



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.

13th Sunday after Pentecost
August 23rd, 2026 10:00 a.m.

1

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

PRELUDE

WELCOME

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 124

¹ If it had not been the Lord who was on our side
—let Israel now say—

² **if it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
when our enemies attacked us,**

³ then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;

⁴ **then the flood would have swept us away;
the torrent would have gone over us;**

⁵ then over us would have gone
the raging waters.

⁶ **Blessed be the Lord,
who has not given us
as prey to their teeth.**

⁷ We have escaped like a bird
from the snare of the hunters;
the snare is broken,
and we have escaped.

⁸ **Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.**

OPENING PRAYER

We have no other help than the help that comes from You, the Living God. We might think we can manage our own affairs in our own strength, but we are mistaken. Lovingly convince us of your power to care and provide for us, Lord. Your ways are good, teach us, empower us, strengthen us to follow you. Amen.

HYMN PH #451 “Open My Eyes That I May See”

CALL TO CONFESSION

Voice 1: We are a pilgrim people on a journey deeper into the heart of God.

Voice 2: But we stumble.

Voice 3: We fall.

All: Still God calls us to arise

Voice 1: setting aside all that hinders us from following.

Voice 2: Jesus says, “Come unto me, all you who are weary . . .

Voice 3: and I will give you rest for your soul.”

Voice 1: You will run and not be weary . . .

Voice 2: walk and not faint.

Voice 3: Trusting in the mercies of the Lord, we confess our shortcomings before God and one another that we might be relieved of all that gets in the way of walking in the freedom of love.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (In Unison)

Leader: Your story is one of redemption, holiness, salvation, and new beginnings: things that we need, things that we long for. Because we mess up. We fall down. We don’t know where to turn.

People: So we turn to you, Holy One. We turn to you for redemption. We place before you all those things—holy and unholy—that are part of our lives. We cry out to you, “Save us! Help us to start over! Because we can’t get out of our own way!”

Leader: Forgive us, God, as only you can. Help us to begin anew.

People: Not only that, but remind us of what it means to be your people: to love you and to love those around us—whether we want to or not—with our whole being.

Leader: That’s your call to us. That’s who you want us to be. People who follow the teacher, preacher, healer, and Savior, Christ the Lord. Amen.

DECLARATION OF PARDON

Leader: Everyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

People: Whatever was old is gone. New life has begun!

Leader: Through Christ, our relationship with God has been restored.

People: And our call is to restore our relationships with one another.

Leader: Friends, believe the Good News that comes from God: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord, we have questions. So many questions. We want to learn more about you, yet we don't know where to begin. Help us to find a starting place in your story. Through it, shed light upon our darkness, our wanderings, our doubts. Settle within us the discomfort that comes with the questions. Calm our deepest fears and anxieties as we find root in the Word told to us this day. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 51:1-6

Blessings in Store for God's People

51 Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the LORD.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

² Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah, who bore you,
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.

³ For the LORD will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the LORD;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴ Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation,
for a teaching will go out from me
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵ I will bring near my deliverance swiftly;
my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.

⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens
and look at the earth beneath,

for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
 the earth will wear out like a garment,
 and those who live on it will die like gnats,
 but my salvation will be forever,
 and my deliverance will never be ended.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“People Need the Lord”
 Bob Patterson and Bonnie Griffith

Arr. Nelson & McHugh

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: John 8:31-59

True Disciples

³¹ Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. ³⁷ I know that you are descendants of Abraham, yet you look for an opportunity to kill me because there is no place in you for my word. ³⁸ I declare what I have seen in the Father’s presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.”

Jesus and Abraham

³⁹ They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did, ⁴⁰ but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. ⁴¹ You are indeed doing what your father does.” They said to him, “We are not illegitimate children; we have one Father, God himself.” ⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God, and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. ⁴⁴ You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷

Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.”

⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹ Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death.” ⁵² The Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets, yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’ ⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?” ⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, ‘He is our God,’ ⁵⁵ though you do not know him. But I know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. ⁵⁶ Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad.” ⁵⁷ Then the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” ⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

TABLETALK WITH GOD’S CHILDREN

SERMON

Like Father, Like Son Part 2

Pastor Lindsey Carnes

BEARING THE WORD OUT INTO THE WORLD

OFFERING

In the midst of struggle, wrestling with doubt and confusion, pinned to the ground and breathless, we ask God for a blessing. In our emptiness, we feel like we have nothing to give. Then God reminds us that we are never worthless, that we can always offer something—even the vulnerability of welcoming someone into our emptiness. So we find blessing in being honest, in standing side by side with others in need, in volunteering what we have and in sharing what we lack. Let’s come to God with all we have and all we are.

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

Just as we dedicate these gifts to you, Lord, we dedicate our lives. Use these gifts and use our lives, we pray. Our hope is that these offerings will make a difference

in our community, especially in the lives of those who need your grace the most. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Will the Ushers Please come forward.

OFFERTORY

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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

"Lord's Prayer"

Arr. Max Sauders

Bob Patterson and Bonnie Griffith

MINUTE FOR MISSION (this will be ten minutes)

Refugee Welcome Team Sarah Martin-Fanone

LITURGY FOR NEW NEIGHBORS

Lord Jesus, you call all nations and people from all nations to yourself. You love the refugee and the families who seek refuge in far off lands, fleeing violence. Your Kingdom is made up of the mighty and the meek, the powerful and the impoverished.

We pray for men and women and vulnerable children in danger and those in trouble. and those who need refuge.

You protect those experiencing persecution and violence. You protect the vulnerable. Turn our hearts to your heart; Toward compassion and righteousness and justice.

We thank you for our friends who now have homes where once they did not. We thank you for new neighbors! We thank you that you have transformed violence into peace, fear into safety.

We thank you for the opportunity to build our community, to learn, and see your great love work.

Help us love our neighbors as we would want us and our children to be loved.

Grant wisdom and grace to government leaders and to leaders in so many local churches that serve refugees, asylum-seekers and other immigrants.

You bring hope. You bring rescue. You bring justice.

Be present with us Lord, In your powerful name, we pray.

Amen.

HYMN PH #610

“For a Thousand Tongues to Sing”

CHARGE

As you leave this place, remember to praise God. And also remember: Praise is not just acknowledging God’s goodness when things are going your way. Praise is also crying out when you are struggling— because praise is an act of trust. Praise the Lord who watches over you now and forevermore. **Hallelujah! Amen!**

BLESSING

May our ears hear the cries of the unwanted, may our eyes see the wounds of the sick, may our hearts break for the brokenhearted, may our minds remember the lost. But above all, may our lives be lived as a response to God’s gracious love for us. Go now to live out your part in the body of Christ. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Peace be with you!...and also with you!

Announcements

Be sure to visit the sign-up table before you leave on Sunday mornings! There are many opportunities to volunteer and serve.

 **Fall Quilts Wanted!**  Help us bring the warmth and beauty of fall into our church! We are looking for fall-themed quilts to display throughout the church during the autumn season. Quilts featuring fall colors, leaves, pumpkins, harvest designs, or other seasonal patterns would be wonderful additions. If you have a quilt you would be willing to loan us for the season, please bring it to the church office or contact Mary Zimble. Be sure your name is securely attached so we can make sure it is returned to you. Thank you for helping us make our church feel warm, welcoming, and ready for fall!

Plant Sale – Sunday, August 23

Mark your calendars! Sunday, August 23, Rita Vadasz will have homegrown flowers and plants available for donation. All donations will support our Refugee Welcome Ministry.

Ice Cream Social – Sunday, August 23

Join us for a sweet time of fellowship during **Coffee Hour on Sunday, August 23!** We'll be serving delicious ice cream with a variety of toppings for everyone to enjoy. To help make the event extra special, **please consider signing up to bring an ice cream topping.** A sign-up sheet is available in **Fellowship Hall** with a variety of topping suggestions. Stay after worship, visit with friends, meet someone new, and enjoy a fun summer treat together. **Everyone is welcome—we hope you'll join us for this fun summer fellowship event!**

 **Apple & Pumpkin Celebration**  Sunday, September 20 • During Coffee Hour Celebrate the flavors of fall with us! Bring your favorite apple or pumpkin dish or dessert to share and join us for a fun afternoon of fellowship. We'll also have games, prizes, and plenty of delicious fall treats! Please sign up in Fellowship Hall and let us know what you plan to bring. Everyone is welcome—come hungry and ready for some fall fun!

WE NEED YOUR HELP! - We are looking for people willing to help run the technology parts of our weekly worship service. We need people to run the slides, operate the audio system, and help with the online streaming. Training is available, all that is required is a willingness to serve. Please contact Kelly Sunman-Davis or Pastor Robbie and we will schedule training.

Tuesday Knitting Group - Weekly at 1pm in the church library. Come join us for a cozy and creative time at our Tuesday Knitting Group! Whether you're an experienced knitter or just getting started, all are welcome. Bring your current project—or simply come to learn, share ideas, and enjoy friendly conversation together. It's a wonderful way to relax, connect, and create something meaningful. We'd love to have you join us!

Women's Bible Study – *Angels* by Melissa Spoelstra

What does the Bible really say about angels? Join us for this inspiring 8-session Bible study as we journey through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, discovering who angels are, what they do, and how their work always points to the power and purpose of God. Together we'll find hope, grow in our understanding of God's presence, and gain confidence that He reigns over both the seen and unseen world.

Choose the session that works best for you:

- **Wednesday Mornings: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. beginning September 9**
- **Thursday Evenings (Zoom): 6:30–8:00 p.m. beginning September 10**

Book Cost: \$22

To register, call the church office or sign up in Fellowship Hall. All women are welcome!

Tuesday Adult Bible Study Returns September 15!

Tuesday Adult Bible Study will resume Tuesday, September 15, 2026, from 11:00 AM–12:15 PM in the Conference Room. Our study topic is still to be determined, but one thing is certain—everyone is welcome! Whether you've attended before or are thinking about joining us for the first time, we'd love to have you. The coffee is always hot, and the conversation is always fruitful! Come grow in faith, ask questions, share insights, and enjoy fellowship together.

GriefShare Support Group - You don't have to walk through grief alone.

GriefShare is a caring, welcoming support group for anyone who has experienced the loss of a family member, friend, or loved one. Each weekly session offers encouragement, practical insights, and the opportunity to connect with others who understand the journey of grief.

Beginning Sunday, September 6

11:30 a.m. following worship

After worship, grab a cup of coffee or tea, enjoy a few treats, and join us downstairs in the Youth Room. Whether your loss is recent or happened years ago, you'll find a compassionate, Christ-centered community where you can share, listen, and begin to heal at your own pace.

Facilitated by Hannah Hall. Books and materials are provided.

For more information, contact the church office or sign up in Fellowship Hall.

SAVE THE DATE - Members and friends 70+ years of age. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for our Church Senior Luncheon on Saturday, October 10, 2026! We're looking forward to a wonderful time of food, fellowship, and fun together. More details will be coming soon!

Growing Personally & Spiritually (GPS)

Are you longing to grow deeper in your faith while finding greater emotional and spiritual health? Join us as we begin our new study, *Journey of the Soul: A Practical Guide to Emotional and Spiritual Growth* by Bill and Kristi Gaultiere.

Together we'll discover how God meets us in every season of life, helping us move beyond feeling stuck and continue growing in grace, hope, and Christ-centered living.

Mondays • 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Beginning September 14th in the Conference Room

Please sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact the church office so we can order your copy of the book. Participants are also welcome to purchase their own copy if they prefer.

Wherever you are on your journey, you'll find a place to belong. Everyone is welcome!

Sunday Evening Adult Study - Exploring the Ten Commandments

For the first **5–7 weeks**, we'll take a closer look at the **Ten Commandments**—their history, meaning, and how they apply to our lives today. The Ten Commandments appear in both **Exodus 20** and **Deuteronomy 5**, but the two versions are not identical. There are also differences in their wording, numbering, and interpretation among Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox traditions.

Each week, we'll explore **one or two commandments**, consider these different perspectives, and discuss what these ancient teachings mean for us today. Videos from **The Bible Project** will also be included. **Everyone is welcome!**

Sundays at 5:00 PM (Most Sundays)

Conference Room at 4Square Tax & Accounting

205 Lincoln St., Fenton, MI

First Presbyterian Saturday Grounds Beautifying Work Group -

Volunteers are needed to help keep our flower gardens clean, attractive, and weed-free.

When: 3rd Saturday of each month, May–September

Time: 9:00 AM

If you are interested in participating, please contact the church office at **810-629-7801**, or see **Deb Bard** or **Mary Zimpler** for more information.

Help Us Tell Our Story! Do you have photos from worship, fellowship events, mission projects, youth activities, picnics, or other church gatherings? We're collecting photos that capture the life and ministry of Fenton First Presbyterian Church. Your photos may be featured on our website, social media, newsletters, and other church publications. Email them to office@ffpc.org

Flowers for Worship - If you would like to provide flowers for worship, we invite you to bring flowers from your garden or purchase a bouquet from a grocery store or florist of your choice. If you plan to provide flowers, please contact Heidi Roberts in advance.

FFPC Book Binders Book Group

“Get lost in a good book...and find great friends along the way!”

Join us on the **second Tuesday of each month at 2:00 PM** as we gather to discuss a new book and enjoy great conversation with fellow book lovers! Expect thoughtful discussion, a few laughs, and plenty of book-loving fun. Contact Mary Zimbler for more information. Happy Reading! 

Help Others Find a Church Home

Has First Presbyterian Church of Fenton been a blessing in your life? Consider leaving a Google review! Your words can help someone searching for a church home feel welcomed before they ever walk through our doors. Scan the QR code or use the link to share your experience. Thank you for helping us extend Christ's welcome to our community.

<https://g.page/r/CQnBYwpLGho5EBM/review>

Financials as of 8/12/26

Offerings \$5,636.00 Fiscal \$207,705.25

Expenses \$4,933.20 Fiscal \$163,373.38