

First Presbyterian Church Covington, GA




the good news is...
so good, it catches
us by surprise

**FIRST SUNDAY
IN LENT**

February 22, 2026



✠ *You are invited to stand in body OR in spirit* ❖

Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

Our Father in Heaven

J.S. Bach, BWV 863

Fairest Lord Jesus (CRUSADERS' HYMN) Schlesische Volkslieder, 1842

My Jesus I Love Thee

GORDON

Invitation to Worship

Chiming of the Hour

Prelude

They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

Peter Scholtes

Welcome & Announcements

✠ Call to Worship

The good news of the gospel is:

**manna in the desert,
water turned into wine,
love after loss,
forgiveness after pain.**

The good news of the gospel is:

**release for the captive,
hope for the hopeless,
mourning turned to dancing,
and strangers turned to friends.**

So come on in. There's no time to waste!

This surprising good news is here for you.

Let us worship this good-news God.

✠ Hymn of Praise 630

Fairest Lord Jesus

CRUSADERS' HYMN

✠ Call to Confession

✠ Community Confession

Loving God, somewhere along the way we picked up the message

that in order to be faithful, we have to be serious.

We have to pray on our knees without ceasing.

We have to be somber in worship and quiet in our studies.

We have to check our wiggles and our questions at the door.

But then you say the kingdom of God is like a mustard seed—
unruly and untamed.

You turn water into wine—surprising and extravagant.

And all of a sudden, we wonder:

Can we be like that mustard seed? Can we be faithful and unruly?

Can we be playful and curious? Can we be messy and still be yours?

We know the answer already.

The Spirit whispers: of course, of course, of course.

Forgive our doubt. Pull us closer into your embrace.

With faith like a mustard seed, we pray. Amen.

✠ Hymn of Response 695

Change My Heart, O God

CHANGE MY HEART

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

You are the Potter; I am the clay.

Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

✠ Assurance of God's Love & Forgiveness

God's grace is wild and unruly.

God's mercy is abundant and surprising.

God's love is expansive and unending.

So if you ask, "Holy One, am I forgiven?"

the answer is and always will be:

of course, of course, of course.

This is the good news of the gospel.

Church, we are forgiven!

We are free to try again.

✠ **Hymn 582** *Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me* GLORY TO GOD (Vasile)

We invite our children to come forward and to play shakers during this song!

***Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.***

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

✠ **Passing of the Peace**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you!



Proclaiming the Word

Wondering with God's Children

Anthem

Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)

by Chris Tomlinson

Mark Fiddie (solo)

Prayer for God's Wisdom & Understanding

Scripture Reading

John 2:1-11

Pew Bible page 93

Message

The Good News is...

so good it catches us by surprise

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



Responding to the Word

✠ **Response 462**

I Love to Tell the Story

HANKEY

Affirmation of Faith

I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. It sounds like welcome and feels

like home. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. It sounds like love and feels like a seat at the table, so I believe in the good news of Jesus Christ. I have seen it alive in the world.

And even when my heart aches, even when wars rage, even when mercy feels out of reach, I remember the one who welcomed the children and led with nonviolence. I remember the one who cared for the vulnerable and inspired those around him. I remember that the good news really is good news, for I have seen it alive in the world. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Prayers of the People & 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.

Offering Our Gifts: An Invitation to Generosity

You are invited to "Text to Give" your offering! Text* FPCCOV to: 73256 and follow the link to give online, or scan the QR Code to visit the giving page! Select "**2026 Pledge**" if you made a pledge during stewardship season. Select "Non-Pledge" for a general offering.



Offertory

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Alice Walker (organ)

Charles Callahan

✦ Response 658

God Is So Good

GOD IS SO GOOD

God is so good; God is so good; God is so good; God's so good to me.

God cares for me; God cares for me; God cares for me; God's so good to me.

Prayer of Dedication & Gratitude

Tell Me Something Good

You are invited to write down Good NEWS on the leaf cut out found in your bulletin! As you exit worship we ask that you place the leaves in the offering plates located at the exit doors! Your Good News will be added to our worship art each week of Lent! How might God be saying "Surprise" to you this Lenten season?



Being the Church in the World

✦ Sending Hymn 658

God Is So Good

GOD IS SO GOOD

God loves me so; God loves me so; God loves me so; God's so good to me.

God is so good; God is so good; God is so good; God's so good to me.

✦ Charge & Benediction

✦ Postlude

Sifonia from the Cantata "Wir Danken Dir Gott"

J.S. Bach



Worship Practices

Tell Me Something Good Lenten Series—Our 2026 Lenten series, “Tell Me Something Good: grounding ourselves in the good news this Lent” was created by the creative team at Sanctified Art. The following is their message on the series:

Lent was originally a season for new converts to learn and prepare for their baptism on Easter. During that time, they would study what was central to Christianity. As we crafted this Lenten series, we studied what was central to Jesus' life and ministry: radical welcome, love for neighbor, care for the vulnerable, nourishment for the hungry, nonviolence in the face of injustice. At the heart of Jesus' teachings, we find liberation, love, mercy, and grace—all of which are meant to be very good news for us all.

This Lent, let us remember that the good news really is good news. It is joyful—like fine wine saved for celebration. It grows like a mustard seed and smells like perfume poured from an alabaster jar. It tastes like bread passed endlessly through a hungry crowd. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. The good news is alive in the world. This Lent, let the teachings of Jesus lead us forward. May the good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good.

Worship Art—Look at the art on the cover of this worship guide. Imagine you are the servant in the image. How do you feel as the chief steward tastes from the cup and realizes it is wine?

Today's worship guide cover art is an acrylic on canvas piece by Rev. T. Denise Anderson titled “Messianic Secret” inspired by John 2:1-11. The following is from the artist's statement on the piece.

The Wedding at Cana is my favorite text because there is a lot of humor in it. There's humor in a mother approaching her son and telling him to do something without ever actually telling him to do it. There's his pouty resistance to his mother's non-demand while she completely ignores him and paints him in a corner. There is humor in a raucous wedding reception where the people are so "lit" that the wine has run out. And, for me, it's particularly humorous that there's this huge, beautiful secret of which only a few people are aware.

Those people include Jesus' mother and the select servants who help him pull off the miracle that inaugurates his ministry. Servants are normally meant to be inconspicuous, so I wanted to focus on the servant who goes to the chief steward with a cup full of what, as far as he's concerned, is water.

If Jesus—whose ministry has not started, so there haven't been any wonders associated with him yet—tells you to fill jars with water and draw from the jar to give to the chief steward, what is going through your mind at that moment? I invite the viewer to focus on this servant and all his curiosity and expectation, and think of a time when you were surprised by something God did. What actions preceded the miracle? Did it make sense? What did you know, and what was hidden from you? What "secrets" might God be keeping from you now as God works clandestinely on your behalf?

First time visiting? We're so glad you're here!—Please take a moment to fill out the Connect Card in the pew pocket in front of you. After worship, let us know it's your first time—we have a gift for you with info about our church and a free treat from The Little Rabbit Bake Shop!

Want to learn more about our church family, baptism, communion, or Bible study? Just mark it on the card—we'd love to connect with you!

Offering Cards—The offering is an act of worship! We encourage you to place something in the offering plate as it comes to you. Throughout the pews you will find a selection of "offering cards" which we invite you to use to share how you intend to be a good steward this week. *Connect* with us as a newcomer by sharing about yourself or your family. *Pray* with us by offering a prayer which will be shared with the pastor. *Serve* with us by telling us how you will use your time and talent this week. Or *Give* with us by placing either a card to represent your online gift or physical cash or check offering. These offering cards are an invitation to generosity!

Accessibility—A limited supply of large print worship guides and hymns are available in the narthex. Please return the large print binder to an usher at the end of worship so it

may be updated for next week. If you'd like to learn about connecting your Bluetooth hearing aids to our Sanctuary sound system we invite you to talk to our Tech Team.

Use—One License #A-728728 authorizes the use of music printed in our worship guide and streamed online. *Messages and data rates may apply when using Text to Give. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel. Lenten Series: “Tell Me Something Good” | Liturgy by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | Art: “Messianic Secret” by Rev. T. Denise Anderson | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Serving Today

Usher Chair | Sara Chini

Acolytes | Rose Ralston, Lily Wells, Michael Dobbs

Tech Team | Jonny Atkins, Laramy Wells



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First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	<i>Senior Pastor & Head of Staff</i>	<i>Nursery Staff</i>
Alisa Castilla	<i>Interim Dir. of Children & Youth</i>	Hattie Bellinger
Mark Fiddie	<i>Dir. of Music & Worship Arts</i>	Catrina Crowe
Denise Gabriel	<i>Dir. of Community Preschool</i>	Akeelah Fletcher
Peni Kehoe	<i>Finance Administrator</i>	Jahnyah Greene
Catherine Laseter	<i>Dir. of Communications & Operations</i>	Jordyn Williams
Alice Walker	<i>Organist CAGO, AAGO</i>	Sylvia Woods

Nursery Staff
Hattie Bellinger
Catrina Crowe
Akeelah Fletcher
Jahnyah Greene
Jordyn Williams
Sylvia Woods

Officers

Reaching Out

Sara Chini	<i>Witness (2026)</i>
Yvonne Hill-Davenport	<i>Witness (2028)</i>
Stephanie Scarborough	<i>Witness (2027)</i>
Bob Tabb	<i>Thriving Congregations (2028)</i>

Engaging

Krista Firkus	<i>Faith Formation (2027)</i>
Hardy Fortson Sideris	<i>Worship (2027)</i>
Chuck Williams	<i>Faith Formation (2028)</i>
Angie Woodham	<i>Worship (2028)</i>

Belonging

Gary Boteler	<i>Finance (2027)</i>
Pam Stillerman	<i>Welcome (2026)</i>
Bethany Wells	<i>Welcome (2028)</i>

Connecting (Deacons)

Cathy Dobbs	<i>Pastoral Care (2027)</i>
Denny Dobbs	<i>Pastoral Care (2027)</i>
Beverly Kratz	<i>Faith & Fellowship (2028)</i>
Darcel Tabb	<i>Faith & Fellowship (2027)</i>

More

Jodi Atkins	<i>Preschool (2026)</i>
Kenny Compton	<i>Facilities (2026)</i>
Jo Anna Fish	<i>Personnel (2027)</i>
John McCarthy	<i>Clerk of Session</i>

Emergency Response Team

In the event of an emergency including tornado, fire, intruder, and medical emergencies, the Emergency Response Team will lead the church's response and may be identified by wearing yellow visibility vests. If these people are not present for an emergency secondary responders will wear ERT vests. Please follow any directions given by the following people in the event of an emergency:

Primary Point Person—Neeley Rentz Lane
Facility/Security Response—Kenny Compton, Stan Hall, John McCarthy
Medical Response—Nichole Howell, Pam Stillerman

UNDIE SUNDAY UNDERWEAR DRIVE MARCH 1

Bring **NEW** undies
(men, women,
teens, kids)
to worship!

This is a need for
our unhoused
neighbors

In partnership with Repairers of the Breach



2026 Intergenerational Church Retreat *peace be with you and also with you*

February 28th, 2026
9:00am-4:00pm at Camp Calvin



Our friends at Southern
Crescent Habitat for
Humanity will be speaking at
our church on March 15th!

They will lead a group discussion
in the Foundations Sunday School
Class and will hold a Minute for
Mission at the beginning of
worship! Come and hear about
their mission in our community!

Sunday, February 22

First Sunday in Lent

Signup for S.O.S. Adventure

9:30am Jr. Acolyte Training

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship—Tell Me Something Good

11:30am Godly Play after Children's Moment

12:00pm Session Meeting

4:00pm Black History Month Movie Night

Monday, February 23

5:30pm FPCP Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 24

12:00pm Lectio Divina - Pastor's Bible Study

Wednesday, February 25

9:00am S.O.S Adventure

5:45pm Handbell Choir

6:30pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, February 26

10:00am FPCP Chapel

2:00pm Singing Ambassadors at Merryvale

Saturday, February 28

9:00am Meals on Wheels delivery

9:00am—
4:00pm Intergenerational Church Retreat

Sunday, March 1

Second Sunday in Lent

Undie Sunday

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship—Tell Me Something Good

5:00pm Youth Study Night

IN RECOGNITION OF
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
MOVIE NIGHT
& CONVERSATION
SUNDAY, FEB. 22
4:00PM-7:00PM IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL
POPCORN & PIZZA
Send questions to Alisa!
alisa@fpccov.org
We invite the whole church to join our Youth for a movie
and conversation in honor of Black History Month

In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Most recent prayer requests

Requests will be moved to "ongoing" after three weeks unless the office is notified.

- ✦ Beth Vining - knee & back pain
- ✦ Sybil Carter, grandmother of Luke Usry - hospice
- ✦ Jonathan Paschal, father of Jon Paschal
- ✦ Joann Usry, grandmother of Luke Usry - surgery & pacemaker
- ✦ Julia MacKenzie - recovering from eye surgery
- ✦ Kevin Gabriel, husband of Denise Gabriel - kidney surgery & testing
- ✦ Seth, nephew of FPCP teacher Jannie Smith - surgery
- ✦ Ed Perkerson - early Parkinson's
- ✦ Starr Puckett - rotary cuff surgery
- ✦ Greg Brickell, friend of Sam & Loucy Hay
- ✦ Gail Watson, friend of Mark Fiddie - mourning the loss of her husband James

Ongoing prayer requests

Requests will be removed after six weeks unless the office is notified.

- ✦ Aviya Castilla, sister of Alisa Castilla
- ✦ Mary Alice Clark, cousin of Denny Dobbs - serious blood illness
- ✦ Ariana Donaldson, friend of Hannah Freeman
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining
- ✦ Virginia, mother of Tammi Welch
- ✦ Otis Andrews, friend of the Buckelew/McSwain family - in the ICU
- ✦ Joy Bouchard, family of Sara Chini - pneumonia
- ✦ Norma C. Couch, friend of Starr & Taryn Puckett - recovering from heart transplant
- ✦ Aria Jo, friend of Ruby Wells - infant with poor immune system
- ✦ Jill Chandler, sister of Brad Hawley - cancer
- ✦ Katelyn Jackson, niece of Kim McSwain - stage 3 breast cancer

- ✦ Patrick Carmichael
- ✦ Mark Wells, family of Lily Wells
- ✦ Bob Woodham, family of Angie Woodham - recovering from a fall

Condolences

- ✦ Our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of Jane Williams, including her husband Jon Williams, as they mourn Jane's passing on February 10, 2026. A private service will be held at a later date.

Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Reid Buckelew - Prema at Ashton Hills
- ✦ Sarah Davis - Merryvale Assisted Living
- ✦ Jean Elder - Florida with her daughter
- ✦ Dot Fincher - Madison, GA
- ✦ Louly Hay - Presbyterian Village Athens
- ✦ Carol McGiboney - Prema at Ashton Hills
- ✦ Jon Paschal - Annandale Village
- ✦ Louise White - Prema at Ashton Hills

Military Service

- ✦ Koen Ardis - Navy

Prayer requests and updates may be given the pastor, put in the offering plate, or emailed to catherine@fpccov.org

Sunday School

Sunday School classes are held at 9:45am.
Children's Class (PreK-4th) | Youth Class (5th+)
Foundations Adult Class | The Wired WORD



2026 Lobby Day

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18TH @ 8:00AM
AT CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN ATLANTA. REGISTER AT P4BG.ORG



*Lenten
Lectio
Divina*

DEVOTIONAL STUDY

**Tuesdays at 12pm
in the Parlor**

Join Pastor Neeley this
Lent as we discuss the
Good News

S.O.S. Adventures!

FPC's Seasoned Older Saints' Monthly Outings

Wed., February 25

**Jimmy Carter
Presidential Library**

Meet at church to carpool at 9am

Signup with
Neeley by Feb. 22!

Museum Cost: \$12
Cost does not include lunch



**SHINDIG
STUDY
SERVE
@5-7PM**

March 1 - Study Sunday
March 15 - Serve Sunday
March 22 - Shindig Sunday