



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CLEVELAND

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
HOMECOMING SUNDAY
10AM Sanctuary Worship

WE GATHER IN THE GRACE OF GOD

PRELUDE	<i>Ruhig bewegt</i> from Sonata 2	Paul Hindemith
WELCOME	Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams	
INTROIT	<i>Great and marvelous</i>	C.W. Walton

Great and marvelous are Thy works. Lord, God, Almighty.
Just and true are Thy ways. O Lord most high. O Lord most high.

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Grace to you and peace from God our Parent
and from our Savior Jesus Christ.

**We thank God as we remember one another
and celebrate our partnership in the gospel.**

God has begun a good work among us
and calls for our worthy, wholehearted involvement.

**We will stand side by side, firm in one spirit,
striving for the faith of the gospel.**

Let your life represent the good news,
and enter into fruitful labor on its behalf.

**No work of our hands can create anything
worthy of our full devotion.**

Recall God's wonderful works and steadfast love
as you seek to do your part.

**We will turn away from our golden calves.
It is God who inspires, empowers, and blesses.**

* INVOCATION PRAYER

Let us pray together:

We marvel, O God, at the thought that you care about us.

**We are amazed that the Creator of the universe
would take on human flesh**

to draw near to us in ways we could begin to understand.

As Jesus emptied himself to serve,

modeling your love even in the face of death,

**we seek in these moments to lay aside self-interest
that we might take direction from you.**

**Help us to humble ourselves in order to obey you,
to listen in order to hear,
to care in order to serve.**

**As we gather at your table from all over the world, O God,
we pray that all those who come to you in the name of Christ
might be one in Spirit.**

Knead us together in one loaf.

Free us from jealousy and selfish ambition;

unite us in mission and service to those in need everywhere.

**May we sow righteousness and harvest peace,
through the grace of Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

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.

Written for Pentecost by a British Baptist pastor, this text is full of biblical terms like "Ebenezer" (1 Samuel 7:12), Hebrew for "a stone of help" set up to give thanks for God's assistance. The tune name honors hymnal compiler Asahel Nettleton, who probably did not compose it.

TEXT: Robert Robinson, 1758, alt.

MUSIC: Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second, 1813

NETTLETON

8.7.8.7.D

* CALL TO CONFESSION

Ted Sawicki

We are called to a manner of life worthy of the gospel,
 a life in which love abounds more and more,
 with knowledge and all discernment,
 a life filled with the fruits of righteousness.

Because we have a deep sense of our failure to be pure and blameless,
 we come in humble awe before the One who lived such a life
 among the likes of us and today can put us in touch with the Eternal.

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

Thus, we pray:

* PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**In the name of Jesus Christ,
whom we have so often failed to honor in our bodies,
we come to confess our corporate and individual guilt.
We have been jealous and competitive workers in your vineyard,
far more concerned with personal reward
than with accomplishing the tasks you set before us.
We forget your generosity to us and resent what others receive.
Rather than standing side by side for the faith of the gospel,
we pursue our separate goals and turn away from true partnership.
We even try to create our own little gods.
Forgive us, O God,
turn us from our grumbling
and restore us to fruitful labor and joy in the faith.**

(moment of silent confession)

* KYRIE

GUARANI KYRIE

**Kyrie eleison , Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison , Christe eleison.**

* ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

God is understandably angry with our pursuit of lesser gods
and our resentment of coworkers.
We are a "stiff-necked people" who deserve to be destroyed.
But God, in abundant mercy and forgiveness,
offers a new start and fresh hope. Let us rejoice in our salvation!
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 #581

Glory Be to the Father

GLORIA PATRI

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen, amen.**

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Please be seated.
As Christ gave up selfish ambition and conceit for human beings like us,
may we offer our best for sisters and brothers
who need the message we can send
and the practical help we can provide through our offerings.
The offering will now be received.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

People Get Ready

arr. Kyle Pederson

People get ready
There's a train a comin'
You don't need no baggage you just get on board
All you need is faith to hear the diesels hummin'
You don't need no ticket, you just thank the Lord

People get ready there's a train to Jordan
Picking up passengers coast to coast
Faith is the key open the doors and board them
There's hope for all so thank the Lord

Can we even make room for the hopeless sinner
Who would hurt all mankind just to save his own
Have mercy on those whose chances grow thinner
There's no hiding place from the Kingdom's throne

* DOXOLOGY #606

OLD HUNDREDTH

**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.**

* OFFERTORY PRAYER

Kristy Sawicki

Let us join our voices in prayer:

**Generous and Loving God,
we would not compare the size of our offerings with those of others.
Rather, we contrast them with your open-handed provision for us.
May we withhold nothing we have to give
from involvement in your purposes for this planet.
Amen.**

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE

Bless Thou The Gifts

Robert Schumann

Bless thou the gifts our hands have brought;
bless thou the work our hearts have planned.
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought; the rest, O God, is in thy Hand.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**Gracious God, your Word surprises,
challenges, upsets, and overturns
our way of seeing and thinking.
Come and find us today
wherever we are,
however we are.
By the power of your Holy Spirit,
cause that which is withering in us to blossom
and that which is exacting in us to broaden
until we see as you see,
and thereby glimpse the kingdom you are bringing.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

THE READINGS

Epistle

Philippians 1:21-30 (Inclusive Bible)

Paul says: For to me, "life" means Christ; hence, dying is only so much gain. If on the other hand, I am to continue living on earth, that means productive toil for me—and I honestly don't know which I prefer. I'm strongly attracted to both: I long to be freed from this life and to be with Christ, for that is the far better thing; yet it's more urgent that I remain alive for your sakes. This fills me with the confidence that I will stay with you and persevere with you all, for the sake of your joy and your progress in the faith. My being with you once again should make you even prouder of me in Christ.

Conduct yourselves, then, in a way worthy of the Gospel of Christ. If you do, whether I come and see you myself or hear about your behavior from a distance, it will be clear that you're standing firm in unity of spirit, and exerting yourselves with one accord for the faith of the Gospel, without being intimidated by your enemies. Standing together without fear is an indication that they will be destroyed and you will be saved. It's a divine signal that God—on behalf of our Savior—has given you the privilege of believing in and suffering for Christ. You're now experiencing the same struggle that you saw in me—and now hear that I still have.

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

With God's help we are listening.

Jesus says: “The kingdom of heaven is like the owner of an estate who went out at dawn to hire workers for the vineyard. After reaching an agreement with them for the usual daily wage, the owner sent them out to the vineyard.

About mid-morning, the owner came out and saw others standing around the marketplace without work, and said to them, ‘You go along to my vineyard and I will pay you whatever is fair.’ At that they left.

Around noon and again in the mid-afternoon, the owner came out and did the same. Finally, going out late in the afternoon, the owner found still others standing around and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’

‘No one has hired us,’ they replied. The owner said, ‘You go to my vineyard, too.’ When evening came, the owner said to the overseer, ‘Call the workers and give them their pay, but begin with the last group and end with the first.’ When those hired late in the afternoon came up, they received a full day’s pay, and when the first group appeared they assumed they would get more. Yet they all received the same daily wage.

Thereupon they complained to the owner, ‘The last group did only an hour’s work, but you’ve put them on the same basis as those who worked a full day in the scorching heat.’

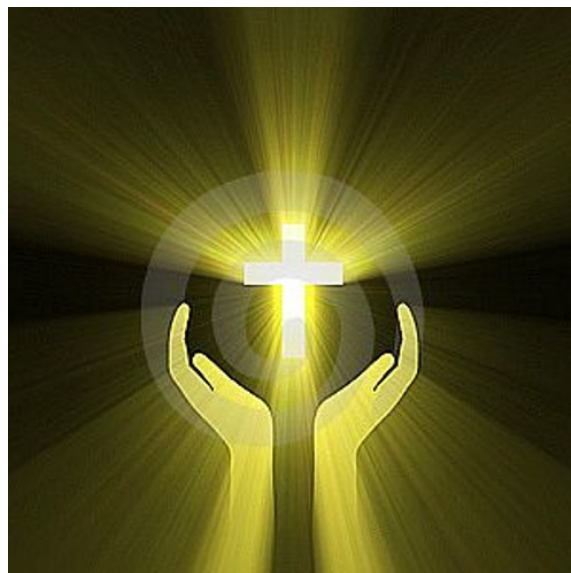
‘My friends,’ said the owner to those who voiced this complaint, ‘I do you no injustice. You agreed on the usual wage, didn’t you? Take your pay and go home. I intend to give this worker who was hired last the same pay as you. I’m free to do as I please with my money, aren’t I? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ Thus the last will be first and the first will be last.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PASTOR’S MESSAGE

Pastor Stephen C. Blonder Adams
“God’s Economy-God’s Justice”



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.**

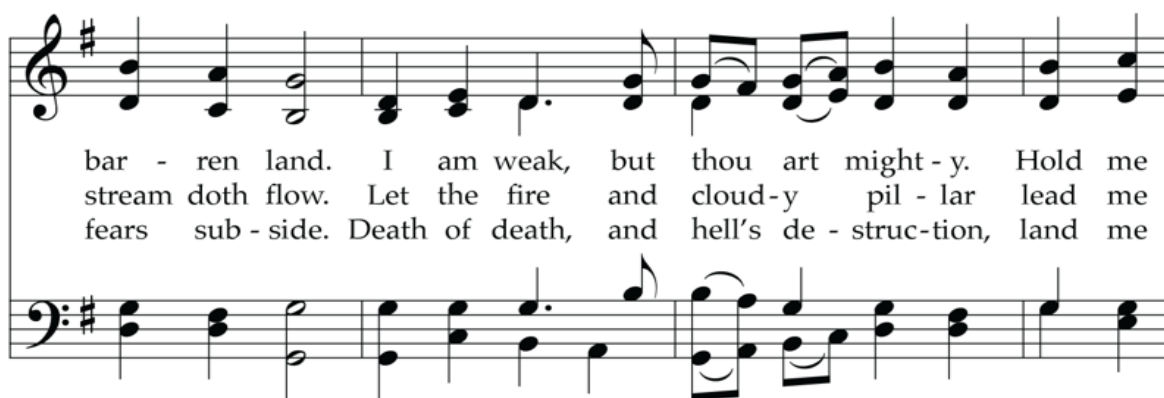
LIGHTING OF CANDLES, PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

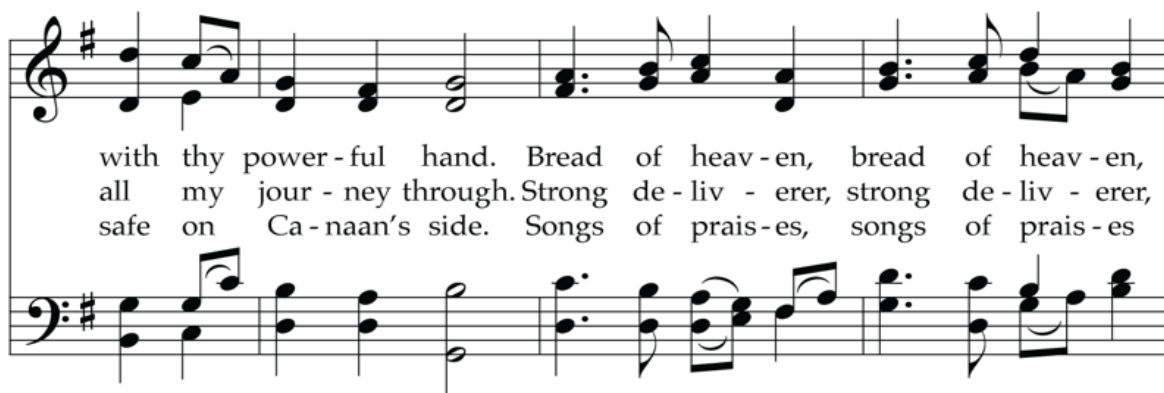
**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**



1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land. I am weak, but thou art might - y. Hold me
 stream doth flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me



with thy power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 safe on Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es



feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

Few Welsh hymns are as well known or loved as this 18th-century text that did not gain its popular tune until the early 20th century. In both its original text and in English translation, it is a stirring hymn of pilgrimage filled with vivid imagery from Hebrew Scripture.

* COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Stand firm in one spirit, with one mind
striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

**For us to live is Christ and to die is gain,
so we will serve without fear or complaint.**

Let your manner of life
be worthy of the gospel.

**We will share the good news with others
by what we do and in all we say.**

Let your prayers and conversations
be filled with joy and thanksgiving.

**We will hold our sisters and brothers
in our hearts, upholding their ministry.**

Grace to you and peace from God our Parent
and from the Sovereign Jesus Christ.

* CHORAL RESPONSE

Sevenfold Amen

John Stainer

POSTLUDE

Prelude in g minor (molto agitato)

F. Chopin

*“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:

Ingrid Naylor, JoAnn Hood, Bruce Kranicz, Jean Marie Leathers, Patsy Buchanan,
David Buchholzer, Adam Fiortto, Karen McKibben, Denise Sarago, Tommy Bollinger,
Jacob Daley, Scheem, Jimmy, Linda, Kenny, Emma, Martha, Conrad, Jerome, Dorland,
Addie Singleton, Rajvinder Kaur, Walter & Kimberly Scott, Michael & Penni-Lynn Rolan

We pray for the repose of the soul of Ian Sopharn Scott,
may his memory be a blessing.

We pray for the repose of the soul of Earl Dwayne Rolan,
may his memory be a blessing.

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.



Please join us for Communion following the service this morning in the Chapel.

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



@ The First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland

Sunday September 20 Homecoming Sunday

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

11:30AM MUW Committee Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

1:40PM Guardians/Athletics/Progressive Field

2:00PM Welcoming and Fellowship Committee

Cleveland Art Museum Tour

Tuesday September 22

12:15PM AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Wednesday September 23

11:00AM Stirring Up Hope Soup Pantry

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

Saturday September 26

10:00AM Stated Meeting of the PWR/Forest Hills Presbyterian Church

Sunday September 27

10:00AM Worship/Sanctuary

11:30AM Communion/Chapel

12:00PM Stated Session Meeting/ZOOM

1:40PM Browns/Panthers/Huntington Field

Tuesday September 29

12:15PM AA Meeting/Cuyahoga Room

Wednesday September 30

11:00AM Stirring Up Hope Soup Pantry

12:15PM Mid-Week Communion/Sanctuary

6:00PM Welcome and Fellowship Committee Meeting/ZOOM

Sunday October 4

10:00AM Worship with Communion/Sanctuary

11:30AM Deacons Meeting/Conference Room

12:00PM-2PM Blessing of the Animals/Front Steps

Last Sunday Attendance In-Person:68 Online:184

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

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Mail to:

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

Cali Jacobs, *soprano*
Zara Smith, *soprano*
Kaya Sparks, *soprano*

Anthony Steward, *tenor*
Noah Whitaker, *tenor*

Rayna Brooks, *alto*
Morgan Potts, *alto*
Val Sibila, *alto*

R. Dominic Aragon, *bass*
Job Butcher, *bass*
Adam Whanger, *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

Class of 2027
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Eric Grattan
Sunny Kunche
Amy Wheeler
John Wheeler

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JoAnn Hood
Elie Medie
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