



**First Presbyterian Church
El Campo, Texas
September 15, 2024**

First Presbyterian Church seeks to provide a spiritual home that proclaims God's presence and love to all people by creating a welcoming environment for Christian spiritual growth through worship, fellowship, and education, joyfully celebrating God's love as disciples serving the community and the world.

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

September 15, 2024

11:00 am

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

All Are Welcome to Worship at First Presbyterian Church!

GATHERING AROUND THE WORD

CHIMING OF THE HOUR

PRELUDE *Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone*
arr. Cindy Berry, 2008

WELCOME

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Look at the heavens!

All: They are shouting the glory of God.

One: The days and the nights declare the magnificence
of God's creative works.

**All: Their voice goes through all the earth
and their words reach the ends of the world.**

One: Let our words of praise be acceptable to you.

All: Our Lord, our rock, our redeemer!

*HYMN #265 *Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun (Stanzas 1,3,5)*

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**You have called us, O God,
and we have refused to listen;
you have stretched out your hand
and we have not taken it.**

**We have taken what you have given us
and used those gifts to hurt others and defy you.**

We have refused to be tamed by your wisdom.

**Forgive our inability to recognize you
and live out the reality of your gospel.**

**Give us the insight we need
to understand your place in our lives**

"Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone," a hymn text written by English pastor Thomas Shepherd in 1693, is traditionally sung to the tune MAITLAND, composed in 1855 by George Allen, an American composer and professor of music at Oberlin. The tune, in its early years, was also known as CROSS AND CROWN and WESTERN MELODY. In 1938, Thomas Dorsey altered and adapted MAITLAND for his famous hymn, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand."

**Please stand in body or spirit*

**so that our words and actions reflect
the glory of God in the lives of others.
In the name of the Messiah we pray. Amen.**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON/DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

One: The law of the Lord is perfect,
and it revives the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure
and make wise the simple;
the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear,
and it enlightens the eyes.
Believe in God, friends!
Believe the good news:
in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

All: Thanks be to God!

***GLORIA PATRI**

**Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen. Amen.**

HEARING OF THE WORD OF GOD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Malachi 3:1-5, 4:5

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me,
and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The
messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming,
says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and
who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as
a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of
Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to
the Lord in righteousness.

Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to
the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.

One: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM *Shepherd Me, O God*

Marty Haugen, 1986 arr. Mark Hayes, 2013

Richard Urbis, soloist Sue Zanne Williamson Urbis, piano

SECOND SCRIPTURE

Mark 8:27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will

it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

SERMON Rebuked! Rev. Jim DeMent

Mark 8:33: But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me Satan! for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

*HYMN #327 *From All That Dwells Below the Skies*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

CALL TO GIVE

OFFERTORY *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*
arr. Kenon Renfrow, 1995

*THE DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *From the Confession of 1967*

**God’s sovereign love is a mystery
beyond the reach of the human mind.
Human thought ascribes to God superlatives
of power, wisdom, and goodness.
But God reveals divine love in Jesus Christ
by showing power in the form of a servant,
wisdom in the folly of the cross,
and goodness in receiving sinful people.
The power of God’s love in Christ to transform the world
reveals that the Redeemer is the Lord and Creator
who made all things to serve the purpose of God’s love.**

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" is always sung to the melody that was passed down with it -- ASSAM, named after a region in northeastern India. The hymn text was written by Simon Kara Marak (1877--1975), a pastor, schoolteacher, and missionary in Jorhat, Assam, India. All of the stories concerning the origin of this hymn agree that it was written in northeastern India by someone facing persecution for his or her faith who wanted to affirm loyalty to Christ before their execution by an angry tribal chief.

PRAYER CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

- One: God of mercy, we are weary of disaster. We are tense with concern. We feel helpless as we read the internet and watch the evening news. Hear us, O God, as we share ourselves, our prayers, our hopes with you.
- All: Bless us, O God, with a reverent sense of your presence as we lift these petitions to you today.**
- One: We pray for students newly returned to school. We pray for their curiosity, imagination, and intellect to bloom.
- All: We pray that they persevere through every new challenge, that they take advantage of their education, that they work hard to develop their emerging skills.**
- One: We pray also for parents and teachers navigating the transition out of summer and into this new academic year.
- All: Bless these, we pray, with your wisdom and grace.**
- One: We pray for our nation during this volatile election season. May our leaders be led by your wisdom; may they clearly discern your will and seek to follow it.
- All: May we not wage war with words and demeaning rhetoric, entrenching us into further divisiveness, but find ways to speak our truth in love, remembering that all are a part of the Beloved Community.**
- One: We pray for the suffering across our globe.
- All: We pray for peace in the Middle East and for the Ukrainian people to enjoy the freedom and dignity they deserve.**
- One: We pray for all those who are forced to endure violence, destruction, and abuse.
- All: Remind us of our interdependence, that the suffering of some, is the suffering of us all.**
- One: Mighty and merciful God, we claim your promise of restoration for all who suffer. We glorify you for your constant presence, help, and hope.

The hymn tune called SICILIAN MARINERS is traditionally used for the Roman Catholic hymn "*O Sanctissima.*" According to tradition, Sicilian seamen ended each day on their ships by singing this hymn in unison. The tune probably traveled from Italy to Germany to England, where it was first published in 1792. The tune was associated with the German Christmas carol "*O du Frohliche, O du Selige*" and the British hymn "*Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing*" (see #546 in *GtG*).

All: May your world and all who live in it be renewed through the power of the risen Christ and those committed to being Christ's hands and feet in a hurting world.

One: United as a family of faith and as the Body of Christ, we lift all these prayers to you, Loving God. Hear them, together with the prayer we now pray using the words taught us by your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

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.

*HYMN #611 *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*

*CHARGE

*BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

**God be with you till we meet again;
by His counsels guide, uphold you,
with His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.**

**Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet.
Till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.**

POSTLUDE

Sicilian Mariner's Hymn

arr. Benton Price, 1967

One License A-736067; CCLI #11514120 & 2046772

WORSHIP LEADERS

Rev. James DeMent, Interim Pastor

Dr. Karl Paoletti, Choir Director

Ted Lashley, Music Director

Jana and Ava Fernandez, Ushers

SANCTUARY FLOWERS: Flowers given by Suzanne and Tom Hauser to the Glory of God, and in thanks and honor of our children, Colby, Holly and Kevin, their spouses, and our granddaughter, Maddie.

THIS WEEK AT FPC:

Wednesday, Sept. 11

6:00 pm – POW for all ages!

Sunday, Sept. 15

11:00 am – Worship, followed by Fellowship Dinner
Blessing Cup donation Sunday

Monday, Sept. 16

6:15 pm – Session Meeting

Prayer List

Steve Porter; Esther Bender

POW!

On Wednesday, September 25th, the FPC+EC youth will meet on Wednesday night for dinner and study lessons beginning at 6:00 pm. This year the youth will dine together and then separate for their classes from 6:30 – 7:30 pm.

