

Worship at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday, March 22, 2026 at 10 am

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10)*

PRELUDE

WELCOME

*

IN CHRIST ALONE

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song.
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground:
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease:
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied,
For every sin on Him was laid,
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain.
Then bursting forth in glorious Day,
Up from the grave He rose again.
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine,
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand,
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

*"In Christ Alone" by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS, PASSING THE PEACE, PRAYERS FOR THE CONGREGATION

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)

I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done.

We **will be filled with joy because of you.**
We will sing praises to your name, O Most High.

My enemies retreated;
they staggered and died when you appeared.

For you have judged in our favor;
from your throne you have judged with fairness.

The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed,
a refuge in times of trouble.

Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.

Let's worship our loving and saving God!

Based on Psalm 9:1–14.

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HYMN #420: *GOD OF GRACE AND GOD OF GLORY (verses 1–3, 5)*

God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your pow'r;
crown your ancient Church's story,
bring its bud to glorious flow'r.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn the Christ, assail his ways.
From the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
lest we miss your kingdom's goal,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
 serving you whom we adore,
 serving you whom we adore.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *AND* ASSURANCE OF PARDON
 (You are invited to join in unison with the pastor, or to follow along in silence)

God of faithfulness,
 we confess the ways we have conformed to the world,
 chosen the path of least resistance,
 avoided suffering for your sake,
 or compromised our witness to ease our path.

We too often fear the disapproval of the world
 more than we value the approval of our King.
 We have been silent when we should speak.
 Forgive us, Lord.

Strengthen us to live boldly in your way,
 to endure for righteousness,
 and sustain us by your Spirit as we follow Christ faithfully—
 even when the road is narrow and the cost is high.

In Christ we are made citizens of your kingdom,
 and by your Spirit we are upheld.
 Amen.

After corporate prayer we will have a few moments of silence for personal confession.

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HYMN #339: *BE THOU MY VISION*

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.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
 Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
 Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
 Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;
 I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
 Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
 Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

READING AND PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD

Sermon: *"Finding God's Blessing in Surprising Places:
 Those Who are Persecuted"*

Matthew 5:1–12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

He said:

- ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

John 15:18–22, 16:1–4

"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹ The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. . . . Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. ²¹ They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me.

¹ "I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith. ² For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. ³ This is because they have never known the Father or me. ⁴ Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning.

1 Peter 3:8–9, 13–17

Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Sympathize with each other. Love each other as brothers and sisters. Be tenderhearted, and keep a humble attitude. ⁹ Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing. . . .

¹³ Who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? ¹⁴ But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. ¹⁵ Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. ¹⁶ But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak

against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. ¹⁷ Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE WITH OUR OFFERINGS

The metal basket in the offering plate is for gifts to support our deacons' provision of care, support, and financial assistance to those in need.

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DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
 Praise Him all creatures here below;
 Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;
 Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

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I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS

I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 No turning back; no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;
 the world behind me, the cross before me,
 the world behind me, the cross before me;
 no turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow;
 though none go with me, I still will follow;
 though none go with me, I still will follow;
 no turning back, no turning back.

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BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

CALENDAR

TODAY	Choir Practice (9:00 in the Parlor) Sunday Worship (10:00 in the Sanctuary)
Tuesday, Mar. 24	Tuesday Crew (9:00–11:30)
Wednesday, Mar. 25	Quilting Group (10:30–2:30) Soup and Study: <i>Reel Jesus: Christ in Film</i> Coffee and Study (1:00 pm) Soup and Study (6:00 pm)
Saturday, Mar. 28	Choir Rehearsal (9:00 am)
Sunday, Mar. 29	Choir Practice (9:00 in the Parlor) Sunday Worship with Easter Cantata (10:00 in the Sanctuary) Sharing Table (before and after the service)
LOOKING AHEAD	Thursday, April 2: Maundy Thursday Service (Supper at 6:00), Service (6:30) Sunday, April 5: EASTER SUNDAY

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