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 25, 2026
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.

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

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* Johann Sebastian Bach

Words of Welcome

Song of Gathering Hymn 489, stanza 1
Open now thy gates of beauty, Zion, let me enter there.
Where my soul in joyful duty waits for God who answers prayer;
O how blessed is this place, filled with solace, light, and grace.

Call to Worship
God desires truth in our inward being.
O God, teach us wisdom.
God cleans away our sinfulness.
O God, give us gratitdue and joy.
God forgives us and sets us free.
O God, let us bear your love to the world.

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

Long before Isaac Watts Christianized psalms, Martin Luther did so when he wrote text and tune for *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, which is based on Psalm 46. Luther encouraged metrical versions of psalms, which were a big part of the Reformed tradition in the Presbyterian Church.

***Call to Confession**

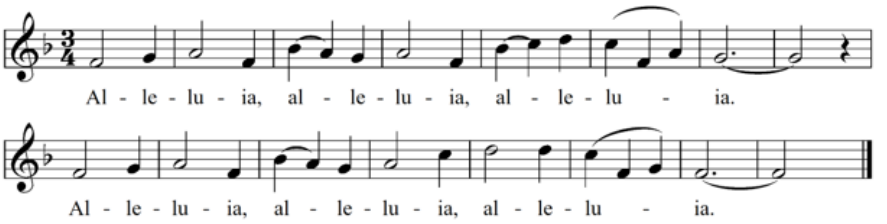
***Prayer of Confession**
We have rebelled against your life-giving reign and raised up worldly kings for ourselves—people, possessions, fame. You have sent us prophets to declare to us the error of our ways and we have despised them, choosing instead to follow false prophets who tell us what we want to hear. We have failed to heed your persistent call to lives of simplicity, love, self-sacrificial service, and commitment to the flourishing of all creation. Forgive us our short-sightedness and self-focus. Draw us back to you, that we might center our lives on our relationship with you, and turn outwards in love for all that you have made.

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

**Those who are able please stand.*

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Congregational Response** David Ogden



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."

***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.

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.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD

Congregational Prayer for Illumination Hymn 327, stanza 1

O Word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light of our dark sky;
we praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed page,
a lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

Lay Reader:
11:00: Patrick Sheridan

First Lesson Psalm 51:1-9, page 509

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

11:00 Anthem *Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God* Carl F. Mueller

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away fro thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Second Lesson 2 Samuel 11:1-11, 14-17, 11:26-12:14, page 281

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

Sermon *Failure and Repentance* Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

***Hymn 261** *God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us*
O QUANTA QUALIA STORY

By ending with questions rather than simple affirmations, *God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us* conveys a strong sense of faith in God's presence and guidance without ignoring and unknown future. Confidence is matched by the sturdy 17th-century French tune.

***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.

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.

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.**

Moment for Generosity Keith Oelke

Presentation of Our Tithes and Offerings

Offertory *God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us* Flor Peeters

***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 298** *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy* IN BABILONE

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

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There's a Wideness in God's Mercy is a portion of a long hymn, a reminder that the model for our dealings with others should be god's generosity rather than limited human tolerance. The text is set to a sturdy Dutch folk melody.-

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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.

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
Patrick Sheridan

USHERS
8:45 a.m. John Simpson (head), Diane Hartzell
11:00 a.m. Keith Oelke, Lisa Oelke, Hailey Crim

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

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.

Food Sunday
November 1

You may bring donations of **canned sweet peas, hamburger helper, and pork 'n beans** to church on **Sunday, November 1**. You may also bring items to the church office until **Friday, October 30**. Our neighbors in need are very grateful for your donations! Many thanks for your thoughtfulness and generosity!

Generosity Sunday, November 15

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.

New Members First Things Class

Join us for our next First Things gathering on **Sunday, November 1** 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, November 15**, 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 Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard at whitney@firstpresathens.org by **Wednesday, October 28.**

THIS WEEK

Sunday, October 25
8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, The Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard preaching
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
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 26
9:00 a.m. Semi-Circle #3, Off Site
10:00 a.m. Lay Caller Meeting, Staff Conference Room
5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, Handbell Choir Room
5:30 p.m. Semi-Circle #2, Off Site

Tuesday, October 27
7:00 a.m. Our Daily Bread Breakfast, First Baptist Church
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting, Staff Conference Room
12:00 p.m. Semi-Circle #1, Off Site

Wednesday, October 28
12:00 p.m. Semi-Circle #4, Off Site
4:30 p.m. Shakespeare and Friends Class, Staff Conference Room
6:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Room 202

Thursday, October 29
9:05 a.m. Weekday School Chapel, Children's Ministry Suite
2:00 p.m. Mellows at Presbyterian Village Assisted Living
4:30 p.m. Matthew 25 Resource Pantry, The PIT
6:00 p.m. Semi-Circle #5, Off Site

Sunday, November 1 - Communion Sunday, Food Sunday, Daylight Saving Ends
8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Services, Dr. Ryan Baer preaching
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
12:15 p.m. First Things New Member Class, Staff Conference Room
4:00 p.m. All Saints' Concert: *Requiem* by Gabriel Fauré, Sanctuary
5:30 p.m. Youth Group, The PIT

All Saints' Concert on November 1, 4:00 p.m.

All are invited to join us in the Sanctuary on All Saints's Sunday at 4:00 p.m. as The First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir will perform Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem*, with guest instrumentalists Rachael Fischer, violin, and Elizabeth Bennett Veal, harp. This event is presented by the Wayne F. Middendorf Memorial Concert Series.

"Footsteps of Paul" Trip

As a result of their study of Acts last Spring, members of the Bible Basics class are exploring the possibility of a group trip to Greece and possibly Ephesus in the Fall of 2027 or Spring of 2028. If you are interested in learning more about how this trip is coming together, please join us for a light lunch and an opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas at **12:15 p.m. on November 8** in Moses Waddel Room. Please RSVP to Elaine Johnson (elaine@firstpresathens.org) by November 3 so that we can have lunch for you! If you are interested but cannot attend, please email Elaine by the same date, so that you can be included in informational updates as we move forward.

Sign Up for the New Church App, Realm

Have you signed up for Realm Connect? If you haven't, please scan the QR code and click "Sign Up" or go to onrealm.org/FirstPresAthensGA. More information about Realm can be found on the church website or on our bulletin boards.

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 Jay Holloway, Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee, at jaytholloway@gmail.com. You can also fill out the form in the website (www.firstpresathens.org).

Current Elders:
(Not eligible for recommendation)

Class of 2027	**Class of 2028**	**Class of 2029**
Susan Baldwin	Steven Brooks	Meghan Bawcum
Bill Bushnell	Courtney Dantzler	Stephen Covington
Amy Cowsert	Shannon Ferguson	Andrew Griffeth
Matt Crim	Edward W. (Ned) Phares	Anne Marie Miller
Jay Holloway	Holly Sheats	Mike Morris
Tom Lane	Lawton Stephens	Leslye Queen
Joan Pinson	Madeline Van Dyck	Laura Toney
Paige Simmons	John Webster	Gail Wilfong

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 Jay Holloway (Chair), Matt Jones, Jimbo LaBoon, and Beverly Phares.

EDUCATION – FAITH FORMATION

CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES

Director of Children and Youth Ministries: Hannah Knight
Interns: Morgan Cassidy
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.

Contact Hannah Knight (hannah@firstpresathens.org), Director of Children and Youth Ministries, with any questions.

Children's Sunday School meets in the Children's Ministry Suite each Sunday starting at 9:45am. Our younger children participate in **Godly Play** (4 years to 2nd grade), an interactive, hands-on, reflective method of learning and wondering about God's great story. Our **Explorers Class** (3rd - 5th grade) also learn the stories of God's people, through acting out stories, worship and prayer practices, designing and playing games, and more!

Youth Sunday School (6th - 12th grade) meets in the PIT (youth space on basement level) kicking off each Sunday with donuts & fellowship at 9:45am. This class studies scripture that follows the texts of that morning's worship service, engaging these sacred stories alongside games and fun converstaion. Middle and high school small groups will meet together sometimes, as well as in separate small groups.

Youth Group (5:30-7:00 p.m.)
This Sunday evening gathering is a safe space for both middle school (6th-8th grades) and high school youth (9th-12th grades) to come as they are to enjoy fellowship, dinner, games, Bible study, and prayer-- a great way to begin the week! The theme for this year is "Fruit of the Spirit" (as found in Galatians 5), so we will learn about love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control — and how those fruits help us to follow Christ in our daily lives. All are welcome — bring a friend!

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

9:45-10:45 a.m.

Bible Basics • Moses Waddel Room
This fall, we will explore the beginning and early years of Israel's monarchy as recounted in the books of 1 & 2 Samuel. Just as the early Israelites did in ancient times, we will wrestle with the questions of: Who is God? Who are we as God's people? What is God's plan for us and God's creation? If you are interested in learning how these issues are addressed in these Old Testament texts, please join us.
Contacts: David Dantzler (jdaviddantzler@gmail.com) and Elaine Johnson (elaine@firstpresathens.org)

Del Dunn Sunday School Class • Room 308
We offer an in-depth study of scripture in a collegial environment and welcome all who seek to enrich their understanding of the Bible and its application to our daily lives. Several teachers rotate in leading the class in thought-provoking discussions. Our study for the fall is 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus in the LifeGuide Bible Studies series published by InterVarsity Press.
Coordinator: Jerry Rogers: jrogerswtv@aol.com.
Zoom ID: 706 543 1820

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)

New Voices • Room 310
Our goal is to create joy through art, food, music, prayer, scripture, class-led discussion, community, open-mindedness and inclusion. "To everything, turn, turn, turn, there is a season and a time to every purpose, under heaven." Yes, the class will be studying the Book of Ecclesiastes and what it means for each of us.
Contact: Lewis Hudgins (lewisahudgins@gmail.com)
Zoom ID: 674 533 8902

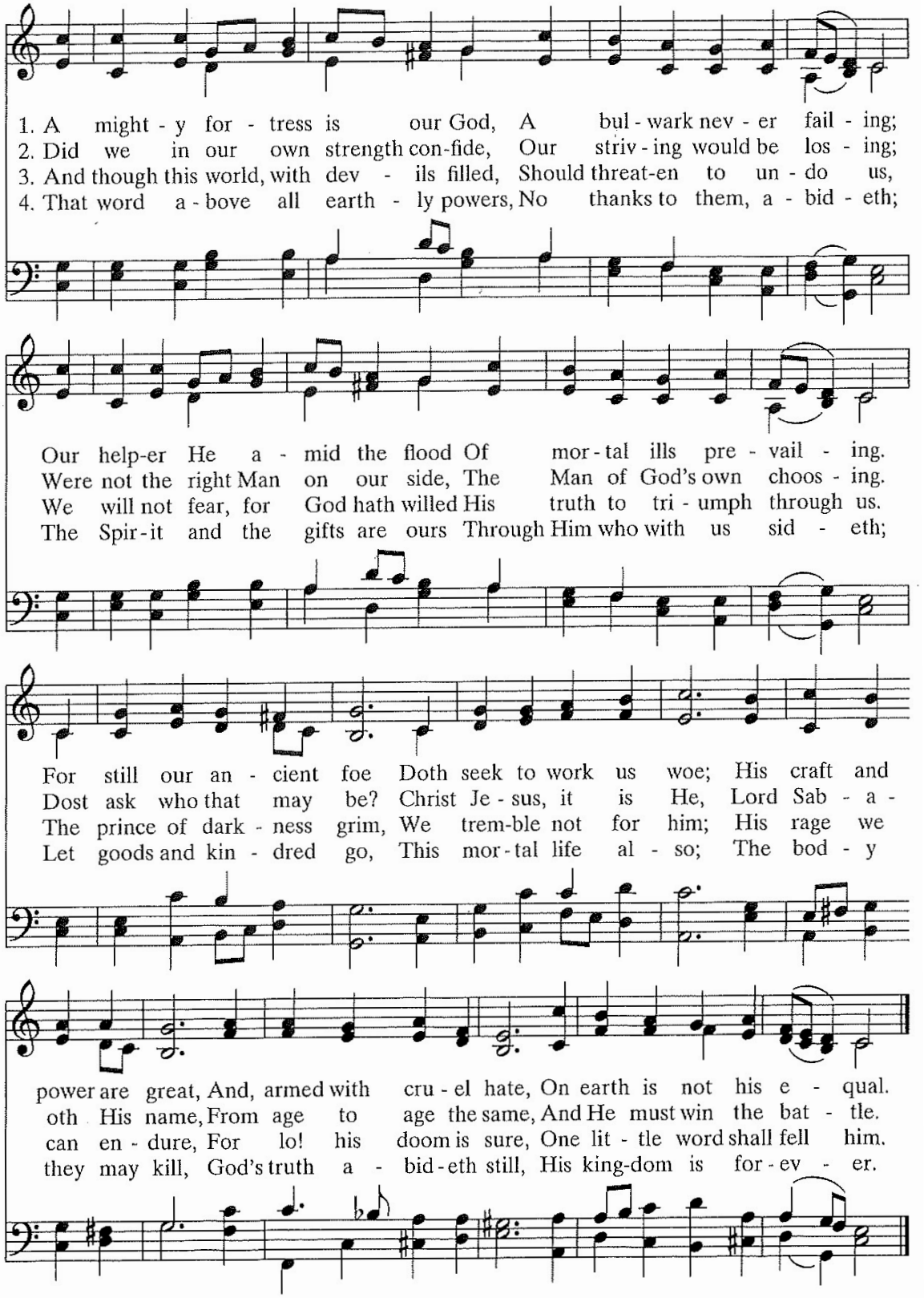
Wayne F. Middendorf Men's Bible Class
Bride's Room, Tinsley-Stern
Rev. Will Norman will lead us in discussion on books of the New Testament. On other weeks, we watch and discuss the "Great Churches of Christianity", a DVD series led by Professor William Cook. All are welcome, as are all viewpoints.
Contact: Ian Hardin (ianhardin1@gmail.com)
Zoom ID: 883 5159 0923

260 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

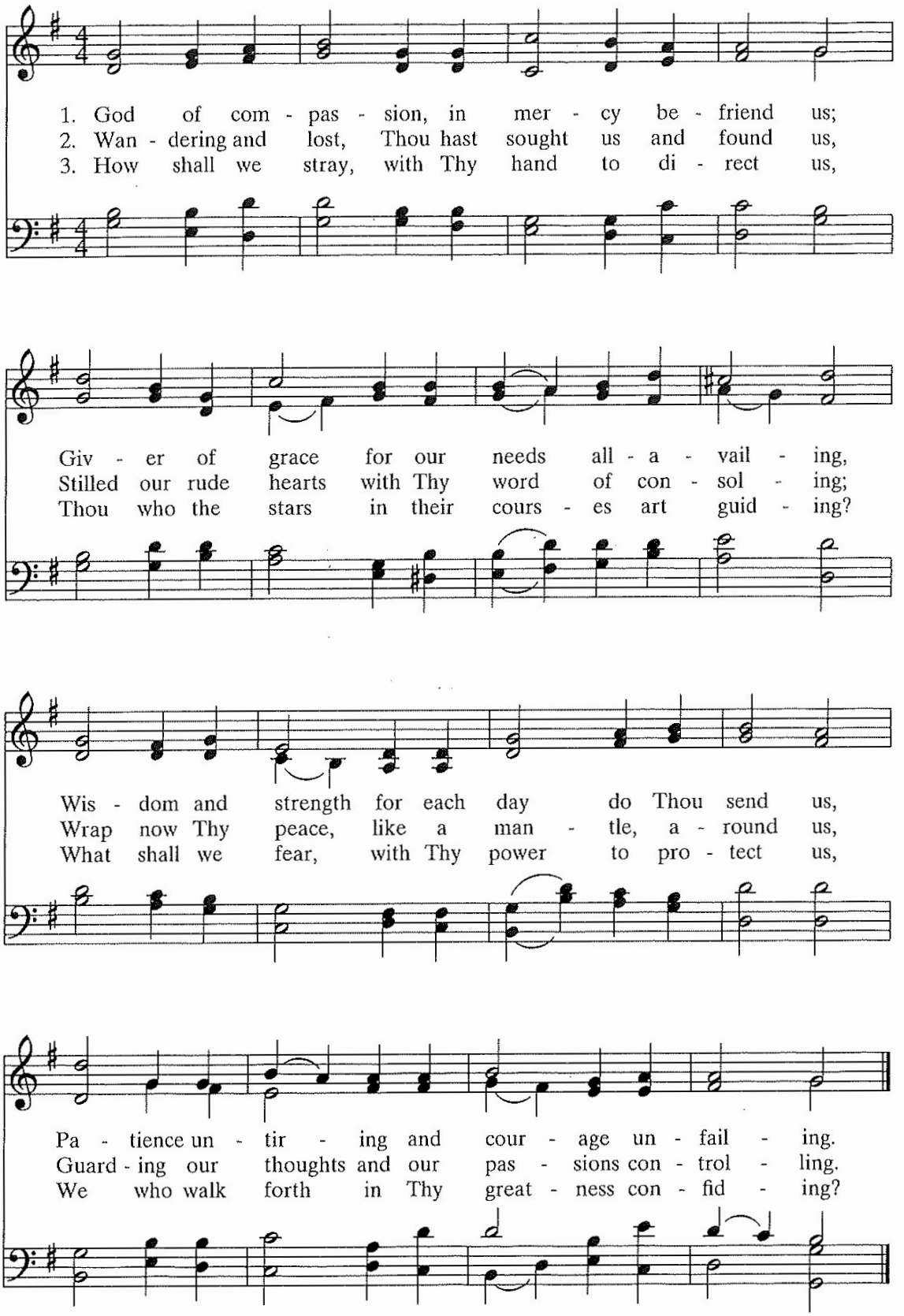


God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us 261

O QUANTA QUALIA 11.11.11.11

Paris *Antiphoner,* 1681
As in La Feillée's *Méthode du plain-chant,* 1808

John J. Moment, 1933



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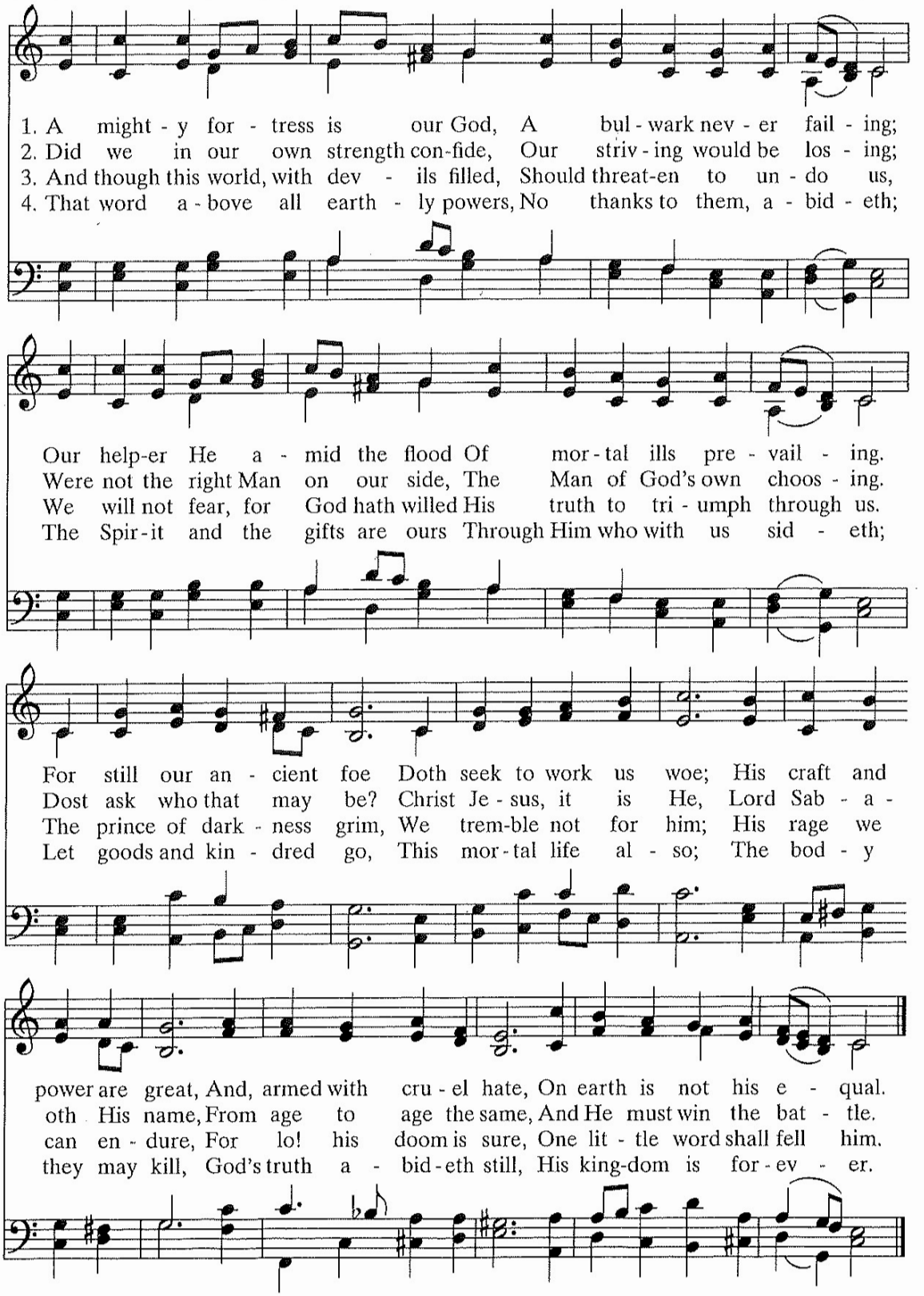

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SESSION

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

Class of 2027	Class of 2028	Class of 2029
Susan Baldwin	Steven Brooks	Meghan Bawcum
Bill Bushnell	Courtney Dantzler	Stephen Covington
Amy Cowsert	Shannon Ferguson	Andrew Griffeth
Matt Crim	Edward W. (Ned) Phares	Anne Marie Miller
Jay Holloway	Holly Sheats	Mike Morris
Tom Lane	Lawton Stephens	Leslye Queen
Joan Pinson	Madeline Van Dyck	Laura Toney
Paige Simmons	John Webster	Gail Wilfong

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. Mikel Williams, *Director of Weekday School (mikel@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*