

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 26, 2021

A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mindy Douglas

PRELUDE

*Voluntary on "Holy Manna" Southern tune, arr. Don Husted*

\*CALL TO WORSHIP

Mindy Douglas

Leader: The Lord redeems the life of his servants.

**People: Thanks be to God!**

Leader: No one who takes refuge in the Lord will be condemned.

**All: Praise the Lord!**

MUSICAL RESPONSE

*Christians, We Have Met to Worship*

*Holy Manna*

*Christians, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God.*

*Will you pray with all your power while we try to preach the word?*

*All is vain unless the Spirit of the holy One comes down.*

*Christians, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.*

*Christians, will you come and help us? Moses' sister aided him.*

*Will you help the trembling mourners who are struggling hard with sin?*

*Tell them all about the Savior. Tell them that he will be found.*

*Christians, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.*

*Let us love our God supremely; let us love each other, too.*

*Let us love and pray for sinners till our God makes all things new.*

*Christ will call us home to heaven; at his table we'll sit down.*

*Christ will gird himself and serve us with sweet manna all around.*

\*CONFESSION OF SIN

Mindy Douglas

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession (*in unison*)

Leader: Today, O God, we ponder what you say to us through scripture and wonder what has changed.

**People: In Esther's story, we hear about the abuse of power and exploitation of women.**

Leader: We learn about the planned destruction of foreigners in the land.

**People: These issues concern the use of power to take advantage of the powerless,**

Leader: and deny them the possibility of experiencing lives of dignity and worth.

**People: Forgive us when our actions, or lack of action, have contributed to continuing powerlessness in people's lives.**

Leader: Strengthen us all to witness to our faith with a freshness that attracts;

**All: a sincerity that convinces, and an integrity which confirms our allegiance to Christ, in whose name we pray.**

\*Those who are able, please stand

Silent Confession  
Assurance of Pardon

**PASSING THE PEACE**

Mindy Douglas

**COLLECT FOR THE DAY**

Michael Honeycutt

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**All: God of courage, you gave Esther the strength to speak out and the intelligence she needed to save her people. Help us to believe that you are still present and active in this world and that your grace remains as an everlasting force in our lives. Amen.**

**HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON**

Esther 3:1-15

Michael Honeycutt  
Mitzi Leshner-Thomas  
John Weicher

<sup>1</sup> After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the officials who were with him. <sup>2</sup> And all the king's servants who were at the king's gate bowed down and did obeisance to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow down or do obeisance. <sup>3</sup> Then the king's servants who were at the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's command?" <sup>4</sup> When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's words would avail; for he had told them that he was a Jew. <sup>5</sup> When Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow down or do obeisance to him, Haman was infuriated. <sup>6</sup> But he thought it beneath him to lay hands on Mordecai alone. So, having been told who Mordecai's people were, Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews, the people of Mordecai, throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus. <sup>7</sup> In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, they cast Pur—which means "the lot"—before Haman for the day and for the month, and the lot fell on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. <sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and separated among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king's laws, so that it is not appropriate for the king to tolerate them. <sup>9</sup> If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who have charge of the king's business, so that they may put it into the king's treasuries." <sup>10</sup> So the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. <sup>11</sup> The king said to Haman, "The money is given to you, and the people as well, to do with them as it seems good to you."

<sup>12</sup> Then the king's secretaries were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and an edict, according to all that Haman commanded, was written to the king's satraps and to the governors over all the provinces and to the officials of all the peoples, to every province in its own script and every people in its own language; it was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's ring.

<sup>13</sup> Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces, giving orders to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods.

<sup>14</sup> A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation, calling on all the peoples to be ready for that day. <sup>15</sup> The couriers went quickly by order of the king, and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

## HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON

Esther 7:1-10; 9:20-22

Michael Honeycutt

Mitzi Leshner-Thomas

John Weicher

<sup>1</sup> So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. <sup>2</sup> On the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled."

<sup>3</sup> Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have won your favor, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me—that is my petition—and the lives of my people—that is my request.

<sup>4</sup> For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have held my peace; but no enemy can compensate for this damage to the king." <sup>5</sup> Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen

Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who has presumed to do this?" <sup>6</sup> Esther said, "A foe and enemy, this wicked Haman!" Then Haman was terrified before the king and the queen. <sup>7</sup> The

king rose from the feast in wrath and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that the king had determined to destroy him. <sup>8</sup> When the

king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman had thrown himself on the couch where Esther was reclining; and the king said, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?" As the words left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's

face. <sup>9</sup> Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "Look, the very gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, stands at Haman's house, fifty cubits high." And the king said, "Hang him on that." <sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated.

<sup>20</sup> Mordecai recorded these things, and sent letters to all the Jews who were in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, both near and far, <sup>21</sup> enjoining them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar and also the fifteenth day of the same month, year by year, <sup>22</sup> as the days on which the Jews gained relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor.

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“Nowhere to Be Seen”

John Weicher

RESPONSE

*What Does the Lord Require of You?*

*Moon*

*What does the Lord require of you?*

*What does the Lord require of you?*

*To seek justice and love kindness*

*and walk humbly with your God.*

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*A Brief Statement of Faith*

Mindy Douglas

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.**

**The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world, the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth, praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!”**

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

John Weicher

DEDICATION OF OFFERING

Mitzi Leshler-Thomas

Invitation to Offering

Hunger for Change Offering is received today.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Mitzi Leshler-Thomas

**We thank you for the wealth you shower on us daily, O Lord, and we witness the marvelous goodness that comes from you. Transform these gifts into signs of welcome for all who are touched by their use. Transform us into people who bless others throughout each day, in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

Mitzi Leshler-Thomas

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Mitzi Leshler-Thomas

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

*(Prayers of intercession and thanksgiving)*

**All: 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.**

*Together we serve, united by love,  
 inviting God's world to the glorious feast.  
 We work and we pray through sorrow and joy,  
 extending God's love to the last and the least.  
 We seek to become a beacon of hope,  
 a lamp for the heart and a light for the feet.  
 We learn, year by year, to let love shine through  
 until we see Christ in each person we meet.  
 We welcome the scarred, the wealthy, the poor,  
 the busy, the lonely, and all who need care.  
 We offer a home to those who will come,  
 our hands quick to help, our hearts ready to dare.  
 Together, by grace, we witness and work,  
 remembering Jesus, in whom we grow strong.  
 Together we serve in Spirit and truth,  
 remembering love is the strength of our song.*

**\*BENEDICTION**

John Weicher

**\*POSTLUDE***Holy Manna**Southern tune  
 arr. Phillip Young*

**Welcome! Let us know you have joined us for worship by scanning this QR code.**

First Presbyterian Church welcomes all who worship with us. We honor and celebrate the human diversity and unity that God gives us in Christ. We welcome individuals of every age, race, nationality, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, and economic circumstance to participate fully in the life of the church. On September 19, 58 joined us for in-person worship and 25 households tuned in to the live-streamed broadcast.

We are grateful to **Mindy Douglas** and **Mitzi Lesher-Thomas** for sharing with us their gifts in song today.

The **flowers** in the sanctuary are given to the glory of God by the Tyren Flower Fund.

**Many thanks** to **John Fricks**, **Jody Maxwell**, and **Keith Rokoske** for their technical assistance with our live broadcasts of worship on Sunday mornings.

Portions of **today's texts and music** were reprinted from *Call to Worship*, *Book of Common Worship*, *Feasting on the Word*, and *Lectionary Liturgies*.

**Childcare:** A staffed nursery and children's playroom are available on the second floor of the Christian education building for use during worship.

**Worship activity bags** are available in the foyer for children to use during worship.

**Large print worship bulletins** along with **children's worship / activity bulletins** are available from the table as you enter the sanctuary from the foyer.

**Hearing Assistance Receivers** are available for use during worship from the audio console located at the rear of the sanctuary. Before you leave the sanctuary, please turn off the receiver and place it in the specially marked receptacle or return to an usher.

**Restrooms** are located off the narthex (to the left and right as you exit the rear of the sanctuary), on the second floor of the Christian education building, and on the first and second floors of the church house.

**These Days daily devotional** books from October – December 2021 have arrived. Regular and large prints are available. Pick up your copy on the table outside the Volunteers Office. You may also contact the office staff to request a copy to be mailed.

~ **Joys and Concerns** ~

**Condolences:** The love and concern of the congregation are extended to **Steve Rimmer** and **Lyn** and **John Williams** upon the death of **Martha Rimmer**, Steve's wife and Lyn's mother on September 17.

**Kerry Holbrook    Margaret Sims    Paul Cornsweet    Minnie Cameron**

**Care Communities:**

Brookdale Durham: **Julian Boswell**

Carver Living Center: **Everlyn Bass**, aunt of Valerie McMillian

Dubose Center at The Cedars: Chapel Hill: **Arthur Clark**

Durham Ridge Assisted Living: **Phillip Herndon**

Hillcrest Convalescent Center: **Jim Wolfe, Walter Chambliss**, father of Will Chambliss,

**Family and Friends of the Congregation:**

**Carolyn Bonner**, wife of Deborah Momsen-Hudson's coworker Al Bonner

**Greer & Jenn Brown**, friends of Logan Tice

**Flora Estrella**, a relative of Beth Stringfield and Cris Rivera

**Lynn Everett**, mother of Luke and Rob Everett

**Will French**, son of Berry & Katie French

**Lori Griffin & baby Teagan Rose**, niece of Jeanne Hervey

**Chris Grill**, former FPC intern

**Grace**, Chris James' great-niece

**Chris Irwin**, cousin of Linda Barenchi

**Peggy Mordecai**, mother of Beth Eisenson

**Ed Overton and wife Abby**, friends of Doug Butler

**Carlton Rounds' mother**, Carlton is a friend of Li-Chen Chin

**Ty, Laurel, Joe, & Cheli Seddon**, family of Martha Seddon, former FPC Parish Administrator

**Heath Tuttle**, son of Chris & Carrie Tuttle

**Jim Vacca**, father of Jamie Chambliss

**Deb Walsh**, friend of Celia Dickerson

**Please remember to update the pastoral staff on the progress of your loved ones.**

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE:** To access zoom, signup genius and other links listed in this bulletin, go to [www.firstpres-durham.org](http://www.firstpres-durham.org) and click in the section for listed for Newsletters or Bulletins.)

## **Fall Fellowship Pop-Up's (Sign-up online to participate)**

Questions or concerns, contact [Mitzi Lesher-Thomas](#).

**October 1 at 10:00 a.m.**

**Walk/ride with Jancy Johnstone along** The American Tobacco Trail

Meet under Hwy 147 by the ball park

RAINDATE Oct 16

**October 3 at 5:00 p.m.**

**Backyard Ecology & Bee Keeping**

Keith and *Franzi Rokoske's* home (2510 Wrightwood Ave, Durham)

**October 5 at 1:30 p.m.**

**Tour of the Nasher with Brent Curtis**

**October 9 from 12:30 - 2:00 p.m.**

**Tour Historic Montrose Garden with *Ellie Meade***

**October 15 from 4:30 - 6:30**

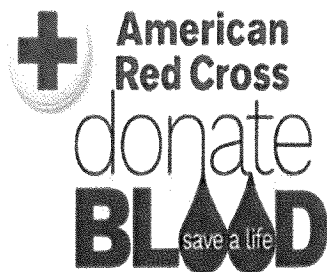
**Trivia Night with *Ian & Jennie Belle***

on the grounds of FPC (weather permitting)

**October 17 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Walking Tour of Downtown Durham with *Vera Cecelski and Laura Hanson***

Beginning at the Museum of Durham History



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**Thursday, October 7, 2021**

**1:00-6:00 p.m. at FPC in Watts-Hill Hall**

Primary contact/organizer: [Julie Whiddon](#)

Julie's email: [foxylady2642@yahoo.com](mailto:foxylady2642@yahoo.com)

Julie's phone number: 919-730-6673

**Sign up through Julie or sign up online**

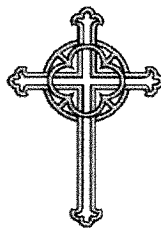
**at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) using code: firstpres.** Informational brochures are available from the table in the church foyer.

## The Week at a Glance!

<p><b>Sunday</b> <b>September 26</b></p> <p><b>12:00 - 1:15 PM</b> Youth Group Lunch Out</p> <p><b>3:00-4:00 PM</b> Children's Pop-Up on FPC Playground</p>	<p><b>Monday</b> <b>September 27</b></p> <p><b>1:00 PM</b> Worship Planning</p> <p><b>2:00 PM</b> Program Staff</p> <p><b>6:00 PM</b> Diaconate Meeting</p> <p><b>7:00 PM</b> Session Meeting</p>	<p><b>Tuesday</b> <b>September 28</b></p> <p><b>6:15 PM</b> <i>Love Is the Way</i> Book Study</p>	<p><b>Wednesday</b> <b>September 29</b></p> <p><b>11:00 AM</b> <i>Love Is the Way</i> Book Study</p>
<p><b>Thursday</b> <b>September 30</b></p>	<p><b>Friday</b> <b>October 1</b></p>	<p><b>Saturday</b> <b>October 2</b></p>	<p><b>Sunday</b> <b>October 3</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY</b></p> </div> <p><b>Sunday</b> <b>9:30 - 10:30 AM</b> Adult Faith Formation</p> <p><b>10:00 - 10:30 AM</b> Children and Youth Faith Formation</p> <p><b>11:00 AM</b> Worship and Communion</p> <p><b>4:30 - 6:00 PM</b> Youth Group at Farm Church</p>

### CHURCH STAFF

*Tom Bloom*, Business Administrator  
*Lenore Champion*, Children's Ministry Director  
*Mindy Douglas*, Pastor/Head of Staff  
*Susan Dunlap*, Parish Associate  
*Joseph Harvard*, Pastor Emeritus



*Sybil King*, Administrative Assistant  
*Mitzi Leshner-Thomas*, Associate Pastor  
*Valerie McMillian*, Parish Administrator  
*Kathy Parkins*, Minister of Music  
*John Weicher*, Associate Pastor

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