

Forest Hill Church: Outdoor Worship

August 27, 2023 ~ 10:00 am

You may also join worship online using this link:

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

**Please stand if able*

Centering Words

Create some space for the Spirit to move.

Quiet yourself.

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know.

Be.

Greeting Our God with Joy

*CALL TO WORSHIP

In a world of doubt and fear; **we worship a God of hope and love.**

In a world of division and suspicion; **we worship a God of unity and trust.**

In a world of narrowness and scarcity; **we worship a God of imagination and abundance.**

Come now, let us worship the God who calls us to be the people of God! **In faith, hope and love, seeking to follow the way, the truth and the life of Jesus, we come!**

*HYMN NO. 301

“Let us Build a House”

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive. Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions: all are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

3. Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine, and wheat; a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet. Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space; as we share in Christ the feast that frees us: all are welcome; all are welcome; all are welcome in this place.

5. Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word. Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace; let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Renewing Our Relationship with God

PRAYER OF LAMENT

Creator and loving God, you have searched us out and known us and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned: we have put walls between ourselves and you, closing our hearts to your gifts. We have failed to respect and honor the gifts you have given us in creation. We squander the inheritance of generations to come. We have sinned against each other: we have put up walls between ourselves and our neighbors. Giving in to fear, ignorance, and arrogance. We are stained by the sin of racism and fail to respect the gifts of all your people. Forgive us for what we have done to hurt others and the ways we have hurt your earth. Give us your blessing and help. Let us walk in your great love; through the great peacemaker, your Son, Jesus Christ.

TIME OF SILENCE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Change is possible! We are told week after week that we are forgiven; that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting; that God is creating through us a new creation, offering us a new life. Take it! It is yours! Go in peace! **Thanks be to God!**

Affirming the Good News in Our Lives

ANTHEM

Adapted from Londonderry Aire

“He Looked Beyond My Fault”

Cheryl Murray, Soprano

Opening Our Hearts to God’s Word

THE LIVING WORD (From Eugene Peterson’s “The Message”)

Romans 12:1-21

So, here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

I’m speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it’s important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn’t amount to much, would we? So, since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t.

If you preach, just preach God’s Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don’t take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don’t get bossy; if you’re put in charge, don’t manipulate; if you’re called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don’t let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face.

Love from the center of who you are; don’t fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don’t quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality. Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they’re happy; share tears when they’re down. Get along with each other; don’t be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don’t be the great somebody.

Don’t hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you’ve got it in you, get along with everybody. Don’t insist on getting even; that’s not for you to do. “I’ll do the judging,” says God. “I’ll take care of it.”

Our Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he’s thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don’t let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

After the readings

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

Thanks be to God.

HYMN NO. 750

“Goodness is Stronger than Evil”

*Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate;
light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.
Victory is ours; victory is ours through God who loves us.
Victory is ours, victory is ours through God who loves us.*

SERMON

Rev. Dr. John C. Lentz, Jr.

“Walk This Way”

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

Phill McHugh and Greg Nelson

“People Need the Lord”

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Going Forth to Live as God’s People

***CLOSING HYMN NO. 769**

“For Everyone Born”

*For everyone born, a place at the table, for everyone born,
clean water and bread, a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing, for everyone born, a star overhead,
**Refrain: And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy,
compassion and peace: yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice, justice and joy!**
For just and unjust, a place at the table, a chance to repent, reform and restore, protecting the wronged, without
shame or pressure, for just and unjust, God’s vision fulfilled. **[Refrain]**
For gay, bi and straight, a place at the table, a covenant shared, a welcoming space, a rainbow of race, and
gender and color for queer, trans, and ace, the chalice of grace. **[Refrain]**
For everyone born, a place at the table, to live without fear, and simply to be, to work, to speak out, to witness
and worship, for everyone born, the right to be free, **[Refrain]***

***BENEDICTION**

SANCTUARY

*Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving I’ll be a living, sanctuary for you.*

POSTLUDE

Traditional Spiritual

“I Want Jesus to Walk with Me”



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:

Mark Davidson, Ed Dickson, Bob and Dianne Doyle, Deborah Howard, Jaycox Family, Roz and Graham Peters, Pat Seeders, Beverly Thomas, the family of Fran Thomas, Grace Uhle, Doreen Underwood, Debbie Wagner, Anne Way, Susan Way and Warren Young.

Please remember these homebound members in your prayers:

Florence and Ron Klein and Carol Hopkins-Lutz.

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 **September 21 (for the October TOWER) at 8:00 am**. Please submit your written requests to office@fhcpresb.org.