

# *The First Presbyterian Church* *in the City of New York*

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## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*Service for the Lord's Day*

November 15, 2020 | 11:00 a.m.

*The Session and members of First Church extend a sincere welcome to all persons regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the church.*

### GATHERING

*The peace candle represents our prayers for peace in a broken world. The congregation is asked to offer prayers of intercession for one another and for those who lead in these times of remote worship.*

PRELUDE

Prelude on "Be Thou My Vision"

Gerre Hancock

WELCOME

INTROIT

"Oculi omnium"

Charles Wood

*Oculi omnium in te sperant, Domine, et tu das escam illorum in tempore opportuno. Gloria tibi, Domine, Amen.*

The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. Glory be to you, O Lord. Amen.  
-Psalm 144:15 (NRSV)

Christina Angelopoulos, Hannah Nacheman, Arri Lawton Simon, and Andrew Martens

CALL TO WORSHIP

**Lord, you have been our help,  
generation after generation.  
Before the mountains were born,  
before you birthed the earth and the inhabited world—  
from forever in the past  
to forever in the future, you are God.  
You return people to dust,  
saying, "Go back, humans,"  
because in your perspective a thousand years  
are like yesterday past,  
like a short period during the night watch.  
You sweep humans away like a dream,  
like grass that is renewed in the morning.  
True, in the morning it thrives, renewed,  
but come evening it withers, all dried up.**

**Teach us to number our days  
so we can have a wise heart.**

-Psalm 90:1-6, 12

**HYMN 687**

“Our God, Our Help in Ages Past”

ST. ANNE

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Merciful God, we come before you in humility.  
We confess we have fallen short in the most simple ways.  
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
We have not done justice, loved kindness,  
or walked humbly with you, our God.  
In your loving-kindness, have mercy on us.  
In your great compassion, teach us again what it means to love  
kindness, do justice, and walk with you.  
Keep us near and give us strength to keep trying. Amen**

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

**DOXOLOGY**

*Traditional*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.**

**OLD HUNDREDTH**

*Inclusive*

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

**SHARING SIGNS OF PEACE**

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

**CHILDREN’S PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER**

**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.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**HEARING THE WORD**

**SCRIPTURE READING**

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night.

But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

SERMON

“Keeping Each Other Awake”

Rev. Barbara Davis

## RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 450

“Be Thou My Vision”

SLANE

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We trust in Jesus Christ,  
fully human, fully God.**

**Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:**

**preaching good news to the poor**

**and release to the captives,**

**teaching by word and deed**

**and blessing the children,**

**healing the sick**

**and binding up the brokenhearted,**

**eating with outcasts,**

**forgiving sinners,**

**and all calling all to repent and believe in the gospel.**

–from the Brief Statement of Faith (1991)

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### OFFERTORY

“Keep Your Lamps!”

André J. Thomas, arr.

Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, the time is drawing nigh. Children, don't get weary 'til your work is done. Christian, journey soon be over, the time is drawing nigh.  
– based upon Matthew 25:1-13

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION

## SENDING

HYMN 362

“Rejoice! Rejoice, Believers”

LLANGLOFFAN

## BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“Fugue in E-flat Major, BWV 552ii”

Johann Sebastian Bach

*The congregation is invited to continue worshiping through the postlude,  
which is offered as a thanksgiving to God.*

MUSIC NOTES Raised on the humble plains of Texas, Gerre Hancock (1934-2012) was one of the most celebrated organists and church musicians of the last hundred years. For thirty years he was director of music at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, elevating their choir of men and boys to international acclaim. His gift for improvisation, creating original music on the spot, was a signature element in worship and concert, inspiring listeners and students alike. His prelude on the beloved Irish hymn, “Be Thou My Vision,” is but a taste of “Uncle Gerre” (as he was known to many) – an adventurously harmonized version of the hymn that builds to a dramatic climax, then quickly tapers to some of the quietest sounds of the organ. • Though he lived and taught in England most of his life, Charles Wood (1866-1926) drew a great deal of musical inspiration from his native Ireland. His music for the church remains popular, including the beautiful setting of “Oculi omnium,” composed as part of a pair of introits for choir published following his death. • Echoing the theme of today’s scripture lesson of waiting, of anticipating, is André J. Thomas’ arrangement of “Keep Your Lamps,” a song from the expansive musical tradition of African-American slaves. “The time [that] is drawing nigh” is Christ’s second coming (which Jesus says we will know “neither the day nor the hour” of in Matthew 25). For slaves, this “time” might have been a call to be alert for a conductor on the Underground Railroad, or sadly, the freedom that would only be known only in death. • Johann Sebastian Bach’s glorious “Fugue in E-Flat Major” is the final work in a volume for organ published in 1739. The symbolism to the number three is overt – the fugue has three sections, each with its own theme, and the fugue is in the key of E-flat major (three flats). Additional scholarship has tied a personage of the Trinity to each fugal section theme: the beginning broad theme as “Father,” the middle florid theme as “Son,” and the final jubilant theme as “Spirit.” –Michael Shake

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