

First Presbyterian Church Covington, GA

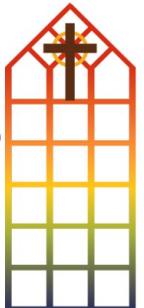


the good news is..

protection & care for
the vulnerable

FOURTH SUNDAY
IN LENT

March 15, 2026



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

Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

Fanfare

Jacques Lemmens

I am His, and He is Mine

EVERLASTING LOVE

Trumpet Tune in D

Ed Dunbar

Invitation to Worship

Chiming of the Hour

Prelude

If With All Your Hearts

Felix Mendelssohn

Welcome & Announcements

Minute for Mission

Habitat for Humanity

✠ Call to Worship

God loves the field mouse.

God loves the crows that take flight when church bells ring.

God loves the baby, cooing in the back pew.

**God loves the child who reads during the sermon
and the child who sings off key!**

God loves those who walk, crawl, and use mobility aids.

God loves the one with wrinkled hands and soft eyes.

God loves the bumblebees and the tabby cats.

**God loves the giant oaks and the evergreens,
standing strong over all of us.**

God loves the young, the impressionable, and the earnest.

There is no bit of creation that God does not love.

So let us worship this good-news God!

Amen.

✠ Hymn of Praise 664

Morning Has Broken

BUNESSAN

✠ Call to Confession

✠Community Confession & Assurance of God's Forgiveness

God said, "When a foreigner resides among you in your land,
do not mistreat them."

Holy God, we confess, we have mistreated the immigrants in our land.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God."

**We confess, we have clung to guns and war
more than we have pursued peace.**

God said, "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard,
do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow."

**We confess, we have hoarded our resources
and failed to care for our neighbors.**

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them."

We confess, we have gatekept the good news in unfair ways.

Fortunately for all of us, God also said,
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name; you are mine."

**By God's grace, despite our sin and shortcomings,
we are redeemed, claimed, forgiven, and loved.**

May this good news change our lives!

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

Children's Anthem

Great and Mighty
Children's Choir

by Todd Pettygrove

Anthem

Have Mercy on Me
Chancel Choir; Krista Firkus (solo)

by Clayton White

Prayer for God's Wisdom & Understanding

Scripture Readings

Matthew 19:13-15

Pew Bible page 21

Message

The Good News is... wiggles and giggles!

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



Responding to the Word

✦ **Response 188**

Jesus Loves Me!

JESUS LOVES ME

Affirmation of Faith

**We have this unwritten agreement,
us members of humanity.**

**When the toddler at the coffee shop runs round the corner,
when her mom, at the register, looks up in panic,
we, the adults in the room, will pledge,
with quick smiles and silent head nods, to keep watch.**

We will lean out of our seats.

We will put down our phones.

**We will stand at the ready
to scoop up,
to offer words of comfort,**

**to make silly faces,
to keep an eye on the door.**

And we will do this, because we cannot ignore the instinct to care.

We will do this, because we cannot ignore the child right in front of us.

We will do this, because love always includes the least of these.

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

*Jardins Sous La Pluie
Alice Walker (organ)*

Claude Debussy

✠Response

This Little Light of Mine I'M GONNA LET IT SHINE

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. (repeat 3x)

Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine



The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Table

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving & The Lord's Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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.

Words of Institution

Church, you are invited to partake with bread and cup upon hearing the words “The gifts of God for the people of God.” We recognize Christ is present with us as the Body of Christ in our sanctuary and in our homes this day. May the Holy Spirit dwell with you as we participate in the sacrament of communion together. One bread, one body!
See our Worship Practices section for more details.

Prayer After Communion



Being the Church in the World

✦ **Sending Hymn 542** *God Be with You Till We Meet Again* GOD BE WITH YOU

✦ **Charge & Benediction**

✦ **Postlude** *Fill Your Hearts with Joy and Gladness* Charles Callahan



Worship Notes

Communion—All are invited to come forward to take communion. The ushers will guide you to two stations on either side of the Lord’s table to receive the bread and the cup. You may choose to receive prepackaged communion elements or a gluten-free option which are available at the Lord’s table. If you are not physically able to come forward and would still like to receive communion, please let an usher know and it will be brought to you. Communion elements are taken to the nursery for children to participate in the sacrament. If you would not like to receive communion, you are welcome to stay in your seat for a time of prayerful reflection.

Worship Art—Our “Jesus Loves Me” banner displayed under the organ was made with the precious handprints of our First Presbyterian Community Preschool kiddos Today’s worship guide cover art composed of self portraits done by some of our FPC Kids and Youth Thank you Rose (age 9), Kately (13), JJ (10), Paisley (11), Lorene (6), Ruth (12), Bea (13), Lily (7), MaryRantz (8) and our FPCP students for sharing your art with us!

Today you are invited to take note of the butterflies added to our good news tree! These butterflies were painted by our church children over the years!

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.

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. 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 | Poem of Affirmation: “Unwritten Agreement” by Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Serving Today

Usher Chair | Angie Woodham

Tech Team | Jonny Atkins, Dan Walden

Acolytes | James Freeman, Wesley Freeman, Nova Puckett



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First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	<i>Senior Pastor & Head of Staff</i>
Alisa Castilla	<i>Interim Dir. of Children & Youth</i>
Mark Fiddie	<i>Dir. of Music & Worship Arts</i>
Denise Gabriel	<i>Dir. of Community Preschool</i>
Peni Kehoe	<i>Finance Administrator</i>
Catherine Laseter	<i>Dir. of Communications & Operations</i>
Alice Walker	<i>Organist CAGO, AAGO</i>

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

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

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>

In Our Thoughts & Prayers

Most recent prayer requests

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

- ✦ Douglas Hatfield, husband of Mary Hatfield
- ✦ Kelly Folden, friend of Jennifer Buckelew - father diagnosed with cancer
- ✦ Tom Crews - recovering from a fall
- ✦ Anne Cranford - cancer
- ✦ Ken Walker - pneumonia
- ✦ Brad Phillips, son-in-law of Tricia & Harry Hinton - recovering from knee surgery

Ongoing prayer requests

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

- ✦ Jill Chandler, sister of Brad Hawley - cancer
- ✦ Katelyn Jackson, niece of Kim McSwain - stage 3 breast cancer
- ✦ Jonathan Paschal, father of Jon Paschal
- ✦ Beth Vining - knee & back pain

- ✦ Joann Usry, grandmother of Luke Usry - surgery & pacemaker
- ✦ Patrick Carmichael
- ✦ Julia MacKenzie - recovering from eye surgery
- ✦ Kevin Gabriel, husband of Denise Gabriel - kidney surgery & testing
- ✦ Ed Perkerson - early Parkinson's
- ✦ Seth, nephew of FPCP teacher Jannie Smith - surgery
- ✦ Starr Puckett - rotary cuff surgery
- ✦ Greg Brickell, friend of Sam & Loucy Hay
- ✦ Aviya Castilla, sister of Alisa Castilla
- ✦ 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

Condolences

- ✦ Our thoughts and prayers are with Luke Usry and his loved ones as they mourn the loss of his grandmother, Sybil Carter.

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

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

Holy Week at FPC

Palm-Passion Sunday

March 29 | 11:00am

Featuring the Children's Palm Parade & a Lenten Cantata from our Chancel Choir

Maundy Thursday

April 2 | 6:00pm

Experience communion with us around The Lord's Table

Good Friday

April 3 | 6:00pm

Community Worship hosted by our friends at Grace United Methodist Church experiencing the Seven Last Words

Easter Sunday April 5

Traditional Service at 11:00am in the Sanctuary
Sunrise Service at 6:45am in the Garden



MISSION MANIA

join FPC for local missions this Summer!

July 20-23

stay tuned for more info!

On Easter Sunday, we will collect for

One Great Hour of Sharing, a PCUSA special offering.

Join Presbyterians worldwide in sharing God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed.

FPC's Seasoned Older Saints' Monthly Lunch



Chicken Salad Chick

Thu., March 19 at 11:30am

Signup with Neeley!

4153 Hwy 278 NE



Sunday School classes are held at 9:45am.

Children's Class (PreK-4th) | Youth Class (5th+) | Foundations Adult Class | The Wired WORD

EASTER EGGHUNT



Saturday, April 4 at 10:00am

ALL are welcome to join us in the FPC Fellowship Hall for an Easter egg hunt, refreshments, story time, and a special visit from the Easter bunny!

Want to donate for a great Easter Egg Hunt? Bring in plastic eggs and/or candy and place them in the colorful laundry basket by March 29! no nuts please!



Instead of regular Youth Group, we will be supporting our friends in the Arts Association's production of *Alice in Wonderland* on March 15 at 3:00pm.

FPC KIDS
LOGOS Night
 Wednesday, March 18
 in the Fellowship Hall
 from 5:00pm - 6:30pm
 Dinner Provided

EASTER LILIES



Dedicate an Easter Lily for the Sanctuary to a loved one

Deadline to donate and submit names is March 29th

Find the form in the narthex, in the e-news or at fpcov.org/lent

The suggested minimum donation is \$14. Donations over the cost of flowers will be contributed to the Newton County Community Food Pantry and to our work with our Partner in Education Fairview Elementary School.

CHANGEMAKERS LAB VBS at FPC

JUNE 15-18

9:00AM-12:00PM

3 y/o - 5th grade

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE FUN!

To register, visit fpcov.org/vbs



Register by May 14 to guarantee a t-shirt in your size!

