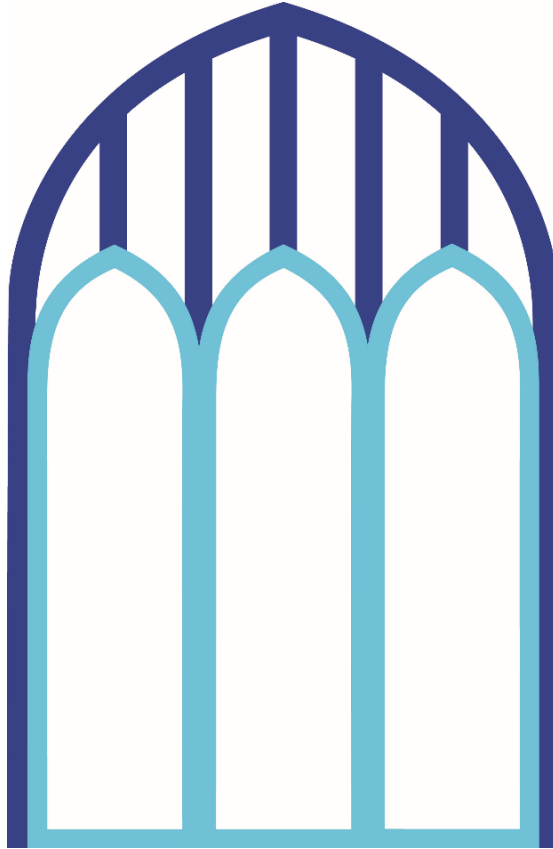


SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

February 25, 2024



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Servant Church in the City Since 1827

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

SERVICE OF WORSHIP FOR THE LORD'S DAY

11:00 A.M.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.” Philippians 2:5-8

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE

Meditation on *Wondrous Love*

Dale Wood

*CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER OF ADORATION

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN

No. 49

Tune: LEONI

The God of Abraham Praise

CONFESSION OF SIN

Almighty God, we bow our heads before you, acknowledging our unworthiness and our sin. You sent your Son to show us the way of life, yet we have erred and strayed like lost sheep. We have confessed him with our lips, but we have not given him the loyalty of our lives. We have followed our own pleasures, sought our own ends, nurtured our own selfishness, and rejected the way of the cross. Have mercy on us. Rebuke our waywardness and folly, and grant us true repentance, that our sins may be forgiven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LENTEN PETITION

No. 215

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, What wondrous love is this,
O my soul! What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul!

DECLARATION OF PARDON

*GLORIA

No. 215

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing, To God and to the Lamb,
I will sing; To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing!

*WORDS OF PEACE

Minister: Since God has forgiven us in Christ, let us forgive one another.
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.
People: And also with you.
(Please greet your neighbors with words of God's peace.)

WELCOME AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

(Please sign and pass the Friendship Registers at this time.).

INVITATION TO THE CHILDREN

UNISON PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Almighty God, whom we know most surely in Jesus Christ, grant us a fresh vision of his way of living, a resolute decision to let him be our Master, and a new willingness daily to take up our cross and follow him; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 Page 13

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON Mark 8:31-38 Page 44

SERMON “Decisions That Matter” Dr. Williams
*“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me.” Mark 8:34*

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** from A Declaration of Faith, 1977

We believe Christ gives us and demands of us lives in pilgrimage toward God's kingdom. Like Christ we may enjoy on our journey all that sustains life and makes it pleasant and beautiful. No more than Christ are we spared the darkness, ambiguity, and threat of life in the world. We are in the world, but not of the world. Our confidence and hope for ourselves and other people do not rest in the powers and achievements of this world, but in the coming and hidden presence of God's kingdom. Christ calls each of us to a life appropriate to that kingdom: to serve as he has served us; to take up our cross, risking the consequences of faithful discipleship; to walk by faith, not by sight, to hope for what we have not seen. Amen.

***HYMN** No. 718 *Tune:* BOURBON
Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said

MINUTE FOR MISSION

THE PRAYERS AND OFFERING

AT THE OFFERTORY Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain Carolyn Jennings
The Chancel Choir and Children's Choir

*Climb to the top of the highest mountain, joyous tidings proclaim to the world,
lift up your voice, shout the good news: behold, your Lord comes to you.*

*He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will carry the lambs in his arms,
he will ever keep them safe from harm, behold, your Lord comes to you.*

*He who made the stars in the Heaven, he who fashioned the earth and the sea,
from time eternal, he was God, the Alpha and Omega. He, behold your Lord!*

*He will come in pow'r and glory, he will rule with mercy and truth.
Hope of the nations, light of the world, light of all.*

He will love the little children, he will hold them in his arms. Love and trust him as a little child, behold, your Lord comes to you. Trust him as a child.

***DOXOLOGY**

No. 223

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts/debtors)**

***HYMN**

No. 826
Lift High the Cross

Tune: CRUCIFER

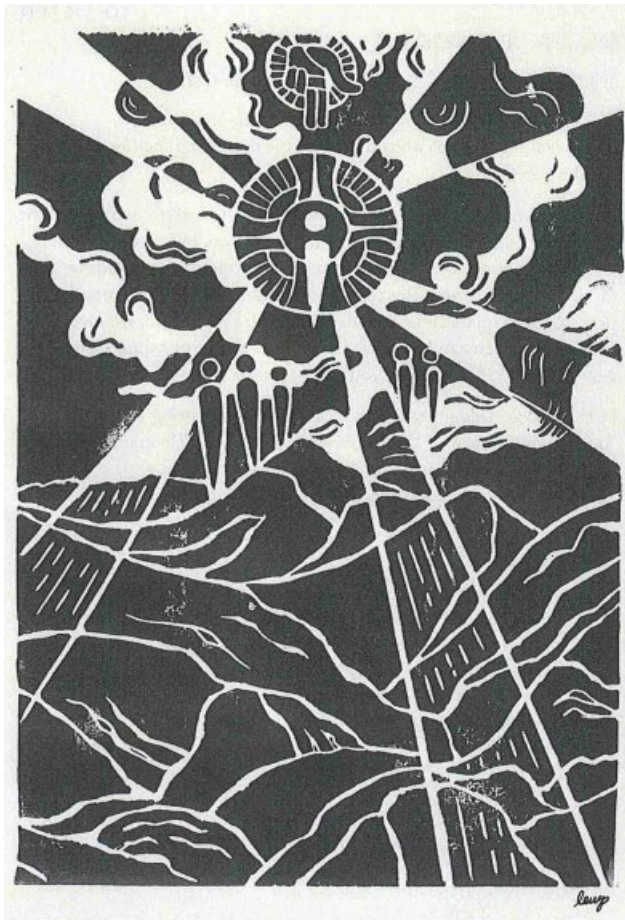
***BENEDICTION AND CHORAL RESPONSE**

***POSTLUDE**

Toccata in E Minor

Johann Pachelbel

*Congregation please stand in body or in spirit.



Transfiguration | Lauren Wright Pittman
Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper

READ Mark 8:31-9:8

FROM THE ARTIST | Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

I'm not a good listener. In the midst of our national reckoning around structural racism and white supremacy in the U.S., I've found that I've done a terrible job listening to my Black and Brown siblings. I constantly have to resist the urge to explain myself, to be seen as good and antiracist. I try saying all the right things, I do performative acts of allyship, and quite honestly, I need to be quiet and listen. I need to be ready to accept criticism, and instead of trying to prove anything, I need to gain awareness of my internalized biases and learned racist tendencies and do the difficult work of unlearning them in every moment. "Get behind me, Satan" (Mark 8:33).

Here we find Peter stepping in and saying all the right things, rejecting the notion that Christ must suffer and die; but in the end, he's not listening to Jesus. It seems Peter's rejection of this narrative reflects his fear of the suffering he also might face in following Christ. "Let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mark 8:34).

Six days later, the disciples are called to listen once again. In this image, I zoomed out to focus on the moment of Transfiguration. Jesus shines like a beacon atop the high mountain while former prophets appear. The disciples are terrified, but also want to live this moment forever, making the glory-filled rock face their home. At once a cloud descends, obscuring things further, and God's voice echoes down, "This is my Son, the Beloved, listen to him!" (Mark 9:7). It's almost as though Jesus had exhausted all efforts to get the disciples to listen, and God had to spectacularly reiterate the importance of listening. I think it's important to note that following God's words, all the disciples could see was Jesus.

PRAY

Breathe deeply as you gaze upon the image on the left. Imagine placing yourself in this scene. What do you see? How do you feel? Get quiet and still, offering a silent or spoken prayer to God.

Welcome to All!

If you are a newcomer, please sign the friendship register at the end of the pew and introduce yourself to the minister. Join us as we grow together in our love for God and neighbor. Ask yourself how you can make a difference in this "Servant Church in the City."

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - WEEK OF FEBRUARY 25

Sunday, February 25

Lenten Prayer Service	9:00 a.m.
Adult Handbells.....	9:30 a.m.
All Church Forum.....	9:30 a.m.
Confirmation Class	9:30 a.m.
Chancel Choir	10:15 a.m.
Coffee Fellowship	10:30 a.m.
Worship Service.....	11:00 a.m.
Youth Dinner	5:00 p.m.
Youth Fellowship	5:30 p.m.
Youth Music	6:30 p.m.

Monday, February 26

Mission Committee Dinner.....	6:00 p.m.
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Tuesday, February 27

Music+Art+Faith.....	4:30 p.m.
Men's Book Study.....	5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 28

Wednesday Dinner and Program	6:00 p.m.
Chancel Choir Rehearsal.....	7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 29

Women's Lenten Study.....	9:00 a.m.
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Friday, March 1

Centering Prayer.....	10:00 a.m.
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CHILDREN, KINDERGARTEN AND UNDER Worship bags, designed to help children participate in worship more meaningfully, are available in the narthex. Children in kindergarten and younger may go to the Preschool for Extended Session following the children's sermon.

CHILDREN, 1st – 5th GRADERS are invited to leave the service after the "Invitation to the Children" to attend a worship service led by Allison and Tanner in Stewart Hall. Exploring worship through art, music, faith questions, and interactive prayer will be the focus. They will return to sit in the balcony or with their parents during the singing of the second hymn.

MINUTE FOR MISSION is presented by Michelle Muniz, Coordinator for Puerto Rico with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS are given by Sandy Cooper to the glory of God and in memory of her mother, Betty Chamberlin Macpherson.

COVERED DISH DINNER will be held on Monday, February 26 at 6:00 p.m. in Imlay House where Michelle Muniz will be the guest of honor. Enjoy fellowship and learn more about the denomination's efforts at hurricane relief in Puerto Rico. The Mission Committee will provide the entree and participants will be asked to bring side dishes. Email Mallory@savannahFPC.org for reservations.

MEN'S BOOK STUDY Men of First and friends will meet on Tuesday, February 27 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 115 to discuss David Grann's "The Lost City of Z". Newcomers are welcome!

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY, February 28, will include a dinner of spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, Caesar salad, garlic bread, and dessert and begins at 6:00 p.m. Larry Koch will speak at this worship service of the Lenten series, *Meeting Jesus at the Table*. "Surprised by Grace: A Dinner Interrupted," based on Luke 7:36-50. The service will be held at 6:45 p.m. in the sanctuary. \$8/adults, \$4/children under 12.

FIRST DINNER GROUP A dinner and musical, "Jersey Boys" at the Savannah Theater will be on Thursday, March 14. Dinner will be at the English pub, Six Pence, followed by the musical at 7:30 p.m. You may choose to attend both or either one. The shuttle bus will be available from the church. Please reserve your spot by noon, March 4. Contact larrystuber@bellsouth.net or 912-663-1638. The cost is \$40 per person for the show. Please send payments to Mallory at the church payable to First Presbyterian Church.

ANNE & EMMETT is an imagined conversation between Emmett Till and Anne Frank about race and religion that will be performed on Wednesday, March 6 at 6:30 p.m. in Stewart Hall. The one-act play was written by Janet Langhart Cohen. A buffet dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. No charge for the play; dinner will be \$8/adult; \$4/child under 12.

CELEBRATING THE GIFTS OF WOMEN on Sunday, March 10 at 11:00 a.m. will celebrate the women of First. The life of the congregation is enriched by the generosity, creativity, and hard work of these women. Rev. Deannie Strength, Stated Clerk of Savannah Presbytery and an active participant at First, will preach with a brunch to follow the service. Please contact maggie.elliott.mcmanus@gmail.com if you would like to participate.

THE SESSION - Class of 2024: G. Robert Bennett, Carol J. Booker, Michael P. Brooks, Allison D. Johnson, Paul M. Pressly, Ellen M. Tate; **Class of 2025:** Natalie F. Chase, Myra P. Hill, Elizabeth H. Longley, Eric J. McManus, Colin A. McRae, William M. Schriefer; **Class of 2026:** Judith G. Crawford, John H. Hinman III, Brett J. Lundy, Emily C. Salzer, Marti Stein, Daniel R. Walters; **Clerk of Session:** Paul M. Pressly. **Elder Emerita:** Rose M. Donnelly.

CHURCH STAFF - Stephen C. Williams, *Minister*; Allison B. Shearouse, *Director of Christian Education*; Jeffrey L. Lewis, *Director of Music and Organist*; C. Tanner King, *Associate Director of Music*; Mallory T. Abshire, *Office Administrator*; Barbara G. Roush, *Financial Secretary*; Dorothy S. Bunker, *Preschool Director*; Brent J. Bissell, *Communications Coordinator*; Hope J. Boyd, *Sexton*.

MISSIONARIES - Farsijana and Bernard Adeney, Yogyakarta, Indonesia; Nancy and Shelvis Smith-Mather, Yei, South Sudan; Ellen D. Smith, Warsaw, Poland.

CHIMING OF THE HOUR marks the beginning of the Lord's Day service. The Prelude is a time for quiet preparation and private prayer as the congregation prepares to worship God.

GREETER: Charlotte Keenoy... **USHERS:** Arnie Correa, head usher, Sandra Correa, Thomas Hetherington, Linda Wittish, and Rich Wittish... **ACOLYTE:** Ruth McManus... **EXTENDED SESSION TEACHER:** Raven Herrington.

ONLINE GIVING Please consider making a one-time or recurring gift to First using our secure online portal which can be found at www.savannahFPC.org by clicking on the Give Now tab at the top right corner of the home page or by scanning our QR code using your smartphone's QR reader.



FIRST'S MISSION STATEMENT The life of the church is the response of faith and obedience to the call of God in Christ. Gathered: We worship and sing, study and pray. We enjoy fellowship together. Forgiven by God, we learn to forgive other people. Sent forth: We serve as leaven, salt and light, to be agents of God's love in Savannah and the larger world.



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A Servant Church in the City Since 1827

520 Washington Avenue / Savannah, GA 31405 / 912.354.7615

A Member of the Presbytery of Savannah, the Synod of South Atlantic, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

SavannahFPC.org

