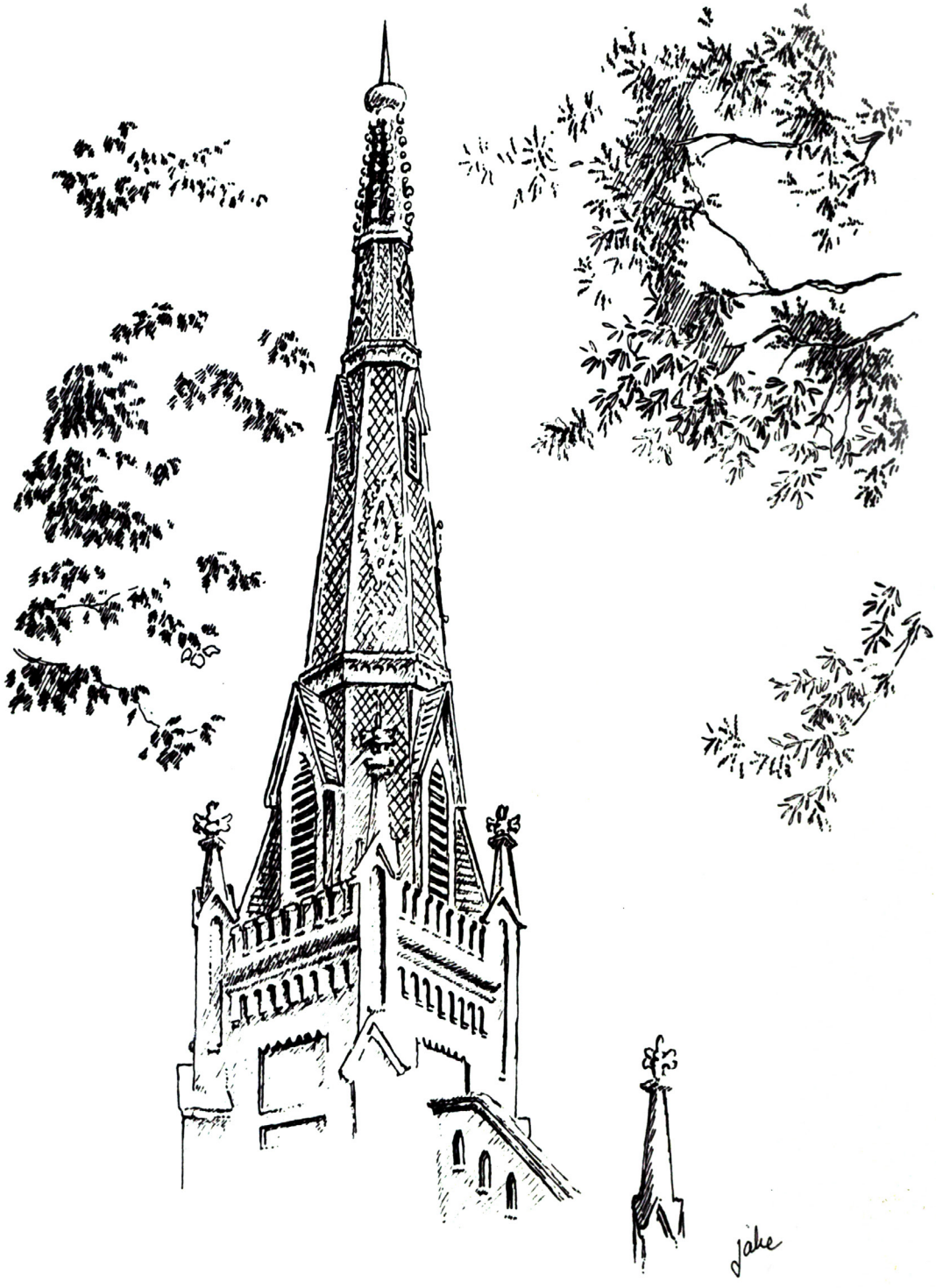
CONTEMPLATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE

First Presbyterian Church

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA



NOVEMBER 15, 2026
9 AM WORSHIP

TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

I believe that the world was created and approved by love, that is subsists, coheres and endures by love, and that, insofar as it is redeemable, it can be redeemed only by love. I believe that divine love, incarnate and indwelling in the world, summons the world always toward wholeness, which ultimately is reconciliation and atonement with God. - Wendell Berry

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 Christ Church London Sabbath Prayer

O Lord our God, King of the Universe, we praise you for the gift of Sabbath rest and the way it points us back to you, the One who knows us better than we know ourselves.

We make the active choice to enter into your rest and to join with you in delighting in this good world you have made and are re-making. We are grateful for this space in which we can practice Sabbath. Thank you for creating a threshold in which demands, deadlines, and distractions can fall away. Thank you for reminding us that our worth does not come from performance and productivity, but simply because we belong to you.

We make the choice to open ourselves anew to you as the one who defines and shapes our identities. We choose to hear your affirmation and love over other voices, to the celebrate the freedom you offer, and to enjoy that which fills our souls with joy, and reminds us of our identity in Christ, as a deeply loved child of God.

Time of Reflective Prayer

O God, uphold us and care for us. O Christ, heal us and forgive us. O Spirit, enliven us and guide us. Amen.

Meditative Music | "All Creatures of Our God and King" | BYU Vocal Point

All creatures of our God and King; Lift up your voice and with us sing; Alleluia, alleluia.
Thou flowing water pure and clear; Make music for thy Lord to hear; Alleluia, alleluia.
Thou fire so masterful and bright; That gives to men both warmth and light; Alleluia, alleluia. Oh, praise Him alleluia.

Dear mother earth who day by day; Unfolds His blessings on our way; Alleluia, alleluia.
Thou flowers and fruit that in Thee grow; Let them His glory also show; Alleluia, alleluia. Oh, praise Him alleluia.
Thou rushing wind that art so strong; Ye clouds that sail in heaven along, Alleluia, alleluia.
Thou rising morn in praise rejoice; Ye light of evening find a voice; Alleluia, alleluia. Oh, praise Him alleluia.

Prayer for Illumination and First Reading | Micah 4:1-4 (The Message) | Tom Bunn

But when all is said and done, God's Temple on the mountain, Firmly fixed, will dominate all mountains, towering above surrounding hills. People will stream to it and many nations set out for it, Saying, "Come, let's climb God's mountain. Let's go to the Temple of Jacob's God. He will teach us how to live. We'll know how to live God's way." True teaching will issue from Zion, God's revelation from Jerusalem. He'll establish justice in the rabble of nations and settle disputes in faraway places. They'll trade in their swords for shovels, their spears for rakes and hoes. Nations will quit fighting each other, quit learning how to kill one another. Each man will sit under his own shade tree, each woman in safety will tend her own garden. God-of-the-Angel-Armies says so, and he means what he says.

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

Second Reading | Matthew 5:1-12 | Elise Barksdale

When Jesus saw his ministry drawing huge crowds, he climbed a hillside. Those who were apprenticed to him, the committed, climbed with him. Arriving at a quiet place, he sat down and taught his climbing companions. This is what he said:

"You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought.

"You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

"You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'care-full,' you find yourselves cared for.

"You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

"You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

"You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

"Not only that—count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

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

Moment of Reflection

Meditation | "Wisdom from the Minor Prophets (Micah): God's Vision for the 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 | "Here I Am, Lord" | John Michael Talbot | Table of Plenty

I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.

I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them
My hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send? Refrain.

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 | Jim Branch | Adapted from *The Blue Book: A Devotional Guide to Every Season of your Life*

God, thank you for the gift of communion with you through worship and through the table. Forgive us when we think that life is more about what we are doing, then about who we are becoming. Help us to remember that more than anything else you want our hearts. Allow us to give them to you fully, that we might receive yours in return, changing us more into the likeness of your Son Jesus. In his name we pray. 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 and linger in the Chapel. The minister is available for prayer or conversation after the service. For those interested, Sunday School begins at 9:45 a.m.

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