



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
COVINGTON, GA

November 19, 2023

Twenty-fifth Sunday
after Pentecost

Asking for
a friend...

A sermon series inspired by
your friends' questions!

✠ *You are invited to stand in body or spirit*



Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

*If You But Trust in God to Guide You
God Himself Is Present
Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation*

Georg Neumark
Joachim Neander
David Cherwien

Prelude

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Diane Bish

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

✠ **Call to Worship**

written by the Rev. Elizabeth Dilley

The prophet asks: Can our soul-weary bones live again?

O God, you know!

We ask: Can we dance again after mourning, loss and grief?

O God, you know!

The gift is sure and unmistakable:

God's breath poured out as new life for weary souls!

Let us celebrate the gift of God's new life,

And come to worship God in laughter and dancing!

✠ **Hymn of Praise 634**

To God Be the Glory

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

✠ **Call to Confession**

✠ **Community Confession**

written by Kate Bowler

**God, things don't make sense,
the innocent still suffer,
buildings still fall,
families still grieve.
Help us to know what to feel,
what to do,**

how to grieve—together.

Blessed are we
who let reality in
though our bodies shudder.

Blessed are we
who ask and wait, and ask again
for answers that may not come,
for hope that seems hard to find,
for comfort that is not easily found.

Along the way
show us how to live
when we've lost the things
we cannot get back.

Remind us that you, oh God,
are our home and our refuge
when life's cruelty and our fragility
are too difficult to shoulder alone.
Be with us, oh God of all comfort.

✠ Assurance of God's Love and Forgiveness

Church, we are forgiven!

We are free to try again.

✠ Response to God's Grace 582

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

GLORY TO GOD (Vasile)

***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.***

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

World without end, without end. Amen.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

✠ **Passing of the Peace**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you!



Proclaiming the Word

Wondering with God's Children

Anthem

All Praise To You We Sing
Chancel Choir

Susan K. Fair
and Steven Taranto

Prayer for God's Wisdom and Understanding

Old Testament Reading

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Pew Bible page 806

Gospel Reading

John 11:28-39

Pew Bible page 104

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Message

Asking for a Friend...Does grief get easier?

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



Responding to the Word

✠ **Response 649**

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

AMAZING GRACE

✠ **Affirmation of Faith**

excerpt from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

PCUSA

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Our Grief Group wrote today's Prayers of the People

Dear God,

Your beloved children feel the pain of loss. You know our anger and our denial. You know all the stages of grief we experience. He was my companion. She was someone I loved. Help all as we walk this journey of grief together. There is no way they will come back, but they will always live in our hearts. How can we be comforted except to know that you wrap us in the folds of your wings and will be with us through it all. We pray for the grieving. We pray for the hurting. We pray for the longing. Hear our prayer as we pray together...

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.

Offering Our Gifts: An Invitation to Generosity

You are invited to "Text to Give" your offering!

Text FPCCOV followed by your donation amount to: 73256 and follow the link to give online! Or scan the QR Code to visit the giving page!*



Offertory

Let The Praise Go 'Round
Chancel Choir

William Boyce
Arr. by Hal Hopsin

✠ Response 658

God Is So Good

GOD IS SO GOOD

***God is so good; God is so good; God is so good; God's so good to me.
God loves me so; God loves me so; God loves me so; God's so good to me.***

Prayer of Gratitude

All are invited to join in our community Prayer of Gratitude by lifting up a one-word prayer of thanksgiving.



Being the Church in the World

✦ Sending Hymn 625

O Lord My God

HOW GREAT THOU ART

✦ Charge and Benediction

First Presbyterian Church Covington is a Christian community existing to glorify God by welcoming all of God’s children. We celebrate through serving, teaching, praying, eating, crying, singing, and dancing with the Holy Spirit. As works in progress, we seek to respond to God’s presence in our church, lives, and community.

✦ Postlude

Now Thank We All Our God

J.S. Bach

Our Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church Covington is a Christian community existing to glorify God by welcoming all of God’s children. We celebrate through serving, teaching, praying, eating, crying, singing, and dancing with the Holy Spirit. As works in progress, we seek to respond to God’s presence in our church, lives, and community.

First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	<i>Senior Pastor</i>
Erin Morgan	<i>Associate Pastor</i>
Alice Walker	<i>CAGO, AAGO Organist</i>
Catherine Laseter	<i>Dir. of Communications & Operations</i>
Peni Kehoe	<i>Finance Administrator</i>
Krista Firkus	<i>Interim Choir Director</i>

Nursery Staff
 Hattie Bellinger
 Sierra BlackShear
 Catrina Crowe
 Jahniyah Greene
 Laina Lalane

Officers

Reaching Out

Curtis Watson *Witness (2024)*

Engaging

Charles Ardis *Faith Formation (2025)*

Pat Harper *Worship (2024)*

Nichole Howell *Worship (2025)*

Mary Catherine Whisnant *Faith Formation (2024)*

Belonging

Doug Bolton *Welcome (2025)*

Louly Hay Kapp *Marketing (2023)*

Bob Tabb *Finance (2023)*

Connecting (Deacons)

Tom Crews *Pastoral Care (2025)*

Dana Hall *Faith & Fellowship (2025)*

Eleanor Scarborough *Pastoral Care (2023)*

Darcel Tabb *Faith & Fellowship (2024)*

More

Billy Fortson *Personnel (2024)*

Stan Hall *Facilities (2023)*

John McCarthy *Clerk of Session*

Ed Perkerson *Strategic Planning (2023)*



Worship Practices

Sound System—We are excited to announce that the new sound system has been installed in the Sanctuary! The new system is designed to improve the sound in the space, not only in volume but in clarity and includes a Bluetooth hearing aid connectivity option. We are still testing and figuring out the settings and we appreciate your patience during this adjustment period. Once we fully understand the settings and capabilities, we will hold lessons on how to connect with the Bluetooth.

Children in Worship—We have a “Children in Worship” guiding brochure available in the Narthex! This brochure is intended to serve as an aid to parents and other members of our congregation in welcoming our children to worship. Children are always welcome to wiggle and giggle in the pews at FPC! During worship children are invited to join us at the front of the Sanctuary for a time of Wondering with God’s Children. Afterwards, children planning to go to the nursery will be escorted downstairs by Pastor Neeley or Pastor Erin. This is to help you stay in worship and us get them to the nursery safely. If you need help finding the nursery, you are invited to ask an usher to point the way.

Friendship Registers—In each pew there is a pad with a black cover that we invite everyone to fill out. If the Friendship Register is nearest to you, please fill it out and pass it down the pew so it can reach everyone. When you pass it on, we invite you to introduce yourself to your pew friends! We encourage visitors and newcomers to connect with us by filling out the Friendship Register so we can be sure to send you a message to thank you for joining us.

Use—One License #A-728728 authorizes the use of music printed in our worship guide and streamed online. *Messages and data rates may apply when using Text to Give. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel.



Serving Today

Tech Team | Dan Walden, Kenny Compton,
Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley, Kraig Howell

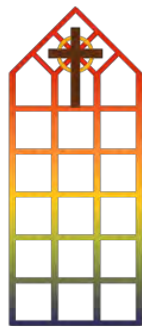
Usher Chair | Ed Perkerson

Acolytes | Ruth Ralston, Rose Ralston



Worship Notes & Doodles

We invite you to fill the space below with the thoughts, reminders, and doodles that you may be blessed with during and after worship.



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
COVINGTON, GA

1169 Clark Street SW, Covington, GA 30014

fpccov.org | 770.786.7321



Advent Workshop
Sunday, December 3rd
during Sunday School
in the Fellowship Hall

Explore the meaning of advent through hands-on activities, crafts, and fellowship for **ALL AGES: adults & families!**

CHRISTMAS SOUL FEAST



DEC. 6



**ON THE MENU:
CHRISTMAS DINNER
TURKEY, DRESSING, GREEN BEANS**

Feed your body and soul in the Fellowship Hall at 5:15pm.

RSVP by Monday, December 4th
to catherine@fpccov.org or 770-786-7321



Christmas Caroling
 Sunday, December 10th at 5:00pm
 Meet at FPC to carol in
 The Cottage Links at Corrydale

- Sunday, November 19**
Twenty-fifth Sunday
After Pentecost
- 9:45am Sunday School
 - 11:00am Worship—Asking for a Friend...
 - 12:00pm Receiving new members
- Tuesday, November 21**
- 12:00pm Lectio Divina
 - 5:30pm Witness Team Meeting
- Thursday, November 23**
- Office CLOSED for Thanksgiving
- Friday, November 24**
- Office CLOSED for Thanksgiving
- Saturday, November 25**
- 9:00am Meals on Wheels
- Sunday, November 26**
Christ the King Sunday
- 9:45am Sunday School
 - 11:00am Worship—Asking for a Friend...

We will be passing out doughnuts for the Lions Club Christmas Parade on December 2nd!



We will have a table in front of the church and will meet at **9:15am** to set up before the parade starts at 10:00am.

Please contact Curtis Watson if you are interested in helping!

FPC YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY PRESENTS

BELIEF AND BEER

DRINKS AND DISCUSSION
 NOVEMBER 27 | 5:30PM
 LUCKY DAY TACO SHOP
 CHILDCARE AT FPC

TEXT
 "@K74G9K"
 TO 810-10
 FOR
 UPDATES &
 REMINDERS

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Illness

- ✦ Ken Fullerton, father of Scott Fullerton - recovering from illness at Westbury rehab
- ✦ Patsy Freeman, sister of Judy Davis
- ✦ Grant Moss & Chris Mattice, family of Louly Fowler Hay - cancer and care
- ✦ Joyce, sister of Faye Kitchens
- ✦ Shelvie Belser, grandmother of Neeley Rentz Lane
- ✦ Carolyn Watson
- ✦ Bernice Bailey - cancer treatment
- ✦ Bob and Beverly Beasley, friends of Jean Elder - health concerns and care
- ✦ Brenda Buckelew, mother of Jennifer Buckelew
- ✦ Patrick Carmichael
- ✦ Larry Cox, brother-in-law of Randy Layton - cancer

- ✦ Bob Darby, friend of Jeff MacKenzie - leg amputated, kidney problems
- ✦ Karla Ensminger, sister of Perri Walden
- ✦ Randy Jones, nephew of Faye Kitchens - lung cancer
- ✦ Karen Lein Kaasa, sister-in-law of Julie MacKenzie - home health care
- ✦ Marcia McGowan-Thurman, mother of Alicia Taylor - inoperable brain tumor
- ✦ Rosalia Meadors, friend of Tom Crews - three year old with bone marrow failure
- ✦ Meredith Nash, friend of Barbara Martin - four year old with stage IV kidney cancer
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining - vision loss
- ✦ Joyce Williams, sister of Danny Vining - Alzheimer's

Military Service

- ✦ Billy Scarborough - Marines
- ✦ Koen Ardis - Navy
- ✦ Clint Williams - Army
- ✦ Daryl Williams - Army

Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Penny Blakeney - Oaks Assisted Living
- ✦ Homer Borders - Presbyterian Village
- ✦ Jean Elder - Florida with her daughter
- ✦ Dot Fincher - Merryvale
- ✦ Louly Hay - Presbyterian Village Athens
- ✦ Travis Moss - Westbury, Conyers
- ✦ Louise White - Merryvale

All **prayer requests** should be sent to:
catherine@fpccov.org
 Requests may be removed after three weeks if not updated.

Sunday School

Sunday School classes are held at 9:45am.
 Children's Class (PreK-4th) Youth Class (5th+)
 Foundations Adult Class The Wired WORD



Come help decorate the church!

We'll be decorating for Advent and Christmas on **Saturday, December 2nd** starting at **1:00pm!** Contact Pat Harper with any questions!

Where Our Treasure Is

Even though Commitment Sunday has passed you still have time to have your pledge included in the 2024 budget!

Be sure to fill out your Pledge Card and Time & Talent so it can help us fund ministries for the coming year! For more, visit fpccov.org/stewardship

You are invited to **"Text to Give"** your offering! Find more details in the worship guide under "Offering Our Gifts: An Invitation to Generosity."



Christmas Poinsettia donations will be opened next week. Honor or memorialize a loved one by donating in their name to help decorate the Sanctuary for Advent. Donations made over the cost will fund witness and outreach programs.

THE LONGEST NIGHT

WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER
20TH
5:30PM
SANCTUARY

Bring your grief.
Bring your weariness.
Bring your fatigue,
and allow yourself a quiet space to reflect and draw near to God in this quiet service of healing.