

THE SERVICE FOR THE LORD'S DAY

The First Presbyterian Church
of Howard County

Third Sunday of Lent
March 23, 2025

10:30 a.m. In-person & Livestream Service



GATHER

Let all enter the sanctuary in a spirit of prayer.
Words in **bold** are read by the congregation.

**Those who are able may stand*

Please remember to turn your cell phones to silent.

*This worship service is being livestreamed to the internet,
and you may appear on our Facebook page and YouTube channel.*

*For our online congregation - Let us know you are here! Post a greeting!
And remember that you can place a request in the Prayer Journal
in the comments on both You Tube and Facebook Live.*

Prelude

Chorale Prelude

Gottfried Homilius

Lighting the Christ Candle

Whenever we light this candle, we proclaim:

Christ is the light of the world and the center of our lives.

Call to Worship

(based on Psalm 27)

Your steadfast love, O Lord, is better than life.

Therefore our lips will praise you.

We will bless you as long as we live.

We will lift up our hands and call on your name.

For you have been our help

and in your presence we sing for joy.

* **Hymn 415**

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy
(see next page for hymn)

Restoration

CONFESSION

415 Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

All or Leader

1 Come, ye sin - ners, poor and need - y, weak and wound-ed,
 2 Come, ye thirst-y, come, and wel - come; God's free boun - ty
 3 Come, ye wea - ry, heav - y lad - en, lost and ru - ined
 4 Let not con - science make you lin - ger, nor of fit - ness

sick and sore; Je - sus read - y stands to save you,
 glo - ri - fy, true be - lief and true re - pen - tance,
 by the fall; if you tar - ry till you're bet - ter,
 fond - ly dream; all the fit - ness he re - quir - eth

Refrain
All

full of pit - y, love, and power.
 ev - ery grace that brings you nigh. I will a - rise and
 you will nev - er come at all.
 is to feel your need of him.

go to Je - sus; he will em-brace me in his arms. In the

arms of my dear Sav - ior, O there are ten thou-sand charms.

The differing voices of this text indicate that its parts were not created together. The stanzas are cast in the voice of a preacher or exhorter, but the refrain (added later) takes the voice of a penitent heeding that call in language like that of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:18).

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Almighty and merciful God, it is a gift that we can come before you to confess our sins. You have already given us so much, and yet we continue to want more. And we want everything to come without struggle. We get so consumed with our own desires that our eyes are blind to people in real need. Forgive us when we fail to appreciate what we have. Forgive us when we don't do the work we need to do with care and diligence. Cleanse us of envy, greed and laziness. Help us see the world with your eyes so we will respond as you would — with generous hearts. Amen.

Assurance of Grace

* **Response of Peace 851** (*singing together*)

Woza Nomthwalo Wakho

The musical score is written for a choir or congregation in a 6/8 time signature with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

All

Come, bring your bur-dens to God; come, bring your
Wo - za nom-thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom-

bur - dens to God; come, bring your bur - dens to God, for
thwa - lo wa - kho; wo - za nom - thwa - lo wa - kho U -

Je - sus will nev - er say no.
ye - s'a - ka - so - za - thi hayi.

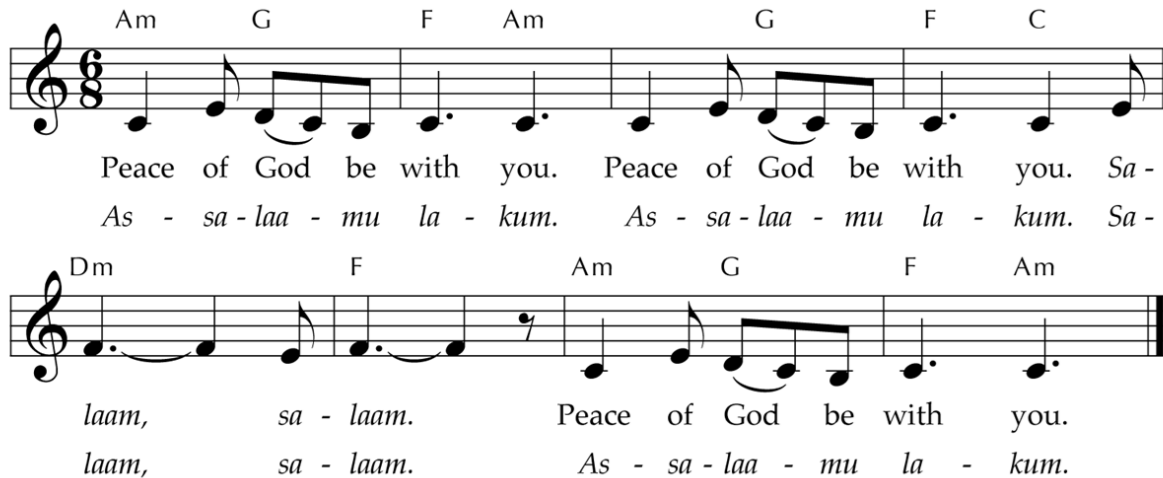
* **Sharing the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

(We share peace with a nod or a bow, perhaps with hand on heart or folded hands, or with the ASL sign for peace. If worshipping from home, greet each other by sending a text, a wave or comment on Facebook or YouTube.)

*** Response of Peace 448** (singing together)

As-Salaamu Lakum



Am G F Am G F C

Peace of God be with you. Peace of God be with you. Sa -
As - sa - laa - mu la - kum. As - sa - laa - mu la - kum. Sa -

Dm F Am G F Am

laam, sa - laam. Peace of God be with you.
laam, sa - laam. As - sa - laa - mu la - kum.

Words of Welcome

Newcomers please leave us your address and contact information on the Visitor Card in the pew rack! Place the Visitor Card in the offering plate.

ENCOUNTER

Prayer for Illumination

First Lesson: Psalm 63:1-8

¹O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

²So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

³Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

⁴So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

⁵My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips

⁶when I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

⁷for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

⁸My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

The Word of God for the People of God.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Prayer and The Lord's Prayer

Afterwards, children ages 4-7 may go with Ms. Kathy Moore to Godly Play.

Parents can pick up their children following worship.

Older children, grades 2-5, may go with Ms. Virginia Callegary to The Worship Bridge. They will return to the sanctuary later in the worship service.

(It is the church's policy to not put images of children on the livestream.)

**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.**

Second Lesson: Luke 13:1-9

13At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' ⁸He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

Sermon

One Year

Kenneth Page

(after the sermon, we observe a time of silence and prayer)

RESPOND AND SERVE

* Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God whose love is ever constant and steadfast, even when we are not.

We believe in Jesus the Christ who walked among us, who was betrayed and forgave and who died that we might live.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, ever present with us to comfort as well as urge us forward in the name of Christ.

We believe in the church as the place where we are loved as we are and still gently encouraged to grow.

We believe that we are called to be the church; to love people more than they deserve, because so Christ loves us.

We believe in the miracle of life and in the life everlasting. Amen.

* Hymn 438

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
(see next page for hymn)

Toplady

438 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

1 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.
 2 Not the la - bors of my hands can ful - fill thy law's de - mands.
 3 Noth - ing in my hand I bring; sim - ply to thy cross I cling;
 4 While I draw this fleet - ing breath, when my eye - lids close in death,

Let the wa - ter and the blood from thy wound - ed side which flowed
 Could my zeal no res - pite know, could my tears for - ev - er flow,
 na - ked, come to thee for dress, help - less, look to thee for grace;
 when I soar to worlds un - known, see thee on thy judg - ment throne,

be of sin the dou - ble cure, cleanse from guilt and make me pure.
 all for sin could not a - tone. Thou must save, and thou a - lone.
 foul, I to the foun - tain fly; wash me, Sav - ior, or I die.
 Rock of A - ges, cleft for me, let me hide my - self in thee.

Though scholars discredit the story that this hymn was written when the author found shelter under a large rock during a thunderstorm, the popular appeal of that conjecture perhaps lies in the energy of this plea and the vividness of its imagery drawn from many biblical sources.

TEXT: Augustus M. Toplady, 1776, alt.
 MUSIC: Thomas Hastings, 1830, alt.

TOPLADY
 7.7.7.7.7

Concerns and Remembrances

Prayers of Gratitude and Concern

Concluding Prayer *(together)*

Holy God, your grace is a mystery that is incomprehensible to us. It draws us to you, inviting us into your presence. It allows us to experience your delight in us and helps us to trust your love which we do not deserve. It's only by your grace that we dare to hope for eternal life with you. Thank you for this vast mystery. Thank you for grace that amazes, convicts, invites and consoles. May our lives be our grateful response for your extravagant gift. Amen.

The Offering

Offertory Anthem

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Gilbert Martin

* **Doxology 608** *(singing together)*

Praise God (Hopson)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Christ, all
people here below; praise Holy Spirit ever -
more; praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore.

* **Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

SEND AND BLESS

This Week at First Presbyterian Church

* Hymn 800

Sometimes a Light Surprises

Sally Gardens

LAMENT AND LONGING FOR HEALING

800 Sometimes a Light Surprises



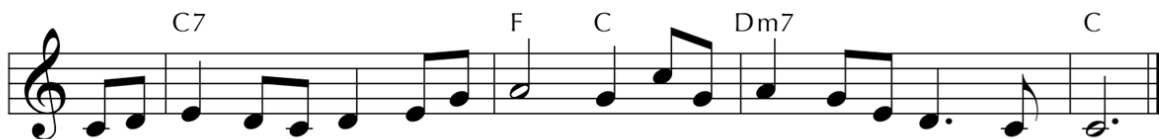
1 Some - times a light sur - pris - es the child of God who sings;
2 In ho - ly con - tem - pla - tion we sweet - ly then pur - sue
3 It can bring with it noth - ing but he will bear us through;
4 Though vine nor fig tree nei - ther their longed - for fruit should bear,



it is the Lord who ris - es with heal - ing in his wings;
the theme of God's sal - va - tion and find it ev - er new;
who gives the lil - ies cloth - ing will clothe his peo - ple, too;
though all the fields should with - er, nor flocks nor herds be there,



when com - forts are de - clin - ing, he grants the soul a - gain
set free from pres - ent sor - row, we cheer - ful - ly can say,
be - neath the spread - ing heav - ens no crea - ture but is fed;
yet God the same a - bid - ing, his praise shall tune my voice;



a sea - son of clear shin - ing to cheer it af - ter rain.
"Let the un - known to - mor - row bring with it what it may."
and he who feeds the ra - vens will give his chil - dren bread.
for while in him con - fid - ing, I can - not but re - joice.

This is one of the few hymns rooted in what can happen during worship, and that experience—gaining a spiritual insight while singing—is no less possible now than when this text was written in the 18th century. It is set here to a folk song variously labeled Irish or English.

* **Benediction**

* **Response #564** *(singing together)*

Amen (Schubert)

A - men, a - men, a - - men. A - men, a - - men.

Postlude

Tocatta in E Minor

Johann Pachelbel



WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

We are grateful for your presence and invite you to participate in the worship, education, mission and common life of First Church.

During Today's Worship

If your infant or child needs care during the worship service, you may leave the Sanctuary and return as you wish. Child care for infants and children under four years old is available all morning. We have a texting system to alert you if you are needed while in the worship service. The ushers will be glad to help you.

Flash photography during worship is not permitted. Please, no food or drink in the Sanctuary.

If you are new to First Presbyterian Church

Communion is served on the first Sunday of each month.

Disabled persons entrance is through the Main Entrance in the rear of the building.

We invite you to become a member of First Presbyterian Church. Please speak with Pastor Ken or call the church office to set a time to meet.

Interested in the mission and activities of First Presbyterian Church?

Visit the church's website, www.firstpreshc.org for more info.

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The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County

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Ministers: All members of the congregation

Kenneth Page, Interim Pastor
Virginia Callegary, Director of Christian Education
Dr. Margaret McGillivray, Director of Music Ministries
Megan Bondhus, Church Administrator
Pat Travers, Bookkeeper
Woodrow Collins, Church Sexton
Kathy Moore, Godly Play Coordinator
Marla Youkers, Nursery Coordinator
Sarah Reinhardt, Nursery Assistant

The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County is a congregation of the Presbytery of Baltimore in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

✦ We are an Earth Care Congregation ✦

✦ We are a Matthew 25 Congregation ✦

Inspirit Counseling Services at First Presbyterian Church

Meredith Barger 410-433-8861 x104 | John Michalczyk 410-433-8861 x115

