

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

Fourth Sunday of Easter

May 11, 2025

**A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD**

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

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS**

Mindy Douglas

**PRELUDE**

*Now the Green Blade Rises*

*trad. French tune,*  
arr. Michael Bedford

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Mindy Douglas

Leader: Be joyful in God, all you lands; be joyful, all the earth.

**People: Sing the glory of God's name; sing the glory of God's praise!**

Leader: Let us say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!"

**People: Come now and hear of the works of God!**

**\* HYMN NO. 13**

*The Mighty God with Power Speaks*

*Kingsfold*

**\*CONFESSION OF SIN**

Esther Hethcox

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

**Merciful God,**

**like Saul on the road to Damascus,**

**we have traveled paths of pride, anger, and self-righteousness.**

**We have ignored your truth,**

**persecuting others in thought, word, or action—**

**forgetting that all are made in your image.**

**Lord, we confess that we often act out of fear,**

**clinging to control instead of surrendering to your will.**

**We resist transformation because it is costly.**

**We avoid the hard work of reconciliation and love.**

**Forgive us, Lord.**

**Open our eyes to your truth,**

**our hearts to your love,**

**and our lives to your mission.**

**In the name of Jesus, who restores and sends us, we pray.**

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Esther Hethcox

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

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

**\*REGATHERING HYMN NO. 243**

*Be Not Afraid*

*Be Not Afraid*

Be not a - fraid; sing out for joy! Christ is ris-en, al - le - lu - ia!

Be not a - fraid; sing out for joy! Christ is ris-en, al - le - lu - ia!

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Be Not Afraid'. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are written below the staves. The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system continues the melody and accompaniment.

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

Cris Rivera

Reader: The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

Reader: Let us pray.

**All:** God our helper,  
by your Holy Spirit, open our minds,  
that as the scriptures are read  
and your word is proclaimed,  
we may be led to your truth and taught your will,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING**

Psalm 146

(Pew Bible, OT Page 581)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Cris Rivera

**People:** Thanks be to God!

**GOSPEL READING**

Acts 9:1-20

(Pew Bible, NT Page 127)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God!

**SERMON**

*"Surprised by God"*

Mindy Douglas

*(Silent reflection)*

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

Esther Hethcox

**We believe in the God who transforms lives.**

**Just as Saul, once a persecutor, became Paul, a preacher of Christ,  
we believe no one is beyond the reach of God's redeeming love.**

**We believe that the light of Christ breaks into even the darkest hearts,  
calling us by name and leading us into new life.**

We believe in the power of grace—  
 not earned by works, but given freely by a merciful Savior.  
 We believe that God gives purpose to us all,  
 calling the unlikely to carry the light of Christ into the world.  
 We believe that our past does not define us—  
 God's call redefines us.  
 We believe in Jesus Christ,  
 who met Saul on the road, who meets us where we are,  
 and who sends us out, changed and empowered,  
 to proclaim the gospel with boldness and love.

**\*HYMN NO. 330**

*Our Help Is in the Name of God*

*Old 124th*

**A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN**

Mindy Douglas

**DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS**

Invitation to Give

Esther Hethcox

Offertory Anthem

*Now the Green Blade Rises*

*trad. French tune,  
 arr. Heitshusen*

*Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
 Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
 Love lives again, that with the dead has been;  
 Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

*In the grave they laid Him, love by hatred slain,  
 Thinking that He would never wake again,  
 Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;  
 Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

*Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
 He that for three days in the grave had lain;  
 Raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;  
 Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

*When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,  
 Your touch can call us back to life again,  
 Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;  
 Love is come again like wheat arising green.*

\*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!*

**BLESSING OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS**

Heidi Biermann

*Presentation of Scarves and Laying on of Hands*

Mindy Douglas

Esther Hethcox

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Esther Hethcox

Leader: The grace of the 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. 233**

*The Day of Resurrection*

*Lancashire*

**\*CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

*Mindy Douglas*

**\*POSTLUDE**

*Jesus Is Lord (Festal Fourish)*

*Matthew Corl*

---

### *Happening Today*

**Children's Music (following worship):** The children who are attending the music program can follow Kathy Parkins upstairs to begin rehearsal.

**Youth Stock Sale:** See page 5 for more details.

**Meaning in the Middle Fellowship** will not meet today. We will resume on May 25.



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*** today are given by ***Judith*** and ***Al Arrowood*** to the Glory of God and in memory of their mothers, **Pauline Estes Fowler** and **Gladys Duncan Arrowood**.

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

Our ***Paschal Candle and stained Red Oak Stand***, crafted by Marklin Candle Design of Contoocook, New Hampshire and given in memory of ***Elder Ed Kwon***, was originally dedicated on April 30, 2017. This candle stands as a visible sign of God's enduring presence in our beautiful century-old sanctuary. Rooted in Passover (Pesach) and adopted by early Christians, the lit Candle represents the Risen Christ's triumph over darkness and death, his resurrection, to become the Light of the World.

***Portions of today's worship music*** are reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926.

***Youth Stock Sale:*** Our Second Annual Stock Sale is happening now! This is our youth fundraiser for summer trips. FPCers can support our youth who are participating in Appalachia Service Project, CROSS, and the Montreat Youth Conference this summer. A stock entitles its holder to a letter from one of the youth during their trip, sharing first-hand about their 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.

In our worship today, we offer a ***special blessing*** to our high school graduates: **Sam Brown, Anna Compton, Seth Cowden, Will Creighton, Cate Everett, Thilo Fullenkamp, Ruby Gentithes, and Ariel Mbah**. In addition, we celebrate with **Keridwen (Kriddie) Whitmore** who successfully defended her dissertation in the Department of Geography and the Environment at UNC-Chapel Hill, and will graduate on May 10th. She and her family will move to Umea, Sweden in September where she has a 2-year post-doc at Umea University.

***FPC Life During WWII:*** Mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II with a visit to the exhibit in the foyer organized by two members of the Worship and Arts Committee, Peter Fish and Alice Raney. The exhibits graphically detail the life and mission of our church during the hectic years from 1941-1945.

## Advocacy Day for Reproductive Freedom

Tuesday, May 13th  
9am - 12pm

Interfaith Voices for Reproductive Freedom (IVRF) is sponsoring an advocacy day along with other faith-based and progressive groups at the NC General Assembly. FPC is a member of IVRF. Training will be provided in advance; all are welcome to attend. This will be an important opportunity to show that people of faith support reproductive freedom and gender affirming healthcare and also show that we reject state funding for evangelical crisis pregnancy centers. Please carpool, wear clerical clothing or anything identifying you as a member or leader of your faith group (FPC t-shirt, hat, etc). Please contact Melva Okun with questions at [melvafokun@gmail.com](mailto:melvafokun@gmail.com).



### Things That Matter Book Club

Tuesday, May 13 at 7 pm  
Home of Celia Dickerson

Hosted by Celia Dickerson, we will discuss *North Woods* by Daniel Mason. Dale Gaddis will be our fearless leader. Please contact Celia for directions and to let her know that you plan to attend by email.

- [cdickerson1965@gmail.com](mailto:cdickerson1965@gmail.com)



### First Friends Coffee Klatch

Saturday, May 17 at 10 am  
Home of Cherrie & Andy Henry

Join us for a breakfast potluck with your favorite dish. Coffee and tea will be provided. Dress casual and comfortable for the weather. We will be outside if possible. **RSVP** by contacting Cherrie at 919-599-9406 or Andy at 919-599-9405.



*Blue-billed Curassow, found only in Colombia's Magdalena Valley.*

### **Bird Slide Show**

Sunday, May 18 at 7:00 pm  
Watts-Hill Hall

Colombia has more bird species than any other country, which makes it the birdiest country in the birdiest continent in the world. It's also a magnet for traveling birders, such as our own David and Judy Smith. Join them for a photographic visit to Colombia on Sunday, May 18, at 7:00 pm in Watts-Hill Hall.

### **Daytimer's Luncheon**

Tuesday, May 27 at 11:30 am  
Bennett Pointe Grill  
4625 Hillsborough Rd.

Join us for our monthly gathering. RSVP to Mickey Velkey by May 25.

Email: Marilyn.velkey@usa.net or Cell: 601.750.3619

***The Worship and Arts*** committee is excited to showcase the wide range of talents of our FPC members and friends at the FPC ART FESTIVAL from June 8-15. Word is spreading about the all-ages show and it is shaping up to include photography, paintings, sculpture, and furniture. Representing the daintiest entry so far, one of our members has agreed to share her beautiful handmade reproduction medieval buttons. We hope to exhibit an exceptional variety of visual arts and crafts, so please consider connecting with us to share your talents. For more information, please contact Alice Raney araney1@nc.rr.com or Floalice Reaves floalice@reaves@yahoo.com.

## *~Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~*

### **We extend our condolences to:**

*Richard Boulden* and *family* on the passing of his **mother** on April 24, 2025.

*Family and friends* of **Linda Barenchi** who died on May 4, 2025.

### **We remember in prayer:**

*Jeanne Hervey* is having a surgical procedure on May 15.

*Michael Honeycutt* is home recovering from surgery.

*Mitzi Leshner-Thomas* started hospice care at 2460 Northwick Dr. Apt. 107, Winston-Salem, NC 27103.

*Kathryn Murchison* is home recovering well from surgery.

*Tony Brown*

*Dennis Buckley*

*Paul Cornsweet*

*Sam Crabtree*

*Susan Cyr*

*Kerry Holbrook*

*Lee House*

*Ann Huff*

*Jenni James*

*Jen McGonigle*

*Madge McKeithen*

*Harriett Mitchell*

*Franzi Rokoske*

*Keith Rokoske*

*Alfred Tisdale*

*Phyllis Verhey*

### **Care Communities**

Croasdaile Pavilion: *Dub Gulley, Harvey Estes*

Durham Ridge: *Phillip Herndon*

Hillcrest Convalescent: *Carol Wills*

Pruitt Health - Durham: *Fred Callaway*

Brookdale Senior Living: *Debbie Mathews*

### **Family and Friends of the Congregation**

*Julia Allen*, grandmother of Amy Wilson

*Evan Breyer*, grandson of friends of Jo Ann Moore

*Francisca Cristobal*, relative of Al and Judy Arrowwood

*Kim Cummings*, father of Drew Cummings

*Linda Foster-Momsen*, mother of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

*Cheryl Fowler*, friend of Cheri Reece

*Michael Gilmer*, neighbor of Becky Martin

*Jennifer Hervey*, daughter-in-law of Jeanne Hervey

*Katie Jackson*, wife of Matthew Hirsch

*Donna Johnson*, mother of Ann Huff

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

*Aaron Pritchard*, friend of Kathy Parkins

*Wu-Chou Su*, father of Claire Su

*Larry Todd*, friend of Kathy Parkins and Wendy McCorkle

*Jim Vacca*, father of Jamie Chambliss



## This Week at a Glance!

### Later Today

**12:15 PM**

Children's Choir (Choir Room)  
Youth Stock Sale (Foyer)  
Youth Downtown Lunch (Lobby)

**5:00 PM**

Youth Groups

### Monday, May 12

**1:30 PM**

Worship Planning (Mindy's Office)

**6:00 PM**

Property Committee (Room 205)  
Christian Education Committee (Zoom)  
Personnel Committee (Daye Meeting Room)

**6:30 PM**

Service & Mission Committee (Zoom/Watts-Hill Hall)

### Tuesday, May 13

**6:00 PM**

Finance & Investment Committee (Daye Meeting Room)

**7:00 PM**

Things That Matter Book Group (Home of Celia Dickerson)  
Worship and the Arts Committee (Zoom)

### Wednesday, May 14

**1:00 PM**

All Staff Meeting (Daye Meeting Room)

**4:30 PM**

Yoga (Room 201)

**7:00 PM**

Choir (Choir Room)

### Thursday, May 15

### Friday, May 16

**10:30 AM**

Yoga (Room 201)

### Saturday, May 17

**10:00 AM**

First Friends Coffee Klatch  
(Home of Cherrie and Andy Henry)

### Sunday, May 18

*Youth Stock Sale, Newsletter Deadline*

**9:45 AM**

Faith Formation  
(Classes available for children, youth, and adults.)

**11:00 AM**

Worship; Mindy Douglas preaching

**12:15 PM**

Children's Music (Choir Room)  
Teacher Appreciation Lunch (Watts-Hill Hall)

**5:00 PM**

Youth Groups: Kickball

**7:00 PM**

Bird Slide Show (Watts-Hill Hall)

**8:00 PM**

MnM's Fellowship (via Zoom)

## CHURCH STAFF

*Shakira Bethea*, Church 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  
*Kathy Parkins*, Minister of Music  
*John Weicher*, Associate Pastor  
*Mitzi Leshner-Thomas*, Associate Pastor  
(Medical Leave)

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

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