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SERMON SERIES

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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14th Sunday after Pentecost

September 14, 2025

A SERVICE FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD
WITH THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, JOYS AND CONCERNS

Esther Hethcox

PRELUDE

Pari Intervallo

Arvo Pärt

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (adapted from 1 John 4)

Esther Hethcox

Leader: Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;

People: everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Leader: God's love was revealed among us in this way:

People: God sent God's only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

Leader: Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

People: If we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us.

All: Let us worship God.

***HYMN NO. 435**

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

In Babilone

***CONFESSION OF SIN**

John Weicher

Call to Prayer

Prayer of Confession

Holy One,

you gave us the first moment of kindness,

when you breathed our beings into existence.

Your kindness toward us and the world

has echoed through the ancient story of our faith,

calling us to respond in kind.

But we have failed in embodying your kindness

in all we have done and all we have left undone.

Forgive us, O Lord,

for the ways we have failed to be kind to one another and the world.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer...

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

**Those who are able, please stand.*

***REGATHERING HYMN NO. 389**

Come and Sing the Praise of the Lord

Hal'luhu

Come and sing the praise of the Lord: sing hallelujah!

Come and sing the praise of the Lord: sing hallelujah!

Let all that lives, all that has breath, sing the praise of God, hallelujah!

Let all that lives, all that has breath, sing the praise of God.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lizzie Apple

Reader: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Reader: Let us pray.

All: **Startle us, O God, with your truth,
and open our minds to your Spirit,
that we may be one with Christ our Lord,
and serve as faithful disciples,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

HEBREW READING

Isaiah 43:1-7

(Pew Bible, OT Page 672)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Lizzie Apple

People: **Thanks be to God!**

EPISTLE READING

Colossians 3:12-14

(Pew Bible, NT Page 201)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Lizzie Apple

People: **Thanks be to God!**

HEBREW READING

Micah 6:6-8

(Pew Bible, OT Page 866)

Leader: The Word of the Lord.

Esther Hethcox

People: **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

"Clothed in Kindness"

Esther Hethcox

(silent reflection)

***HYMN (see page 8)**

God, Bless Your Church with Strength!

sung to Diademata

A TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

Esther Hethcox

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Esther Hethcox, John Weicher

Presentation

Questions

Renunciations

Question to the Congregation

Jon Abels

Elder: Do you, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture Claire Su by word and deed, with love and prayer, encouraging them to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of this church? **We do.**

*Profession of Faith (in unison)

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Thanksgiving over the Water

Baptism

Anointing

Welcome and Gifts

Sung Response (Hymn No. 727, verse 2)

The Servant Song

We are pilgrims on a journey; we're together on the road.

We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

Invitation to Give

John Weicher

Offertory Anthem

With a Voice of Singing

Martin Shaw

With a voice of singing declare ye this, and let it be heard, Alleluia.

Utter it even unto the ends of the earth. The Lord hath delivered his people. Alleluia.

*O be joyful in God, all ye lands, O sing praises to the honor of his name,
make his praise to be glorious.*

With a voice of singing declare ye this, and let it be heard, Alleluia.

*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!

COMMISSIONING OF WESTERN NC MISSION TRIP

Esther Hethcox, John Weicher

Introduction

Questions to the Participants

Questions of the Congregation

Will you, the community of First Presbyterian Church, hold these serving pilgrims in prayer, keep them close in your awareness and hearts while they are away, and in so doing maintain our connection and unity in the body of Christ? **We will.**

Will you receive these pilgrims with curiosity and openness upon their return? Will you listen to their stories, encourage them in their growth, and help them discern how we can incorporate their experiences into the life of our community? **We will.**

Prayer (in unison)

Holy God, you are in this place and in all places at once. We ask your blessing on these pilgrims this day. May they feel your presence and power as they meet new people, see new places, offer what service they are able, and learn new things. May they hear your living Word through the voices of people who speak your truth and seek your peace. May they experience the mystery of the body of Christ - alive across all boundaries and differences. May they be encouraged and renewed by your Spirit so that the refreshment and freedom of your grace is present with them always. Amen.

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

John Weicher

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. 475**

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Nettleton

***CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

Esther Hethcox

***POSTLUDE**

Toccata

Giambattista Martini

Happening Today

Silent Auction Begins in the Wilson Parlor. See *page 5* for more information.

5:00 PM Youth Groups - Carried by Faith: Jesus' Story (youth room)



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.



Sign In

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 to the glory of God and in loving memory of ***Marilyn Hedgpeth*** by the ***Worship and the Arts Committee***.

This week, we continue our six-week **sermon series** based on Colossians 3:12-14. In this passage, Christians are invited, through their baptisms, to put on a new metaphorical garment that sets them apart in the way they live. It is a garment of love that shows itself through compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love. Each week, we will explore stories that open our hearts to recognize the ways we are to follow Jesus by exhibiting these traits as we live our lives together in the world. From youngest to oldest, we are the whole people of God, the Body of Christ, called to put on love in all its beauty and grace, as we worship and serve God in the world.

Our thanks to **Gordon Campbell**, organist, and **Dan Huff**, conductor, for sharing their musical gifts with us while Kathy is on vacation.

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.

Portions of today’s worship resources were reprinted from: *Lectionary Liturgies* and *Book of Common Worship*. Music is reprinted under Onelicense.net: A.713926. Bulletin cover logo created by Lauren Wright-Pittman and used for the 2025 PAM Worship & Music Conference. Used with permission.

Music Notes: The compositions of the Estonian minimalist Arvo Pärt rank among the most frequently performed works of contemporary classical music. His music is deeply grounded in his Christian faith. Pärt prefaces “Pari Intervallo” (“Equal Distance,” a comment on the tonal structure) with the words of Romans, 14:8: “for if we live we live for the Lord; or if we die we die for the Lord.” The piece sounds a meditative space which many find difficult to inhabit.

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/>



Art Auction bidding begins today. Enjoy 50 pieces of unique art on display in the Wilson Parlor. In addition, a new Apple Laptop 13 inch M4 will also be available for purchase. The highest bidder wins. You may place a bid until September 28. All proceeds support the ministries of FPC. Checks can be made to First Presbyterian Church.

Children’s Choir: CHILDREN age 6-11 are invited to sing in Children’s Choir which begins, **September 21** immediately following church upstairs in the choir room. We’ll gather for a small snack and about 20 minutes of fun, singing, and learning about church traditions. For more information, please feel free to email Kathy Parkins at k.parkins@firstpres-durham.org.

Save the Date

Memorial Service: A Service of Witness to the Resurrection for **Keith Rokoske** will be held in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church on **Saturday, September 20 at 10 a.m.**

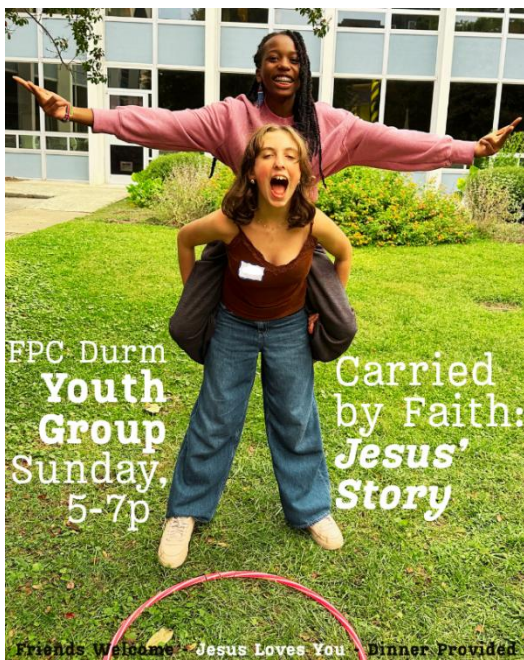
First Friends is a fellowship group of FPC folks that tend to be 55 and older. Hope to see you at our gatherings! **Saturday, October 25** hosted by Amy & Dan Mapel and **Saturday, November 22** hosted by Carl Rist.



Sign up now for FPC's Durham Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope

FPC's free participation in the October 10-12 Durham Pilgrimage of Pain and Hope is still open. You are invited to sign up for this once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience

the history of Durham woven together with God's story from Stagville plantation to Black Wall Street to a special visit to the Carolina Theater to hear a piece of the story of Durham's Civil Rights movement. Over a weekend of visiting important sites, hearing the stories of leaders who have shaped the city, and engaging in discussion with fellow pilgrims over meals and fellowship time, we will get to reckon with the challenges Durham has faced and witness the hope in our community and in our church. FPC's pilgrimage will be on Friday 10/10 - 4pm-9pm; Saturday 10/11 - 8am-8pm, and Sunday 10/12 10am-7pm. Registration is limited to 20 people and the registration deadline is Friday, September 26th. To register, and for more information, visit www.durhamcares.org/pilgrimage. Please share with your friends and fellow FPC members and join this very special opportunity!



Today's Youth Group

For youth group this week, we're diving into our theme: Carried by Faith. We'll be reading our guiding scripture - the friends lowering a paralyzed man to see Jesus in Luke 5:17-26 - and paying special attention to Jesus' story. Plus, games, fabulous humans, and dinner together.

We had a great showing last week, and first-timers and friends are always welcome. Contact John Weicher with any questions.

~Celebrations and Concerns of the Congregation ~

We remember in prayer:

Carter Momsen Hudson is recovering at home after a hospitalization in Atlanta.

<i>Tony Brown</i>	<i>Paul Cornsweet</i>	<i>Sam Crabtree</i>	<i>Susan Cyr</i>
<i>Kerry Holbrook</i>	<i>Lee House</i>	<i>Ann Huff</i>	<i>Mal King</i>
<i>Kathy Krahenbuhl</i>	<i>Mitzi Leshner-Thomas</i>	<i>Jen McGonigle</i>	<i>Madge McKeithen</i>
<i>Harriett Mitchell</i>	<i>Jim Rogers</i>	<i>Franzi Rokoske</i>	<i>Alfred Tisdale</i>
<i>Ginny Widmark</i>	<i>Mickey Velkey</i>		

Care Communities

Croasdaile Pavilion: ***Dub Gulley, Harvey Estes***

Hillcrest Convalescent: ***Carol Wills***

Brookdale Senior Living: ***Debbie Mathews***

Durham Ridge: ***Phillip Herndon***

Pruitt Health - Durham: ***Fred Callaway***

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 Arrowood

Kim Cummings, father of Drew Cummings

Linda Foster-Momsen, mother of Deborah Momsen-Hudson

Cheryl Fowler, friend of Cheri Reece

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

Bill Prochaska, friend of Al and Judy Arrowood

Sara Neece Silletto, daughter of Vernon & Beth Neece

Wu-Chou Su, father of Claire Su

Jim Vacca, father of Jamie Chambliss

God Bless Your Church With Strength!

John A. Dalles

George Job Elvey, 1868

DIADEMATA

1. God bless your church with strength! Wher - ev - er we may be,
2. God bless your church with life! May all our branch - es thrive,
3. God bless your church with hope! De - spite cha - ot - ic days,

The first system of the hymn features a treble and bass staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

up - build your ser - vants as we work in com-mon min - is - try.
un - blem-ished, whole-some, bear - ing fruit, a - bun-dant - ly a - live.
may we in dark - ness shine to light a path-way through life's maze.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

Urge us from fledg - ling faith to ven - ture and to soar
From you, one ho - ly vine, in free - dom may we grow;
May jus - tice be our aim, and kind - ness ours to share;

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staves.

through o - pen skies to sing the praise of Christ whom we a - dore.
sus - tain us in our mis-sion, Lord, your love and peace to show.
in hum - ble - ness O may we walk, as - sured our God is there!

The fourth system concludes the hymn. The melody and accompaniment end with a final cadence. The lyrics are written below the staves.

435 There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy, like the wide-ness
 2 For the love of God is broad-er than the mea-sures

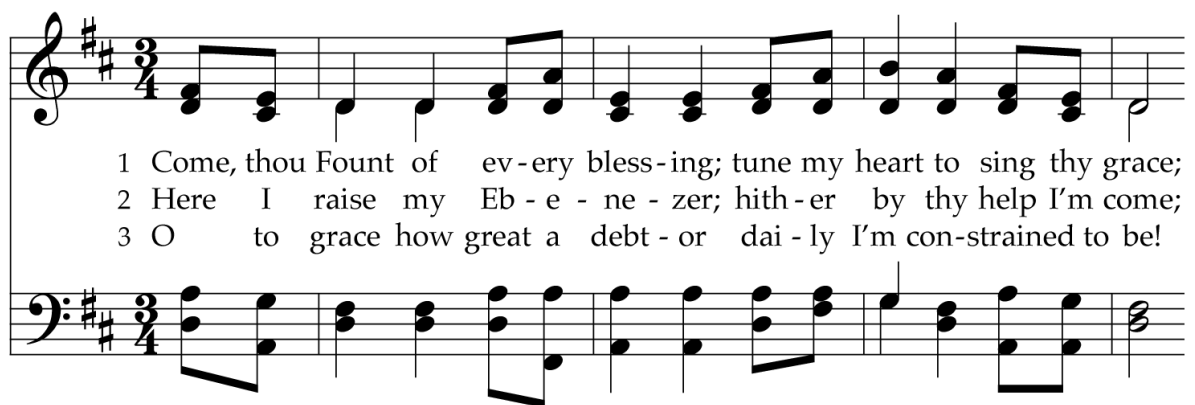
of the sea. There's a kind-ness in God's jus-tice,
 of the mind. And the heart of the E-ter-nal

which is more than lib-er-ty. There is no place where earth's
 is most won-der-ful-ly kind. If our love were but more

sor-rows are more felt than up in heaven. There is no place
 faith-ful, we would glad-ly trust God's Word, and our lives re-

where earth's fail-ings have such kind-ly judg-ment given.
 flect thanks-giv-ing for the good-ness of our Lord.

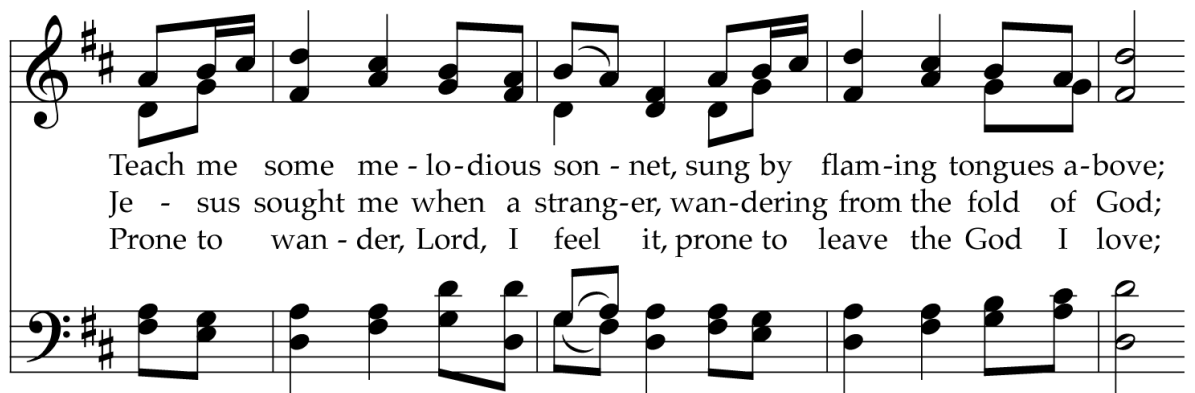
Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing 475



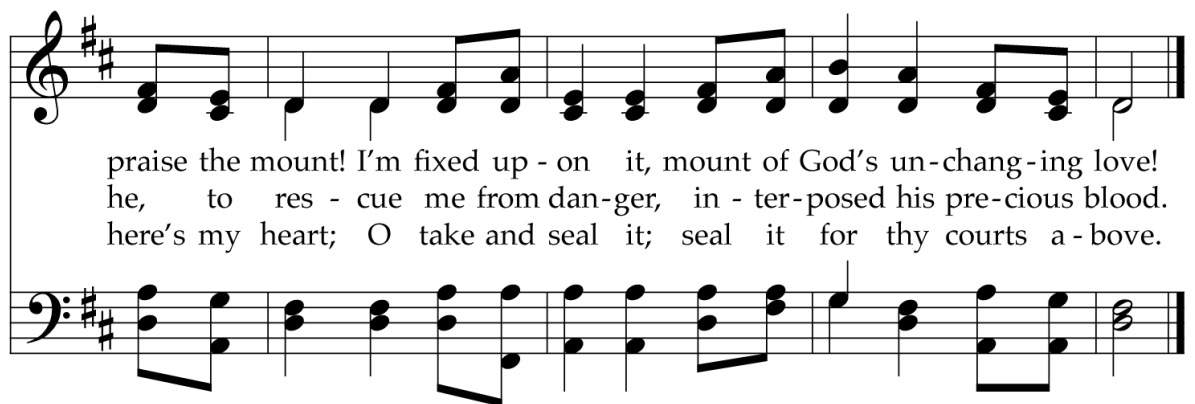
1 Come, thou Fount of ev-ery bless-ing; tune my heart to sing thy grace;
 2 Here I raise my Eb - e - ne - zer; hith-er by thy help I'm come;
 3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I'm con-strained to be!



streams of mer - cy, nev - er ceas - ing, call for songs of loud-est praise.
 and I hope, by thy good plea-sure, safe-ly to ar - rive at home.
 Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to thee.



Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove;
 Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God;
 Prone to wan - der, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;



praise the mount! I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un-chang-ing love!
 he, to res - cue me from dan-ger, in - ter-posed his pre-cious blood.
 here's my heart; O take and seal it; seal it for thy courts a - bove.

This Week at a Glance!

Later Today

Western NC Hurricane Recovery Mission Begins

5:00 PM Youth Groups - Carried by Faith: Jesus' Story (youth room)

Monday, September 15

11:30 AM Coalition for Affordable Housing & Transit (Watts-Hill Hall)

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

Tuesday, September 16

10:00 AM You Are Not Alone (Wilson Parlor)

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

6:00 PM Day School Board Meeting (Zoom)

7:00 PM The Somethings Prayer Service (Sanctuary)

Wednesday, September 17

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

7:00 PM Senior Choir (choir room)

Thursday, September 18

Friday, September 19

First Friends Beach Trip Begins

Saturday, September 20

10:00 AM Service for Keith Rokoske (Sanctuary)
Reception to follow (Watts-Hill Hall)

Sunday, September 21

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Newsletter Deadline

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

11:00 AM Worship; John Weicher, Preaching

12:15 PM

FPC members of Day School Board Meeting (Daye Meeting Room)

Fellowship Committee (Wilson Parlor)

Children's Music (choir room)

5:00 PM Youth Groups – High Schoolers vs Middle Schoolers vs. Advisors (youth room)

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

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