



Potluck, David Fichter, A detail of the larger mural, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

August 29, 2021
14th Sunday after Pentecost

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Established 1817

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

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.

Order of Worship

Prayer of Preparation

*Beloved Savior, our hearts overflow with your goodness.
The night has passed. The morning has come.
Your voice calls us to arise and come with you into this new day.
Let your love strengthen us to answer your call and follow you,
caring for those in need of your love. Amen.*

Welcome

Chiming of the Trinity

Prelude *Just as I Am* Coe

Introit *Arise, Your Light Is Come!* Duck/Walter

***Call to Worship** from James 1

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift

Comes down from the Father of lights,

with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

In fulfillment of God's own purpose, he gave us birth
by the word of truth

So that we would become a kind of first fruits of creation.

Beloved children of God, may we be quick to listen,
slow to speak, slow to anger;

May we be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.

Let us worship God!

Anthem *Gracious Spirit, Dwell with Me* Lynch/
K. Lee Scott

Confession

**God who calls us into hope and meets us in disappointment,
in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Too often, we hurt others when we are hurt.

We choose words out of frustration

instead of love being the motivation for our truth.

And, we default to speaking when should be listening.

Forgive us, Lord.

Teach us to be led by faith,
trusting your abundance and resting in your wisdom.
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. 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.’”

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson

Mark 7:1-15

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

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight

*Affirmation of Faith

from a Declaration of Faith, 1977

Christ calls us to live for our neighbors. Jesus broadened the definition of neighbor to include those ordinarily despised and excluded. His life in behalf of others led to persecution and death. He commanded his disciples to live the same way. We believe Christ gives us and demands of us lives that recognize all people in all cultures as our neighbors on this planet. Christ teaches us to go beyond legal requirements in serving and helping our neighbor, to treat our neighbor's needs as our own, to care passionately for the other's good, to share what we have. It is part of our discipline to live in simplicity, avoiding greed and luxury that threaten our neighbor's survival. We are obligated to speak the truth in love, to listen with patience and openness, to love our enemies, to accept the risk and pain which love involves.

*Hymn 39

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Chisholm/Runyan

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

The flowers in the Sanctuary this morning are given by Trisha Smith to the glory of God and in memory of her husband, Master Sgt. Raymond J. Smith, and her friend Miriam Hurley.

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

God of light, hear our prayer.

***Benediction**

Postlude

For the Beauty of the Earth

Wold

If you have not already done so, please place your offering in the marked basket nearest the exit you use.

For the next two Sundays (August 29 and September 5) the Session has approved a special offering for Haiti Relief. If you would like to give to this simply note "Haiti Relief" on your check or in the notes for electronic giving.

Organist: Vance Harper Jones

Ensemble: Members of the Daybreak and Sanctuary Choirs

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Installation Service and Dinner

The installation service for the Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight is TODAY at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary. A celebratory meal will follow in the J. Murphy Smith Fellowship Center. The meal will be catered by Moore's with a menu of Bar-b que, fried chicken, shrimp, slaw, beans, potato salad, hushpuppies, cake & ice cream.

Nursery Open

The nursery is available for the 11am service (from 10:30am-noon) for children, infants through second grade. Starting on September 12th, the nursery will be available during Sunday school, starting at 9:30am.

Parking

For those who park in the large parking lot across from the church, please make sure to park in the marked spaces only. We would like to keep the path clear around the island in the lot for cars coming and going from the New Street entrances. Thank you!

Welcoming Tip of the Month

Our church has a large campus with a number of buildings, and people approach the center of the campus from several different directions. This can be confusing for anyone who isn't familiar with the buildings. We are working on improving signage so that directions are easier to understand, but sometimes YOU can lend a hand. If you see people looking puzzled, ask if you can help. If they are receptive, then lead, don't tell. It's easy enough to walk with them toward their destination--plus you have another brief opportunity to connect!

First Presbyterian Church identifies itself as a welcoming community of faith and intends to be an inclusive place of spiritual growth for all people. The Welcoming Committee over the months will be offering you tips to strengthen the hospitality of our congregation.

Nametags

As more of the congregation is returning to worship in person after not seeing one another in quite a while AND to help Anna become acquainted with the congregation, we want to encourage everyone to get in the habit of wearing your 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.

House Churches

Every year in September/October the House Churches of First Presbyterian begin to meet again. This is a long-standing ministry of the church, and it is a wonderful way to connect with old and new friends in the church. If you have not been attending a house church, we hope that you will consider it!

Here is how House Churches work: Groups of around 10-25 people meet monthly for good food and faith-full conversation. Some House Churches are hosted in different homes each month and some meet in the same place -- at the church (in the Session House or in the Fellowship Café), or at a restaurant or local gathering place. House Churches meet for around an hour and a half to two hours. There are currently 13 House Churches (and there is always the possibility of new house churches forming). They meet on different weeks of the month, different days of the week, and at different times during the day.

If you would be interested in joining an existing House Church (or maybe trying a different House Church to meet new people), please contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org). Don't miss out on this opportunity for a delightful time, where new friends are made and existing friendships are deepened!

Join the Choir

We always have a place for new singers in each choir, so please consider joining us. The experience will enrich your own worship, and you will be giving a gift to God that only you can give.

If you have questions, contact Pat Rowlett Tuesdays or Thursdays at the church office (252-637-3270) or email pat@firstpresnb.org.

Daybreak Choir: open to Sr. high youth and adults. 8:30 service starting Sept. 9

Sanctuary Choir: open to Sr. high youth and adults. 11:00 service starting Sept. 9

Resurrection Singers: youth and adults, 1 Sunday/month Rehearse 1st & 2nd Thursdays, 6:00 pm. Choir Room Sept. 9 & 16 (Contact Susan Mabie if you are interested, 252-638-4773.)

Crop Walk

Mark your calendars for the 41st CROP Hunger Walk in New Bern. The walk will take place Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021, starting at Union Point Park. Donations and sign-ups for the walk will take place after worship services starting September 12. CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service (CWS) and organized by local congregations or groups to raise funds to end hunger at home and around the world.

Serve at Religious Community Services Soup Kitchen

Members and visitors at First Presbyterian Church New Bern consider whether you might be able to fit in several morning hours, one time, or more than once if it feels right to you, to volunteer at the RCS Soup Kitchen.

For those who are not yet familiar with it, RCS is at 919 George Street, and includes an emergency shelter, a food pantry, a Clothes Closet, and the Soup Kitchen. Our church has actively supported the organization, financially, and through volunteerism, since its inception in 1982.

Our commitment at this time is for a team of five to be in their kitchen from 8:00am-noon, once or twice a month. Our days are the second Monday of each month, and in any month that has a fifth Thursday. During those times, we assist the cook in the preparation

of a nourishing meal. This commitment was fulfilled in the past year, by a small group of people of faith, who helped prepare, then pack, the meals "to go". At this point, the meals are still packed to take out. However, as soon as it is deemed safe, the diners will be welcomed back into the relatively new dining room. When that time comes, our teams may need to be larger. We often served 70 to 200 hot meals. If your faith, and your benevolent spirit, lead you to want to try this even once, we'd love to hear from you. Contact Prudence Wing, Volunteer Coordinator from First Pres New Bern to RCS, 1-207-457-5535

Food 4 U

Our Food 4 U program has been restarted and is ready to go. The only thing we need is food FROM you! Food 4 U is (will be) available to be picked up anytime for your family or someone you know who needs it. There is a freezer in the Session House kitchen and containers in the pantry there. Take a container home for the next time you have extra soup, casserole or whatever and bring it in. Labels are also provided. Thank you for thinking of and caring for each other in this way! Questions? Call Polly Frank, 703-927-4626.

Education

Sunday School classes meet Sundays 9:40-10:40am starting on September 12th! Starting September 12, the Nursery will be available starting at 9:30am.

Sunday School for Children

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

Preschool – Ministry Center room 1.24 (God Loves Me – 52 story books)

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

This new Sunday School offering is a place to land for parents of youngsters, young couples, and young adults. It will be a place to develop friendships, share about this unique stage of life we are in, and delve into some thought-provoking discussions about topics of faith. Each week we will view a TheoEd talk (think a TED talk on a topic of faith) with a discussion to follow. To learn more about TheoEd talks visit <https://theoed.com/watch>. For questions contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org).

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

We began this class in January of 2020 and had to pause because of COVID. We will return to our study of the Old Testament with a lot of review of what we covered already! If you have ever struggled with the reading and understanding the Old Testament, or if you have ever wondered how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament, come join us. We will be guided by Ellen Davis's book "Getting Involved with God" and John Goldingay's book "Do We Need the New Testament," among others. No need to buy a book (unless you want to!). Bring your favorite translation of the Bible with you.

The Present Word/George Evans – Session House Parlor

The class is studying the series "The Present Word class: Call in the New Testament." Please contact George Evans (gkevans4@gmail.com) with questions. The book is available in the church office.

Church Membership Class/Anna Straight – Ministry Center Conference Room

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 **September 12 and 19** during the Sunday School hour with the opportunity to join and be welcomed in worship on the 19th (at 11:00) or the 26th (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).

Mid-Week Formation Opportunities

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study starting back Monday, September 13

Join us Monday evenings from 7-8:30pm starting September 13th 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. Meeting details will be decided the week before pending the Covid situation in New Bern.

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study starting back Thursday, September 16

Our Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study meets 10-11am by Zoom. We meet weekly and we are going to read together "The Difficult Words of Jesus" by Amy-Jill Levine. 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).

Life of Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Living

Beginning Wednesday, September 15, noon-1pm led by Lloyd Griffith 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

Beginning Wednesday, September 15, 5-5:30pm 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 around 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.

Grief Support

Grief Support will resume on Tuesday, September 21 at noon in the Chapel. This group voluntarily provides its members who have lost a loved one with hope and understanding, as well as support and guidance as we navigate together through this murkiest of times. The group members provide lessons learned, helpful hints, or just a listening ear because they have experienced the same kind of hurt and pain that others simply can't understand. This group is a vessel where we grow from receiving support to feel called to provide that support to others who are in this transition. We hope you can join us. Bring your lunch or snack if you choose. Call the church office for more information.

Presbyterian Women's Circles

Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary - Matthew names these women for a reason. How might Jesus have heard the stories of his grandmothers? What might the young Jesus have felt as he heard about his family? What might the stories of these women have added to his sense of identity, as part of a particular family in a particular time and place?

Our small group Circles will be studying "What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus" by Meryll Blair. Circles will begin meeting in September so look on the church website under Presbyterian Women for meeting times: firstpresnb.org/pres-women

Youth Ministry

Youth Group Kicks Off on Sunday, September 12 at 5:30pm

We will be hosting a Youth Group Kick Off Family Event on Sunday, September 12. Marianna will be sending more information via email to our families regarding details of this event! We can't wait to kick off another great year of youth! Contact Marianna (marianna@firstpresnb.org) for more information.

Notes: