



The Ascension, John Singleton Copley, 1775, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

9 May 2021

6th Sunday of Easter/Ascension of the Lord

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

*Loving God, help us to love others as Christ has loved us.
Bring us into the spiritual joy of living our lives as your friend,
and teach us to abide in your love, that we may show that love to
the world. Amen.*

Welcome

Chiming of the Trinity

Prelude *Trio and Pastorale on "Morning Star"* Sandresky

*Call to Worship

Ephesians 1:15–20

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus
and your love toward one another.

So, I do not cease to give thanks for you
as I remember you in my prayers.

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ
may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation
as you come to know him.

**With the eyes of our hearts enlightened,
we see the greatness of Christ's power
at work in us who believe.**

**God put this power to work in Christ
when God raised him from the dead—
and seated him at God's right hand
in the glory of the heavenly places!**

Anthem *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!* Holden

Confession

**Forgiving and gracious God, you have called us to be the
church, to live out our Resurrection faith. You have asked us
to place our trust in you and to bring to all the good news of
your saving love. But we have failed to do this. We have given
our faith a back seat to the troubles of the world and to the
stresses in our own life. We look for the quick and easy
answers. Forgive us for the smallness of our faith. You, who**

raised Christ from the dead, have promised to raise our spirits and bring us to new life. You have done this and yet, we remain static in our response to you. Clear our spirits of the clutter of everyday living. Help us to be open always to your word and your love. Challenge us to move in directions of peace and hope for all people.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Summary of the Law

“‘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.’” **Matthew 22:37-39**

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson

Acts 1:1-11

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

Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Maren Sonstegard-Spray

***Affirmation of Faith**

A Declaration of Faith (PCUSA 1991) Chapter 8 (1)

God sends the church into the world.

God has not taken his people out of the world but has sent them into the world to worship him there and serve all humankind.

We worship God in the world by standing before the Lord on behalf of all people. Our cries for help and our songs of praise are never for ourselves alone. Worship is no retreat from the world; it is part of our mission. We serve humankind by discerning what God is doing in the world and joining him in his work. We risk disagreement and error when we try to say what God is doing here and now. But we find guidance in God's deeds in the past and his promises for the future, as they are witnessed to in Scripture. We affirm that the Lord is at work, especially in events and movements that free people by the gospel and advance justice, compassion and peace.

Anthem *He Is King of Kings* Spiritual
Mildred Moore Lopez, Betsy Conzelman, solos

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Postlude *Sing a New Song* Wagner

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

A special thank you to our ushers!

Liturgist: Lloyd Griffith

Organist: Vance Harper Jones

Ensemble: Betsy Conzelman, Margaret Cooper, Charles Francis, Bill Harris, Mildred Moore Lopez, Pat K. Rowlett, Carol Taylor, David Taylor

Next week we welcome Daewon Goldenbaum-Yang as our guest preacher and we will be celebrating our graduates!

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Margaret Vardell Sandresky, composer of today's prelude, celebrated her 100th birthday on 28 April 2021. Her grandfather, the Reverend Charles Graves Vardell, served as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, New Bern, 1891-1896. A noted organist, her father Charles Gildersleeve Vardell played the Centennial Concert on the new Haskell Organ (1916) in this church January 7, 2022. Mrs. Sandresky is still actively composing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Returning to Two In-person Sunday Worship Services!

After two weeks of attendance of over 125, the Session has approved the return of two services (8:30am and 11am) starting today May 9. Mask wearing and social distancing still required.

Nursery Re-opening!

The nursery will also reopen starting today, May 9 for the 11am service (from 10:30am-noon) for children, infants through second grade.

New Adult Class “Read This Book” starts today

JOIN US for Read This Book starting today Sunday, May 9, 9:30-10:30am on Zoom. Each week a different person will present a book that informed, challenged, or inspired them, and connected with their faith. You don't have to attend every week to participate in the class, and friends and family are welcome to attend! To be included on the email list for the class, contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org)

Here is the schedule of presenters for May:

- **May 9** Maren Sonstegard-Spray “Lies my Preacher Told Me: An Honest Look at the Old Testament” by Brent Strawn
- **May 16** Wendy Moeller “On the Road with Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts ” by James K A Smith
- **May 23** Jim Copland “The Telling: How Judaism's Essential Book Reveals the Meaning of Life” by Mark Gerson
- **May 30** Janet Benrey Swain "Why Social Justice Is Not Biblical Justice: An Urgent Appeal to Fellow Christians in a Time of Social Crisis" by Scott David Allen

Adult Sunday school class “The Present Word”

George Evans is leading "The Present Word class: Call in the New Testament". The class meets online Sunday morning 9:30-10:30am using Zoom. Please contact George Evans (gkevans4@gmail.com) to receive a meeting room ID and password. The book is available in the church office.

Attention Parents of Graduates

If you have a child or children who will be graduating this spring from high school, college (associate degree, bachelor's degree, or post-baccalaureate degree), or other institution, we would like to recognize them on Senior Recognition Sunday on May 16 and in the June newsletter. Please email the following to Cilla Miller (priscilla@firstpresnb.org) by May 10, 2021:
name(s) of graduate, where they are graduating from, degree or certificate, plans after graduation

Church Office Staff: Welcome Marcy and Thank You Cilla!

We are very pleased to announce that Marcy Latteman started on May 5th as our new Office Administrator! As we welcome Marcy, we also say goodbye to Priscilla Miller (or CillaMilla, as she is affectionately known). When we were waiting for the arrival of our interim minister, Eddie Bellis, Cilla agreed to “help us out for a few weeks” as a temporary, part-time Office Administrator. At our urging, she continued to extend her “few weeks.” Here we are two years later, and we are finally going to let her retire!

Nursery Worker Recruitment

First Presbyterian Church is looking for two Nursery Workers and a Nursery Coordinator to care for our infant to four-year-old children on Sunday mornings and at special services. Applicants must be at least 18 years old, have experience in caring for young children, complete a background check and complete CPR training for infants and children. Hours for the positions are normally 8:00 am – 12:30 pm. Interested individuals should send a resume to the Office Administrator at church@firstpresnb.org.

Reception Desk Volunteer Opportunity

Would you like to help out at the Church Office's Reception Desk? Do you have 4 hours that you could give to the church? We have returned to normal business hours, but we need your help. We are looking for those who can let their smiles show through in their voices on the phones or in their eyes when greeting visitors (we are still masking). Don't worry if you are not familiar with the ins and outs of the office equipment. We are more than happy to teach you. Hours of shifts are 9 am-1 pm or 1 pm-5 pm Monday through Thursday, and 9 am-1 pm on Fridays. If you are interested or have questions, please contact our Office Administrator.

Updated Hours

Amber Zapffel our church Financial Administrator will be working from her office in the Ministry Center Monday - Thursday 9am - 5pm beginning Monday, May 10th.

New Church Library Location

The church library has moved to the second floor of the Ministry Center – come and check it out! At the moment we are not accepting new book donations.

Montreat Women's Conference 2021 – Discount Available

Join us at the Montreat Women's Connection Conference Friday-Sunday, August 13-15! The conference was postponed for a year, but we held on to our room reservations in the Assembly Inn (with an elevator and air-conditioning), and we have a couple of rooms available for those who had not previously registered. Registration cost includes program, room, and meals. Transportation is on your own and many arranged carpools together last time. We are offering a discount on the cost of the registration from the McClary Scholarship fund to make it easier to attend the conference! Please contact Maren to learn more about the discount and/or to register. Childcare is available at Montreat for children aged six months through preschool.

Thank you for your financial support!

At the April Budget and Finance Meeting, we reviewed the finances of the church for the year so far, and we are in a remarkably strong place. Giving has increased and our expenses are down. As new staff comes on board in the next few months, our personnel costs will increase, but we were collectively moved by our congregation's generosity and continued faithfulness. Your continued giving makes worship possible, makes music fill our sanctuary, provides for the Christian education of all ages, supports our mission partners in New Bern and beyond, and allows for care for people in many ways.

God of love, help us to remember
that Christ has no body now on earth but ours,
no hands but ours, no feet but ours.
Ours are the eyes to see the needs of the world.
Ours are the hands with which to bless everyone now.
Ours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good.
- Teresa of Avila (1515–82)

Trusting that God's grace embraces and makes 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.