



# THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND

MAY 3, 2026  
FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER WITH COMMUNION  
**10 AM Sanctuary Worship**

## WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE	<i>Eternal Grace</i>	Theron Brown
WELCOME		Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
MINUTE FOR MISSION		John Rappaport
INTROIT	<i>Bless The Lord</i>	TAIZE

Bless the Lord my soul, and bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord my soul, who leads me into life.

\* CALL TO WORSHIP

Let us come away from our regular routines,  
our limited perceptions, our counterfeit piety.

**We come eagerly, with high expectations,  
to wrestle with scriptures and their implications.**

Seek what is genuine, lasting, and helpful,  
putting away insincerity, malice, and guile.

**We seek refuge from our detractors  
and delivery from idols and shame.**

May we commit our ways to the Sovereign's hand,  
as we rejoice in God's steadfast love.

**God is our rock and our fortress,  
leading and guiding us day by day.**

We are chosen and precious, God's own people,  
destined to lead others to God's marvelous light.

**Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our faith,  
invites us to be part of God's spiritual household.**

\* INVOCATION PRAYER

**Merciful God,**

**we join in worship in the assurance  
that there is a place for us in your plans.**

**We ask for discernment to recognize our special gifts  
and courage to use them.**

**Quiet people's opposition to the good news  
so they will recognize that we are not turning the world upside down,  
but helping to turn it right side up, for the sake of all.**

**Keep our worship focused on your action, in Christ, on our behalf;  
we pray in Jesus' name.**

**Amen.**

\* HYMN #409

*God Is Here!*  
Verses 1, 3 and 4

ABBOT'S LEIGH

1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to  
2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our  
3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the  
4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an

of - fer praise and prayer, may we find in  
life - long need of grace; here are ta - ble,  
Shep - herd's flock and fold; here as bread and  
age of change and doubt keep us faith - ful

full - er mea - sure what it is in Christ we share.  
 font, and pul - pit; here the cross has cen - tral place.  
 wine are tak - en, Christ sus - tains us as of old.  
 to the gos - pel; help us work your pur - pose out.

Here, as in the world a - round us, all our  
 Here in hon - es - ty of preach - ing, here in  
 Here the ser - vants of the Ser - vant seek in  
 Here, in this day's ded - i - ca - tion, all we

var - ied skills and arts wait the com - ing  
 si - lence, as in speech, here, in new - ness  
 wor - ship to ex - plore what it means in  
 have to give, re - ceive: we, who can - not

of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.  
 and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.  
 dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.  
 live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

\* CALL TO CONFESSION

Mary Musson

We, who use our doubts and questions as excuses for irresponsibility,  
 are called to account.

We have disobeyed God's word  
 and rejected the One who revealed God's love.

Because we do not believe, we cannot see the goodness of God.

Let us seek God's mercy and forgiveness.

Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,  
 followed by time for silent personal confession.

Thus, we pray:

\* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**We confess that sometimes we have covered our ears  
so we cannot hear your word of judgement, holy God.  
We seek to isolate ourselves from a world in pain.  
We become enemies and prosecutors of Christ,  
who identified with poor, needy and oppressed people.  
We reject the One you sent as the way, the truth, and the life.  
We do not pray, as Jesus prayed, trusting that you hear and respond.  
O God, deliver us from ourselves.**

*(moment of silent confession)*

\* KYRIE

*Choir*

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.

***Congregation***

**Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.**

\* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Let not your hearts be troubled.  
Whoever believes in God will not be put to shame.  
If you truly believe, you will show care for others.  
When you care, you will join in doing the things Jesus did  
to help all the people God loves.  
You are chosen to proclaim the mighty acts of One who called you  
out of the shadows into God's marvelous light.  
Rejoice! You have received the mercy of God.

**Alleluia and Amen!**

\* PASSING OF THE PEACE

May the peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us offer a sign of peace to one another.

\* GLORIA #582

*Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

**Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,  
and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,  
and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be.  
Amen.**

## OFFERTORY INVITATION

Please be seated.

These are the moments when the heavens seem to open to us,  
and we sense the vast possibilities for life that God offers.

We long to reach our God-given potential  
and to offer that opportunity to others.

The tithes and offerings we bring are devoted to that purpose.

The offering will now be received.

## OFFERING

OFFERTORY

*I Will Sing of God's Mercy*

I will sing of God's mercy

Every day, every hour

He gives me power.

I will sing and give thanks to Thee

For all the dangers, toils and snares that He has brought me out.

He is my God and I'll serve Him no matter what the test.

Trust and never doubt, Jesus will surely bring you out.

He never failed me yet.

\* DOXOLOGY #609

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Praise, God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures high and low.**

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Praise God, in Jesus fully known: Creator, Word, and Spirit one.**

**Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

\* OFFERTORY PRAYER

Mary Musson

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**We have tasted your kindness, O God,  
and want to share it with others.**

**We have witnessed your saving grace in Jesus Christ  
and give thanks for all your care.**

**We have heard the call to even "greater works,"  
and here dedicate our offerings and ourselves to that end.**

**Amen.**

\* OFFERTORY RESPONSE

*I Will Always Give Thanks*

Eric Thiman

I will always give thanks, give thanks unto the Lord,

His praises will ever be in my mouth!

# WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Let us pray together:

**Lord, as we listen to your holy Word;  
open our hearts to the power of your Spirit,  
call us out of darkness,  
and lead us into your marvelous light.  
Amen.**

## THE READINGS

Epistle

Acts of the Apostles 7:55-60 (Inclusive Bible)

Stephen, meanwhile, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked to the sky and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right side of God.

“Look!” he exclaimed. “I see the heavens opened, and the Chosen One standing at God’s right hand!”

The onlookers were standing there, shouting and holding their hands over their ears as they did so. They rushed at him as one, and dragged him out of the city. The witnesses then stoned him, having laid their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

As they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “O Jesus, receive my spirit.”

He fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice,

“Please, don’t hold this sin against them!” And with that, he died.

The Holy Spirit has a word for each of us today.

**With God’s help we are listening.**



“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith in me as well. In God’s house there are many dwelling places; otherwise, how could I have told you that I was going to prepare a place for you? I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I will come back to take you with me, that where I am there you may be as well. You know the way that leads to where I am going.”

Thomas replied, “But we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?” Jesus told him, “I myself am the Way—I am truth, and I am Life.

No one comes to Abba God but through me. If you really knew me, you would know Abba God also. From this point on, you know Abba God and you have seen God.”

“Rabbi,” Philip said, “show us Abba God, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and still you don’t know me? Whoever has seen me has seen Abba God. How can you say, ‘Show us your Abba’? Don’t you believe that I am in Abba God and God is in me?

The words I speak are not spoken of myself; it is Abba God, living in me, who is accomplishing the works of God. Believe me that I am in God and God is in me, or else believe because of the works I do. The truth of the matter is, anyone who has faith in me will do the works I do—and greater works besides. Why? Because I go to Abba God, and whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that God may be glorified in me. Anything you ask in my name I will do.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

“Getting Stoned for Jesus”

# WE RESPOND IN LOVE AND FAITH

\*HYMN #463

*How Firm a Foundation*

FOUNDATION

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/2 time. It consists of six systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are as follows:

1 How firm a foun - da - tion, ye saints of the Lord,  
2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dis - mayed,  
3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call thee to go,  
4 "When through fi - ery tri - als thy path - way shall lie,  
5 "The soul that on Je - sus hath leaned for re - pose,  
is laid for your faith in God's ex - cel - lent Word!  
for I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;  
the riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;  
my grace, all suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;  
I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;  
What more can be said than to you God hath said,  
I'll strength - en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
for I will be near thee, thy trou - bles to bless,  
the flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign  
that soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,  
to you who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?  
up - held by my righ - teous, om - nip - o - tent hand.  
and sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress.  
thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine.  
I'll nev - er, no, nev - er, no, nev - er for - sake."

It seems odd now to think of singing this text to ADESTE FIDELES, but mainline churches did so well into the 20th century because of a cultural bias against shape note music. The vigor of the present tune seems especially right for the final line's reference to Hebrews 13:5.

TEXT: "K" in John Rippons's *A Selection of Hymns*, 1787, alt.  
MUSIC: American folk melody; Funk's *Genuine Church Music*, 1832, alt.

FOUNDATION  
11.11.11.11

\* INVITATION TO THE MEAL

Easter people, come now to the table with Christ!

**For Christ is risen! Christ lives,  
and presides at this feast!**

Come, eat together the bread of life!

**For Christ is risen,  
and nothing separates us from God's love!**

Come, drink together from the cup of gladness!

**For Christ is risen—risen as Christ said!  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Praise to you, God of glory!

You created the universe and all living things.

You breathed life into our dust  
and gave us a paradise.

You sought us when we hid ourselves,  
ashamed of our sin.

You made a people for yourself,  
and saved them from oppression.

In the fullness of time,  
your love came also to us in your servant Jesus.

He ministered to us,  
healing, overcoming divisions, welcoming all.

He died on the cross of shame.

But you vindicated him,  
giving him a life that is forever new!

This is the life he shares with us:

a life of justice, mercy,  
and citizenship in your realm of peace.

All your creatures testify to your mighty deeds!

They declare your everlasting love!

We too proclaim it,

as with the angels of heaven we sing:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of  
 pow - er, God of might, heav - en and earth are  
 full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the  
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the  
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the  
 high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*(Please be seated)*

Now, O God, with grateful hearts we remember Jesus.

We remember that Jesus was laid in a borrowed grave.

**A heavy stone sealed up the tomb.**

We remember that the women came,  
 early in the morning, on the third day.

**They did not find him among the dead.**

We remember that Jesus' disciples met him on the road.

**Jesus opened the Scriptures, explaining everything,  
 and their hearts burned within them.**

They said to Jesus,  
 "Stay with us, for it is evening."

So he went in with them.

And while they were at table,  
 Jesus took bread, gave thanks,  
 and broke it for them to share.

Then their eyes were opened,  
 and they knew him in the breaking of the bread.

Great is the mystery of faith:



We pray for all in need of healing,  
whether it be in body, mind, or spirit...

Corine and Joseph McCalpine, Laurie Thomson, Tom LaRosa, Reene, Carlos, Priscella, Anthony Buccino, Rosa Buccino, Tralaina Davis, Dorland, Addie Singleton, Rajvinder Kaur, Mary Orr, Sue Blazek, JoAnn Hood, the Jackson-Dix family

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,  
let us pray as our Savior has taught us:

**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.**

## THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread,  
and after giving thanks to you, he broke it,  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam  
hamotzi lekhem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe,  
who brings forth bread from the earth.

“Take and eat, whenever you do this, remember me.”

In the same way Jesus took the cup, saying:

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam  
borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe,  
who creates the fruit of the vine.

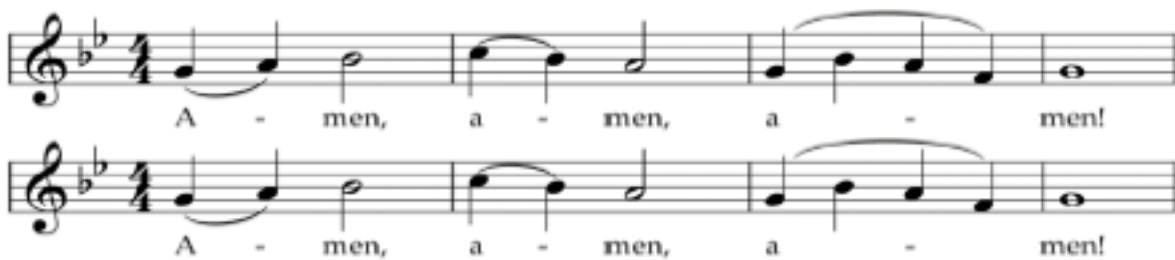
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

## PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit,  
bless this bread that earth has given  
and human hands have made.  
Bless also this fruit of the vine,  
created for our gladness.  
Make them the food and drink of everlasting life,  
body surrendered, blood poured out.

**As we rejoice in the resurrection,  
give us love for each other,  
and make us servants of peace,  
until your new realm is revealed  
and every creature beholds it.**

**We pray in the name of Jesus,  
who lives and presides at this table,  
our host and our feast.**



1. Je - sus, Lamb of God,  
 2. Je - sus, Bread of Life, you take a - way the sins of the  
 3. Je - sus, Prince of Peace,

5  
 world: have mer - cy on us.  
 have mer - cy on us.  
 grant us your peace.

### SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Please partake of the elements as you receive them,  
 and then place the cup back into the tray.  
 You may then light a candle in petition of prayer  
 or in remembrance.  
 The gifts of God for the people of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Starting from the back of the sanctuary  
 you are invited to come forward at this time.

COMMUNION ANTHEM

*Destiny*

Kamau Kenyatta

#### \* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

**Thank you, O Christ, for this feast of life.  
 We are fed by your love;  
 we are strengthened by your life.  
 We are sent forth into this world to live your way and share your joy.  
 We are now commissioned to:  
 feed as we have been fed,  
 forgive as we have been forgiven,  
 love as we have been loved.  
 Thanks be to God.  
 Amen.**



1 \*Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther;  
 2 Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring - time and har - vest,  
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth,



there is no shad - ow of turn - ing with thee.  
 sun, moon, and stars in their cours - es a - bove  
 thine own dear pres - ence to cheer and to guide,



Thou chang - est not; thy com - pas - sions they fail not.  
 join with all na - ture in man - i - fold wit - ness  
 strength for to - day and bright hope for to - mor - row:



As thou hast been thou for - ev - er wilt be.  
 to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy, and love.  
 bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

*Refrain*



Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!



Morn - ing by morn - ing, new mer - cies I see.



All I have need - ed thy hand hath pro - vid - ed.



Great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord un - to me!

\* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Declare the wonderful deeds of God,  
who brought you from night to day.

**God has built us into a spiritual house  
with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone.**

Do not lose heart or be jealous of others;  
rather, taste the kindness of God and rejoice.

**We will not despair if our work and witness  
are opposed and rejected.**

God, in Christ, declares there is a place for you;  
in loving mercy you are chosen by God.

**We will seek to honor Christ in all circumstances,  
for Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.**

Ask, and God will provide all you need;  
believe, and your works will proclaim God's glory.

**May God help us to know when to be bold  
and when to make our quiet witness.**

\* CHORAL RESPONSE

*Amen*

anon.

POSTLUDE

*Mawu's Dance*

Kamau Kenyatta

+++++A special welcome and thank you to Theron Brown and his ensemble.+++++

*“My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”*

*Psalm 73:26*



**We continue to keep in our prayers:**

Corine and Joseph McCalpine, Laurie Thomson, Tom LaRosa, Reene,  
Carlos, Priscella, Anthony Buccino, Rosa Buccino, Tralaina Davis, Dorland,  
Addie Singleton, Rajvinder Kaur, Mary Orr, Sue Blazek,  
JoAnn Hood, the Jackson-Dix family

We pray for those struggling with illness, convalescing, homebound or in need.

*Names are generally removed after four weeks unless there is a continuing need.*

There are many ways to support The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland

Online Giving:

[firstprescle.org/giving](http://firstprescle.org/giving)



Mail to:

Scan the QR Code with your phone.

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Attn: Financial Office  
1380 Ontario Street  
Cleveland, OH 44113

Checks should be made payable to “The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland.”

All contributions are tax-deductible and will be appropriately acknowledged at year-end.

**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND**

*LOVING CHRIST, SERVING CITY—SPIRITUALLY, SOCIALLY, CULTURALLY—SINCE 1820*

91 Public Square, Cleveland, Ohio 44113-2058

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**Senior Pastor:** Rev. Stephen C. Blonder Adams

**Parish Associate:** Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

**Minister of Music:** Evan M. Collins

**Choir**

Leah Jennings Brown, *soprano*

Christian Bush, *tenor*

Kaya Sparks, *soprano*

Anthony Steward, *tenor*

Val Sibila, *soprano*

Noah Whitaker, *tenor*

Rayna Brooks, *alto*

R. Dominic Aragon, *bass*

Reese Henrick, *alto*

Christopher Clark, *bass*

Morgan Potts, *alto*

Albert Donze, *bass*

**Church Elders:**

Clerk of Session: Beth Buchanan

Class of 2026  
Beth Buchanan  
Judy Macuga  
Melissa Maffia  
Harriet Niles  
Marty Vassel

Class of 2027  
Michelle Baron  
Bernard Medie  
Bob Reid

Class of 2028  
Dave Finley  
Don Urban

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Forrest Diehl  
Pam Daly  
Ruth Finley  
Alyssa Niepokny  
Charlene Thornton

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Sunny Kunche  
Amy Wheeler  
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JoAnn Hood  
Elie Medie  
Brad Oglesby  
Mark Pichler  
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Mike Musson

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