



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!

March 8, 2026
8:45 and 11:00 a.m.
Third Sunday in Lent

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

Psalms 118:24

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

Prelude

Ah, Holy Jesus

Johannes Brahms

Words of Welcome

Song of Gathering

WINCHESTER NEW

The glory of these forty days
we celebrate with songs of praise;
for Christ, by whom all things were made,
himself has fasted and has prayed.

Call to Worship

We call upon our God.

We know our God hears and answers.

We bring our cares to God.

Our God shows us steadfast love.

*Hymn 477

Ye Servants of God, Ye Master Proclaim

HANOVER

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Most holy God, we come to you in need of grace. Time and again we have forgotten your simple and loving call—to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves. We have forgotten your promise to care for us, and in our fear, we have made choices that hurt us, those around us, and even those we don't know. Remind us who we are and whose we are, and show us the way to amend our wrongs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our savior and friend.

*Silent Prayer

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

Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim resembles many 18th-century drawings that show parallels between worship on earth and in heaven, especially as described in Revelation. The tune name honors British monarchs 1714–1901.

One of our Lenten worship practices is observing silence, and as the season of Lent progresses, our time of silence will grow longer by about 30 seconds each week.

**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 - 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. Paul Lee

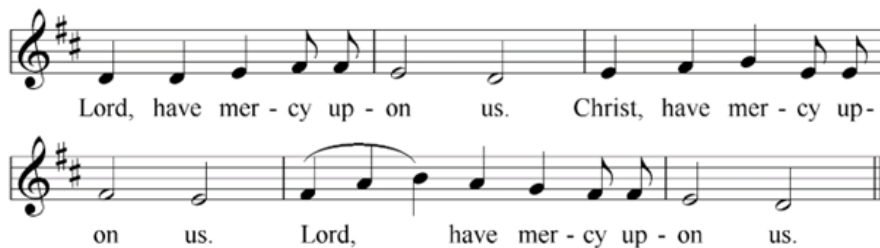
The anthem was originally composed in 1695 for the funeral of Queen Mary. The text, from the Anglican Book of Common Prayer is set to music by the famous English composer, Henry Purcell.

Ah, Holy Jesus is an English paraphrase of a German meditation on Christ's Passion. The English version was written by then future Poet Laureate Robert Seymour Bridges.

Scholars debate whether this powerfully poetic text is an early Christian hymn which Paul is quoting or his own composition. It is one of the best-known and most influential passages in the Pauline corpus.

*Congregational Response

Healy Willan



*Assurance of Pardon

*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.

Giving Thanks for Shared Ministry

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination

TALLIS' CANON

**Eternal light, shine in my heart; eternal hope, lift up my eyes;
eternal power be my support; eternal wisdom, make me wise.**

First Lesson

Psalms 17:1-7, page 486

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

11:00 a.m. Anthem

Thou Knowest, Lord

Henry Purcell

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts;
shut not thy merciful ears unto our prayer;
but spare us, Lord, most holy, O God most mighty,
O holy and most merciful Savior, thou most worthy Judge eternal,
suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee. Amen.

Second Lesson

John 18:12-27, page 988

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

Sermon

Denial

Dr. Ryan Baer

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

*Hymn 93

Ah, Holy Jesus

HERZLIEBSTER JESU

*Affirmation of Faith

Philippians 2:5-11

**Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.**

**And being found in human form, he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.**

**Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name
that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and
under the earth, and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

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, (cont'd)**

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

Ah, Holy Jesus

Helmut Walcha

***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 101**

When I Survey the Wonderous Cross

HAMBURG

***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

Hanover

Charles Callahan

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When I Survey the Wonderous Cross was written in the 18th century as part of Isaac Watts' desire for Christians to be able to write and sing about gospel events, something not allowed at the time. The 19th-century tune was inspired by Gregorian chant.

Nurseries for children 4 years old and younger, available from 8:35 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.

Lenten Lunch Study on Thursdays, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Join us for weekly Lenten Lunches Thursdays from 12:30-1:30 through April 3. We will follow a weekly Lenten devotional booklet called "Tell Me Something Good". This resource invites us into explore stories in which Jesus is bringing good news and challenging us to claim it as such, to ground ourselves in it, and to let it nourish and embolden us for the work to the lives of discipleship to which we are called.

You can find the devotional booklet online on our website. To receive the daily daily devotional emails, please contact the church office (e-mail frontdesk@firstpresathens.org or call 706-543-4338).

NOTES ON THE SERVICE

WORSHIP LEADERS

Dr. Ryan Baer, *Senior Pastor*

The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, *Associate Pastor*

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

Lay Reader

11:00 a.m. Paul Lee

USHERS

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

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

SUNDAY MORNING MANAGER

Justin Winstanley

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICIAN

Bryan Owens

FLOWERS

The flowers are given to the glory of God and in memory of W. Clarence Higginbotham, Jr.'s 94th birthday by Tim and Elaine Johnson.

MARCH FLOWER TEAM

Rosemary Stancil (chair),

Susan Ferguson, Karen Cobb, Elaine 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.

Holy Week Services & Activities

Palm/Passion Sunday, March 29

Everyone is invited to join the palm procession at 10:40 a.m. in the upper parking lot.

Maundy Thursday, April 2, Service at 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary

We will recall the night of Jesus' arrest and celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Good Friday Service, April 3, Covenant Presbyterian Church, 7:00 p.m.

Our siblings from Athens area Presbyterian churches and campus ministry will gather for the annual Good Friday service, hosted this year by Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Easter Eve Egg Hunt and Picnic Lunch, Saturday, April 4, 11:00 a.m., The Hill

All are invited to our Egg Hunt and Picnic Lunch at The Hill (11:00-12:30 p.m.). The church family is asked to bring a side dish or desert to share and your own picnic blanket and/or chairs. Lee Epting will provide a meat and the perfect grass for egg hiding. The church will provide drinks and Easter treats. Please use tinyurl.com/egghuntsides to indicate which side/desert you plan to bring.

Easter, April 5

Easter Sunrise Service, 7:00 a.m., gates will open at 6:30 a.m.

Oconee Hill Cemetery invites everyone to the Wingfield Chapel within the cemetery grounds for an Easter Sunrise Service. Please dress comfortably and consider bringing a flashlight and folding chair.

Easter Worship Services: 8:45 & 11:00 a.m., One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Join us for the celebration of the risen Christ. We will receive an offering for the One Great Hour of Sharing, which will be used to help Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self Development of People through the Presbyterian Church USA.

Biscuit Brunch, 9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Between services, instead of Sunday School, we will all gather as a church family for fellowship.

THIS WEEK

Sunday, March 8 - Daylight Savings Time Begins, Volunteer Recognition Sunday

- 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

Monday, March 9

- 10:00 a.m. Congregational Care Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Handbell Choir Room
- 5:30 p.m. UGA Campus Kitchen, Main Kitchen

Tuesday, March 10

- 7:00 a.m. Our Daily Bread Breakfast, First Baptist Church
- 1:00 p.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. UGA Campus Kitchen, Main Kitchen

Wednesday, March 11

- 9:15 a.m. Circle 7, Presbyterian Village
- 4:30 p.m. Shakespeare and Friends Class, Staff Conference Room or Zoom (ID: 706-543-1820)
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Volunteering at Athens Area Diaper Bank
- 6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, March 12

- 9:05 a.m. Weekday School Chapel, Children's Ministry Suite
- 12:30 p.m. Lenten Study Group, Staff Conference Room

Sunday, March 15

- 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard 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
- 5:00 p.m. Elder Training, Staff Conference Room
- 5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

Life Care Informational Meeting, Tuesday, March 17 6:00 p.m.

Trying to determine the “right care” for an aging loved one...or “proactively planning” for our own future aging needs can be very confusing, time-consuming, and stressful. To help address these concerns, Stephen Ministry is hosting guest speaker Abbie Vogt, Owner and General Manager of *A bridge: Aging Life Care Management*. Ms. Vogt will provide information regarding the broad services offered by her organization to assist families in making these important decisions, as well as, their provision of ongoing care management. Please join us on **Tuesday, March 17, 2026**, at **6:00 p.m.** in the Moses Waddell Room. To confirm your attendance, please contact Lisa Oelke (706.540.4251) or Becky Hartman (706.254.4504)

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 (jrogersutw@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.

Contact: 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.

Contact: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com)

Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

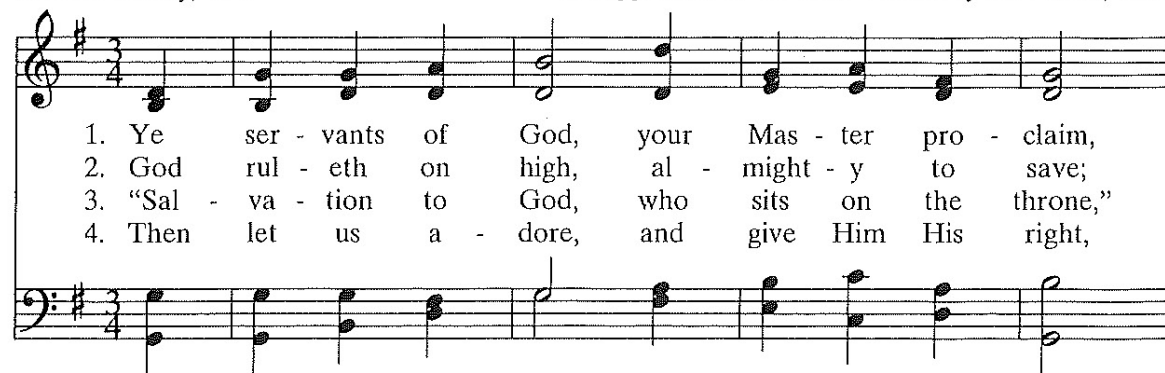
Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim 477

HANOVER 10.10.11.11

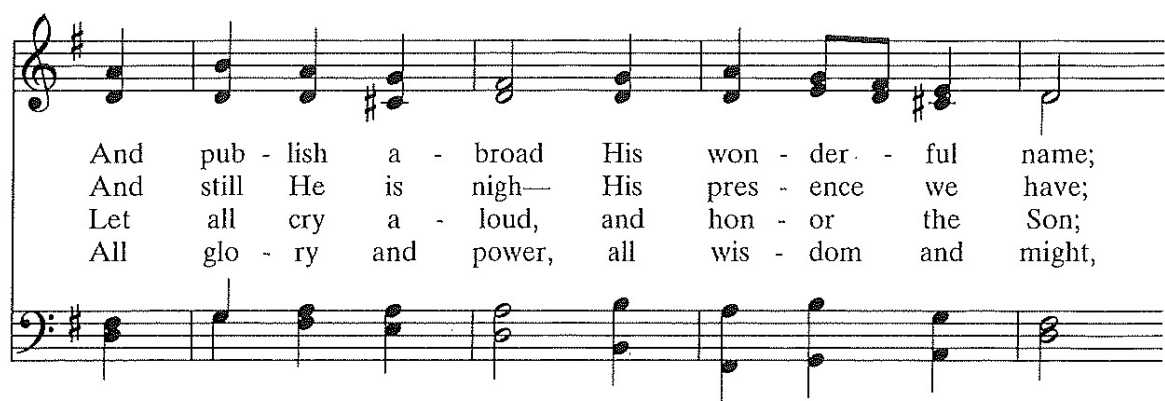
Attr. William Croft, 1708

Charles Wesley, 1744

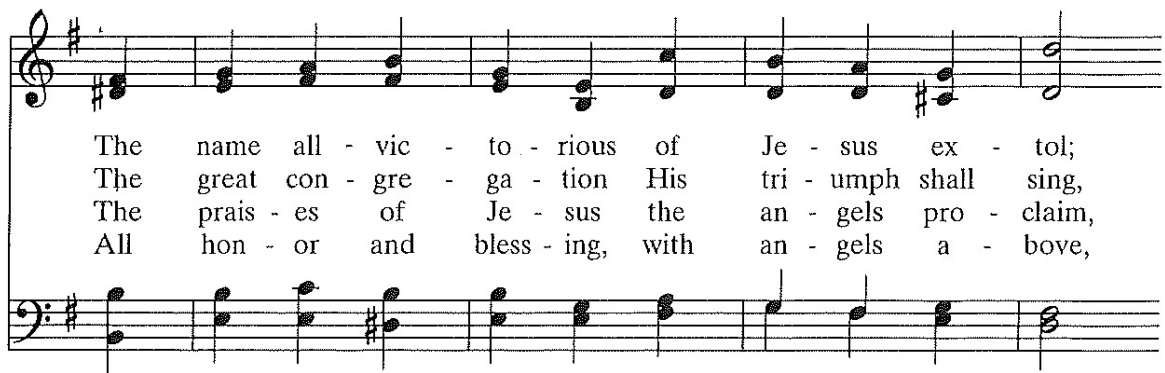
A Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms, 1708



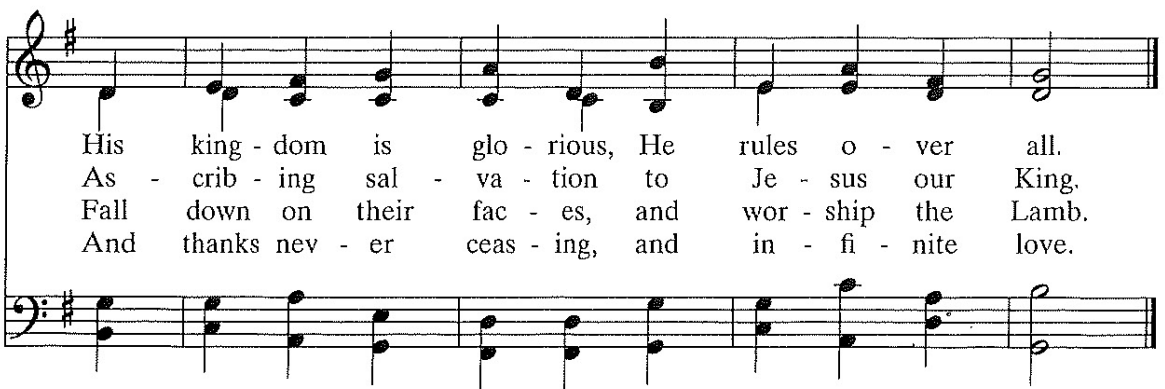
1. Ye ser - vants of God, your Mas - ter pro - claim,
2. God rul - eth on high, al - might - y to save;
3. "Sal - va - tion to God, who sits on the throne,"
4. Then let us a - dore, and give Him His right,



And pub - lish a - broad His won - der - ful name;
And still He is nigh— His pres - ence we have;
Let all cry a - loud, and hon - or the Son;
All glo - ry and power, all wis - dom and might,



The name all - vic - to - rious of Je - sus ex - tol;
The great con - gre - ga - tion His tri - umph shall sing,
The prais - es of Je - sus the an - gels pro - claim,
All hon - or and bless - ing, with an - gels a - bove,



His king - dom is glo - rious, He rules o - ver all.
As - crib - ing sal - va - tion to Je - sus our King.
Fall down on their fac - es, and wor - ship the Lamb.
And thanks nev - er ceas - ing, and in - fi - nite love.

Ah, Holy Jesus

93

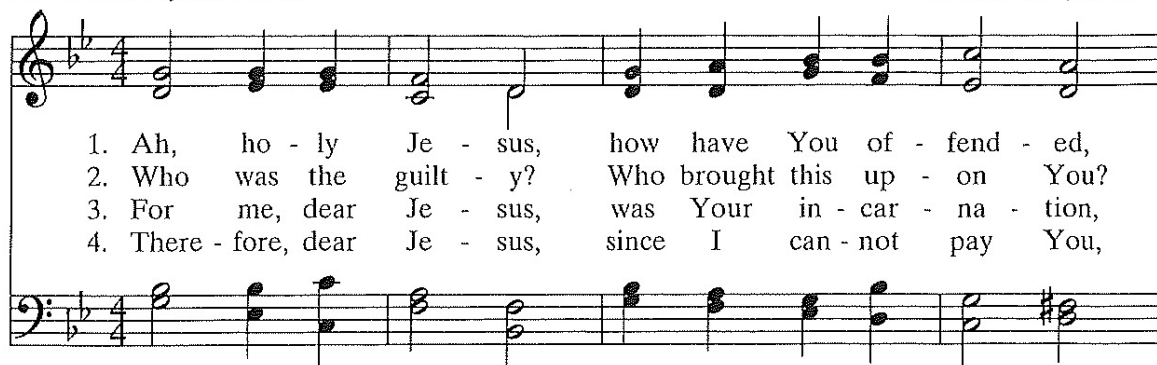
HERZLIEBSTER JESU 11.11.11.5

Johann Heermann, 1630

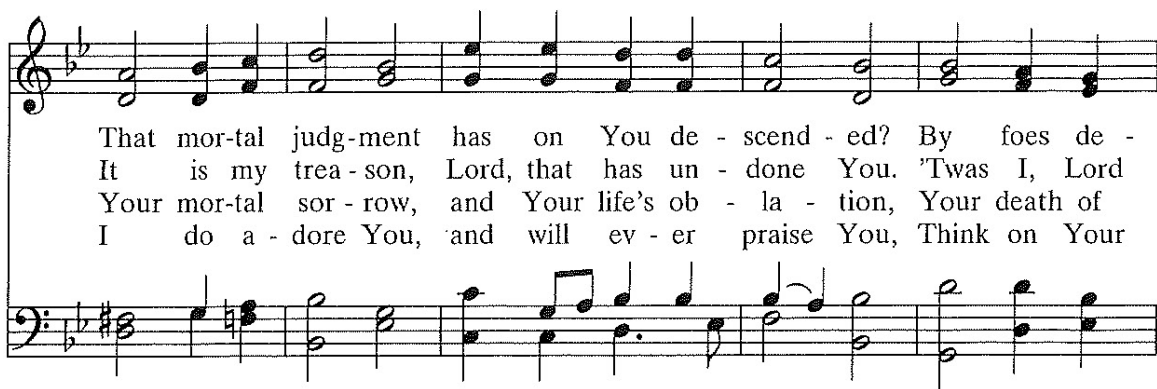
Trans. Robert Bridges, 1899

Alt. *Psalter Hymnal*, 1987

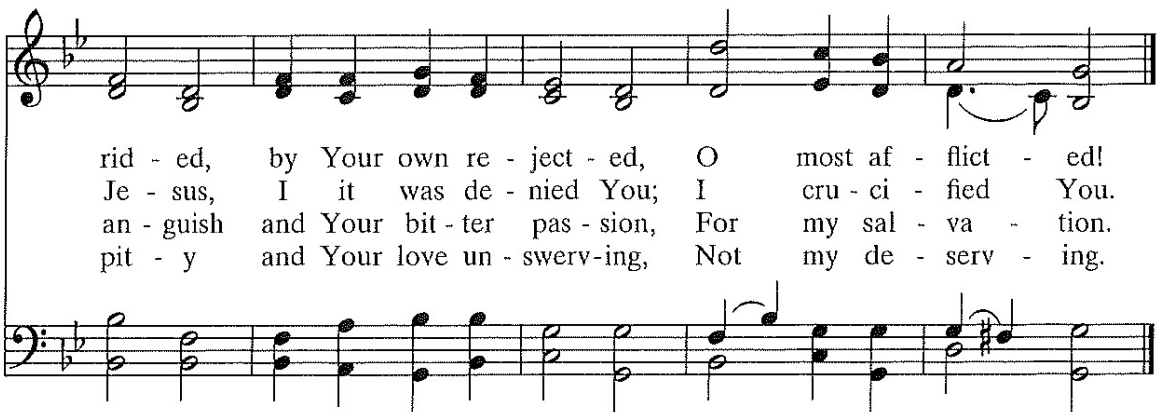
Johann Crüger, 1640



1. Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how have You of - fend - ed,
 2. Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on You?
 3. For me, dear Je - sus, was Your in - car - na - tion,
 4. There - fore, dear Je - sus, since I can - not pay You,



That mor-tal judg-ment has on You de - scend - ed? By foes de -
 It is my trea - son, Lord, that has un - done You. 'Twas I, Lord
 Your mor-tal sor - row, and Your life's ob - la - tion, Your death of
 I do a - dore You, and will ev - er praise You, Think on Your



rid - ed, by Your own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed!
 Je - sus, I it was de - nied You; I cru - ci - fied You.
 an - guish and Your bit - ter pas - sion, For my sal - va - tion.
 pit - y and Your love un - swerv-ing, Not my de - serv - ing.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

101

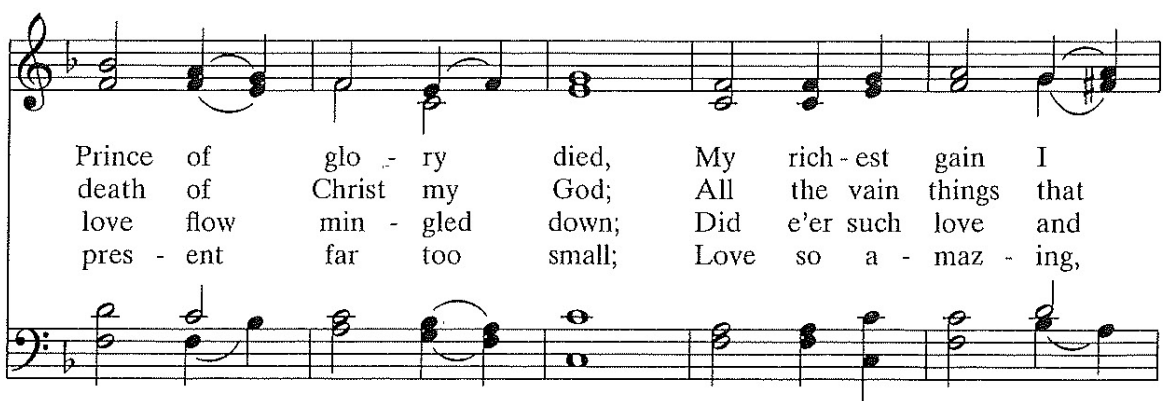
HAMBURG LM

Isaac Watts, 1707

Lowell Mason, 1824



1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross On which the
 2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast, Save in the
 3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sor - row and
 4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine, That were a



Prince of glo - ry died, My rich - est gain I
 death of Christ my God; All the vain things that
 love flow min - gled down; Did e'er such love and
 pres - ent far too small; Love so a - maz - ing,



count but loss, And pour con - tempt on all my pride.
 charm me most, I sac - ri - fice them to His blood.
 sor - row meet, Or thorns com - pose so rich a crown?
 so di - vine, De - mands my soul, my life, my all.

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 Cowsert
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*