

FIRST CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

*"To become a community of committed Christians
who Love God, Share Christ, and Serve the World"*

10:30 AM

Aug. 24, 2025

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

PRELUDE *"Thy Word"* Grant, Smith, arr. Mark Hayes

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, Holy One. You create, You redeem. You empower.

All: You precede us to this place to meet us in worship.

One: Come, Living One. You reconcile. You transform.
You make new.

**All: You move among us and within us to shape our living
through our worship.**

One: Come, Loving One. You love. You forgive. You heal.

**All: You enter into us through our confession and our
consecration. Use our worship to repair our broken
spirits and to make us vessels fit for holy living and
loving service.**

***HYMN** *"Holy Spirit, come with power"* 26

*PRAYER (together):

Holy and Living One, open our hearts to the mystery of
your love. Awaken us to your presence, knit to the ordinary.
Reveal to us what is possible but not present. Heal us, that we
might be healers. Reconcile us to you and to ourselves that
our living might be reconciling. Stop us often, we pray, with
news that is good, with hope that holds, with truth that
transforms with a Word tailored to this trail we're on. May the
wonder of your grace guide our steps like the sun by day and
the north star by night, as we travel into the gift of another
day. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME

ANTHEM *"Order My Steps"* Burleigh & Schrader

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Welcome Home, Joel! (insert)
Joys and Concerns
Prayer Hymn *"Spirit of the living God"* 349
Responsive Prayer (back of bulletin)

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalms 89:1-2 (Page 514)

John 15:1-12 (Page 939)

**Cong. Response: I am the Vine: you are the branches.
Whoever believes in me and I in them will bear much fruit.**

MESSAGE "Gathered for Growth"

HYMN OF RESPONSE *"Thou true Vine, that heals"* 373

GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

Invitation

Offertory *"Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"*

American Folk Hymn arr. Cindy Berry

*Offering Response *"Praise God from whom"* 118

*Prayer (together)

**Great God, you are the giver of life and all that is good. Accept
our humble gifts and multiply them. Accept our humble hearts
and mold them. Accept our humble lives and transform them
that we might live in the power of the resurrection, willing to
risk all for your kingdom. In the name of Jesus, we offer these
gifts. Amen.**

***HYMN** *"Heart with loving heart united"* 420

*BLESSING

***SENDING SONG:** *"May the Lord, mighty God"* (tune of Edelweis) 435
May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever,
Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in ev'ry endeavor.
Lift your eyes and see God's face full of grace forever.
May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever.

POSTLUDE *"I've Got Peace Like a River"*
Traditional American Spiritual arr. Mark Hayes

We kindly request that you be seated for the Postlude or leave quietly
so that others may appreciate the conclusion of the service. Thank you.

*Please stand in body or spirit.

**York First Church of the Brethren
Welcome Back, Pastor Joel!
Sunday, August 24, 2025**

Kim: Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God for the work God gives this congregation, and for the leadership Pastor Joel provides. We ask God's blessing on us and on Pastor Joel as he returns to us from his sabbatical time. We give thanks to God for using this intentional time apart for growth, rest and renewal both for Pastor Joel and for our congregation. We give thanks to God for bringing Pastor Joel back into our church community safely and we look forward to the new things that God is doing in our midst as we seek together to glorify God with our gifts to serve all people. Scripture encourages us to rejoice when our loved ones return - **Romans 15:7** says “⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” And **Philippians 2:29** tells us to “²⁹ Welcome him, then, in the Lord with all joy,” So, all together we say...

Congregation: Welcome home, Pastor Joel! We rejoice that God has brought you back into our presence refreshed and we welcome you with open hearts and minds and lots of handshakes and hugs!

Joel: It is good to be back among God's people at York First Church of the Brethren! During this sabbatical time, I journeyed to new places, engaged in education and growth opportunities, spent time alone in silence and self-examination, enjoyed life-giving adventures with my family, friends and colleagues, and sought God's guidance in my ongoing ministry. I have truly experienced rest and renewal. I am grateful to the congregation for this sabbatical time.

Congregation: We thank God for this time apart and for time of returning!

Joel: I thank God for our shared ministry over the past 7 ½ years. I am committed to the mission and ministries of York First COB, to God's people in this community, and to the future that God has planned for us together.

Laying on of Hands by the Congregation:
Eternal God, you fill us with every good thing and your steadfast love endures forever. We thank you for Pastor Joel, his family and for our life together at York First. As we return from Sabbatical time, enfold us all back into the life and ministry of this congregation in this community; fill us with your Spirit; through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

**MINISTERS - ALL MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION
PASTORAL & OFFICE STAFF**

Pastor.....Joel Gibbel, pastor@yorkfirst.org
Interim Ministries Coordinator.....Kim Witkovsky
witkovskyks@gmail.com
Church Admin. Asst.....Karen Bowman, secretary@yorkfirst.org

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Music Director.....Rebecca Wolf
Accompanist.....Becca Miller
Worship Leader.....Kim Witkovsky
Children's Time.....Rebecca Wolf, Jessica Jasitt
Audio/Visual.....Dave Witkovsky, Jay Crist
Ushers.....**Leader – Sheldon Markel**
.....Jeanette Brickner, Jess Dietrich, Bob Drawbaugh, Jeffrey Miller
Coffee/Hospitality.....Connie Wingard
Greeters Today.....Barry & Tammy Stehr
Greeters Next Week.....John & Mary Esther Anderson
Nursery Attendant.....Alicia & Sam Weyant

DEACONS are available and their responsibilities include assisting the pastor with the care of the congregation. If you have a need, please contact your deacon, the church office or Kim Witkovsky, Interim Ministries Coordinator.

Please see one of our ushers at the entrance to the sanctuary prior to worship if you need LARGE PRINT bulletins or hymnals. Hearing Assistance Devices are available from the A/V booth in the back of the sanctuary.

Activity bags for children to use during worship are available as you enter the sanctuary. Nursery care is available and the “worship nursery” in the rear of the sanctuary is open for use anytime.

The church issues a weekly e-newsletter each Friday.
To subscribe, please email secretary@yorkfirst.org
To receive the prayer chain emails, please contact the church office.

Worship attendance last Sunday: 114
Music used by permission – CCLI # 475517
One License # A-742415

The altar flowers are placed in celebration of Pastor's Joel's return to our church after his sabbatical leave and in appreciation of Kim Witkovsky for her work as Interim Ministries Coordinator this summer.

This Week at a Glance:

Today Following Worship: Lemonade on the Lawn
Mon 8/25 10:30 am Gifts Discernment Team – Multi-Purpose Rm
1:00 pm Constitution Review Committee
– Multi-Purpose Rm
6:15 pm Education Team – Anna Mow Rm
Wed 8/27 11:30 am Lunch Bunch
– 2 Brothers Rest. (East York)
Thurs 8/28 1:00 pm Sabbatical Planning Team
– Multi-Purpose Rm
6:30 pm Chancel Choir Practice – Sanctuary
Sat 8/30 10:00 am Food Pantry Open 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
Sun 8/31 9:00 am Sunday School
10:30 am Worship Service – Sanct.

You may use this QR code
to access our church's online giving



YORK FIRST CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
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WIFI: First COB Password: SimplePeace2gether