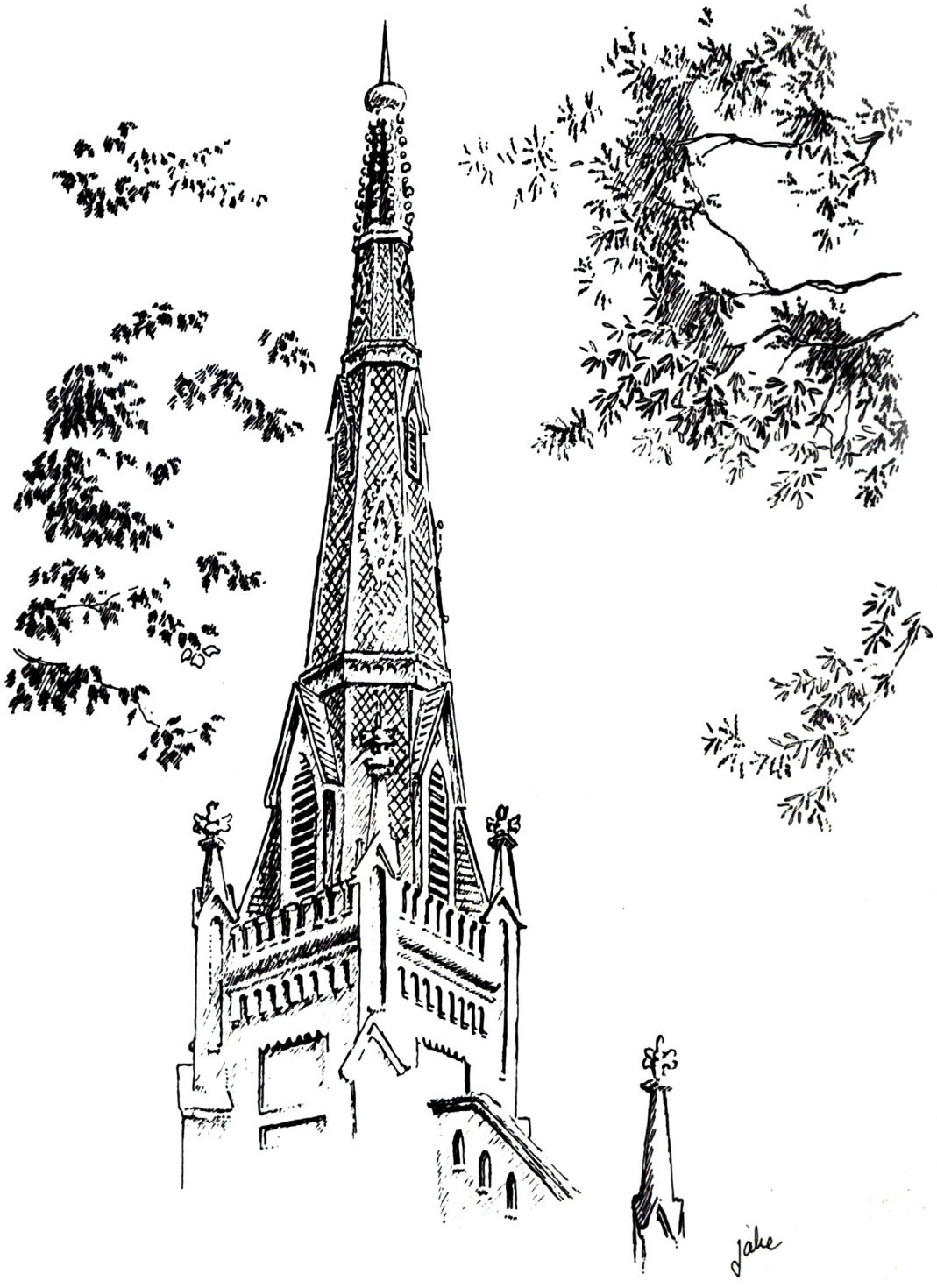
CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE

First Presbyterian Church

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



OCTOBER 18, 2026
9 AM WORSHIP

TWENTY FIRST SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

Faith is seeing light with your heart when all your eyes see is darkness. -Barbara Johnson
In times of deep darkness, we not only need light — we need to be light for one another. -Parker Palmer

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 Joseph A. Tetlow

Almighty and ever-watchful God, You are beginning and end, Alpha, and Omega. You start all things, and bring all things back to Yourself. For no living creature can make itself come to be; no living being wakes itself from nothingness. Nothing in us could have made You love us or forced You to want us to be. Since before we came to be, You have loved us with an everlasting love, and now Your totally free love burns at the core of our lives, at the core of ourselves. We acknowledge You Creator and Lord, once at the start of all things and always, all days, as the beginning of all things. You alone are Lord, living and reigning forever and ever.

Time of Reflective Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, how intimately You desired to know us, starting among us as an infant, leaving nothing out. Your love ties You to us even when some among us drive You away into all kinds of exile. But You just keep coming back to Your saints and holy ones. Lord, we say yes to Your being here, housed in our flesh. Forgive us and love us. Amen.

Meditative Music | Jesus Draw Me Ever Nearer (May This Journey) | Margaret Becker

Jesus, draw me ever nearer
As I labor through the storm.
You have called me to this passage,
and I'll follow, though I'm worn.

May this journey bring a blessing,
May I rise on wings of faith;
And at the end of my heart's testing,
With Your likeness let me wake.

Jesus guide me through the tempest;
Keep my spirit staid and sure.
When the midnight meets the morning,
Let me love You even more.

Refrain

Let the treasures of the trial
Form within me as I go –
And at the end of this long passage,
Let me leave them at Your throne.

Refrain

Prayer for Illumination and First Reading | Habakkuk 2:1-20 (NRSVUE and The Message) | Claire Tate

I will stand at my watchpost and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what God will say to me and what God will answer concerning my complaint. Then the Lord answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.

Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faithfulness. The person in right-standing before God through loyal and steady believing is fully alive, really alive. Note well: Money deceives. The arrogant rich don't last. They are more hungry for wealth than the grave is for cadavers. Like death, they always want more, but the 'more' they get is dead bodies.

They are cemeteries filled with dead nations, graveyards filled with corpses. Don't give people like this a second thought. Shall not everyone taunt such people and, with mocking riddles, say about them,

"Alas for you who heap up what is not your own!" How long will you load yourselves with goods taken in pledge? Will not your own creditors suddenly rise and those who make you tremble wake up? Then you will be plunder for them. Because you have plundered many nations, all who survive of the peoples shall plunder you—because of human bloodshed and violence to the earth, to cities and all who live in them.

"Alas for you who get evil gain for your house, setting your nest on high to be safe from the reach of harm!" You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many peoples; you have forfeited your life. The very stones will cry out from the wall, and the rafter will respond from the woodwork.

"Alas for you who build a town by bloodshed and found a city on iniquity!" Is it not from the Lord of hosts that peoples labor only to feed the flames and nations weary themselves for nothing? But the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

"Alas for you who make your neighbors drink, pouring out your wrath until they are drunk, in order to gaze on their nakedness!" You will be sated with contempt instead of glory. Drink, you yourself, and stagger! The cup in the Lord's right hand will come around to you, and shame will come upon your glory! For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you; the destruction of the animals will terrify you—because of human bloodshed and violence to the earth, to cities and all who live in them.

What use is an idol once its maker has shaped it—a cast image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in what has been made, though the product is only an idol that cannot speak! Alas for you who say to the wood, "Wake up!" to silent stone, "Rouse yourself!" Can it teach? See, it is gold and silver plated, and there is no breath in it at all. But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Second Reading | Hebrews 10:32, 35-39 - 11:1 | Scott Wallace

But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings...
Do not, therefore, abandon that boldness of yours; it brings a great reward. For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what was promised. For yet "in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay, but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back." But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost but among those who have faith and so preserve our souls.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Wisdom from the Minor Prophets (Habakkuk): Living Faithfully in a Challenging World"

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 | "Be Thou My Vision" | Kelly Harder, soloist

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art; thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light. High King of Heaven, my victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

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

O Gracious God, we give you thanks for all of the ways that you give our lives meaning. We thank you for the purposes small and large that knit together our lives. We thank you for being trustworthy - knowing that your faithfulness is from everlasting to everlasting. We thank you for the gift of your word and sacrament that helps to heal our hurts, kindle forgiveness, and re-center us in you. In Christ's holy 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.

About Today's Service

Welcome

Scan the QR code to fill out our Virtual Connect Card to help us get to know you.

Prayer Requests

Submit a confidential prayer request at **fpc.tiny.us/virtualprayer**

Digital Offerings

This service is available via livestream on our website. A recording and a written transcript of today's sermon will be available on Monday afternoon at **firstpres-charlotte.org/sermons**

Ways to Give

In Person

The offering plates are located at the back of the chapel if you are interested in giving regularly as a spiritual practice.

Give Online
fpc.tiny.us/give

Text to Give
Text "givetofpc" to 73256

Venmo
@FirstPresofCharlotte