



The Widow's Mite, JESUS MAFA, 1973, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

7 November 2021
24th Sunday after Pentecost

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Established 1817

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
Building Community ▪ Transforming Lives ▪ Engaging the World

Order of Worship

Prayer of Preparation

*As I live this day, O Lord,
let me be a sign of your salvation—
food for those who hunger, a comfort to those who mourn.
Let me be a temple of your peace—
a home for your holy presence, a sanctuary of renewal.
This I ask in the name of Jesus,
the Alpha and Omega, my beginning and my end. Amen.*

Welcome

The Chiming of the Trinity

Prelude *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less* Held

Introit *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* Chisholm/Runyan

***Opening Sentences** from Psalm 146:1–2, 5–10

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
who made heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them

**who executes justice for the oppressed and
gives food to the hungry.**

The Lord sets prisoners free and lifts up those
who are bowed down.

**The Lord watches over the stranger
and upholds the orphan and the widow.**

The Lord will reign forever. Praise the Lord!

Honoring of Veterans

***Hymn 331** *God of the Ages,* Roberts/Warren
Whose Almighty Hand

Confession

Forgive us, Lord, when we think too highly of ourselves and clamor after privilege and honor. Forgive us, Lord, when we cannot lift our gaze because we do not believe we have anything to give. You have given us the best gift of all: freedom from all that harms us and the way to abundant life. Have mercy on our foolishness and heal our lovesick hearts, that we may live faithfully for you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Summary of the Law

Matthew 22:37-39

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

(11am) Children’s Moment

Anna Pinckney Straight

Hymn 175, verse 1

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you.**

Allelu, alleluia!

Lord’s Prayer

Hymnal p. 35

*2nd-grade children or younger may depart for Children’s
Worship and Wonder in the Ministry Center*

Hymn 175, verse 2

**Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and you shall find;
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.**

Allelu, alleluia!

Anthem

Sing Unto the Lord

Charles Yannerella

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson

Mark 12:38-44

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Maren Sonstegard-Spray

***Affirmation of Faith**

from A Declaration of Faith (PCUSA 1991) Chapter 8(4)

God sends us to exercise compassion.

In his concern for justice in the social order God has never forgotten the needs of individuals. In the end the Lord will judge all persons by the simple, unremembered acts of kindness they did or failed to do for the least of their sisters and brothers. We acknowledge God is at work here and now when people show personal concern for each other and work to make helping agencies, including the church itself, more compassionate. We believe God sends us to risk our own peace and comfort in compassion for our neighbors. We are to give to them and receive from them, accepting everyone we meet as a person; to be sensitive to those who suffer in body or mind; to help and accept help in ways that affirm dignity and responsibility. We must not limit our compassion to those we judge deserving, for we ourselves do not deserve the compassion of God.

Minute for Stewardship

Wood Gibbs

Grounded in Faith, Growing in Gratitude: Dedicating Pledges

*Hymn 697

Take My Life

Havergal/Malan

Litany of Dedication

How shall we give?

“Freely you have received, freely give.”

Matthew 10:8

When shall we give?

“On the Lord’s day each of you should put aside something from which you have earned during the week, and use it for this offering.”

1 Corinthians 16:2

Where shall we give?

“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, says the Lord of Hosts.”

Malachi 3:10

To whom shall we give?

“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name! Bring an offering and come before him, worship the Lord in holy splendor!”

1 Chronicles 16:29

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

The flowers in the Sanctuary this morning are given by John and Gayle Hardy to the glory of God and in celebration of the November 6th wedding of Katie Hardy and Chad Shepard.

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Postlude

Rejoice, the Lord Is King!

Gehring

If you have not already done so, please place your offering in the wooden collection boxes nearest the exit you use. We look forward to seeing you again next week.

Cover: JESUS MAFA, The Widow's Mite.

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57531>.

JESUS MAFA is a response to the New Testament readings from the Lectionary by a Christian community in Cameroon, Africa. Each of the readings was selected and adapted to dramatic interpretation by the community members. Photographs of their interpretations were made, and these were then transcribed to paintings.

Prayers reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion. Copyright 2014.

Liturgist: The Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight

Organist: Vance Harper Jones

Ensemble: Members of the Daybreak and Sanctuary Choirs

WELCOME VISITORS! Please write your name on a visitor's badge for your blouse or lapel. Along with our members, please sign the Friendship Pad when passed to you during the service.

CHILDREN are welcome at First Presbyterian Church. The nursery is available for infants and preschool children in Room 1.23 in the Ministry Center from 8:15am-12:15pm. Following the Children's Moment, those in the 2nd grade or younger may depart for Children's Worship and Wonder in the Ministry Center. For all children in worship, there are worship bags available at the front and back of the Sanctuary.

RESTROOMS are available in the Ministry Center, (including a family restroom), the Session House, and the Fellowship Center.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES with ear coverings are available. Please ask an usher if you have need.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILITY is provided by ramps between the Ministry Center and the Sanctuary, in the back of the Ministry Center, along the side of the Session house, and at the front and side entrances of the J. Murphy Smith Fellowship Center.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Membership Class/Anna Straight – Ministry Center Conference Room (in the Staff Office Suite)

Whether you have been worshipping with First Presbyterian for one Sunday or one hundred, we'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you about what it means to be a part of a church community-what it might mean for you to take the joyful, faithful step of becoming a member of First Presbyterian Church.

To help facilitate these conversations, we have scheduled classes to be held on **November 7 and 14** during the Sunday School hour with the opportunity to join and be welcomed in worship on the 14th (at 11:00) or the 22st (at 8:30).

If these dates don't work for you, please get in touch with Anna so we can add you to the list for the next time we have these gatherings or so we can meet and find a pathway and timeline that works for you (anna@firstpresnb.org or 252-637-3270).

Confirmation Choir (grades 6-12) will meet in the Choir Room this afternoon at 5:00 before Youth Group to rehearse some music for our Christmas services. Come join us!

Youth Fellowship

JOY (Just Older Youth), our youth fellowship for middle and high schoolers, will meet tonight from 5:30-7:30 pm in the Session house.

Christmas Wreath Fundraiser – Table Outside Today!

We are partnering with Vermont Wreath Center, Inc. again this year to purchase live wreaths as a fundraiser for our youth ministry! We are using their online purchasing option again this year, and therefore will not be having a bulk order shipped to the church. You can access the online ordering site through the church website or by going to www.vermontcenterwreaths.com/?ref=first OR you can still order through one of our JOY youth group members! **Ordering is open now until Dec. 1st**, and wreaths will be shipped directly to your home. TODAY only between services and after the 11am service there will be a table in the courtyard between the Sanctuary and the Ministry Center so that you can place your order in person!

Children's Choirs will begin meeting in November

We will learn some songs for the Candlelight Service Dec. 12 and the Christmas Eve Service, both to be held outside.

Covenant Choir (grades 2-5) will meet Monday November 8, from 4:00-5:00 pm in the Choir Room.

Kinderchoir (Kindergarten and First Grade) will meet Tuesday, November 9, from 4:00 to 5:00 pm in the Choir Room. You may register online on our website, or by filling out registration cards available in the Narthex and Vestibule.

Donations of Teacups and Saucers Needed

Habitat for Humanity of Craven County is hosting a Women's Tea Fundraiser for International Women's Day on March 8, 2022. Currently, they are looking for donations of teacups, saucers, teapots, and tiered trays. Before donating, please check your items for chips and cracks; cups and saucers do not have to be matching. Donations can be dropped off Wednesday-Saturday from 9:00am-5:00pm at their ReStore located at 930 Pollock Street. For questions

about donations, please reach out to Volunteer Coordinator, Catherine Campbell, at ccampbell@cravencountyhabitat.org or (252) 633-9599, ext. 104. A small donation like this can help build homes, communities, and hope in big ways!

First Presbyterian's William Lee Hawkins Library

If you happened to miss the tour of the recently relocated William Lee Hawkins Library on October 17th, but are interested in figuring out the lay of the land, how to access the computerized card catalogue, and actually find those books you deserve to be reading this fall and winter, please call Wendy Moeller (876-7259) or Carol Hale (626-8080) to schedule a personally customized experience at some time of your convenience.

Chairs?

The William Lee Hawkins Library would love to receive two reading/easy chairs for people to enjoy while they are visiting the library. If you have one (or two) in good condition that might work, please contact the church office.

Operation Jammies for Coastal Women's Shelter

Each year we collect "new" pajamas for every mother and child receiving services from the Coastal Women's Shelter. For the children, size 6 months to 16 for both boys and girls are needed. The sizes needed for women range from small to XXL. There is a collection bin inside the main entrance to the Ministry Center. You can also drop off the pajamas on Sunday morning. Pajamas will be collected until **December 20, 2021**. Also, remember that you can always donate to Coastal Women's Shelter through Gifts of the Heart.

Pandemic Devotional Booklet

From March 2020 to July 2021, devotions written by church members and staff were emailed to the congregation on weekdays. These devotions have been collected into a booklet that will be made available to the congregation. Please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org) if you would like to receive a copy.

Education

Sunday School classes meet Sundays 9:40-10:40 am

Sunday School for Children

Children and Teachers are asked to wear masks in the classroom.

Preschool – active play in the Nursery

Kindergarten-5th Grade – Ministry Center Room 1.27 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living)

Middle & High School – Ministry Center Room 2.23-24 (Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living)

Sunday School for Adults

TheoEd Talks/Jim Copland and Beth Paul – Ministry Center Room 2.21 (large center classroom on the second floor of the Ministry Center)

Getting Involved with God: Wrestling with the strange and sacred Scripture of the Old Testament/Maren Sonstegard-Spray – Session House Main Room

The Present Word/George Evans – Session House Parlor

Special Lecture on November 21 during Sunday School

The Education Commission is excited to announce a special lecture on the history of New Bern and how that history has shaped our community today. Local historian Bernard George will present a lecture entitled "New Birth of Freedom: The Early African American Experience in New Bern." Bernard George is a former member of the Board of Directors of the New Bern Historical Society and was awarded the Education Award which acknowledged all his work to share New Bern History, most especially our African American history. He was instrumental in the creation of the New Bern African American Heritage Trail. Bernard George's family has lived for nine generations in Craven County. This lecture, and accompanying time of questions and answers, will take place on Sunday, **November 21**, from 9:40-10:40am in the Session House.

Mid-Week Formation Opportunities

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study

The group will meet on Mondays from 7:00-8:30 pm, starting with a hybrid arrangement – those comfortable meeting in person at the Ministry Center conference room, and those not yet comfortable attending online via Zoom at the same time. Join us as we accompany Amy-Jill Levine, one of our favorite authors and teachers, and author of “The Difficult Words of Jesus,” as she guides us through that struggle to a place of greater understanding of what it is that our Lord is requesting of us. For more information, call Wendy Moeller 252-876-7259 or Marice Debruhl 252-637-5468 or Cathy Wingfield 828-767-0975.

Tuesday Afternoon Grief Support

The group meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 12:00 to 1:00 pm in the Chapel. This ongoing group provides its members with companionship, understanding, support, and guidance as we seek to go on living when someone we love dies. All are welcome. Come and bring a friend. Contact Lloyd for more information.

Life of Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Living

Led by Lloyd Griffith on Wednesdays noon-1:00 pm and meets in Ministry Center Room 2.21 and by Zoom in a hybrid format to begin the fall. The group will be studying “Soul Force” by Lloyd Griffith and “Immortal Diamond” by Richard Rohr.

Wednesday Evening Contemplative Worship

Led by Lloyd Griffith and meets in the Chapel in the Ministry Center. This contemplative, or reflective, approach to worship is offered each Wednesday from 5 to 5:30 pm in the Chapel. This quiet service is focused on silence, prayer, and reflection on the Biblical text chosen for preaching the coming Sunday. The Lord's Supper is observed on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Come when you can and bring a friend.

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study – Advent Book

We will begin a new book for Advent on Thursday, December 2, “Advent in Plain Sight: A Devotion through Ten Objects” by Jill Duffield. Our Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study meets weekly 10-11 am by Zoom. The book is available for purchase on

Amazon (Kindle version also available). If you need help acquiring the book or want to be added to the email list for the class, please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

Presbyterian (and friends) Sunday Afternoon at the Brewery

Open to anyone interested in beer and theology! We will meet the first Sunday of the month, **TODAY, November 7**, at Brewery 99 (1014 Pollock St) at 4:00 pm. This will be a casual gathering for fellowship and conversation around topics of theology and faith.

Sunday Afternoon Men's Beer and Theology

led by Ken Wilkins at Brewery 99 (1014 Pollock St) at 4:00 pm, Sunday, **November 21** (on the third Sunday of the month). This will be a casual men's gathering for fellowship and conversation around topics of theology and faith.

Church Nursery

Our Nursery, located on the first floor of our Ministry Center, has resumed regular hours (8:15 am-12:15 pm). We have a team of paid, trained, and background-checked nursery workers to care for infants and preschool-aged children during Sunday school and both worship services. Stop by and say hi to our new nursery workers Cindy and Kimberly and Carolyn, and our nursery coordinator Bailey.

Fellowship Café

Join us from 9:30 until 10:45 am in the Fellowship Café (on the first floor of the Ministry Center) for a cup of coffee, a bite or two, and to renew your church friendships, or stop by and grab a coffee on your way to Sunday School!

Church Email List and Church Newsletter

We communicate a lot of things happening in the life of the church through emails through Constant Contact. If you would like to receive regular announcements or the newsletter, or both, please contact Cathy Wingfield (cathy@firstpresnb.org) or sign up on the church website!

Nametags

We want to encourage everyone to get in the habit of wearing their nametags again! If you have misplaced yours, Marcy, our Office Administrator, is happy to make you another one (marcy@firstpresnb.org). There is a board in the Narthex where you can leave your nametag at the end of the service, and it will be waiting for you the next Sunday.

Trusting that God's grace embraces and makes a covenant with all believers, First Presbyterian Church intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. All persons are welcomed into this fellowship and membership regardless of age, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic or racial identity, economic or educational status, or political affiliation.