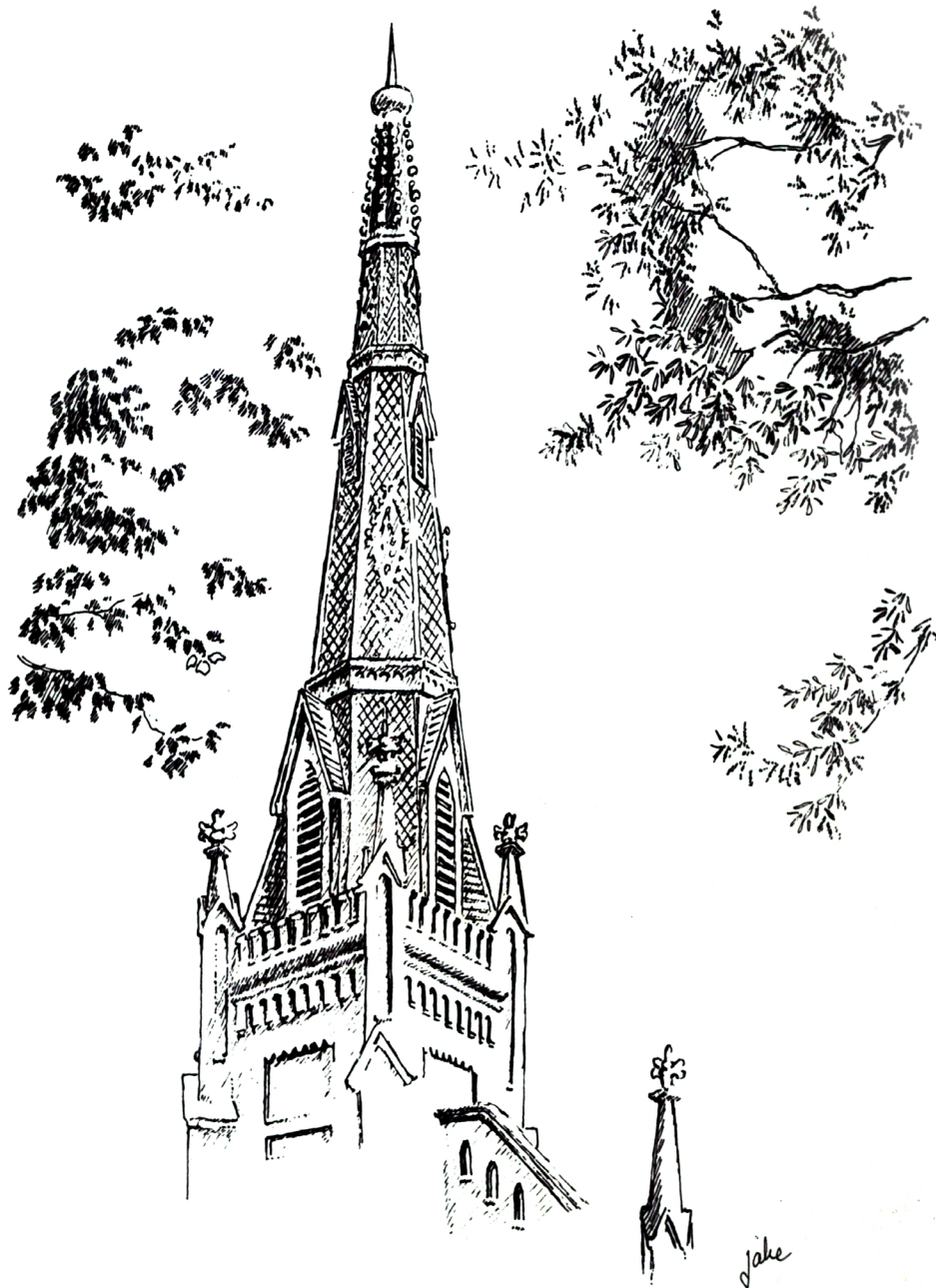


First Presbyterian Church

CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP | 9 AM | SEPTEMBER 28, 2025
SIXTEENTH 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 Mary Bowman

Opening Prayer | Adapted from Andrew Peterson

O Gracious and Holy God, we are grateful to be gathered in this place and to receive the gift of worship and your presence.

We place before you the ways that we are distracted or feel distant. We confess the hurts of those who have sinned against us and the pain of having sinned against others.

We acknowledge that we have questions about our lives and your movement in them. We confess that we have concerns about the world and where you might be working. We know that our awareness can be self-oriented and we long to see beyond ourselves to your movements and to hear your living word to us.

As we pause in reflective prayer, help us to release what is not of you and to receive anew the love and grace that you offer – so we may embrace your gifts and share them with your world.

Moment of Reflective Prayer

Forgive us and heal us, O God.

Help us to deepen our relationship with you, O Christ.

Cradle us and guide us, O Spirit. Amen.

Meditative Music | “Cradle Me” | Bernadette Farrell

God eternal, cradle me, love me till the end;

Give me now your understanding.

Let me be, let me be, let me be your good friend.

Lord Jesus, cradle me, walk with me always;

Let me know true love and justice.

Love me through, love me through, love me through all my days.

Holy Spirit, cradle me, guide me from above;

Let me see you, see your power.

Cradle me, cradle me, cradle me in your love.

Sacrament of Baptism | Reverend Mary Bowman | Elder Don Olmstead

Baptism of Lenora Paek Temple

+Affirmation of Faith | Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination | Scott Wallace

Old Testament Reading | Ecclesiastes 7:1-14, 23-25 | The Message

A good reputation is better than a fat bank account. Your death date tells more than your birth date.

You learn more at a funeral than at a feast—after all, that’s where we’ll end up. We might discover something from it.

Crying is better than laughing. It blotches the face but it scours the heart.

Sages invest themselves in hurt and grieving. Fools waste their lives in fun and games.

You'll get more from the rebuke of a sage than from the song and dance of fools.

The giggles of fools are like the crackling of twigs under the cooking pot. And like smoke.

Brutality stupefies even the wise and destroys the strongest heart.

Endings are better than beginnings. Sticking to it is better than standing out.

Don't be quick to fly off the handle. Anger boomerangs. You can spot a fool by the lumps on his head.

Don't always be asking, "Where are the good old days?" Wise folks don't ask questions like that.

Wisdom is better when it's paired with money, especially if you get both while you're still living. Double protection: wisdom and wealth! Plus this bonus: Wisdom energizes its owner.

Take a good look at God's work. Who could simplify and reduce Creation's curves and angles to a plain straight line?

On a good day, enjoy yourself; on a bad day, examine your conscience. God arranges for both kinds of days so that we won't take anything for granted.

I tested everything in my search for wisdom. I set out to be wise, but it was beyond me, far beyond me, and deep—oh so deep! Does anyone ever find it? I concentrated with all my might, studying and exploring and seeking wisdom—the meaning of life. I also wanted to identify evil and stupidity, foolishness and craziness.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading | Matthew 7:24-29 | The Message | Tom Temple

"These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life, homeowner improvements to your standard of living. They are foundational words, words to build a life on. If you work these words into your life, you are like a smart carpenter who built his house on solid rock. Rain poured down, the river flooded, a tornado hit—but nothing moved that house. It was fixed to the rock. But if you just use my words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach. When a storm rolled in and the waves came up, it collapsed like a house of cards."

When Jesus concluded his address, the crowd burst into applause. They had never heard teaching like this. It was apparent that he was living everything he was saying—quite a contrast to their religion teachers! This was the best teaching they had ever heard.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "How Do We Consider Wisdom?" | Reverend Mary Bowman

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

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 | William Temple

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you, and then use us, we pray, as you will, but always to your glory, and the welfare of your people, through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. 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.

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/>



VIRTUAL
CONNECT
CARD



PRAYER
REQUESTS



TEXT
TO GIVE



GIVE
ONLINE