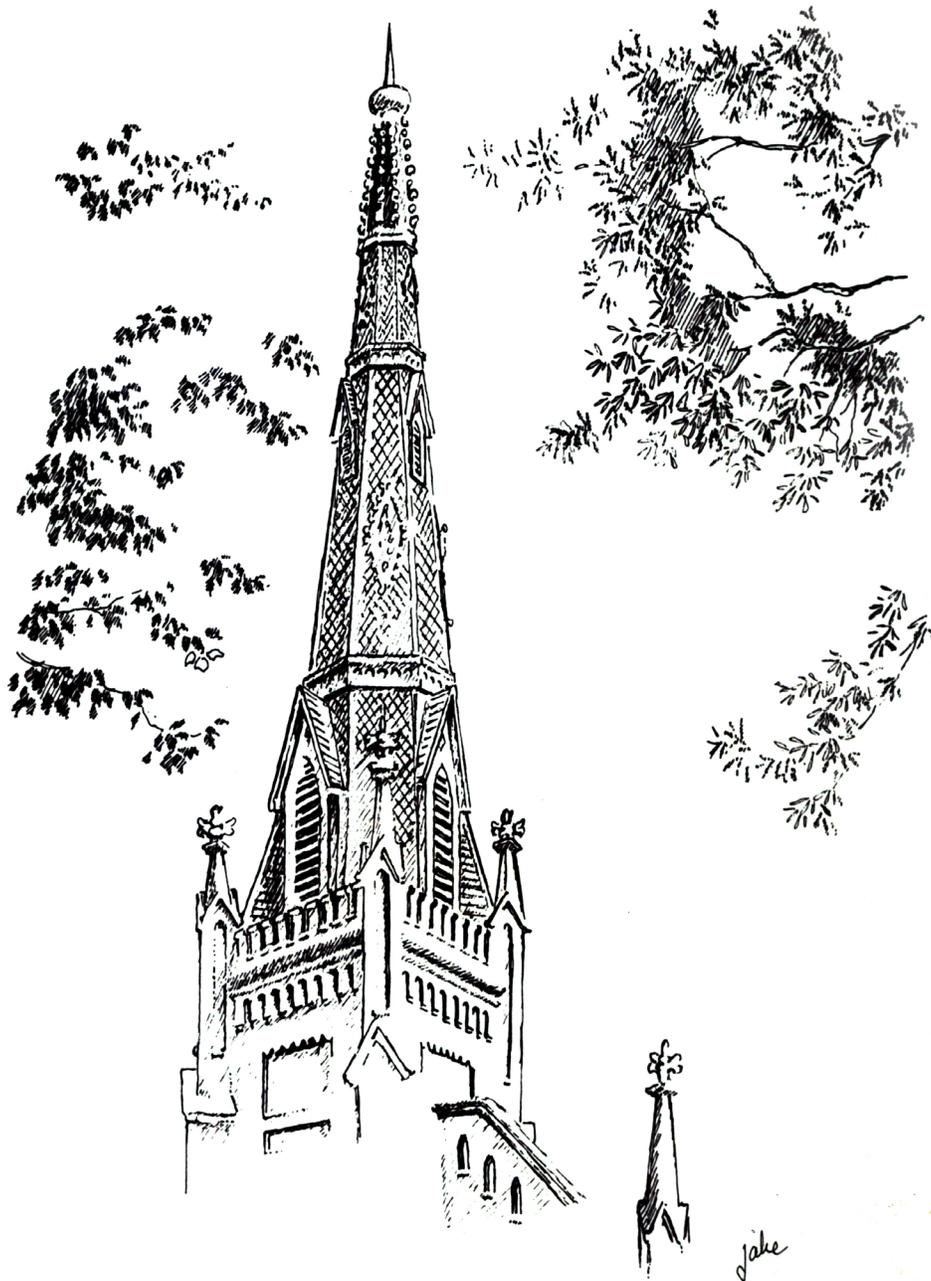


# First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | MARCH 30, 2025  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT



*We invite you, whoever you are and whoever God is helping you to become, to join First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte in our journey of faith. God is love, and that love is for you. You belong as a child of God, and we welcome you. Come experience how that belonging might change you and our world as we seek to be for Christ in the heart of Charlotte.*



First Presbyterian  
Church of Charlotte

**Time of Quiet Meditation and Reflection** | Silence begins in the Chapel at 8:50 a.m.

**Words of Welcome** | Reverend Pen Peery

**Opening Prayer** | Walter Brueggemann

**You are God of all our possibilities. You preside over all our comings and goings, all our wealth and all our poverty, all our sickness and all our health, all our despair and all our hope, all our living and all our dying. And we are grateful.**

**You are God of all our impossibilities. You have presided over the emancipations and healings of our mothers and fathers; you have presided over the wondrous transformations in our own lives; you have and will preside over those parts of our lives that we imagine to be closed. And we are grateful.**

**So be your true self, enacting the things impossible for us, that we might yet be whole among the blind who see and the dead who are raised; that we may yet witness your will for peace, your vision for justice, your veto of all of our violence.**

**At the outset of this day, we place our lives in your strong hands. Before the end of this day, do newness among us in the very places where we are tired in fear, we are exhausted in guilt, we are spent in anxiety. Make all things new, we pray in the new-making name of Jesus. Amen.**

**Moment of Reflective Prayer**

**Meditative Music** | “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” | BYU Vocal Point

Come thou fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace  
Streams of mercy never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Here I raise my Ebenezer  
Hither by thy help I've come  
And I hope by thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger  
Wandering from the fold of God  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
interposed his precious blood.  
Oh, to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it  
Prone to leave the God I love.  
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it  
Seal it for thy courts above.  
Here's my heart; Oh take and seal it  
Seal it for thy courts above.

**Prayer for Illumination** | Walter Brueggemann | David Dillard

**First Scripture Reading** | Psalm 32

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit. While I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them. You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you. Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **Second Scripture Reading** | Luke 15:1-3; 11b-32 | Lisa Dillard

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable:

"There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. "Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command, yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

## **Moment of Reflection**

**Meditation** | "The Cost of Following Jesus: Accepting Grace" | Reverend Pen Peery

## **Moment of Reflection**

## **Offering**

The Christian life is marked by the offering of one's self to God to be shaped, empowered, directed, and changed by God. In worship, God presents us with the costly self-offering of Jesus Christ. We are claimed by Christ and set free. In response to God's love in Jesus Christ we offer God our lives, our gifts, our abilities, and our material goods for God's service. The offering plates are located at the back of the chapel if you are interested in giving regularly as a spiritual practice.

## **Invitation to the Table**

**Meditative Music** | “Amazing Grace” | LeAnn Rimes

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound  
 That saved a wretch like me  
 I once was lost, But now I'm found  
 I was blind, but now I see  
 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved  
 How precious did that grace appear, the hour I first believed  
 When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun  
 We've no less days to sing God's praise, Than when we first begun  
 Amazing grace, Ohh how sweet the sound  
 That saved a wretch like me  
 I once was lost, But now I'm found  
 Was blind but now I see

**Prayers of the People and The 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Sacrament of Communion**

To receive the gluten-free bread and the cup, come forward, take a piece of bread, and then dip the bread into the cup. It is still communion if you prefer to take only the bread. Please do not drink out of the cup directly. If for any reason you prefer not to come forward, please raise your hand and the officers will be glad to serve you in your pew.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Faithful God, you have fed us at this table along with that great multitude of your faithful people. Keep us faithful to your call, and abide with us always, that we may serve you in all things. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

**Charge and Blessing**

We have been fed by the presence of God in the silence, by the Word, and through communion. Please feel free to greet one another in a warm and quiet way that allows an easing out of the silence. The minister is available for prayer or conversation after the service. Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m. If you would like to visit longer with other members, you are invited to gather in the Welcome Center.

Transcripts for the Contemplative Service can be found here: <https://firstpres-charlotte.org/sermons/>



**VIRTUAL  
CONNECT  
CARD**



**PRAYER  
REQUESTS**



**TEXT  
TO GIVE**



**GIVE  
ONLINE**