

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Third Sunday of Easter

Creation Care Sunday

April 19, 2026

A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

(As we prepare to worship, please silence all mobile devices.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

Esther Hethcox

PRELUDE

Now the Green Blade Rises

*French Easter Carol,
arr. Michael Bedford*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Esther Hethcox

Leader: Easter people, do you hear that sound?

People: The voice of our God hovers over the waters, calling us to gather.

Leader: Easter people, do you hear that sound?

People: The love of our Savior cries out from the garden, calling us to know who we are.

Leader: Easter people, do you hear that sound?

People: The winds of the Spirit move through the stories of our discipleship, calling us to dream of what can be.

All: Come, let us worship God!

***HYMN NO. 14**

For the Beauty of the Earth

Dix

***CONFESSION OF SIN**

Mindy Douglas

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

**Creator God, it is you who formed us in the beginning,
crafting us from the dust of the cosmos**

and inviting us to live in companionship with you.

But we have not responded with the same abundant love.

In gardens of plenty,

we choose individual consumption over communal gleaning.

**In waters of stillness, we choose to disrupt and despoil,
instead of delighting and defending.**

In moments of possibility, we choose to destroy

and to reject the invitation to co-create with one another.

Forgive us, for how we have failed to love you,

love your earth, and love your people.

Lord in your mercy....

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

**Those who are able, please stand.*

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

***REGATHERING HYMN NO. 664**

Morning Has Broken

Bunessan

Morning has broken like the first morning; blackbird has spoken like the first bird.

Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning! Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning, born of the one light Eden saw play!

Praise with elation; praise every morning, God's re-creation of the new day!

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Jean Cary

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

All: **Living God,**

the heavens and earth sing to the glory of your creative, majestic name.

May our hearts, minds, and souls be ready in this hour

to imagine how we might join your ministry of creativity

as we embody your love in your world. Amen.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Ezekiel 36: 24-30

(Pew Bible, OT Page 805)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Jean Cary

People: **Thanks be to God!**

PSALTER

Psalm 19

(Pew Bible, OT Page 498)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Esther Hethcox

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

"The Heartbeat of Creation"

Esther Hethcox

(silent reflection)

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

From the Iona Community

Mindy Douglas

**We believe in God above us,
Maker and Sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon,
of water and earth,
of individual and communal.**

**We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,
born of a woman, servant of the poor,
tortured and nailed to a tree.**

**A man of compassion, he died forsaken;
he descended into the earth
to the place of death.**

**On the third day he rose from the tomb;
he ascended into heaven
to be everywhere present;
and his kingdom will come on earth.**

**We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
life-giving breath of the church,
spirit of healing and forgiveness,
source of resurrection and eternal life. Amen.**

***HYMN NO. 23** *God, You Spin the Whirling Planets* *Pleading Savior*

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN John Weicher

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Invitation to Give John Weicher

Offertory Anthem *Celtic Laud* Craig Courtney

*For fruit of the vine, for harvest of wheat, for bread and for wine,
the gift of your feast, the cup of thanksgiving I gratefully raise,
O Lord of my living, my love and my praise.*

*For dove in the sky, for wind in the trees, for wood in the fire,
your Spirit in me. The cup of thanksgiving I gratefully raise,
O Lord of my living, my love and my praise.*

*For springtime's green earth, for morning's first light, for every new birth,
for grace and for life. The cup of thanksgiving I gratefully raise,
O Lord of my living, my love and my praise*

***Doxology with Alleluias** *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below; Alleluia; Alleluia;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER *(in unison)* John Weicher

Leader: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

(Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession)

**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.**

***HYMN NO. 692** *Spirit, Open My Heart* *Wild Mountain Thyme*

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION** Esther Hethcox

***POSTLUDE** *Jesus is Lord of All the Earth* *Matthew Corl*

Happening Today

Children's Choir will meet following worship in the Christian Education building.

Youth Group will meet at 5:00pm at Farm Church (Watts & Green Streets).

The *Choral Society of Durham Chamber Choir* invites you to their spring concert, "Ring in the Thousand Years of Peace," with the Bell Durham Handbell Ensemble today at 3pm in the Sanctuary. Tickets are \$5 at the door and all payment types are accepted.



Sign In

First Presbyterian Church welcomes all who worship with us. Let us know you have joined us for worship by scanning the QR code to the left. For online giving, scan the QR code to the right.



Donate Online

We honor and celebrate the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Jesus Christ. First Presbyterian welcomes individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church. So that you may know who is sitting nearby, please sign the *Friendship Pad*, pass it along the pew, and **then return it to the starting point**, noting the names of those sitting near you.

The *flowers* in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God and in memory of *Seth Greyson Brown* by his family *Chris, Meredith, Logan, and Evelyn*.

First Presbyterian Church has been recertified as an *Earth Care Congregation* by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Presbyterian Hunger Program through February 2027. The Earth Care Congregation certification is designed to recognize churches that take seriously God's charge to "till and keep" the garden, that is our shared common home. Obtaining this status speaks to the serious commitment that FPC has made to care for God's earth.

Flower Donation Opportunities Available: There are open dates for worship flower donors during the next few months. To sign up, visit bit.ly/FPCflowers26 or click on the flowers link in the bi-weekly newsletter.

The *Paschal Banner* was completed in 1990 and dedicated in 1991. It depicts traditional Lenten and Easter symbols. The banner was made possible by funds donated in memory of *Bess Bryant* and by the stitching of many devoted members of this congregation.

Our *paschal candle and stained red oak stand* is a visible sign of God's enduring presence in our beautiful century-old sanctuary. Adopted by early Christians, the lit candle represents the Risen Christ's triumph over darkness and death. The beeswax candle is inscribed with a Cross and an *alpha* and *omega*, symbols attesting to Christ's presence among us always. Traditionally, the candle is lit during worship services throughout the fifty days of Eastertide from Easter to Pentecost.

Portions of today's worship resources were written by Esther Hethcox. Music is reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926.

These Days devotional books for April-June are available in the foyer.

Childcare: A staffed nursery and children’s playroom are available on the second floor of the education building during worship. **Activity bags and baskets** are available in the foyer for children. Please return them to the foyer at the end of worship.

Restroom locations: To the left and right as you exit the rear of the sanctuary; on the first and second floors of the education building; and on the first and second floors of the church house. There is an infant changing table in the restroom area located to the left as you exit the rear of the sanctuary.

Upcoming Community Events

Many of our events are posted in the bi-weekly newsletter. You may read past newsletters and join our mailing list at <https://firstpres-durham.org/weekly-newsletter/>



Yoga is offered at FPC on Mondays at 4:30pm (vinyasa flow class), and Fridays at 10:30am (chair yoga class). Contact **Jane Wettach** for more information at janebettach@gmail.com.

Durham Public Library Fest: FPC’s Racial Equity Task Force encourages everyone to register for the upcoming free programs at durhamcountylibrary.org/libraryfest/events. Both programs require registration – which is nearly full for the “Driving the Green Book” lecture. Both are at the Main Library (just across the street from FPC): “Pauli Murray: Writing the Path to Equality” on Thursday, **April 23**, 12-1pm; “Driving the Green Book” with Alvin Hall on Friday, **April 24**, 6-7:30pm.

First Friends: Join us on **April 25** at the home of **Jane Wettach** and **Paul Baldasare**. Visit evite.me/DcnckCb36E to learn more and RSVP. First Friends is a community of 55+ individuals who gather monthly for fellowship.

Meaning in the Middle, a fellowship group for adults in their 30s and 40s, will enjoy pizza and good coffee together while growing in faith and community after worship next Sunday, **April 26**. Please RSVP at bit.ly/MnMrsvp so that we can order enough food. All are welcome—whether you’re new to MnM or returning for another great conversation together! Visit the MnM Homepage at bit.ly/MnMhome for more info.

Daytimers’ Luncheon will gather on Tuesday, **April 28**, with guest speaker Chris Rice. Rice, an award-winning writer focused on social healing and spiritual renewal, will speak about his mentor, civil rights activist John Perkins. Daytimers, a fellowship group of retirees, will gather in Watts-Hill Hall for fellowship at 11:30am with a catered luncheon by Isaiah Jernigan of Family Meal at noon. Cost will be \$15 per person. For more information contact **Mickey Velkey** at marilyn.velkey@usa.net.

“Things That Matter” Book Group: On Tuesday, **May 12**, the group will discuss *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. **Kathy Parkins** will facilitate the discussion and **Caroline Pritchett** will host. The book discussion is at 4pm. Please RSVP to Caroline at 919-491-4490 or caropritch@gmail.com. All are welcome!

First Acts - Playreading Group: All are welcome to join in to read Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town” (or sit in and listen!) on Saturday, **May 16**, 9am-12pm, in the Fellowship Hall. We intend to explore the play more deeply and identify the themes from this Pulitzer Prize-winning play that are still relevant to our lives today. Visit bit.ly/41yxIBX to register and provide some additional information. Please contact **Mason Essif** at masonessif@comcast.net or **Chris Uithoven** at chris.uithoven614@gmail.com for more information.

Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Freedom will have an **Interfaith Service** on Sunday, **April 26**, at 3pm at United Church of Chapel Hill (1321 MLK Jr Blvd). Then, on **May 5**, there will be a **Faith Leaders Advocacy Day** at 8:45am at the NC General Assembly. Learn more and register for the Advocacy Day at shorturl.at/M2PY8.

~Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~

Condolences:

Condolences to *MargEva Cole* upon the death of her brother, *Arthur Sherman Morris III*.

We remember in prayer:

Perry Black, who is home recovering from an ICU stay.

Lori Pistor, who is recovering from knee replacement surgery

Joe Quirk, Tim O'Brien's stepfather, who is recovering from surgery.

Phyllis Supple, who continues to recover at Duke Hospital.

Our prayers are with *Ginny Widmark's* family, as she entered hospice care this week.

Tony Brown

John Fricks

Lee House

Harriett Mitchell

Phyllis Supple

Paul Cornsweet

Sue Fricks

Ann Huff

Fred Moore

Nora Tisdale

Sam Crabtree

Joe Harvard

Vickie Luboff

Peggy Needham

Susan Cyr

Kerry Holbrook

Elizabeth Manceras

Franzi Rokoske

Care Communities:

Croasdaile Pavilion: *Dub Gulley, Elizabeth High,
Alfred Tisdale*

Hillcrest Convalescent: *Carol Wills*

Brookdale Senior Living: *Debbie Mathews*

Durham Ridge: *Phillip Herndon*

Pruitt Health - Durham: *Fred Callaway*

Southpoint Atria: *Ginny Widmark*

Madge McKeithen

Family and Friends of the Congregation

Ashley Alvord, colleague of Sharon Hirsch

John Carter, brother of Conrad Carter

Francisca Cristobal, relative of Al and Judy Arrowood

Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings

Sara Degand, cousin of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

Gera Fleming, mother of Christyn Klinck

Linda Foster-Momsen, mother of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

Cheryl Fowler, friend of Cheri Reece

Jennifer Hervey, daughter-in-law of Jeanne Hervey

Donna Holladay, friend of Jane & Robert Brawley

Katie Jackson, wife of Matthew Hirsch

Donna Johnson, mother of Ann Huff

Anthony Ketcham, brother of Wil James

Marcia Magee, aunt of Kathryn Muchison

Marie Maly, sister of Barbara Fish

Sandra Mikush, mother of Katie Fogleman

Martha Neece, sister-in-law of Vernon & Beth Neece

Ana Sofia Ochoa, family member of Becky Martin

Bill Prochaska, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood

Annie Reaves, great-niece of Floalice and Robert Reaves

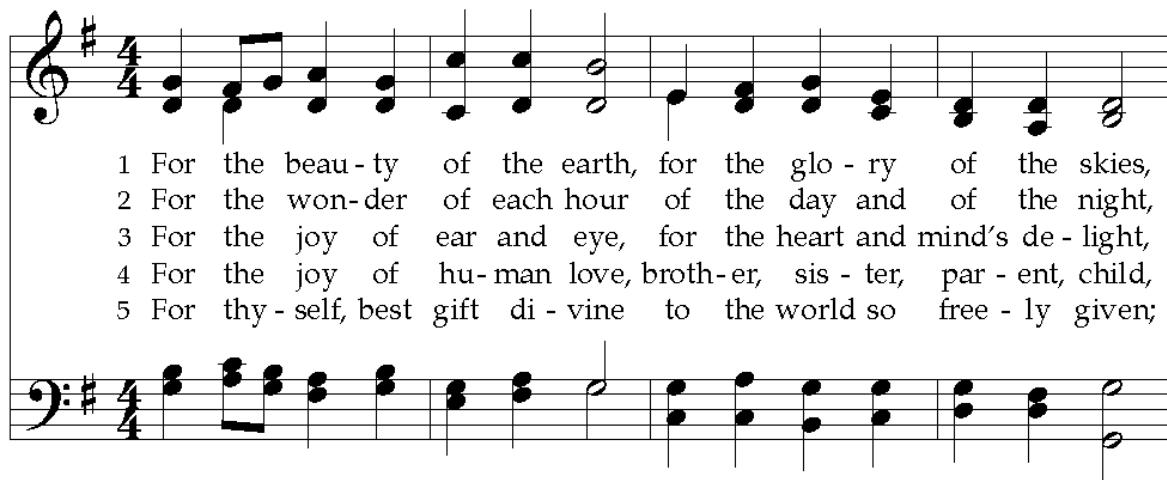
Wu-Chou Su, father of Claire Su

Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss

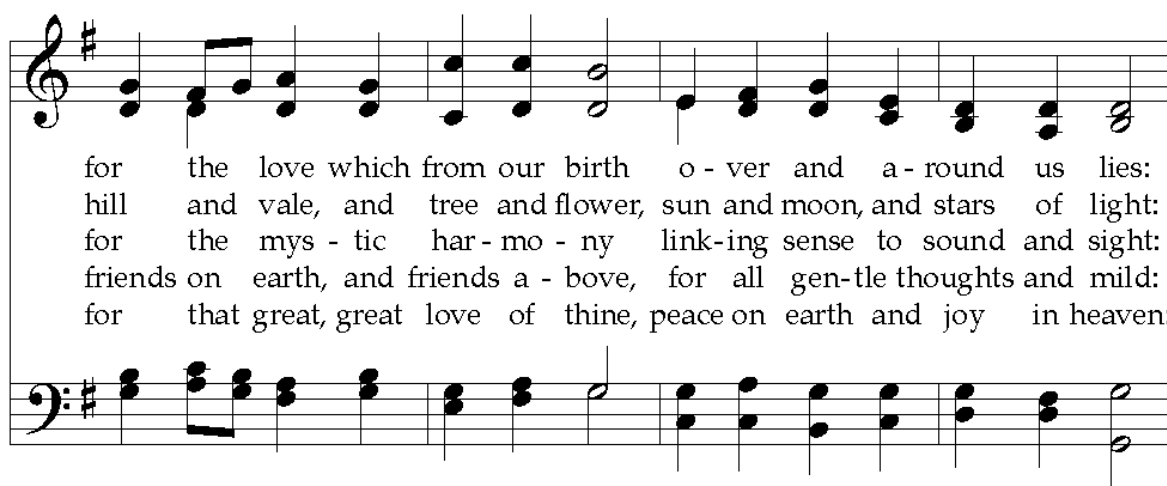
Tanya Watkins, friend of Leigh Wynkoop

For the Beauty of the Earth

14



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the glo - ry of the skies,
2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
5 For thy - self, best gift di - vine to the world so free - ly given;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light:
for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
friends on earth, and friends a - bove, for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heaven:

Refrain



Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grate - ful praise.

God, You Spin the Whirling Planets 23

Capo 1: (D) (G) (D) (G) (A) (D) (G)
 E^b A^b E^b A^b B^b E^b A^b



1 God, you spin the whirl-ing plan - ets, fill the seas and
 2 You have called us to be faith - ful in our life and
 3 God, your word is still cre - at - ing, call - ing us to

(D) (A) (D) (Bm) (G) (D) (G) (A) (D)
 E^b B^b E^b Cm A^b E^b A^b B^b E^b



spread the plain, mold the moun-tains, fash-ion blos-soms, call forth
 min - is - try. We re - spond in grate-ful wor-ship joined in
 life made new. Now re - veal to us fresh vis - tas where there's

(G) (D) (A) (D) (G) (D) (A)
 A^b E^b B^b E^b A^b E^b B^b



sun - shine, wind, and rain. We, cre - at - ed in your im - age,
 one com - mu - ni - ty. When we blur your gra - cious im - age,
 work to dare and do. Keep us clear of all dis - tor - tion.

(D) (Bm)(F#m) (G)(A) (D) (G)
 E^b Cm Gm A^b B^b E^b A^b



would a true re - flec - tion be of your jus - tice,
 fo - cus us and make us whole. Healed and strength - ened
 Pol - ish us with lov - ing care. Thus, new crea - tures

(D) (G) (A) (D) (G) (Em) (D) (A) (D)
 E^b A^b B^b E^b A^b Fm E^b B^b E^b



grace, and mer - cy and the truth that makes us free.
 as your peo - ple, we move on - ward toward your goal.
 in your im - age, we'll pro - claim Christ ev - ery - where.

692

Spirit, Open My Heart

Capo 3: (D) (G) (D) (G) (A7)
 Refrain F B^b F B^b C7



Spir - it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of

(Bm) (D/A) (G) (A7) (Bm) (D/A) (Em)
 Dm F/C B^b C7 Dm F/C Gm



liv - ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing

(D) (G) (Em7) (D) (G) (D)
 F B^b Gm7 F B^b F



and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart. *Fine*

(D) (G) (D) (G)
 F B^b F B^b



1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's
 2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my
 3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of

(A7) (Bm) (D/A) (G) (A7)
 C7 Dm F/C B^b C7



kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and
 goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and
 sis - ter, broth - er. In the wel - come of

(Bm) (Em7) (D) (G2) (G)
 Dm Gm7 F B^b2 B^b



to Refrain

fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.
 deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.
 Christ, may we wel - come one an - oth - er.

This Week at a Glance!

Sunday, April 19

Creation Care Sunday • Newsletter Deadline

9:45 AM Faith Formation (Classes available for adults, youth and children)

11:00 AM Worship: Esther Hethcox, preaching.

Following Worship

Children's Music: ages 3-5 (Room 205), ages 6-11 (Choir Room)

Fellowship Committee (Wilson Parlor)

3:00 PM Choral Society Chamber Choir Concert (Sanctuary)

5:00 PM Youth Group: Farm Church (Watts & Green Streets)

Monday, April 20

9:00 AM Walk-in Ministry

1:30 PM Worship Planning (Pastor's Office)

4:30 PM Yoga (Watts-Hill Hall)

Tuesday, April 21

Newsletter Release

5:00 PM Finance & Investment Committee (Daye Meeting Room)

Wednesday, April 22

1:00 PM Program Staff Meeting (Daye Meeting Room)

7:00 PM Chancel Choir (Choir Room)

Thursday, April 23

9:00 AM Walk-in Ministry

Friday, April 24

4:45 PM Confirmation Retreat Departs (Parking Lot)

10:30 AM Yoga (Room 201)

Saturday, April 25

1:00 PM Officer Training (Watts-Hill Hall)

6:00 PM First Friends (Home of Jane Wettach & Paul Baldasare)

Sunday, April 26

Hunger for Change Offering Collected

9:45 AM Faith Formation (Classes available for adults, youth and children)

11:00 AM Worship: Mindy Douglas, preaching.

Following Worship

Children's Music: ages 3-5 (Room 205), ages 6-11 (Choir Room)

Diaconate (Watts-Hill Hall)

Meaning in the Middle Lunch (Daye Meeting Room)

Prayer Shawl Group (Room 205)

1:00 PM Confirmation Retreat Returns (Parking Lot)

5:00 PM Youth Group: Cookies & Care Packages (Brent's House)

CHURCH STAFF

Tom Bloom, Business Administrator
Lenore Champion, Children's Ministry Director
Vernon Cooper, Sexton
Mindy Douglas, Pastor/Head of Staff
Susan Dunlap, Parish Associate
Omar Guess, Sr., Sunday Morning Sexton



Joseph Harvard, Pastor Emeritus
Esther Hethcox, Associate Pastor
Sybil King, Administrative Assistant
Kathy Parkins, Minister of Music
John Weicher, Associate Pastor

For more information about First Presbyterian Church, email the church office:
office@firstpres-durham.org or visit our website: <https://firstpres-durham.org>.

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