



May 17, 2026  
Seventh Sunday of Easter



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

# *Gathering As God's Beloved People*

## **Gathering Music**

*Toccata on HYFRYDOL*  
*Processional March*  
*Change My Heart, O God*

Matthew F. Walicke  
William H. Harris  
John Carter

## **Invitation to Worship**

## **Chiming of the Hour**

## **Prelude**

*Prelude*

by Alice Griffin Walker

## **Welcome & Announcements**

## ✠ **Call to Worship**

God reveals Godself in Jesus.

Jesus gives us a glimpse of God's glory  
and invites us to share in the unity of all that is Holy.

### **We are united in the Spirit**

**that breaks through all boundaries of fear and injustice.**

God, Meet us here today and teach us to be one.

**One in love for each other.**

Teach us to be one in understanding.

**One in peace.**

Let us worship the Living God!

## ✠ **Hymn of Praise 749**

*Come! Live in the Light!*

WE ARE CALLED

## ✠ **Call to Confession**

Chuck Williams

## ✠ **Community Confession**

Holy one,

**Your blessed Son asked that His Church be one as You and He are one,  
but we have not been united as Jesus prayed.**

**We have isolated ourselves from each other  
and have failed to listen to each other.  
We have misunderstood and ridiculed  
and even gone so far as to attack each other.  
In doing so we have offended against You,  
against all our siblings in the Church.  
Forgive us God and make us fully one.  
Blot out our sins, renew our minds, rekindle our hearts,  
and guide us by Your Holy Spirit into the oneness that is Your Will. Amen.**

### ✠ **Assurance of God's Love & Forgiveness**

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**

**Recognition of Graduates**

**Anthem**

*Spirit Song*  
Mark Fiddie, solo

by John Wimber

## **Prayer for God's Wisdom & Understanding**

**Scripture Reading**

*John 17:1-11*

Pew Bible page 111

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Message**

*A Prayer for the Road*

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



## *Responding to the Word*

✠ **Response 306**

*Blest Be the Tie That Binds*

DENNIS

✠ **Affirmation of Faith**

*excerpt from PCUSA's Belhar Confession*

Amelia Evans, Thornton Holder, Bob Tabb, Ruby Wells

**ALL:**

**We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;**

**PLAYGROUND SIDE:**

**that unity is, therefore, both a gift and an obligation for the church of Jesus Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a binding force, yet simultaneously a reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought: one which the people of God must continually be built up to attain;**

**FONT SIDE:**

**that this unity must become visible so that the world may believe that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;**

## **CHOIR & YOUTH:**

**that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be active in a variety of ways: in that we love one another; that we experience, practice and pursue community with one another; that we are obligated to give ourselves willingly and joyfully to be of benefit and blessing to one another; that we share one faith, have one calling, are of one soul and one mind;**

## **ALL:**

**We have one God and Father, are filled with one Spirit, are baptized with one baptism, eat of one bread and drink of one cup, confess one name, are obedient to one Lord, work for one cause, and share one hope; together come to know the height and the breadth and the depth of the love of Christ; together are built up to the stature of Christ, to the new humanity; together know and bear one another's burdens, thereby fulfilling the law of Christ that we need one another and upbuild one another, admonishing and comforting one another; that we suffer with one another for the sake of righteousness; pray together; together serve God in this world; and together fight against all which may threaten or hinder this unity.**

## **Prayers of the People & the Lord's Prayer**

Chuck Williams

**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**

*Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service*  
Alice Walker, organ

Wayne L. Wold

✦ **Response 300**

*We Are One in the Spirit*

THEY'LL KNOW WE ARE CHRISTIANS

*Verses 1 & 2*

## Prayer of Dedication & Gratitude



# *Being the Church in the World*

✦ **Sending Hymn 733**

*We All Are One in Mission*

ES FLOG EIN KLEINS WALDVOGELEIN

*We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,*

*our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.*

*A single, great commission compels us from above*

*to plan and work together that all may know Christ's love.*

*We all are called for service to witness in God's name.*

*Our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:*

*to touch the lives of others by God's surprising grace,*

*so every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace.*

*Now let us be united and let our song be heard.*

*Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word.*

*We all are one in mission; we all are one in call,*

*our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all.*

## ✦ Charge & Benediction

✦ **Postlude**

*My Heart Ever Faithful*

J.S. Bach



# *Worship Practices*

**First time visiting? We're so glad you're here!**—Please take a moment to fill out the Visitor 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. *Visit* 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 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.



## Serving Today

**Usher Chair** | Jodi Atkins

**Tech Team** | Dan Walden, Brad Hawley

**Acolytes** | Kali Smith, Thornton Holder

### First Presbyterian Church Staff

|                   |  |                      |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|
| Neeley Rentz Lane | <i>Senior Pastor &amp; Head of Staff</i>       | <i>Nursery Staff</i> |
| Mark Fiddie       | <i>Dir. of Music &amp; Worship Arts</i>        | Hattie Bellinger     |
| Denise Gabriel    | <i>Dir. of Community Preschool</i>             | Akeelah Fletcher     |
| Peni Kehoe        | <i>Finance Administrator</i>                   | Jahniyah Greene      |
| Catherine Laseter | <i>Dir. of Communications &amp; Operations</i> | Laina Lalane         |
| Alice Walker      | <i>Organist CAGO, AAGO</i>                     | Jordyn Williams      |
| Chuck Williams    | <i>Parish Associate</i>                        | 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 &amp; Fellowship (2028)</i> |
| Darcel Tabb   | <i>Faith &amp; 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>  |



# Graduates

We would like to congratulate our graduates for reaching this milestone in their lives!

## **Liz Stillerman Anderson**

*University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Master of Fine Arts*

## **Jasmine Ardis**

*Universal Technical Institute; Associate of Occupational Studies, Automotive Technology*

## **Laurel Ardis**

*University of Georgia; Bachelor of Science, Chemistry*

## **Aubrey Jene Evans**

*Valdosta State University; Master of Education, Elementary Education*

## **Akeeleh Fletcher**

*Eastside High School*

## **Jordyn Williams**

*Eastside High School*



We celebrate a benchmark in the life of our church with the first graduating class of

## **First Presbyterian Church Community Preschool**



We also congratulate the following graduating loved ones of church members:

**Emily Elizabeth Bunn**, granddaughter of  
Danny & Beth Vining—*East Jackson*  
*Comprehensive High School in*  
*Commerce, GA*

**Finley Simon**, grandchild of Sandy & Betsy  
Morehouse—*University of Colorado*  
*Boulder*

**Perry Lum**, grandchild of Sandy & Betsy  
Morehouse—*University of Texas, LBJ*  
*School of Public Policy*

**Tommy Smith**, grandchild of Sandy &  
Betsy Morehouse—*Holy Innocents*  
*Episcopal School in Atlanta, GA*

**Wiley Lum**, grandchild of Sandy & Betsy  
Morehouse—*The Westminster Schools*  
*in Atlanta, GA*

**Benjamin Watson**, grandson of Carolyn &  
Curtis Watson—*High School in*  
*Murfreesboro, TN*

**Joshua Merritt Vining**, grandson of Danny  
& Beth Vining—*Texas A&M University*



GIVE HOPE  
THIS SPRING.

Give blood.

**First Presbyterian Church  
Covington, GA  
American Red Cross  
Blood Drive  
Tuesday, May 19th, 2026  
12:00PM-5:00PM  
Fellowship Hall**

**SUMMER**

# FPC KIDS

**June 29 | Pizza in the Park  
Central Park | 5:00pm**

**July 13 | Trail Walk & Scoops  
Meet at Legion Field for a group  
walk on Cricket Frog Trail to the  
square for ice cream | 6:00pm**

**July 26 | Weesner Cabin Day  
Hamburgers, hotdogs, fishing fun!  
RSVP to Neeley | 5:00pm**

### ***Pentecost Breakfast***

On May 24th the Faith Formation Committee is hosting refreshments for all ages at 9:45am in the place of Sunday School classes. Join us in the upstairs elevator hallway and bring a breakfast food to share as we look forward to Summer and celebrate the birthday of the church!

We welcome everyone into  
our church family!

**We'd LOVE to have  
you become an  
official MEMBER!**

**Sunday, May 31st  
Talk to Neeley if you are interested!**

### **Sunday, May 17 Seventh Sunday of Easter**

- 9:45am Last Regular Sunday School
- 11:00am Worship—Graduates' Sunday
- 12:00pm Signing Prayers for Habitat for Humanity
- 5:00pm Youth Group

### **Monday, May 18**

- 5:30pm Worship Team Meeting
- 6:30pm Youth Montreat Participants Meeting

### **Tuesday, May 19**

- 11:00am Deacons Meeting
- 12:00pm Lectio Divina
- 12:00pm American Red Cross Blood Drive—5:00pm
- 5:30pm Faith Formation Team Meeting

### **Wednesday, May 20**

- 10:00am Coffee Club
- 10:00am FPCP Chapel
- 12:00pm Facilities Team Meeting
- 3:30pm Staff Meeting
- 5:45pm Handbell Choir
- 6:30pm Chancel Choir

### **Thursday, May 21**

- 10:00am FPCP Chapel
- 11:30am Lunch Bunch
- 4:00pm Finance Team Meeting
- 5:00pm FPCP Graduation

### **Saturday, May 23**

- 9:00am Meals on Wheels

### **Sunday, May 24 Day of Pentecost**

- 9:45am Pentecost Breakfast
- 11:00am Worship

### **Monday, May 25**

Office CLOSED for Memorial Day

**After worship on May 31st we will  
welcome new members to FPC! Then our  
welcome team and session will host those  
who have recently joined for a new  
member lunch in the Fellowship Hall!**

## In Our Thoughts & Prayers

### Most recent prayer requests

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

- ✦ Ricky, friend of John Leavitt - recovering from colon surgery
- ✦ John Dearing
- ✦ Will Allfather, cousin of Kim Lindsey - cancer treatment
- ✦ Clements Middle School

### Ongoing prayer requests

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

- ✦ Anne Cranford - cancer
- ✦ Ruth McDaniel, former member - recovering from a brain bleed
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining
- ✦ Maggie Gwin, family of Paisley Lane - welcoming baby McCoy!
- ✦ Rita Brown, loved one of Townes Pittman - skin cancer
- ✦ Andrew Rivas, loved one of Townes Pittman - collar bone & wrist injury
- ✦ Carter, friend of Paisley Lane - broken wrist

- ✦ Jill Chandler, sister of Brad Hawley - cancer
- ✦ Glen Eason, uncle of Hannah Freeman - recovering from car accident
- ✦ Steven Gibbons - fractured ribs
- ✦ Brenda Howell - recovering from stroke & heart attack
- ✦ Patrick Carmichael
- ✦ Danny Vining - prostate cancer treatment
- ✦ Lee Ellen Digby, mother of Terri Digby - rehab
- ✦ Brandon Vining, son of Danny & Beth Vining - prostate cancer treatment
- ✦ Ed Perkerson - early Parkinson's
- ✦ Greg Brickell, friend of Sam & Loucy Hay
- ✦ Olaava MacKenzie, daughter of Julie & Jeff MacKenzie - praying for safe travels

### Prayer requests and updates

may be given the pastor, put in the offering plate, or emailed to [catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org)

### Condolences

- ✦ Our prayers are with the loved ones of Ken Walker, including his wife Alice, as they mourn Ken's passing on April 18, 2026. A visitation and service were held on April 23.
- ✦ Our prayers are with Jean Elder as she mourns the recent passing of several loved ones including her sister Jackie, her nephew Robert, and her dear friend Shirly.

### Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Reid Buckelew - Prema at Ashton Hills
- ✦ Tom Crews - 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
- ✦ Benjamin Iannucci, III - Air Force

## S.O.S. Summer!

FPC's Seasoned Older Saints!



**May 21 El Chapparro**

**Lunch Bunch | 11:30am**

**June 1 Olive Garden**

**Lunch Bunch | 11:30am**

**August 13 Fernbank Adventure!**

**Meet at church at 9am | Cost: \$21**

## VOLUNTEER FOR VBS at FPC

**JUNE 15-18**  
9:00AM-12:00PM

Email Neeley to signup!  
[neeley@fpccov.org](mailto:neeley@fpccov.org)



To register campers,  
visit [fpccov.org/vbs](http://fpccov.org/vbs)

**Mandatory training**  
**MAY 31**  
**at 9:45am**  
during Sunday School

## MISSION MANIA

**July 20-23**

For more info visit  
[fpccov.org/signup](http://fpccov.org/signup)

join FPC for  
local missions  
this Summer!

## Summer Sunday School starts May 31 at 9:45am!

**Adults:** We will combine our adult classes with a Feasting on the Word curriculum in the Gathering Room!

**Youth:** We invite our Youth to join us at Bread and Butter for a casual time of coffee and conversation. We will meet in the narthex at 9:45am to walk over together and we'll walk back for worship!

**Children:** Our children will continue regular Sunday School through the summer!