day of Service is an annual celebration in support of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and commitment to service. In 1994, Congress made the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday an official day of service. Athens, Georgia is one of the thousands of cities across the United States that decided to make this "A Day On and Not a Day Off."

THIS WEEK

Sunday, January 18

8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
2:00 p.m. Project Safe Work Day, 995 Hawthorne Ave. #7

Monday, January 19 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Church Office and Weekday School Closed

9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Tuesday, January 20

9:30 a.m. Staff Calendar Planning Meeting, Staff Conference Room

Wednesday, January 21

4:30 p.m. Shakespeare and Friends Class, Staff Conference Room or Zoom (ID: 706-543-1820)
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, January 22

9:05 a.m. Weekday School Chapel, Children's Ministry Suite
5:30 p.m. Session Worship, Sanctuary
6:00 p.m. Stated Session Meeting, Moses Waddel Room

Sunday, January 25

8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
12:15 p.m. New Members First Things Class, Staff Conference Room
5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

New Members First Things Class

Join us for our next First Things gathering on **Sunday, January 25** from **12:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** This will be a time to get better acquainted, meet the church staff, and talk about what makes First Presbyterian Church of Athens unique.

On **Sunday, February 1**, new members will meet with the Session (our governing board) at **10:00 a.m.** to be received into membership and will be introduced to the congregation at the 11:00 a.m. service. To RSVP, please call the church office (706-543-4338) or e-mail Paulo Santos at paulo@firstpresathens.org by **Tuesday, January 20.**

Annual Congregational Meeting & Church Potluck Sunday, February 1, 12:15 p.m.

Please join us in Fellowship Hall for our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 1. We will receive the Annual Report and updates from commissions. Before the meeting, we will have a time of fellowship with an all-church potluck. The church will provide Saucehouse BBQ & chicken and beverages – please bring a dish to share (crockpots welcome).

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 Knight
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
(class will resume on January 18)

Bible Basics is an intergenerational class that, as the name suggests, focuses on the Bible. In the Spring semester, the class is studying the book of Acts. If you are interested in studying how the early Christian movement began and laid the foundation for the emergence of the church, please join us at 9:50 a.m. in the 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. Currently we are studying *John's Letters* which focuses on the core values of living a Christian life.
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– come visit our New Voices Art Studio– music, prayer, scripture, class led discussion and community. We're currently reading and discussing Amy-Jill Levine's book, *The Difficult Words of Jesus– A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings*. Our discussions are open minded, respectful, topical and fun.
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 Rev. Will Norman is leading us in a study of the New Testament books.

Contacts: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com)

Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation

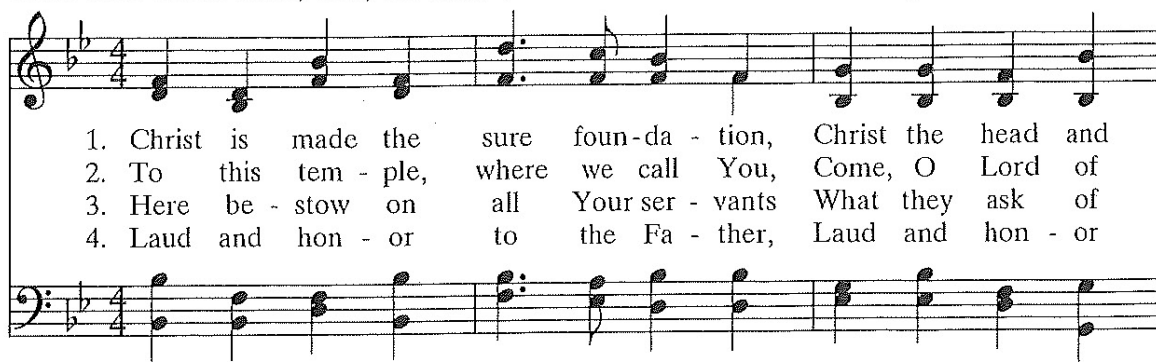
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REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7

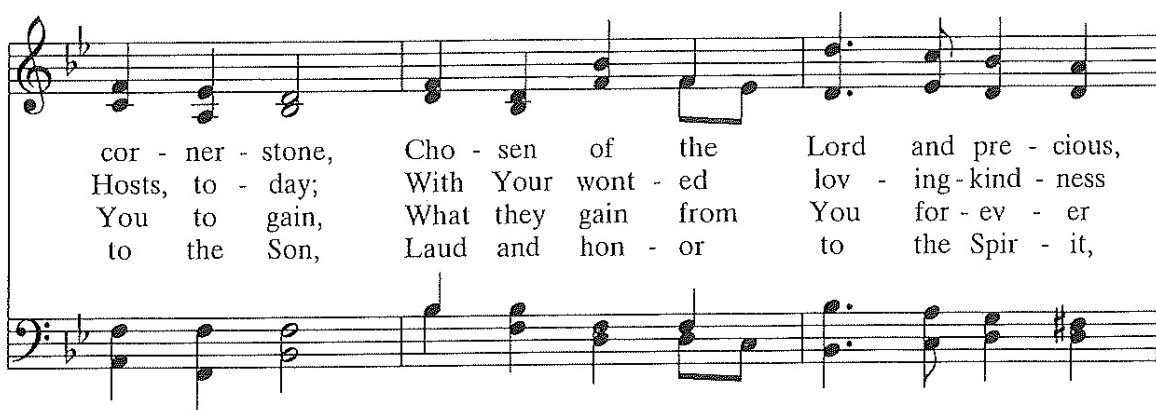
7th century, Latin

Trans. John Mason Neale, 1851; alt. 1861, 1972

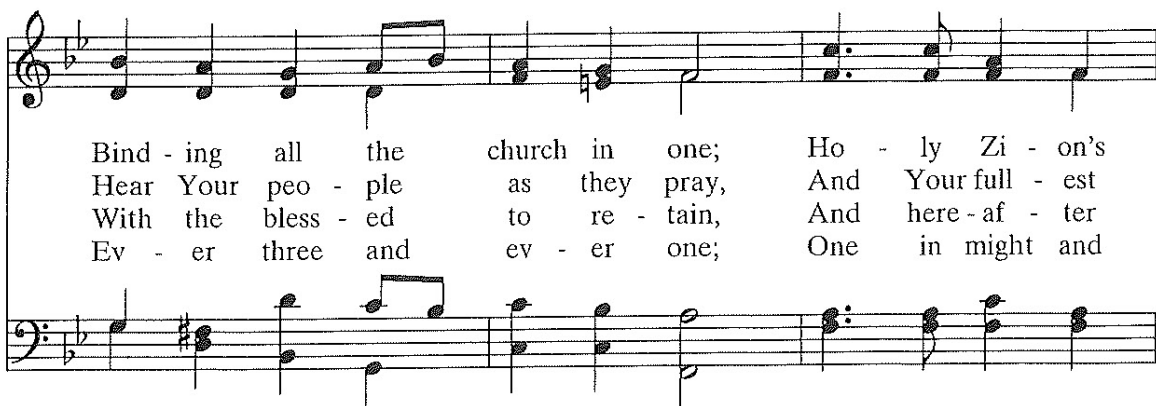
Henry Thomas Smart, 1867



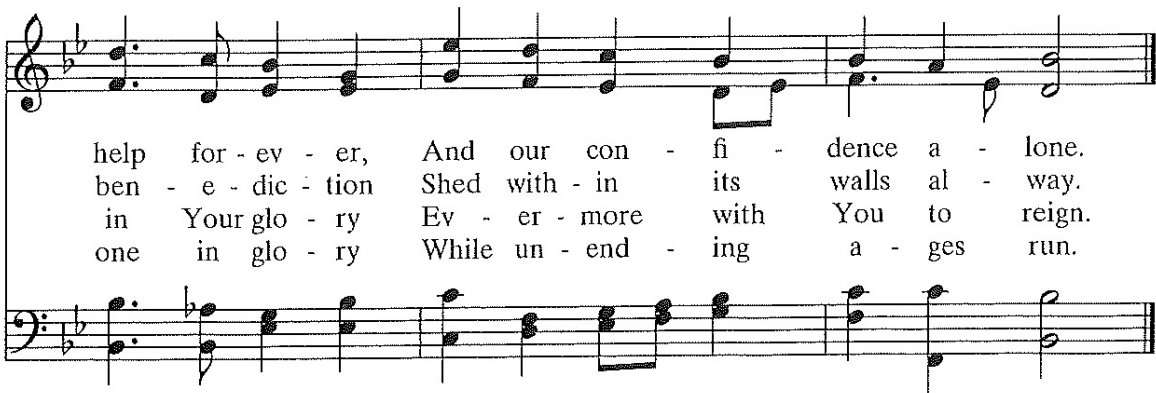
1. Christ is made the sure foun-da - tion, Christ the head and
 2. To this tem - ple, where we call You, Come, O Lord of
 3. Here be - stow on all Your ser - vants What they ask of
 4. Laud and hon - or to the Fa - ther, Laud and hon - or



cor - ner - stone, Cho - sen of the Lord and pre - cious,
 Hosts, to - day; With Your wont - ed lov - ing - kind - ness
 You to gain, What they gain from You for - ev - er
 to the Son, Laud and hon - or to the Spir - it,



Bind - ing all the church in one; Ho - ly Zi - on's
 Hear Your peo - ple as they pray, And Your full - est
 With the bless - ed to re - tain, And here - af - ter
 Ev - er three and ev - er one; One in might and



help for - ev - er, And our con - fi - dence a - lone.
 ben - e - dic - tion Shed with - in its walls al - way.
 in Your glo - ry Ev - er - more with You to reign.
 one in glo - ry While un - end - ing a - ges run.

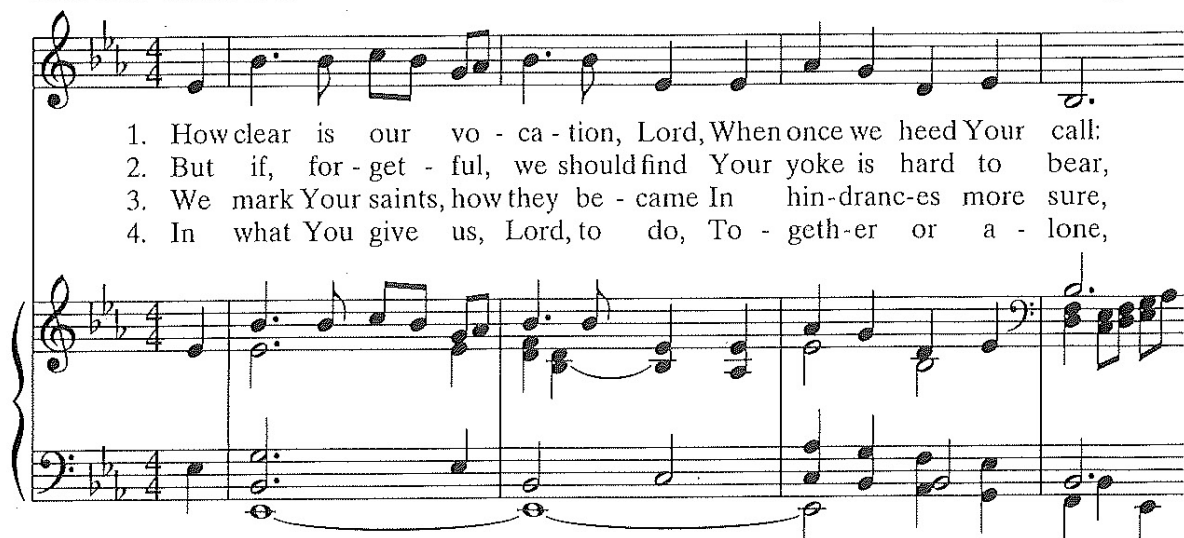
How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord

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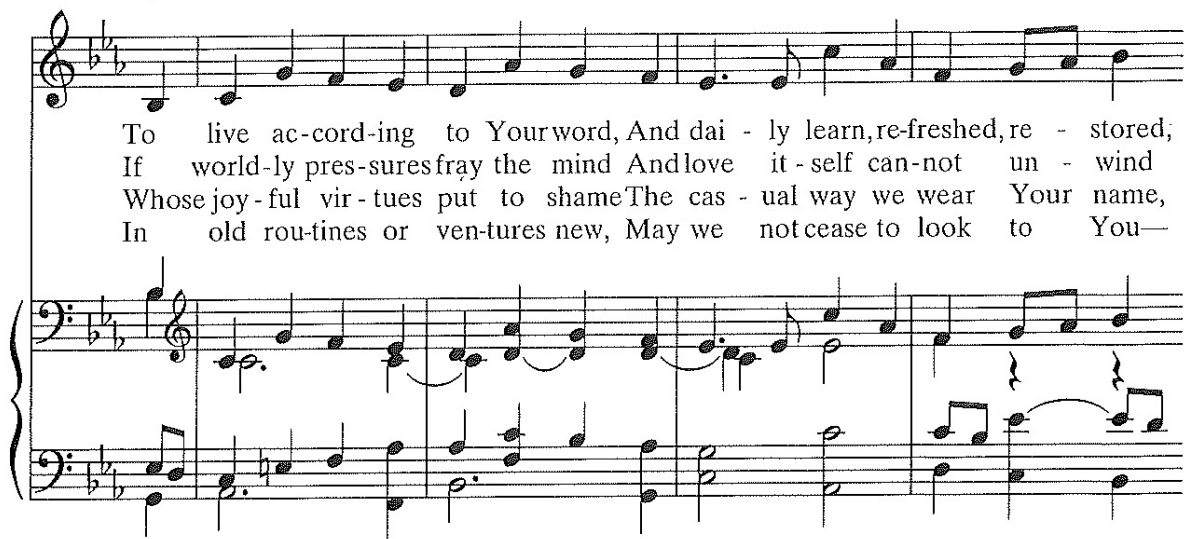
REPTON 8.6.8.8.6.6

Fred Pratt Green, 1981

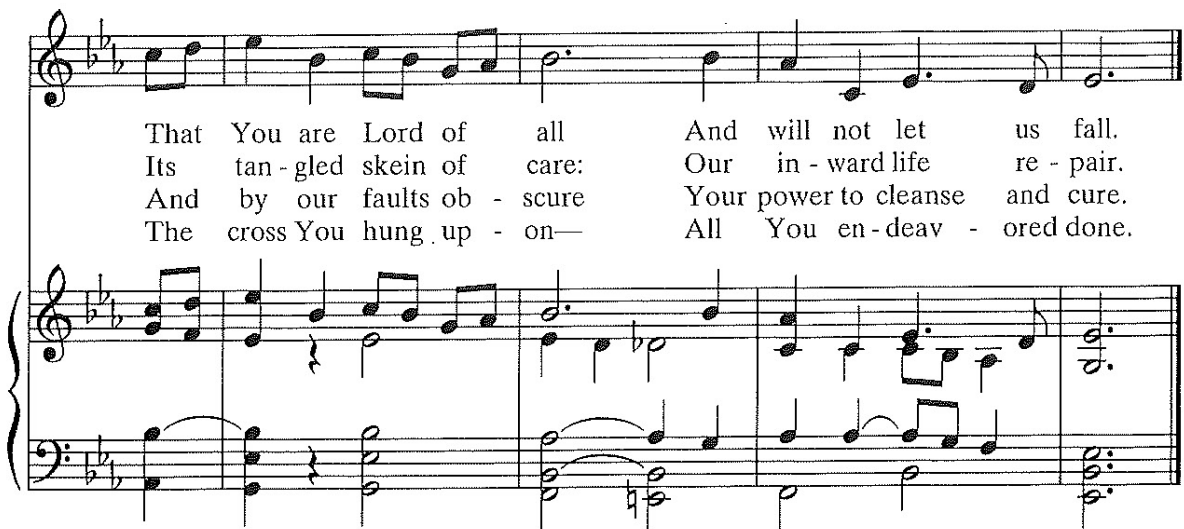
C. Hubert H. Parry, 1888



1. How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord, When once we heed Your call:
 2. But if, for - get - ful, we should find Your yoke is hard to bear,
 3. We mark Your saints, how they be - came In hin - dranc - es more sure,
 4. In what You give us, Lord, to do, To - geth - er or a - lone,



To live ac - cord - ing to Your word, And dai - ly learn, re - freshed, re - stored,
 If world - ly pres - sures fray the mind And love it - self can - not un - wind
 Whose joy - ful vir - tues put to shame The cas - ual way we wear Your name,
 In old rou - tines or ven - tures new, May we not cease to look to You—



That You are Lord of all	And will not let us fall.
Its tan - gled skein of care:	Our in - ward life re - pair.
And by our faults ob - scure	Your power to cleanse and cure.
The cross You hung up - on—	All You en - deav - ored done.

Lift Every Voice and Sing

LIFT EVERY VOICE Irregular

James Weldon Johnson, 1921

J. Rosamond Johnson, 1921

Introduction

1. Lift ev - ery
2. Ston - y the
3. God of our

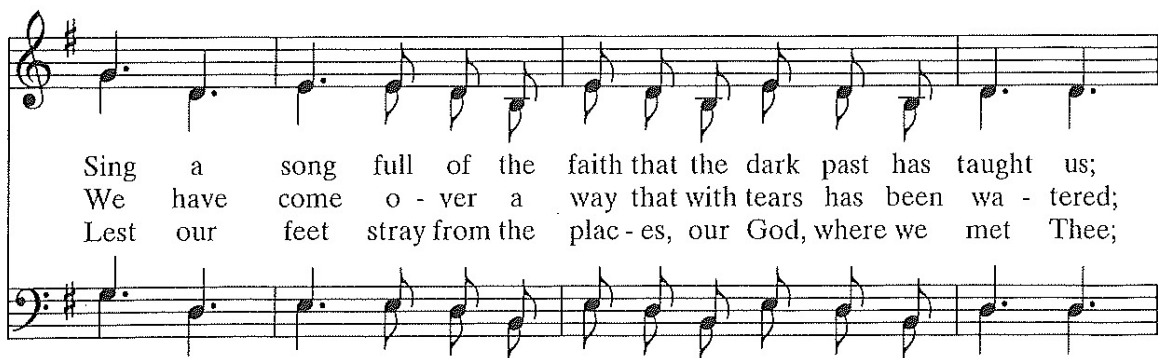
voice and sing till earth and heav - en ring, Ring with the har - mo -
road we trod, bit - ter the chas - tening rod, Felt in the days when
wea - ry years, God of our si - lent tears, Thou who hast brought us

nies of lib - er - ty. Let our re - joic - ing rise high as the
hope un - born had died; Yet, with a stead - y beat, have not our
thus far on the way; Thou who hast by Thy might led us in -

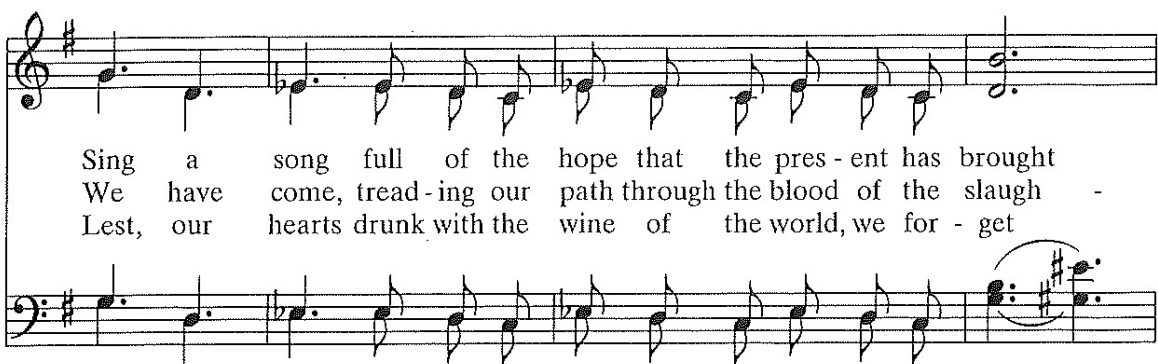
lis - tening skies; Let it re - sound loud as the roll - ing sea.
wea - ry feet Come to the place for which our *fa - thers sighed?
to the light; Keep us for - ev - er in the path, we pray.

*Or "parents."

(continued on next page)



Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
 We have come o - ver a way that with tears has been wa - tered;
 Lest our feet stray from the plac - es, our God, where we met Thee;



Sing a song full of the hope that the pres - ent has brought
 We have come, tread - ing our path through the blood of the slaugh -
 Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we for - get



us; Fac - ing the ris - ing sun of our new day be -
 tered, Out from the gloom - y past, till now we stand at
 Thee; Shad-owed be - neath Thy hand may we for - ev - er



gun, Let us march on, till vic - to - ry is won.
 last Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
 stand, True to our God, true to our na - tive land.

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 Dantzler
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)
Mrs. Deanna Rollins, *Weekday School Administrative Assistant* (wds@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Charlotte Chromiak, *Children's Music Assistant* (charlotte@firstpresathens.org)
Ms. Rita Raines, *Nursery Coordinator*
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*