



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND

JULY 26, 2026
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
10AM Sanctuary Worship

WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE

Peter Kobia

WELCOME

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

INTROIT

Surely the Presence of the Lord

Larry Wolfe

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.
I can feel His mighty power and His grace.
I can hear the brush of angel's wings, I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

* Those who are able are requested to stand

Please silence all electronic devices.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Come before God, asking what you will,
and God will cover your needs.

**How can we ask the Ruler of the universe
to give attention to our small problems?**

God knows and values you;
nothing is too great or small for God's attention.

**Our ancestors in the faith
experienced God's wonderful, rescuing works.**

We, too, can know God's care in our lives,
and the trust God appoints us to keep.

**We need the food God provides in our wilderness
and the cloud and fire to guide us.**

Draw near so the Holy Spirit may encounter you;
hold nothing back from God's All-knowing presence.

**We bring all that we have and are
to the throne of grace.**

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

**We are in awe before you, O God,
for you have provided for us in rich abundance.
The earth is full of your provisions.
There is beauty all around us from the work of your hands.
You have surrounded us with people who care about us
with the love of Christ.
Help us, O God, to count our blessings.
Point us beyond our cries and complaints
that we might realize our capacity to act in your name
for the sake of others. As we wrestle with issues of faith and trust,
help us to risk our false security for the venture of feeding others
in the spirit of Christ.
Amen.**

* HYMN #400

I Rejoiced When I Heard Them Say
(verses 1, 4, and 5)

ENGLAND

1 I re - joiced when I heard them say: "Let us
2 Like a tem - ple of u - ni - ty is the
3 It is faith - ful to Is - rael's law, there to
4 For the peace of all na - tions, pray: for God's
5 For the love of my friends and kin I will

go to the house of God." And now our feet are
cit - y, Je - ru - sa - lem. It is there all tribes will
praise the name of God. All the judg - ment seats of
peace with - in your homes. May God's last - ing peace sur -
bless you with signs of peace. For the love of God's own

stand - ing in your gates, O Je - ru - sa - lem!
gath - er, all the tribes of the house of God.
Da - vid were set down in Je - ru - sa - lem.
round us; may it dwell in Je - ru - sa - lem.
peo - ple I will la - bor and pray for you.

Refrain

Sha - lom, sha - lom, the peace of God be here.
Sha - lom, sha - lom, God's jus - tice be ev - er near.

Psalm 122 is among the most joyful of the pilgrimage psalms, because it sings of finally reaching Jerusalem, the home of the Temple. This rejoicing spills over into prayers for peace inspired perhaps by the placename Jerusalem, from roots meaning "to establish peace" (*shalom*).

TEXT and MUSIC: Bernadette Farrell, 1993
Text and Music © 1993 Bernadette Farrell (Published by OCP)

ENGLAND
LM with refrain

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Ruth Finley

Sin is a break in our relationship with the Eternal,
rather than simply an accumulation of hurtful acts.
The many ways we cut ourselves off from Ultimate Reality
keep us from realizing our potential as individuals or as the family of God.
Let us reach out to let God bridge the gap we have created.
Remember before God what you know is wrong in your life,
and ask for help to see the evil you do not recognize.
Let us pray.
Let us join our voices in the corporate prayer of confession,
followed by time for silent personal confession.
Thus, we pray:

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**O Sovereign God,
we have been so busy with our own pursuits
that we have not noticed the treasure hidden in our midst.
We have not learned to value things by your standards.
We do not see lasting worth in the old we discard,
nor have we discovered the dawning merit of much that is new.
We are content to live in the ruts of life,
rather than climb the mountains of new possibilities.
Forgive us, expand our vision,
and grant us fresh opportunities to serve your purpose.
In Jesus' name.**

(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

In everything, God works for good
with those who respond with love and obedience.
You bear the image of God, who calls you, justifies you, and glorifies you.
Because you have asked for the opportunity to see things God's way,
God grants you new strength and a cleansed judgment.
Accept God's gift and use it.

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 #583

Glory to God, glory to God, glory in the highest!

Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia.

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Please be seated.

God has created a world of abundance for everyone.

Yet many do not share in the bounty.

Christ calls us to find sufficiency among us
and to make sure that all are fed.

We give as we have been blessed.

The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Praise His Holy Name

Keith Hampton

Sing till the power of the Lord come down.
Shout Hallelujah! Praise His Holy name!

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.
Jesus, Jesus, how I love Thee! Shout Hallelujah!
Praise his Holy name!

Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for ev'ryone and there's a cross for me.
Jesus, Jesus, how I love Thee! Shout Hallelujah!
Praise His Holy Name!

* DOXOLOGY #608

PRAISE GOD

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all people here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore; praise Triune God, whom we adore.**

* OFFERTORY PRAYER

Ruth Finley

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**We bring no fine pearls or costly treasure to share with the world.
But what we bring we dedicate to the search for eternal values.
We would be a church that introduces people to the realm of heaven
and treats them as your worthy children.
Bless each gift, all who give, and every work these offerings support.
In Jesus' name. Amen.**

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Simple Gifts

SHAKER HYMN

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
and when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'twill be in the valley of love and delight.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Spirit of life,
we do not know how to pray as we ought.
Meet us in words written, in words spoken;
intercede for us with sighs too deep for words,
until we shine with the hope that is hidden in our hearts,
for we pray in the name of Jesus.
Amen.**

THE READINGS

Epistle

Romans 8:26-39 (The Inclusive Bible)

The Spirit, too, comes to help us in our weakness. For we don't know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit expresses our plea with groanings too deep for words. And God, who knows everything in our hearts, knows perfectly well what the Spirit is saying, because her intercessions for God's holy people are made according to the mind of God.

We know that God makes everything work together for the good of those who love God and have been called according to God's purpose. They are the ones God chose long ago, predestined to share the image of the Only Begotten, in order that Christ might be the firstborn of many. Those God predestined have likewise been called; those God called have also been justified; and those God justified have, in turn, been glorified.

What should be our response? Simply this: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Since God did not spare the Only Begotten, but gave Christ up for the sake of us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that God will freely give us everything. Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? Since God is the One who justifies, who has the power to condemn? Only Christ Jesus, who died—or rather, was raised—and sits at the right hand of God, and who now intercedes for us! What will separate us from the love of Christ? Trouble? Calamity? Persecution? Hunger? Nakedness? Danger? Violence? As scripture says, "For your sake, we're being killed all day long; we're looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered."

Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of God who has loved us. For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, neither heights nor depths—nor anything else in all creation—will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Savior.

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

With God's help we are listening.

Jesus presented another parable to the crowds: “The kingdom of heaven is like the mustard seed which a farmer sowed in the field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all—it becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come to perch in its branches.”

Jesus offered them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a baker took and mixed in with three measures of flour until it was leavened all through.”

“The kingdom of God is like a buried treasure found in a field. The ones who discovered it hid it again, and, rejoicing at the discovery, went and sold all their possessions and bought that field.

Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant’s search for fine pearls.

When one pearl of great value was found, the merchant went back and sold everything else and bought it.

Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collected all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishers hauled it ashore. Then, sitting down, they collected the good ones in a basket and threw away those that were of no use. This is how it will be at the end of time. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the just and throw the wicked into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Have you understood all this?” “Yes,” they answered.

To this Jesus replied, “Every religious scholar who has become a student of the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who can bring from the storeroom both the new and the old.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams

“The Gap We Have Created”



* NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF CANDLES, PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

We ask all these things in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray...

**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.**

1 Lord, speak to me that I may speak in liv - ing
 2 O lead me, Lord, that I may lead the wan - dering
 3 O teach me, Lord, that I may teach the pre - cious
 4 O fill me with your full - ness, Lord, un - til my
 5 O use me, Lord, use e - ven me, just as you

ech - oes of your tone. As you have sought, so
 and the wa - vering feet. O feed me, Lord, that
 truths which you im - part. And wing my words that
 ver - y heart o'er - flow in kin - dling thought and
 will, and when, and where un - til your bless - ed

let me seek your err - ing chil - dren, lost and lone.
 I may feed your hun - gering ones with man - na sweet.
 they may reach the hid - den depths of man - y a heart.
 glow - ing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.
 face I see, your rest, your joy, your glo - ry share.

Two great truths inform this text: first, that the testimony of experience is powerful and persuasive; and second, that no one should venture to minister on one's own strength rather than God's. The tune reflects a 19th-century practice of adapting piano pieces as hymn tunes.

* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

You are set in the midst of the world's sojourners,
as people with contributions to make.

**We know there are no others just like us,
nor will the likes of us ever walk the earth again.**

You have a distinctive place in God's design;
your influence extends to places no others can reach.

**God will work for the good of many, through us,
and evil will lose its appeal.**

Be alert to the special opportunities
God sets before you day by day.

**We would discern the hidden treasure
and the pearl of great value.**

Be led forth in joy to a new confidence
in all God will accomplish through you.

**We would be righteous and fruitful,
eschewing dull conformity for wise choices.**

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Amen

Anonymous

POSTLUDE

When the Saints Go Marching In

+++++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:

Pricicella Fayne, JoAnn Hood, Jane Hazen, John Young Jr., Dorland,
Philip Sykora, Dawson, Sally Columbo, Larry Kroeger, Gabriella Brownfield,
Addie Singleton, Rajvinder Kaur,
Jo'Anna Thomson and family, Renita and 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.



Wednesdays at 12:15 PM please join us in the Sanctuary for a Mid-Week Communion Service.



@ The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland

Sunday July 26

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

12:00PM Stated Session Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Monday July 27

6:30PM Stated Meeting of the PWR/Christ Presbyterian Church/ZOOM

Tuesday July 28

12:15PM Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Wednesday July 29

11:00AM Stirring Up Hope Soup Pantry

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

Sunday August 2

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary with Communion

11:30AM Deacons Meeting/Conference Room

11:30AM Handbell Practice/Gallery

1:40PM Guardians/Diamondbacks/Progressive Field

Tuesday August 4

12:15PM Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Wednesday August 5

11:00AM Stirring Up Hope Soup Pantry

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

6:00PM Welcome and Fellowship Committee Meeting/ZOOM

Sunday August 9

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

12:30PM Chair Exercise Class/Chapel

Tuesday August 11

12:15PM Tuesday AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Wednesday August 12

11:00AM Stirring Up Hope Soup Pantry

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

Thursday August 13

2:00PM Worship Committee Meeting/ZOOM

Sunday August 16

10:00AM Worship with Baptism/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

1:00PM Alzheimer Disease-Dementia Seminar Potluck/Memorial Hall

1:40PM Guardians/Padres/Progressive Field

Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:53 Online:250

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

Online Giving:

firstprescle.org/giving

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The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland
Attn: Financial Office
91 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113

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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

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Senior Pastor: Rev. Stephen C. Blonder Adams

Parish Associate: Rev. Denise Clark-Jones

Minister of Music: Evan M. Collins

Choir

Kaya Sparks, *soprano*

Noah Whitaker, *tenor*

Cali Jacobs, *alto*

Dominic Aragon, *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

Church Deacons:

Class of 2026

Mark Corey
Forrest Diehl
Pam Daly
Ruth Finley
Alyssa Niepokny
Charlene Thornton

Class of 2027

Anand Bandari
Eric Grattan
Sunny Kunche
Amy Wheeler
John Wheeler

Class of 2028

Valorie Hempstead
JoAnn Hood
Elie Medie
Brad Oglesby
Mark Pichler
Lori Montero

Church Trustees:

Class of 2027

Dave Eifert

Class of 2027

Bruce Kranicz

Class of 2027

Mike Musson

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