



*Salt, photograph by Kevin Dooley. Used with permission.
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26 September 2021
18th 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

*God of heavenly glory,
brighter than the midday sun,
deeper than the midnight dark
as each day tells your wonder,
may the words of my mouth
and the dreams of my heart
be acceptable to you,
my rock and my redeemer. Amen.*

Welcome

Chiming of the Trinity

Prelude *Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire* Lovelace

Introit *God, Reveal Your Presence* Tersteegan/Neander

*Call to Worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.
Our hope is in the name of the Lord,
the healer of all that are wounded.
Our trust is in the name of the Lord,
the one we gather to worship and praise.
Let us worship God!

Anthem *O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee* arr. M. Wiley

Confession

Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. For you are our rock, and yet we place our faith in sinking sand. You are our redeemer, and yet we are convinced that we can save ourselves. You are our fount of forgiveness, and yet we fear that we will be unsavable. Forgive us, O Rock. Forgive us, O Redeemer, and show us what it means to forgive one another. Show us what it means to forgive ourselves. 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**

Maren Sonstegard-Spray

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!**

Prayer for Illumination

Lesson

Mark 9:38-50

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

Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Anna Pinckney Straight

***Affirmation of Faith** A New Creed, The United Church of Canada

We are not alone, we live in God’s world.

We believe in God:

**who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

to celebrate God’s presence,

**to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

***Hymn 722** *Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak* Havergal/
Schumann

(8:30 am) **New Member Welcome**

Joys and Concerns of the Congregation

*The flowers in the Sanctuary this morning are given by Nancy
Melling to the glory of God and in memory of her parents,
Ron and Donna Fleck.*

*The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of
Sherry Springer who passed away on September 15th. A
graveside service will take place today in the Memorial Garden
at 1:30pm with a funeral in the Sanctuary at 2pm. A reception
in the Session House will follow.*

Prayers of the People and (8:30am) Lord's Prayer

God of mercy, **be gracious to us.**

Benediction

Postlude *Triumphal March* Stickles

**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.**

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The Affirmation of Faith is from the United Church of Canada, written in
1968 and then adapted in 1980 and 1995.

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canada/faith-statements/new-creed-1968](https://united-church.ca/community-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/faith-statements/new-creed-1968)

Liturgist: The Rev. Dr. Maren Sonstegard-Spray

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. Beginning at 9:30am the nursery is available for infants and preschool children in Room 1.23 in the Ministry Center. 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 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

Called Congregational Meeting Today!

The Session has called a Congregational Meeting for TODAY Sunday, September 26, at 10:40am in the Sanctuary for the purpose of hearing the report of the Nominating Committee regarding nominations for the 2024 Class of Elders, a replacement for a seat in the 2023 Class of Elders, and the 2022 Nominating Committee.

Church Nursery

Our Nursery, located on the first floor of our Ministry Center, will resume regular hours (8:15am-12:15pm) starting October 3. 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, Kimberly, and Carolyn, and our nursery coordinator Bailey.

Fellowship Café Open for Fall

Join us from 9:30 until 10:45am 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!

Youth Fellowship

Youth are participating in the CROP Hunger walk today so there is no regular youth meeting this evening.

Crop Walk

The First Presbyterian CROP Hunger Walk Team is now forming! Donations will be received in the courtyard after worship. Walkers may also register for the walk at that time. The walk is scheduled for TODAY Sunday, September 26th. Team turn in/registration begins at 2:00 PM at the gazebo at Union Point Park. The walk steps off at 3:00 PM.

You also may register or donate by visiting the team's website at the address below:

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/first-pres-new-bern>

The CROP Hunger Walk is an outreach of Church World Service. 25% of funds raised remain in the community with our hunger partner – Religious Community Services. CWS is active combatting hunger and its causes across the globe. Come walk with us!

October Fellowship Meal

Mark your calendar for our October Fellowship meal on Wednesday, October 6, 2021, in the Fellowship Center.

A Caribbean themed meal will be served including Caribbean Jerk Chicken, Jamaican Peas and Rice, Tropical Vegetables, Cornbread, and a Sweet Dessert.

We are asking everybody to wear their favorite Caribbean attire. The meal will be served starting at 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. Take-out meals will be available beginning at 6:00 p.m. for immediate pickup after the masses have been served. Anybody waiting in line starting at 5:30 p.m. can request a to-go plate as well.

Please email (church@firstpresnb.org) or call the Church (637-3270) to indicate your intentions to attend. If you know that you would like take-out meals, please let us know.

Library Open House

You are cordially invited to the Grand Opening of the recently relocated William Lee Hawkins Library and the adjacent Children's Library, both located on the second floor of the Ministry Center, on Sunday, October 17th, before and after Sunday School (following the first service and preceding the second service). Light refreshments will be served. Please come and find that book you've been wanting (or needing) to read. Our "twin" librarians will be available to answer questions or offer suggestions.

Foster Care Child Sponsorship for Christmas

Craven County Department of Social Services is looking for people to provide Christmas presents for children in the foster care system in Craven County. The children complete "letters to Santa" and individuals/families/organizations are given a child to either purchase gifts for or to send in money so that DSS can purchase some of the things on the child's list. DSS asks sponsors to spend a minimum of \$125. If you are looking for a way to show support to children in our community who have faced tremendous difficulty and trauma this year, this is a wonderful way to do it. Contact Maren (maren@firstpresnb.org) for more information.

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 currently 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

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!

Education

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

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 (large center classroom on the second floor of the Ministry Center)

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

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 "Celebrating God," looking at passages in both the Old and New Testaments. Please contact George Evans (gkevans4@gmail.com) with questions. The book is available in the church office.

Mid-Week Formation Opportunities

Monday Evening Women's Bible Study

The group will meet on Mondays from 7:00-8:30pm, 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.

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study

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).

Sunday Afternoon Men's Beer and Theology led by Ken Wilkins at Brewery 99 (1014 Pollock St) at 4pm on Sunday, October 17. This will be a causal men's gathering for fellowship and conversation around topics of theology and faith.

Life of Prayer: The Practice of Contemplative Living

Led by Lloyd Griffith on Wednesdays noon-1pm 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.

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 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 Merryl Blair. Circles will begin meeting in September so look on the church website under Presbyterian Women for meeting times: firstpresnb.org/pres-women

Welcoming Tip of the Month

Offering more than a smile and hello to those you don't know well sometimes requires moving beyond discomfort. It might be embarrassing to mistake a seasoned member for a newcomer-- or introduce yourself a second time! This act of courage can be worthwhile, though, because it might offer you the chance to get to know a bit of someone's story. It's ok to be assertive and to own

the fact that you “aren’t sure we’ve talked before.” Look around the Sanctuary, classroom, or courtyard for someone you can get to know better.

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.

Notes: