

Forest Hill Church: Worship Service

May 21, 2023 ~ 11:00 am

You may also join worship online using this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aicWNrzp4i4>

***Please stand if able**

Centering Words

I'm not idealistic about any kind of human project. I try to always keep that in check. I'm completely idealistic about God's ability to redeem our stuff and our mistakes. If we aren't open about the fact that we've made [mistakes], that can be a barrier to experiencing forgiveness and redemption and grace. [when I have a new member class, I always explain] I'm glad you love it here, but at some point, I will disappoint you or the church will let you down. Please decide on this side of that happening, if after that happens you will still stick around. Because, if you leave, you will miss the way that God's grace comes in and fills the cracks of our brokenness and that is too powerful to miss.

— Nadia Bolz Webber

CHORAL INTROIT

Valerius/Baker

“We Gather Together”

Chancel Choir

Greeting Our God with Joy

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, **one Lord, one faith, one baptism.**
One God, creator of all, **who is above all and through all and in all.**
This is the day that the Lord has made. **We will rejoice and be glad in it.**
Let us worship God.

***HYMN NO. 317**

“In Christ There Is No East or West”

THE LIVING WORD (NRSV)

Ephesians 2:13-22

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

After the readings

Hear what the Holy Spirit is telling God's people.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr.

“The Work of Reconciliation”

HYMN NO. 792

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

Renewing Our Relationship with God

CALL TO CONFESSION

Please take a piece of paper and write something or someone you need to forgive and one thing you need to be forgiven for.

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Creator and Loving God, in baptism you call us to turn away from sin and turn to Jesus Christ, but we stray from his ways and do not live into the call. (silence)

Lord have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

You have invited us to be raised with Christ in new life; but we cherish old ways and are suspicious of new voices and styles. We fail to fully embrace the risen life of righteousness, justice and love. (silence)

Lord have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

We foster division in the church. Intentionally and unintentionally, we say hurtful things to each other, we are guilty of microaggressions, gossip and petty remarks that wound. Some don't feel safe within these walls. We fail to witness to your reconciling love before the world. (silence)

Lord, have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

We fail to live as one people. We cling to our narratives and question the narratives of others. We are divided by age, race, gender, culture, status, education, and how long we have been in the church. (silence)

Lord have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

Some of us have accumulated privileges that we take for granted while others experience degradation and humiliation. You call all of us to serve with compassion all for whom Christ died; but we ignore the suffering of the oppressed and the plight of the poor. We are complicit in historic and contemporary racism; we fall short of being the Beloved Community. (silence)

Lord, have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

God of the future, we cannot move fully into the future until we confess our complicity in the past. Forgive us for anything we did to cause Pastor Veronica to feel disrespected, unloved, unwelcomed or dismissed. (silence)

Lord, have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

Remember the promises you made to us in our baptism, forgive our sinful ways and heal our brokenness. Set us free from all that hinders us, and raise us to new life in Jesus Christ, that we may be your faithful servants, showing forth your healing love within these walls and throughout the world. In Jesus' name we pray.

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news! In baptism you were buried with Christ. In baptism also, you were raised to life with him, through faith in the power of God who raised Christ from the dead. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old life has gone; a new life has begun. I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

HYMN NO. 589

"Alleluia"

THE PEACE

Affirming the Good News in Our Lives

ANTHEM

Pepper Choplin

“Forgive Us”
Chancel Choir

Forgive us, forgive us, Lord. Forgive us, Lord, help us forgive ourselves.

Forgive us, Lord. We come to confess, then you forgive and bless and leave our spirits clean and pure as snow.

Though mistakes are in the past, we hold them in our grasp.

And guilty memories remain, guilty voices stirring all the pain, they're stirring all the pain.

The memories remain. They remain. The memories remain!

Forgive us, forgive us, Lord. Forgive us and help us learn to forgive.

Help us forgive though You forgive our sin, restoring us again, we harbor pain that we cannot release.

But Your grace is not complete until we find our peace,

releasing anger that we hold, forgiving till we let our anger go, let anger go.

O Lord, forgive us. Forgive us, Lord. Forgive us. Lord, help us forgive ourselves, forgive us. Forgive us, Lord. forgive us.

Lord, help us forgive ourselves. Help us learn to forgive, help us forgive.

Opening Our Hearts to God's Word

THE 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.

FRIENDSHIP REGISTER

To participate in our online Friendship Register, please leave a comment in the Live Chat box listing the names of those participating in this morning's Live Worship or email the office.

OFFERING

Giving and Offering is available by texting: 216-400-5300

Or you may give online: <https://fhc.breezechms.com/give/online/>

You may also mail a check to the church office.

OFFERTORY

arr. Harry Burleigh

“Sinner Please Don't Let This Harvest”

Janice Alexander

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you. **And also, with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

As the Spirit leads, go to one of the serving stations. You may place your “forgive, be forgiven” in the basket, renew your baptism by touching the water to your forehead, receive communion and remain at the station until all have received.

COMMUNION MUSIC

Pepper Choplin

“Thy Kingdom Come”

Chancel Choir

The world is full of pain and suffering, hate is alive and well.

Through the chaos, people are asking, “Where is God? Where is God?”

Lord, we see the pow’r of darkness, evil seems so strong.

Bring your law of love and justice to the world, rule the world with peace.

[chorus] Your Kingdom come, Your will be done.

On earth as it is in heaven, let love shine like the sun.

Your Kingdom come, Your will be done.

Come and touch the world with heaven, do not turn away. Come and live among your children.

Lead us, Lord, teach us Lord, to be the light in the darkness, turning night to day.

Let your will be done among us. Work through us, empower us, we pray. **[chorus]**

Almighty King of heaven, come and rule the earth. May your Kingdom conquer evil’s pow’r.

Work among Your people as vessels of Your will until the age of love and peace shall rise, when peace shall rise. **[chorus]**

Shine like the sun. Your will be done, Your Kingdom come, let your Kingdom come, Your Kingdom come!

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of grace, you renew us at your table with the bread of life. May this food strengthen us in love and help us to serve you in each other as we look for the coming of your holy realm. Help us to accept your forgiveness. Help us to forgive one another. May we do what we have to do to be reconciled to our sisters, brothers and siblings. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Going Forth to Live as God’s People

*CLOSING HYMN NO. 526

“Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ”

BLESSING AND CHARGE

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Alleluia!**

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **Amen.**

*BENEDICTION

“Sanctuary”

POSTLUDE

Franz Schubert

“Grätzer Galop”

Mikhail Grazhdanov



What is a Matthew 25 church?

Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

How the vision unites all Presbyterians

By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, we recognize Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.

The invitation, open to any church or mid council, has three goals:

- **Building congregational vitality** by challenging congregations and their members to deepen and energize their faith and grow as joyful leaders and disciples, actively engaged with their community as they share the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed.
- **Dismantling structural racism** by fearlessly applying our faith to advocate and break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
- **Eradicating systemic poverty** by acting on our beliefs and working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.



Prayer Request:

To request prayers for a personal concern, please email Pastor Lentz (pastorlentz@fhcpresb.org) no later than Thursday afternoon of each week for inclusion in next week's congregational prayer.

Prayers are requested this week for:

The family of Cooper Andrews, Kiva Bohanon, Deborah Howard, Jan Kious, Beverly Thomas, Grace Uhle, Doreen Underwood, Anne Way, Susan Way, the family of Beryl Williams, and Sharon Wiggins.

Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:

Robert Kellermeyer, Florence and Ron Klein, Carol Hopkins-Lutz, Emelia McGuire and Henrietta Williams.

Care Groups will assist our pastors with members' needs. Please call the church office to report an illness, hospitalization, family emergency, birth or death. Information will be passed on to the **head of the Deacons, Dean Sieck (deacons@fhcpresb.org).**

Thank you, all office volunteers: Joan Bacon, Lynda Bernays, Cathy Ghiandoni and Nancy Grube.

Thank you, all Stream Team Volunteers! Anyone interested in helping stream Sunday services should contact Kurt Haas at kurt@dangereddy.com.

The deadline for the bulletin and weekly email is Tuesday of each week at 5 pm. The next TOWER deadline is **July 13 (for the August TOWER) at 8:00 am.** Please submit your written requests to office@fhcpresb.org.

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Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr., Pastor
Dr. Amy Wheatley, Dir. of Family, Youth & Children's Ministry
Dr. Qin Ying Tan, Director of Music
Rev. Carol Wedell, Parish Associate