



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FENTON

To be a loving community of faith dedicated to helping people
know Jesus Christ and grow, share and serve as his disciples.

25th Sunday after Pentecost
November 2nd, 2024 10:00 a.m.

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT This is the Day the Lord has Made

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 119

1 Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD.

2 Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart,

3 who also do no wrong but walk in his ways.

4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.

5 O that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!

6 Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

7 I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn your righteous ordinances.

8 I will observe your statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

OPENING PRAYER

Living God: when there is a famine in our souls, you feed us with grace; when there are pockets of poverty in our love for others, you bless us with generosity; when we are empty and alone, you move into our hearts.

Jesus, Bearer of the good things which have come to us: you bend down to lift us from despair; you embrace those who haven't a friend in the world; you open the eyes of those struck blind by arrogance and ambition.

Eternal Spirit: you walk with us wherever we go; you take the fragments of our lives and reshape us into holy people; you are with us, and not even death can separate us. Speak to us today and be present to us as we worship together. Amen.

HYMN God Gather Us From Many Strands

Tune: TRURO, lyrics John A. Dalles

God, gather us from many strands,

To form the pattern of your hands,

That, in the weaving you have done

The handiwork is yours alone.

God, fashion us by your own Word,
 To wear the imprint of our Lord,
 And, make of us, in all our days,
 A fabric of unceasing praise.

God, spread us out in faith, to act
 As comforters to all who've lacked
 The strength to seek, the will to cope.
 O make of us a source of hope!

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Dear God, your Son, Jesus Christ is our grace;
 the Spirit, is our hope; You are, our peace and our joy,
 Speak to us now about your character, your thoughts, and your mission as we read your
 holy word. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

6 “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the ordinances—that the LORD your
 God charged me to teach you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and
 occupy, 2 so that you and your children and your children’s children may fear the LORD
 your God all the days of your life and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am
 commanding you, so that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe
 them diligently, so that it may go well with you and so that you may multiply greatly in a
 land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised
 you.

4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. 5 You shall love the LORD your
 God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 Keep these words
 that I am commanding you today in your heart. 7 Recite them to your children and talk
 about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when
 you rise. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, 9
 and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

ANTHEM 1st Song of Isaiah

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Matthew 13:31-35

31 He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that
 someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has
 grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and
 make nests in its branches.

33 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took

and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. 35 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth to speak in parables;

I will proclaim what has been hidden since the foundation.”

SERMON “The Kingdom of Heaven is Like...” Pastor Lindsey Carnes

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

What image for the Kingdom is the most helpful to you?

How can you ‘bring in the Kingdom’ in your own life?

OFFERING AND DEDICATION OF PLEDGES

Gracious and loving God, giver of all that is good and true and beautiful and life-giving. These pledge cards represent our sweat, they represent our lives, they represent our dreams. The pledges which we make on them are but tokens of the awesome gifts that have been given to us and they are pledged in thanksgiving for all we have received, for all we have been inspired to be, for all we are challenged to become, in this place.

May they be the first fruits of all we have and not what we have left over, so that we may live out as closely as possible how you give to us. May we see them as our offering to you, sacred, holy, yet earthy, filled with possibilities. May we hold this image in our hearts and minds so as we watch our offerings each week come to your table, we can see our very selves being part of this offering, it is us on the table, living sacrifices to you. Amen.

As we offer our gifts, our hearts, our lives to God, may we see the kingdom of hope and wonder, of healing and kindness unfolding in our midst. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

(If you would like a written prayer request included in our prayers today, please indicate that and an usher will collect them)

Will the Ushers please come forward.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

RECOGNITION OF THE SAINTS

Members of FFPC who have passed into Eternal Life in the past year will have their names read and a bell will be sounded for each.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

CALL TO CONFESSION:

The world teaches us many ways to love, but all are based on selfish desires and needs. God teaches us how to love: completely, uniquely, unconditionally. Let us confess our difficulty to be as loving as God teaches us, as we pray, saying,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

We are hesitant to confess, Holy God, how hard it is to love as you wish. It is easy to love you with all that we are, except when you ask us to love our neighbor with all that we have. We find it hard to love our neighbor, when it is linked to the way we love ourselves. And it is difficult to love anyone - even You - more than we love ourselves.

Forgive us, Love Eternal. As you took a risk in creating us, help us to take risks to love others compassionately, to love ourselves genuinely, and to love you as completely as you love us in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON:

In God's Kingdom, all are loved for who they are, not what they do;
in God's Kingdom, all are forgiven for what they do, and don't;
in God's Kingdom, all are welcomed and fed by God's grace and hope.

**Forgiven, loved, sent forth -
we are not far from God's Kingdom!
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

COMMUNION

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE FEAST

COMMUNION PRAYER:

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD**TABLETALK WITH GOD'S CHILDREN**

What does it feel like when you are worried?

HYMN The Lord Will Have His Way

(The Congregation is invited to reflect as the song is presented)

CHARGE from Psalm 3

May God shield you on all sides;

May God ground you and lift your head up high.

With all your might shout to God and May he answer like thunder from his holy mountain.

As you stretch yourself out to sleep, May you rest in God's rest;

May you rise up again rested, tall and steady;

Fearless before fear, confident in God's power and plan.

Real rest comes from God,

His blessings are like clothing for his people.

Look at how well dressed you are!

BENEDICTION The Lord Will Have His Way**POSTLUDE**

May the Peace of Christ be with you...

...And also with you!