

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Seventh Sunday of Easter    Ascension of the Lord/Confirmation Sunday

May 17, 2026

**A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD**

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

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS**

Moment for Children's Faith Formation

John Weicher

Kathy Colville

**PRELUDE**      *Sonata in F for two violins and harpsichord (Adagio; Allegro)*  
*Allison Willet and Noelle Barr, violins*

*Henry Purcell*

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** (From Psalm 47)

John Weicher

Leader: God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

**People: Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to the Divine, sing praises.**

Leader: For God has dominion of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm.

**People: God reigns over the nations; God sits on the holy throne.**

Leader: The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham.

**People: For the shields of the earth belong to God; God is highly exalted.**

**\*HYMN NO. 268**      *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

*Diademata*

**\*CONFESSION OF SIN**

Mindy Douglas

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

**We want to pin you down, O uncontrollable God,  
so that we can know your every thought and plan,  
as if we were the creators and you were the creature.**

**But you have already let your will be known.**

**You say, "Love your neighbor,"  
and we seek to limit and qualify,  
in order to avoid the difficult work.**

**You say, "Judge not,"  
and we throw the book at anyone we don't like.**

**You say, "Be still,"  
but we are too busy to hear it.**

**Forgive us for ignoring or avoiding your words to us.**

**Give us fresh starts and clean pages,  
so that we might try yet again.**

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*\*Those who are able, please stand.*

**\*REGATHERING HYMN NO. 260**

*Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (verse 1)*

*Hyfrydol*

*Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; his the scepter, his the throne;*

*Alleluia! his the triumph, his the victory alone!*

*Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood:*

*“Jesus out of every nation has redeemed us by his blood.”*

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Michael Honeycutt

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

People: **Without your Spirit, the Bible seems just like pages with words.**

**Please send the Holy Spirit to make it the Word of the Lord. Amen.**

**EPISTLE READING**

1 Peter 4:8-11

(Pew Bible, NT Page 235)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Michael Honeycutt

People: **Thanks be to God!**

**NEW TESTAMENT READING**

Acts 1:6-14

(Pew Bible, NT Page 118)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

John Weicher

People: **Thanks be to God!**

**SERMON**

*“Church Is a Team Sport”*

John Weicher

*(silent reflection)*

**\*HYMN NO. 258**

*A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!*

*Deo Gracias*

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

*The Flat Creek Creed*

John Weicher

**Church is a team sport, not a building.**

**Just as a body is made up of many parts,**

**the church is made up of many different people,**

**a faithful group of humans trying to follow God.**

**God is our all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, justice-oriented Creator.**

**God, the Sovereign, has made everything**

**and we are made in the image of God.**

**God is too great for any human language.**

**We use many expansive words for God**

**as an inclusive covenant community.**

**The Bible is made for many purposes,**

**and is the authoritative testimony of God’s people.**

**We grow and fill our faith bucket by reading the Bible,**

**and if we have a fixed mindset,**

**we have a stagnant faith.**

**Jesus was fully human and fully God.**

**Because God loves us, Jesus’ birth was a miracle,**

**and so was his resurrection.**

**Jesus forgives us to the point of dying for us and for our sins. *(continues)***

**We learn who Jesus is through the Bible, worship, faith formation, and each other.**

**God is the Holy Spirit,  
and the Holy Spirit is God.**

**The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity  
who brings Divine energy into the world.**

**When we don't know how to pray,  
the Spirit helps.**

**When the Bible seems just like pages with words,  
the Spirit makes it the Word of the Lord.**

**Spiritual gifts are presents that are present in us.**

**Everyone has their own Spiritual gifts.**

**We use them for purposes that God wants us to.**

**When we worship, we gather around God's Word,  
in a time to find peace, reflect and respond,  
before going out into the world to serve. Amen.**

### **TIME WITH THE CHILDREN**

Children's Choir     *"Be the Change You Want to See in the World"*     Marc Kaplan & Colin Britt  
*Be the change you want to see in the word, and change will come to you.  
Be the voice you want to hear in the world, and change will come to you.  
Be the light you want to shine in the world, and change will come to you.*

Faith Formation Teacher Appreciation

Lenore Champion

### **THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION**

Annie Gentithes, Cris Rivera, John Weicher

Presentation

Renunciations

Laying on of Hands

Welcome

### **DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS**

Invitation to Give

Mindy Douglas

Offertory Anthem

*Land of Rest*

*American folk tune, arr. Katie Kring*

*O Land of Rest, for you we pine  
When our anguish knows no end,  
Land where our tears are wiped away  
And our divisions mend.*

*With broken hearts and tear-filled eyes  
We tremble in our grief,  
But from the sorrows of the world  
Is born God's sweet relief.*

*The shadows fall and death lurks near  
But through our fears we pray,*

*For we know that the darkest night  
Dawns to the brightest day.*

*O Land of Rest, to you we fly  
Where wars and borders cease.  
There, mortal enemies from earth  
Are neighbors now in peace.*

*The joy and sorrow of this life  
Shall pass before our eyes.  
Though agony will lay us down  
In ecstasy we rise.*

*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)*

Mindy Douglas

Leader: The grace 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. 727**

*Will You Let Me Be Your Servant*

*The Servant Song*

**\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

John Weicher

**\*POSTLUDE**

*“Crown Him With Many Crowns”*

*Christopher Tambling*

***Happening Today***

Today is **Confirmation Sunday**, when we recognize this year’s confirmation class, who were welcomed into membership by the session on Thursday night. All 11 members of this cohort have chosen to be confirmed, which is wonderful, not for its percentage, but for the way that each response to God’s love is an authentic one. They are:

**Sibu Admay**

**David Armstrong**

**Michael Baker**

**Colin Bethune**

**Logan Brown**

**Doran Cummings**

**Rory Dillon**

**Rhys McClain-Huslage**

**Cordi Ramont**

**Karl Sims**

**Tate Weicher**

The congregation offers its special thanks to all of the families, Friends in Faith, and the teaching team of **Annie Gentithes, Cris Rivera, and John Weicher**, who accompanied them on their journey. *You are invited to pick up a packet of their statements of faith after worship.*

As every confirmation class does at FPC, this year’s cohort has written a confession of faith: **The Flat Creek Creed**. It is named for the body of water that runs through Montreat, where the class had its capstone retreat. The statement represents the collective faith and experience of this class of 11 confirmands – and thus, in a certain way, our church as a whole.

**Youth Group** will meet at 5:00pm for Kickball & Senior Blessing (Forest Hills Park).

**Youth Summer Trips Stock Sale:** Our Third Annual Stock Sale is happening now! This is our fundraiser for three of our youth summer trips: Appalachia Service Project, Asheville Youth Mission, and the Montreat Youth Conference. A stock entitles its holder to a letter from one of the youth during their trip, sharing first-hand about their service and/or faith formation experience. We will also hold a

stockholder brunch late in the summer, complete with presentations from youth, slideshows of the trips, and brunch cuisine. To purchase a stock, stop by the table in the foyer after worship. Stocks are \$30 for an individual or \$45 for a family (donations always accepted). You can pay via cash, check, card, or online via the church website at [bit.ly/FPCdonate](http://bit.ly/FPCdonate).

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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 *Chris Wilburn* by *Jennie Belle*.

We thank *Noelle Barr* and *Allison Willet* for sharing their musical gifts with us this morning. The violin music is made possible by gifts to the Music Restricted Fund of First Presbyterian Church. We also thank *Shelley and Tim Turkington* for sharing their musical gifts with the children 3-10 by directing the children's choirs.

***Flower Donation Opportunities Available:*** There are open dates for worship flower donors in July. To sign up, visit [bit.ly/FPCflowers26](http://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. The banner will be recessed at the end of today's service, as we approach the end of Eastertide.

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 John Weicher and reprinted from Psalm 47:5-9. 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 [janezettach@gmail.com](mailto:janezettach@gmail.com).

**A Time to Dance!** To celebrate Mindy's 10 years of ministry at FPC, all are invited to A Time to Dance next Sunday, **May 24**, from 6:30-8:30pm at Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (4907 Garrett Rd). Hors d'oeuvres and lemonade, water, and soft drinks will be provided. Mindy has led us in answering the call for social justice issues in Durham, and in that spirit, we invite you to bring a package of diapers to donate to the Diaper Bank of North Carolina in Mindy's honor. Get full details and RSVP at [evite.me/PwgRB8TYk3](http://evite.me/PwgRB8TYk3).

**First Friends:** Join us on Saturday, **May 30**, at the home of **Amy and Dan Mapel**. To learn more and RSVP, visit [evite.me/caK37nZ7Af](http://evite.me/caK37nZ7Af). First Friends is a community of 55+ individuals who gather monthly for fellowship.

**Calling all graduates!** We want to know about all of our FPC spring graduates – of high school, college and, graduate school. Please send 1) a current picture (in regalia is welcome!) and 2) a few words about where they/you are graduating from and what's next for them/you. Please send this to **our new Communications Associate, Brandi Kirkland**, at [communications@firstpres-durham.org](mailto:communications@firstpres-durham.org) by Tuesday, **June 9**.

**Love Offerings & Retirement Celebrations:** As we prepare for the retirements of three beloved staff members, the Session has approved love gift offerings for each of them. If you would like to contribute, please do so at [bit.ly/FPCdonate](http://bit.ly/FPCdonate) by **June 15**. A celebration honoring **Kathy Parkins**, featuring a luncheon and program, will follow worship on Sunday, **June 14**. A celebration honoring **Tom Bloom** and **Sybil King** will follow worship on Sunday, **June 28**, featuring a reception and program. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend both of these important events.

~*Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation* ~

**Celebrations:**

We celebrate with **Rev. Dr. Heidi Biermann** on her appointment by Union Presbyterian Seminary as its new Assistant Professor of New Testament, beginning July 1.

**We remember in prayer:**

**Rebecca Todd (“Toddie”) Peters**, mother of **Sophie Peters**, who will have knee replacement surgery on Friday.

**Tony Brown**

**Paul Cornsweet**

**Sam Crabtree**

**Susan Cyr**

**John Fricks**

**Sue Fricks**

**Kerry Holbrook**

**Lee House**

**Ann Huff**

**Dan Huff**

**Elizabeth Manceras**

**Amy Mapel**

**Harriett Mitchell**

**Fred Moore**

**Lori Pistor**

**Franzi Rokoske**

**Care Communities:**

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

Durham Ridge: **Phillip Herndon**  
Pruitt Health - Durham: **Fred Callaway**

Hillcrest Convalescent: **Carol Wills, Phyllis Supple**

Southpoint Atria: **Madge McKeithen**

Brookdale Senior Living: **Debbie Mathews**

**Family and Friends of the Congregation**

**Ashley Alvord**, colleague of Sharon Hirsch

**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 and Beth Neece

**Ana Sofia Ochoa**, family member of Becky Martin

**Patrick O’Neill**, father of Brianna Bennett

**Bill Prochaska**, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood

**Annie Reaves**, great-niece of Floalice and Robert Reaves

**Joe Quirk**, stepfather of Tim O’Brien

**Jim Vacca**, father of Jamie Chambliss

# Crown Him with Many Crowns 268

1 Crown him with man - y crowns, the Lamb up - on his throne;  
 2 Crown him the Lord of love; be - hold his hands and side,  
 3 Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a scep - ter sways  
 4 Crown him the Lord of years, the po - ten - tate of time;

hark, how the heaven-ly an - them drowns all mu - sic but its own!  
 rich wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, in beau - ty glo - ri - fied:  
 from pole to pole, that wars may cease, ab - sorbed in prayer and praise.  
 cre - a - tor of the roll - ing spheres, in - ef - fa - bly sub - lime.

A - wake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,  
 no an - gel in the sky can ful - ly bear that sight,  
 His reign shall know no end; and round his pier - ed feet  
 All hail, Re - deem - er, hail! For thou hast died for me;

and hail him as thy match-less King through all e - ter - ni - ty.  
 but down - ward bends his burn - ing eye at mys - ter - ies so bright.  
 fair flowers of par - a - dise ex - tend their fra - grance ev - er sweet.  
 thy praise shall nev - er, nev - er fail through - out e - ter - ni - ty.

# 258 A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing!

1 A hymn of glo - ry let us sing! New songs through-  
 2 The ho - ly ap - os - tol - ic band up - on the  
 3 To all, the shin - ing an - gels cry, "Why stand and  
 4 "You see him now, as - cend - ing high up to the  
 5 O ris - en Christ, as - cend - ed Lord, all praise to

out the world shall ring: Christ, by a road be -  
 Mount of Ol - ives stand, and with his fol - low -  
 gaze up - on the sky? This is the Sav - ior!"  
 por - tals of the sky. Here - af - ter you shall  
 you let earth ac - cord. You are, while end - less

fore un - trod, as - cends un - to the throne of God.  
 ers they see their Lord as - cend in maj - es - ty.  
 thus they say; "This is his glo - rious tri - umph - day."  
 Je - sus see re - turn - ing in great maj - es - ty."  
 a - ges run, with Fa - ther and with Spir - it one.

# Will You Let Me Be Your Servant 727

## The Servant Song

1, 6 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me  
 2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney; we're to -  
 3 I will hold the Christ - light for you in the  
 4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you  
 5 When we sing to God in heav - en, we shall

be as Christ to you? Pray that I may have the  
 geth - er on the road. We are here to help each  
 night - time of your fear. I will hold my hand out  
 laugh I'll laugh with you. I will share your joy and  
 find such har - mo - ny, born of all we've known to -

grace to let you be my ser - vant too.  
 oth - er walk the mile and bear the load.  
 to you, speak the peace you long to hear.  
 sor - row till we've seen this jour - ney through.  
 geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.

*(repeat stanza 1)*

## This Week at a Glance!

### Sunday, May 17

*Ascension of the Lord/Confirmation Sunday; Newsletter Deadline*

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

**11:00 AM** Worship: John Weicher, preaching

### Following Worship

Youth Summer Trips Stock Sale (Upper Lobby)  
Fellowship Committee (Wilson Parlor)

**5:00 PM** Youth Group: Kickball & Senior Blessing (Forest Hills Park)

### Monday, May 18

**9:00 AM** Walk-in Ministry

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

**4:30 PM** Yoga (Watts-Hill Hall)

**7:00 PM** Session (Watts-Hill Hall)

### Tuesday, May 19

*Newsletter Release*

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

**6:00 PM** Stewardship (Zoom)

### Wednesday, May 20

**11:00 AM** FPC All Staff Retreat & Quarterly Birthday (Offsite)

### Thursday, May 21

**9:00 AM** Walk-in Ministry

### Friday, May 22

**10:30 AM** Yoga (Room 201)

### Sunday, May 24

*Pentecost*

**9:45 AM** Faith Formation (Lectionary Class for adults. All others will not meet.)

**11:00 AM** Worship with Communion: Mindy Douglas, preaching

### Following Worship

Diaconate (Watts-Hill Hall)

## CHURCH STAFF

*Janet Askew*, Business Administrator  
*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  
*Brandi Kirkland*, Communications Associate  
*Kathy Parkins*, Minister of Music  
*John Weicher*, Associate Pastor

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

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