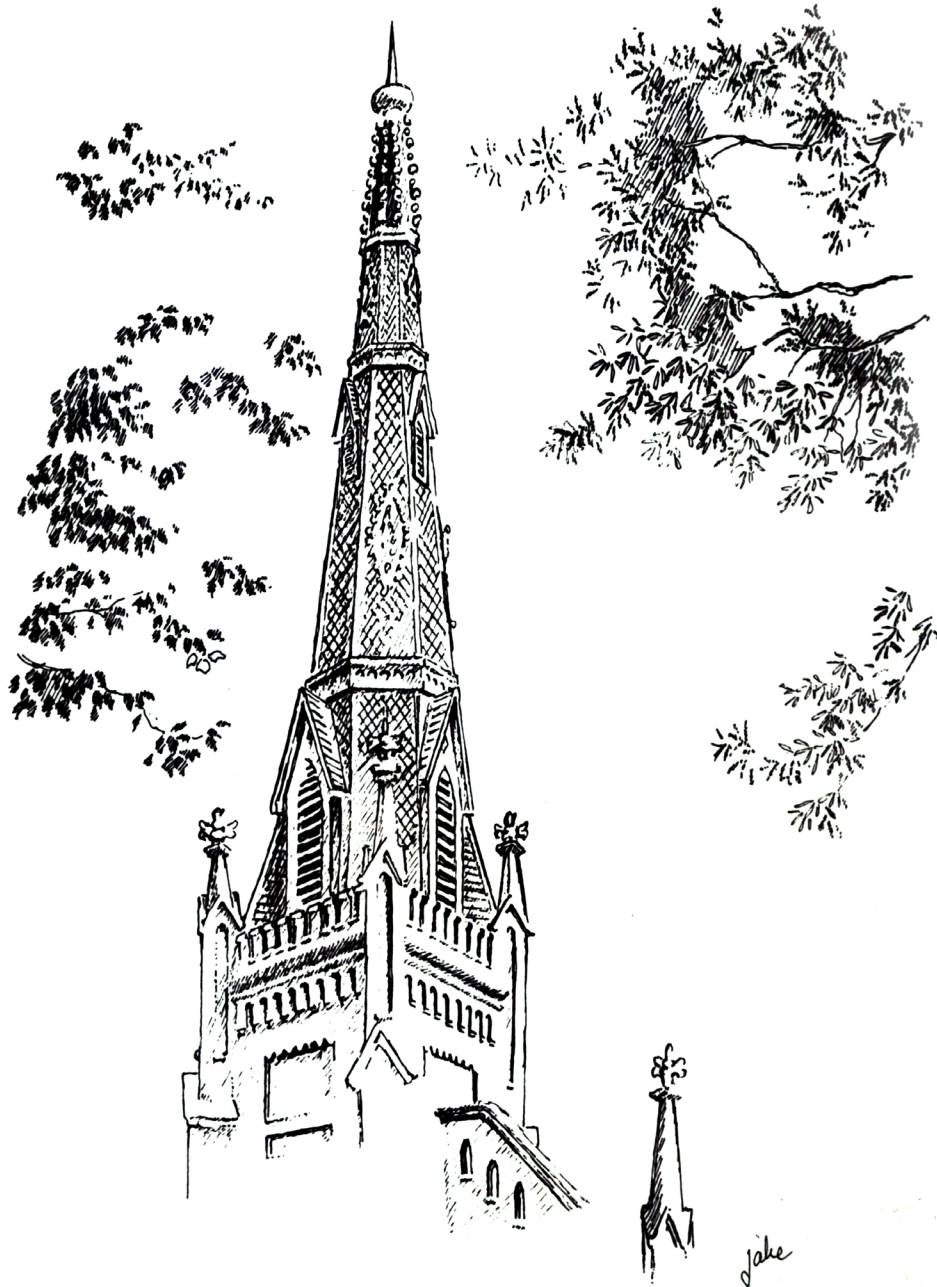


# First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | SEPTEMBER 14, 2025  
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



*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

*"You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."  
- Augustine of Hippo*

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

**Words of Welcome** | Reverend Rob Spach

**Opening Prayer** | Adapted from Christine Sine

**O Gracious God, we lift your name above every other name, and as we move into worship with you, we ask for your help so we may be fully awake and open to your loving presence.**

**May you help us to let go of all that distracts us, discourages us, weighs us down, and holds us captive.**

**May you help us attune our ears and hearts to your words so they may echo in the depths of our being.**

**May we allow you to transform all that we are and all that we do so we can live life freely and to the fullest in your resurrection and created world.**

**As we take time to silently name the things that we are carrying, help us to release them or give them to you so we can be open to what you have for us in this space.**

**Moment of Reflective Prayer**

**Meet us, O Christ, in the stillness of morning worship.**

**Move us, O Spirit, and awaken our hearts.**

**Mend and forgive us, O Father, from past harms.**

**Amen.**

**Meditative Music** | "O Love" | Beckenhorst Singers | Dan Forrest

O Love, O Love, O Love that will not let me go

O Love I rest my weary soul in Thee

I give Thee back the life I owe

That in Thine ocean depths its flow

May richer, fuller be.

O Joy, O Joy that seeks me through the pain

O Joy I cannot close my heart to Thee

I trace the rainbow through the rain

And feel the promise is not in vain

That morn shall tearless be.

O Love, O Love, O Love that will not let me go

O Love I rest my weary soul in Thee

I give Thee back the life I owe

That in Thine ocean depths its flow

May richer, fuller be.

That morn shall tearless be.

O Love, O Love, O Love

O Love, O Love, O Love that will not let me go.

O Love that will not let me go.

**Prayer for Illumination** | Ann Temple

**Old Testament Reading** | Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:25 (selected verses)

I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to humans to be busy with. I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.

For in much wisdom is much vexation, and those who increase knowledge increase sorrow. I said to myself, "Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself." But again, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; I made myself gardens

and parks and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure from all my toil, and this was my reward from all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and again, all was vanity and a chasing after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun.

The wise have eyes in their head, but fools walk in darkness.

Yet I perceived that the same fate befalls all of them. Then I said to myself, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also; why then have I been so very wise?" And I said to myself that this also is vanity. For there is no enduring remembrance of the wise or of fools, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labors under the sun, because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink and find enjoyment in their toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **New Testament Reading** | Luke 7:18b – 35 | Scott Wallace

John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect someone else?" When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to expect someone else?' " Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight; the lame walk; those with a skin disease are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised; the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

### **Moment of Reflection**

**Meditation** | "What is Our Purpose in Life?" | Reverend Rob Spach

### **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** | Reverend Mary Bowman

**Meditative Music** | "He Will See You Through" | Rhiannon Giddens

When your path is full of worry, he will see you through. When you feel alone on your journey, he will see you through. Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

When you think the world's gone crazy, he will see you through. When it looks like the end of days, he'll surely see you through. All your silver, all your gold, Won't shine brighter than your soul. Amen, Amen, Amen.

All your silver, all your gold, Won't shine brighter than your soul. Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen.

**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**

All are welcome to participate in 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**

**Sovereign God, Ruler of all creation, thank you for loving us so deeply that you sent your beloved Son to bring reconciliation to the world and to testify to the truth: that you alone are the Lord of life. Help us to listen always to Christ's voice so that we may proclaim his realm of justice, peace, and endless love; through the power of the triune God, who reigns forever. 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.

**IN LOVING MEMORY** 

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The sympathy of the congregation is expressed to Charles Carson upon the death of his sister, Ann Carson Shea, on September 6, 2025.

This service is now available via livestream. You can access the recording of the service or an audio or written version of the sermon at: <https://firstpres-charlotte.org/sermons/>



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REQUESTS**



**TEXT  
TO GIVE**



**GIVE  
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