

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

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service for the Lord's Day

November 8, 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

“Carillon”

Leo Sowerby

WELCOME

INTROIT

“Cantate domino”

Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni

Cantate Domino canticum novum; laus ejus in ecclesia sanctorum. Laetetur Israël in eo qui fecit eum, et filii Sion exsultent in rege suo.

Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful. Let Israel be glad in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.

—Psalm 149:1-2, sung in Latin

Samantha Noonan, Hannah Nacheman, Arri Lawton Simon, and Andrew Martens

CALL TO WORSHIP

We are pulled in many directions.

Many duties and tasks seek to lay claim on our lives.

This day, in this place, let service to God be your choice.

This day, in this place, we open our hearts and spirits to God.

Blessed be the God of creation who has called us here.

Praise be to God who sustains and nurtures our lives. Amen.

HYMN 612

“We Praise You, O God”

KREMSER

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God,

our sins are too heavy to carry,

too real to hide, and too deep to undo.

**Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
what our hearts can no longer bear,
and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment.
Set us free from a past that we cannot change;
open to us a future in which we can be changed;
and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image,
through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. 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

Joshua 24:1-3, 14-25

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods. Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan and made his offspring many. I gave him Isaac;

"Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!" Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey." So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made statutes and ordinances for them at Shechem.

SERMON

"Have you ever been to Shechem?"

Rev. Greg Stovell

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN 377

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

HOUSTON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

from *The Belhar Confession* – PC(USA)

We believe that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people; that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged that God calls the church to follow God in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry; that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind; that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly; that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering; that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right;

that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

STAFF CONTACTS

The Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell, Pastor/Head of Staff - gstovell@fpcnyc.org
The Rev. Dr. Barbara E. Davis, Executive Minister - bdavis@fpcnyc.org
The Rev. Dr. Mark D. Hostetter, Associate Pastor - fpcnyc@fpcnyc.org
Michael Shake, Director of Music - mshake@fpcnyc.org

The Rev. Dr. Jon Walton, Pastor Emeritus
The Rev. Dr. J. Barrie Shepherd, Pastor Emeritus

Hannah Faye Allred, Staff Associate of Congregational Care - hallred@fpcnyc.org
Sophia Canfield, Online Streaming Coordinator - fpcnyc@fpcnyc.org
Kathleen Cook, Nursery School Director - kcook@fpcnyc.org
Tony Feliciano, Sexton - frontdesk@fpcnyc.org
Jon Harris, Family Music Ministries Coordinator - jharris@fpcnyc.org
Lisa Polite, Administrative Assistant - lpolite@fpcnyc.org
Paul Schnabel, Director of Finance and Facilities - pschnabel@fpcnyc.org
Nicole Stansifer, Director of Outreach - nstansifer@fpcnyc.org
Babs Smith, Assistant Director of Finance and Facilities - bsmith@fpcnyc.org
Audrey Webber, Staff Associate of Children, Youth, and Families - awebber@fpcnyc.org