The First Presbyterian Church
in the City of New York

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Service for the Lord's Day | September 27, 2026 | 11:00 a.m.

Jacopo Tintoretto, *Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet*, 1548

Welcome To First Church

The Session and members of First Church extend a sincere welcome to all persons regardless of race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services, and service as an officer of the church.

We are an open and inclusive community, gathered by God's grace and shaped by many cultures, identities, and experiences.

Together, we are a tapestry of God's children, seeking to respond to God's call in our lives and to witness to God's love, grace, and justice in the world.

Wherever you are in your journey of faith, we pray today's service will be a blessing to you. If this is your first time here, a member of the pastoral staff would be glad to greet you and answer any questions about the life and ministries of this church.

We are glad you are here. May you experience God's welcome in this place today.

Greg Stovell
Senior Pastor

Join us after worship for our Coffee & Fellowship in the Great Hall to meet one another, say hello to new faces, and enjoy refreshments.

Gender-neutral restrooms are located at the back of the Sanctuary, as well as through the wooden doors at the front on the south side. Additional restrooms are located in the lobby on the north side.

Get Involved

Stay Connected

Scan to receive our weekly newsletter, *First Matters*.

Interested in Membership?

Learn more about becoming part of our community.

Give

Support the life and ministries of the church.

Mission Review Survey

Scan to complete the Congregational Survey.

If you are in need of care, such as prayer, a call from a pastor, or a ride to the church, please contact our church office at (212) 675-6150. Our staff will connect you with one of our pastors or a deacon from our caring ministry.

Gathering

Prelude — "Largo appassionato from Sonata Opus 2, no. 2" — BEETHOVEN

Pealing of the Carillon

Welcome

Introit

Please stand in body or spirit.

Prepare the way, O Zion, your Christ is drawing near!
Let every hill and valley a level way appear.
Greet One who comes in glory, foretold in sacred story.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name.

Fling wide your gates, O Zion; your Savior's rule embrace, and tidings of salvation proclaim in every place.
All lands will bow rejoicing, their adoration voicing.
O blest is Christ who came in God's most holy name. —Frans Mikael Franzen

Hymn 35 — "Praise Ye The Lord, the Almighty" — LOBE DEN HERREN

Call to Confession

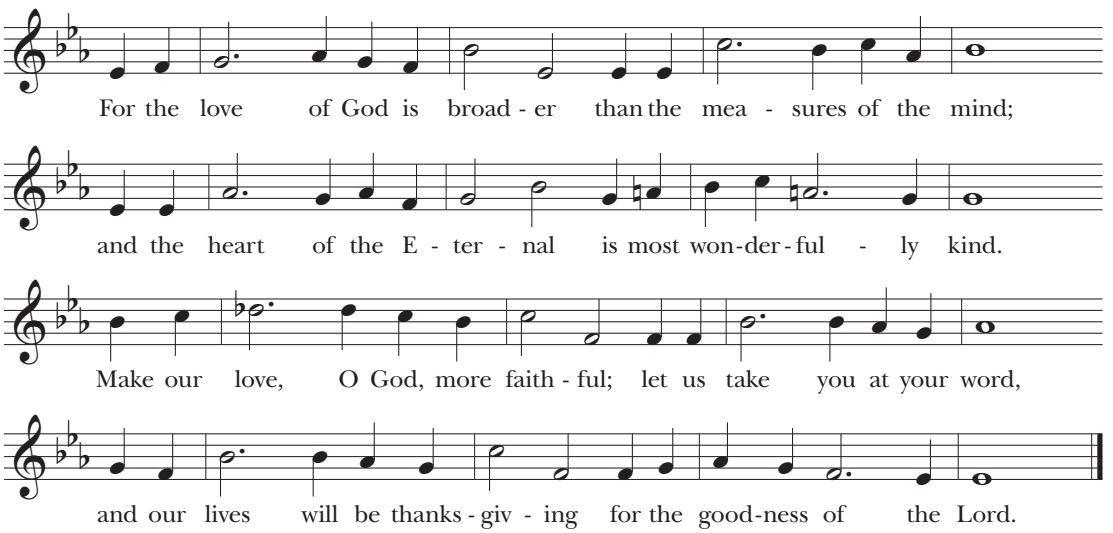
Prayer of Confession

Holy and gracious God, at times we feel so frail and fragile,
getting blown about by the latest crisis, by bad news,
by our own short tempers and failings.
You call us to hold fast to what is good,
but so often we flounder,
unable to find that solid thing that will center us again.
Help us, we pray, help us to see you as our center,
and to cling to the good that you create in the world.
Help us to set aside all our jealousies and prejudices,
all of our betrayals and lies, all that adds to the world's hurt.
Help us to grow even more into Christ's likeness,
that we will bear his love and truth to the world.
Hear now the prayers of our hearts....

Silent Confession

Assurance of Pardon

Response — CORVEDALE



Lighting of the Peace Candle and Sharing Signs of Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Children's Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Children are welcome to come forward for the prayers. Afterward, children ages 3–5th grade are invited to Church School; families may pick them up at the end of the service.

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.

Anthem — MRS. H.H.A. BEACH

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. —Philippians 2:5–11

Hearing the Word

Lesson — Philippians 2:1–13

pew Bible, New Testament page 196/large print, New Testament page 240

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sermon — "Can't Start a Fire Without a Spark" — Rev. Dr. Mark D. Hostetter

Responding to the Word

Hymn 738 — "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee" — MARYTON

Please stand in body or spirit.

Affirmation of Faith — from Brief Statement of Faith, PC(USA), 1983

In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

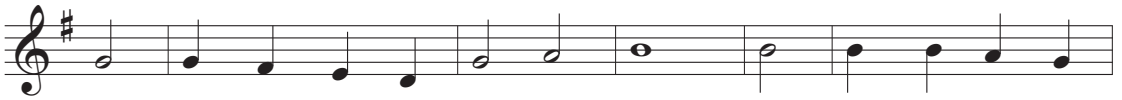
Offering Invitation

Offertory — PALESTRINA

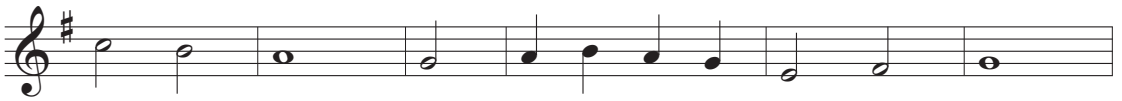
Adoramus te, Christe, et benedicimus tibi,
Quia per sanctam crucem tuam redemisti mundum.
Qui passus es pro nobis, domine, miserere nobis.

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, who by Thy Holy Cross hast redeemed the world.
Thou, who hast suffered death for us, O Lord, have mercy on us. — Unknown

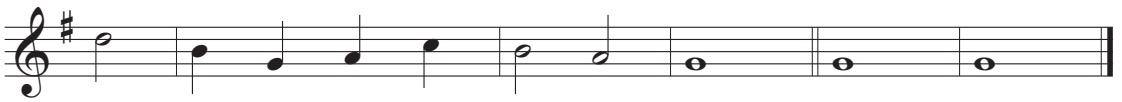
Doxology — Old Hundredth



Traditional Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise Him, all crea-tures
Inclusive Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise Christ, all peo - ple



here be - low; praise Him a - bove, ye heaven - ly host;
here be - low; praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more;



praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. A - men.

Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

Sending

Hymn 761 "Called As Partners in Christ's Service" — BEECHER
Please stand in body or spirit.

Blessing

Postlude "Praeludium in D BuxWV 139" — DIETRICH BUXTEHUDE

The congregation is invited to continue worshiping through the postlude, which is offered as a thanksgiving to God.

The cross is dedicated
"In memory of all those who died from AIDS in our church and community."

Leading This Morning
Rev. Dr. Mark D. Hostetter, *Associate Pastor*
Rev. Dr. Barbara Davis, *Executive Minister*
Jenny Bennett, *Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

The First Church Choir
Colin Fowler, *Visiting Musician*

This Week at First Church

Today, September 27	9:30 a.m.	Child Care
	9:30 a.m.	Coffee & Theology (hybrid)
	10:00 a.m.	Family & Music Ministries Parent Breakfast
	11:00 a.m.	Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Bibles & Bagels
	11:15 a.m.	Church School
	12:00 p.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	12:20 p.m.	Student Choristers
	12:20 p.m.	Voices Project Film Screening
	2:00 p.m.	Art Show Opening: *Tell Me A Story*
Monday, September 28	5:30 p.m.	Qigong (virtual)
	7:00 p.m.	Current Events (virtual)
Tuesday, September 29	12:30 p.m.	The Story & Faith Behind *VeggieTales*
	5:30 p.m.	Village Campus Ministry
Thursday, October 1	5:00 p.m.	Elder Care Committee (virtual)
	6:00 p.m.	Gospel According to The Beatles
	6:30 p.m.	LGBTQ Welcome Dinner
Saturday, October 3	10:00 a.m.	City of Forest Day
	10:00 a.m.	Soup Kitchen
	12:00 p.m.	RIF Asylum Support
Sunday, October 4	9:30 a.m.	Child Care
	10:00 a.m.	Worship Circle with Babies & Toddlers
	11:00 a.m.	Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Church School
	12:00 p.m.	Coffee & Fellowship
	12:00 p.m.	Open Gallery: *Tell Me A Story*
	12:20 p.m.	Student Choristers
	12:30 p.m.	Mission Review Listening Session
	12:30 p.m.	Presbyterian Women
	2:00 p.m.	Make it Meaningful

Stay connected with all that's happening at First Church. Scan to receive our weekly newsletter, *First Matters*.

Announcements

Add Your Voice to the Mission Review

Help shape the future of First Church as we prepare to call an Associate Pastor. Take the Mission Review Survey using the QR code on the inside page of your bulletin. You may also join an upcoming Listening Session:

- Sunday, October 4, 12:30–1:30 p.m., in person
- Saturday, October 10, 4:00–5:00 p.m., via Zoom

The Story & Faith Behind *VeggieTales* | Tuesday, September 29 | 12:30 p.m.

Join us for a special lunchtime conversation with Leslie Ferrell, Senior Vice President of Big Idea Content Group at NBCUniversal, who has helped shape *VeggieTales* for more than 25 years. Leslie will share about her faith journey, the story behind *VeggieTales,* and the role of Christian storytelling in the faith formation of children and families.

LGBTQ Annual Welcome Dinner | Thursday, October 1 | 6:30 p.m.

Join us for our annual Welcome Dinner, a time to gather, share a meal, and connect with friends old and new. RSVP to lgbtq.fpcnyc@gmail.com.

City of Forest Day | Saturday, October 3 | 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Join us in caring for neighborhood street trees as part of this citywide effort. Families and little ones are invited to Tree Story Time from 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the lobby.

Inquirers Class | Monday, October 5 | 6:30 p.m. | Online

We are offering an online Inquirers Class via Zoom on Monday, October 5 at 6:30 p.m. This gathering is open to anyone who is unable to attend a Saturday class, including those who live outside New York City or overseas and would like to become part of our community of faith. To register, contact Aileen at acaba@fpcnyc.org.

What Happens When the People Decide? | Tuesday, October 6 | 6:00 p.m.

Join Mission and Social Justice for a screening of *Goodbye Politicians, Hello Democracy*, a documentary exploring citizens' assemblies and how everyday people can help shape public policy. A discussion will follow, and a light dinner will be provided.

The Bible, Theology, and *The New Yorker*

This fall, our adult education programs will explore the Bible, theology, and *The New Yorker* through two recent articles examining American theology and the life and influence of the Apostle Paul.

- Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Coffee & Theology gathers for hybrid conversation and theological reflection. No class October 4 or 11; returns October 18.
- Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. Bible Study meets in a hybrid format for a deeper exploration of the articles alongside scripture. No class September 30; returns October 7.

For Zoom links, see First Matters or contact the front desk at frontdesk@fpcnyc.org.

The Gospel According to the Beatles | Thursdays through October 22 | 6:00 p.m.

Join Rev. Dr. Greg Stovell for a six-week journey through the music of The Beatles and the enduring themes of faith, love, hope, loneliness, memory, and resurrection.

Youth & Family Ministries

This year, our Youth & Family Ministries programs offer children and young people opportunities to grow in faith, build friendships, ask big questions, and experience God's love through worship, learning, music, and fellowship.

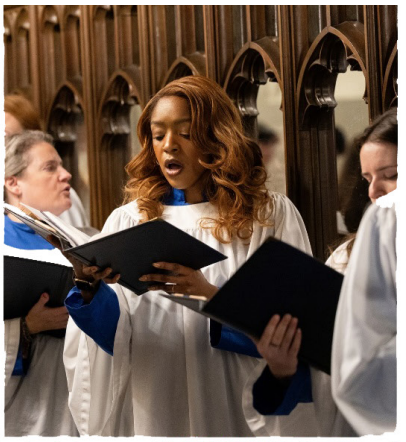
- Worship Circle with Babies and Toddlers (ages 0–3 and their caregivers), 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. first and third Sundays of each month, September through July
- Church School (ages 3–grade 5), Sundays, 11:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- Student Choristers (grades 1–6), Sundays, 12:20 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.
- Club 345 (grades 3–5), last Sunday of the month, 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.
- Youth Leadership Council (grades 6–12), seasonal weeknight dinners throughout the year
- Bibles & Bagels (middle and high school), twice a month during worship

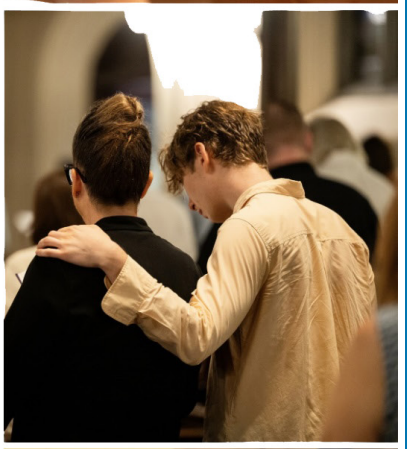
Music at First Church: 2026–27 Season

At the intersection of the Village and the City, our musicians invite you to encounter the beauty of holiness, to live in wonder, and resonate in rhythm. Join us for another inspiring season of music at First Church. The 2026–27 season brings back cherished traditions while introducing exciting new musical offerings throughout the year.

FPCNS Applications for 2027–28 Are Now Open!

Applications for FPCNS's 2027–28 school year are now available online for children who will be age 2 or older by August 31, 2027. Early Decision Notification is available to eligible sibling, alumni, and First Church member families. For more information, contact Ashleigh Roscishewska at aroscishewska@fpcnyc.org or (646) 230-3923.





HOMECOMING 2026

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