

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 6, 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

Voluntary in B Flat

comp. Jonathan Battishill

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Esther Hethcox

Leader: People of God, what a wondrous love we believe in!

People: **We follow a God of captivating grace,
who calls us from scarcity into abundance.**

Leader: People of God, what a powerful love we believe in!

People: **We follow a Spirit of unimaginable reach,
who gathers us in from the far corners of our stories.**

Leader: People of God, what an impossible love we believe in!

People: **We follow a Savior of radical hope,
who calls us to believe in a life of resurrection.**

All: **Come, let us worship our Divine, Incredible God!**

***HYMN NO. 664**

Morning Has Broken

BUNESSAN

***CONFESSION OF SIN**

Mindy Douglas

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, you are the Creator of patterns.

In the story of our faith,

you have invited us into the ever-expanding arrangement of your love.

But we have not followed the etchings of your grace.

We have chosen division instead of unity,

dismay instead of hope,

hate instead of understanding.

Forgive us, Lord,

for the ways we have failed to participate

in the grand design of your love.

Renew our hearts,

so we might discover how to be co-creators of your mercy.

Silent Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

**Those who are able, please stand.*

***REGATHERING HYMN NO. 399** *God Welcomes All*

THEMBA AMEN

*God welcomes all, strangers and friends;
God's love is strong and it never ends.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Carl Rist

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

All: **Holy One, in this moment of our worship,
 we ask for expansion.**

**May this hour embolden the boundaries of our hearts
to understand more truly,
 our spirits to discern more faithfully,
and our lives to commit more sincerely. Amen.**

PSALM READING

Psalm: 119:33-40

(Pew Bible, OT Page 567)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Carl Rist

People: Thanks be to God!

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Joshua 4:1-8, 19-24

(Pew Bible, OT Page 196)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Esther Hethcox

People: Thanks be to God!

SERMON

"Rituals of Our Hearts"

Esther Hethcox

(silent reflection)

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *(from The Confession of 1967)*

Mindy Douglas

People: **The church gathers to praise God,
 to hear God's word for humankind,
 to baptize and join in the Lord's Supper,
to pray for and present the world to God in worship,
 to enjoy fellowship,
to receive instruction, strength, and comfort,
 to order and organize its own corporate life,
to be tested, renewed, and reformed,
 and to speak and act in the world's affairs
as may be appropriate to the needs of the time.**

***HYMN NO. 529**

Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether

UNION SEMINARY

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Lenore Champion

DEDICATION OF OFFERING

Invitation to Give

Offertory

Morning Light

Mindy Douglas
comp. Andrew Moore

*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!*

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

Mindy Douglas

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Esther Hethcox

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord,
for you are the everlasting source of our being.

When darkness was all that there was,
you chose to plant your light of love within dust and formed your people.

But in response to your love,
we found ourselves seeking the glimmering lights
of power, greed and independence.

We chose life apart from you.

But in your ever expansive love,
you sent peoples of all identities and stories to remind us of your grace,
and call us back to you.

In the greatest act of love,
you sent your holy child to teach, guide, heal,
and accompany us through life.

One with you, our Savior defeated death
and showed us a world where redemption and renewal are within reach.

Therefore we praise you,
joining our voices with the heavenly choirs
and with all the faithful of every time and place,
who forever sing to the glory of your name:

All (sung):

1 Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of the
2 Bless - ed is he who comes in the
pow - er and might, heav - en and earth are the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Leader: In the life of this Savior,
we saw our own humanity mirrored
in his words, his feelings, his actions, and his love.
In mending broken hearts and healing ailing bodies,
Jesus spoke truth and peace into this fallen world.
He showed us that so much is possible,
when we dare to believe in the power of our own action
and the reality of God's power and will.
Great is the mystery of faith.

All (sung):

Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a - gain.
Christ has died; Christ is ris-en; Christ will come a - gain.

Leader: Everlasting God, pour out your Spirit upon these common elements of our life,
so that the bread we break and the cup we bless
may be the moment of true communion and life with you.
By your Spirit unite us with our Savior and all whom he loves,
so that we may be one body in every place. **Amen.**

All (sung):



THE LORD'S PRAYER (IN UNISON)

★ Ecumenical Version

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Mindy Douglas & Esther Hethcox

*COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

(The bread and the elements are gluten free and were prepared in a gluten-free area. We use grape juice in the cup. Servers will sanitize their hands prior to distributing the elements. As you are able, come forward to receive communion. The server will give you a piece of bread, which you dip in the cup. Parents, please assist children as they take bread and lightly dip it into the cup. After eating, please return to your seat. Anyone who is unable to come forward may remain in the pew to be served by the clergy.)

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Esther Hethcox

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All: Loving God,

as we leave this table of grace and renewal,

may the bread and cup of your love

be the sustenance for the journey of our discipleship

in this beautiful world which you love so very much. Amen.

*HYMN NO. 692

Spirit, Open My Heart

WILD MOUNTAIN THYME

*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Esther Hethcox

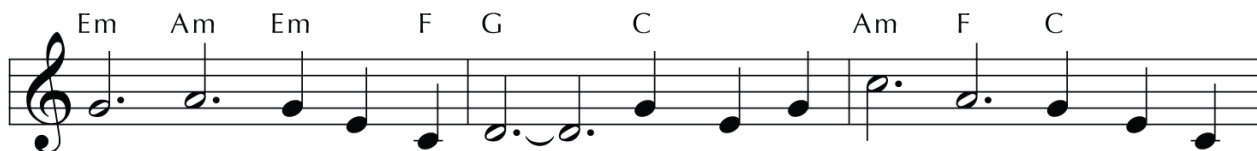
*POSTLUDE

Hornpipe from *Water Music*

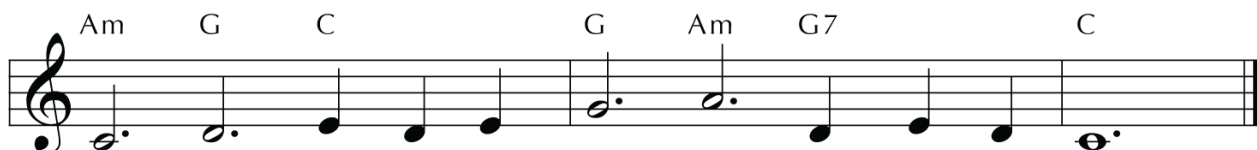
comp. G.F. Handel



1 Morn-ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing; black-bird has
 2 Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en, like the first
 3 Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing, born of the



spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing! Praise for the
 dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet-ness of the wet
 one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion; praise ev - ery



morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!
 gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where God's feet pass.
 morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!



1 Draw us in the Spir - it's teth - er, for when hum - bly
 2 As dis - ci - ples used to gath - er in the name of
 3 All our meals and all our liv - ing make as sac - ra -



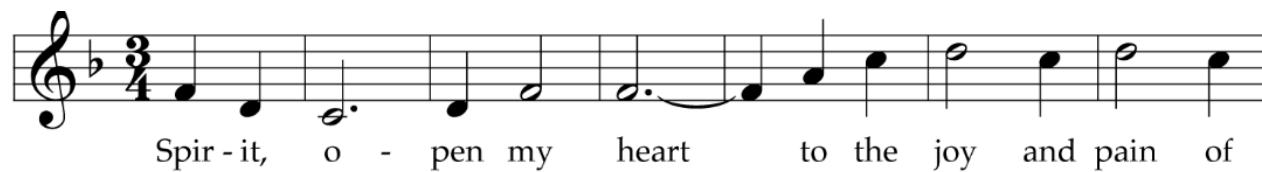
in your name two or three are met to - geth - er,
 Christ to sup, then with thanks to God the giv - er
 ments of you, that by car - ing, help-ing, giv - ing,



you are in the midst of them. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
 break the bread and bless the cup, Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -
 we may be dis - ci - ples true. Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -



lu - ia! Here we touch your gar - ment's hem.
 lu - ia! so now bind our friend - ship up.
 lu - ia! We will serve with faith a - new.



(Bm) (D/A) (G) (A7) (Bm) (D/A) (Em)
Dm F/C Bb C7 Dm F/C Gm



(D) (G) (Em7) (D) (G) (D)
F Bb Gm7 F Bb F *Fine*



(D) (G) (D) (G)
F Bb F Bb



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 Bb C7



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 Bb2 Bb



deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.
Christ, may we wel - come one an - oth - er.

to Refrain

Worship Notes



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 are given to the glory of God and in honor of the new Minister of Music, ***Matthew Moore***, by the Worship and the Arts Committee.

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

Portions of today's worship resources come from The Confession of 1967, section 36 (using the updated language), or were written by Esther Hethcox. ***Music*** is reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926.

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 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/>



Faith Formation Kickoff: *You and me? We're Neighbors!* After the long Labor Day Weekend, Faith Formation returns in earnest for a new year of connecting, learning, asking, snacking, playing, growing, and more. This year, our theme in children's faith formation is about being neighbors. But our kickoff is a festive event for adults and youth as well. Join us at 9:45 am on Sunday, Sept. 13 for a giant inflatable slide, a variety of on-the-ground games and art, and of course some tasty treats and hot coffee. Around 10:20 am, we'll gather together and be dismissed to our class locations, so everyone can meet teachers and learn spaces. (Our first full classes will start on Sept. 20.)

Youth Group Kickoff: That giant inflatable slide from faith formation kickoff? Yeah, we're not letting that go to waste. We'll turn on the hose to make it a water slide at our youth group kickoff, Sunday Sept. 13, 5-7 pm. We'll meet our new advisors (Alexis, Caroline & George), reconnect with familiar friends (including Mimi & John), decorate onesies for advisor Kati's new baby, and learn about our theme for the year, *We Can Do Hard Things*. Friends are always welcome, and it's a great time to join us, even if it has been a minute.

Fall Book Club: *How the Word Is Passed*: Join FPC's Racial Equity Task Force this fall for a book club tour by Zoom, from Monticello to the African American History Museum in DC, reading Clint Smith's *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*, one of the *New York Times*' top ten books of 2021. Six sessions run every other **Thursday, 7–8 p.m., September 10 through November 19**; please have your book ready before the first meeting. To get the Zoom link or sign up to lead a discussion, RSVP here: <https://tinyurl.com/retf-book-club-2026>

Building Update: Rebuilding Together: Construction on our Rebuilding Together building project begins **October 1, 2026**. Funded by the 2022 Building Beloved Community Capital Campaign, the project will improve accessibility, renovate the Fellowship Hall, add an elevator, reconfigure volunteer/Walk-In Ministry offices, add a columbarium and basement showers, plus several other additional renovations. Once construction begins, the Fellowship Hall will close and volunteer offices will move, the kitchen stays open, staff offices will be temporarily reconfigured, and some events may move offsite. Questions? Email office@firstpres-durham.org.

Choir Rehearsals Have Begun!! Our official choir season rehearsals continue in the choir room (upstairs in the Faith Formation hallway and around the corner) as we prepare for the fall. We welcome all our current members, plus any new faces. If you have any experience singing in a choir (no matter how long ago), you are also welcome! For more information contact our Minister of Music, **Matthew Moore**, at music@firstpres-durham.org or find him after church on Sunday.

Save the Date: First Acts Reads The Crucible: Join us **Saturday, October 3, from 9 a.m.–noon** in the Daye Meeting Room for a reading of Arthur Miller's award-winning drama about the Salem Witch Trials. The play's themes of community and family torn apart by ideology, theology, and mass hysteria in 1600s New England still offer valuable insight into our world today. No theater experience needed, all are welcome, and roles will be assigned that morning. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/first-acts-crucible>

Things That Matter Book Club: Join us for the first meeting of the 2026–2027 year on **Tuesday, September 8 at 4 p.m.** at the home of **Jean Wilson**. **Laura McNab** will lead our discussion of *We, the Women*. Don't worry if you haven't finished (or started!) the book... Come anyway! Please RSVP to Jean Wilson at jeanjwilson@gmail.com so we know how many chairs to bring.

The Somethings Book Group: Join us **Tuesdays at 7 p.m.** in **Esther's** office for a laid-back book discussion group. This fall we're reading through *Shameless* by Nadia Bolz-Weber (September), *The Women of Wild Hill* by Kirsten Miller (October), and *Rap and Redemption on Death Row* by Alim Braxton (November), with *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor carrying us into Advent (December). All are welcome to jump in at any point.

~ Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~

We offer our condolences to:

Donald Turner, FPC's Facilities Associate, upon the death of his aunt, **Naomi Turner** this week.

Lea Bingham & Rob Dilworth, Gwen, and Ellie Dilworth on the death of Lea's father, **Ken Bingham**.

Judy & David Smith and the **Sattler family**, upon the death of **Jerry Sattler**, Judy's brother-in-law.

We remember in prayer:

Tony Brown

Sue Fricks

Lee House

Harriett Mitchell

Paul Cornsweet

Joe Harvard

Ann Huff

Fred Moore

Sam Crabtree

Elizabeth High

Jenni James

Franzi Rokoske

Susan Cyr

Kerry Holbrook

Elizabeth Manceras

Care Communities:

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

Hillcrest Convalescent: **Carol Wills**

Brookdale Senior Living: **Debbie Mathews**

Chatham Ridge Assisted Living: **John Fricks**

Durham Ridge: **Phillip Herndon**

Pruitt Health - Durham: **Fred Callaway**

Southpoint Atria: **Madge McKeithen**

Family and Friends of the Congregation

Ashley Alvord, colleague of Sharon Hirsch

John Carter, brother of Conrad Carter

Eddie Cheatham, mother-in-law of Donald Turner

Francisca Cristobal, relative of Al and Judy

Arrowood

Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings

Sara Degand, cousin of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

Minnie Sue Douglas, mother of Mindy Douglas

Rosalynn Farrell, mother of Rachel Bethune

Linda Foster-Momsen, mother of Deborah

Momsen-Hudson

Cheryl Fowler, friend of Cheri Reece

Jennifer Hervey, daughter-in-law of Jeanne Hervey

Larry Hethcox, father of Esther Hethcox

Carl Holladay, friend of Jane & Robert Brawley

Lydia Still and baby, daughter and grandchild of

Kelli Hunnicutt

Katie Jackson, wife of Matthew Hirsch

Donna Johnson, mother of Ann Huff

Anthony Ketcham, brother-in-law of Wil James

Elizabeth Manceras, mother of Julio Manceras

Sandra Mikush, mother of Katie Fogleman

Ana Sofia Ochoa, family member of Becky Martin

Patrick O'Neill, father of Brianna Bennett

Janet and James Ouzts, sister and brother-in-law of Celia Dickerson

Rebecca Todd ("Toddie") Peters, mother of Sophie Peters

Bill Prochaska, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood

Joe Quirk, stepfather of Tim O'Brien

Annie Reaves, great-niece of Floalice and Robert Reaves

Vivian Turner, mother of Donald Turner

Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss

This Week at a Glance!

Sunday, September 6

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:45 AM Adult Faith Formation (Lectionary Class)

9:45 AM Children's Summer Faith Formation

11:00 AM Worship: Esther Hethcox, preaching

12:15 PM FPC Racial Equity Task Force (Wilson Parlor)

Monday, September 7

All Day Office Closed for Labor Day

Thursday, September 10

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM Walk-In Ministry

Tuesday, September 8

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

7:00 PM Somethings Book Group (Associate Pastor's Study)

Friday, September 11

All Day First Friends Beach Trip

Wednesday, September 9

1:00 PM FPC Program Staff Meeting (Pastor's Study)

6:00 PM Stewardship Committee (Room 205)

Saturday, September 12

5:30 PM The Somethings New to Durham Welcome Event (Room 205)

All Day First Friends Beach Trip

Sunday, September 13

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost,

Kick-Off Sunday

9:45 AM Faith Formation Kick-off for All Ages (Back Lawn)

11:00 AM Worship: Mindy Douglas, preaching

12:15 PM MnM Gathering (Wilson Parlor)

5:00 – 7:00 PM Youth Group Kick-off

All Day First Friends Beach Trip

CHURCH STAFF

Janet Askew, Business Associate
Lenore Champion, Director of Children's Ministry
Mindy Douglas, Pastor/Head of Staff
Susan Dunlap, Parish Associate
Omar Guess, Sr., Sunday Morning Sexton
Joseph Harvard, Pastor Emeritus



Esther Hethcox, Associate Pastor
Brandi Kirkland, Communications Associate
Matthew Moore, Minister of Music
Donald Turner, Facilities Associate
John Weicher, Associate Pastor
Betsy Kelly Williams, Church Administrator

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

305 EAST MAIN STREET DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA 27701 919.682.5511 ORGANIZED 1871