



FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
COVINGTON, GA



**seeking:**  
*How do we  
begin again?*

**SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**March 5, 2023**

# ❖ *Gathering As God's Beloved People*

## **Gathering Music**

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*

John Hughes

*I Will Arise and Go to Jesus*

Folk Melody

*Blessed Assurance*

Phoebe Knapp

## **Prelude**

*Change My Heart, O God*

Eddie Espinosa

## **Chiming of the Hour**

## **Welcome and Announcements**

### ✦ **Call to Worship**

What is it like to begin again?

**It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.**

**It is like babies learning to walk, one clumsy step at a time.**

**It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.**

**It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.**

May we find God in our seeking.

**May we learn as we go.**

May we be brave enough to begin again.

**Let us worship the God of new beginnings.**

### ✦ **Hymn of Praise 401**

*Here in This Place*

GATHER US IN

### ✦ **Call to Confession**

One of the things I love about the prayer of confession is it offers us a new beginning. In the prayer of confession, we lay our cards on the table. We speak honestly with God about who we are and who we long to be. And in response, God wraps us in grace and lets us begin again.

So together, with God's grace, let us wipe the slate clean. Together, with God's grace, let us pray the prayer of confession:

### ✦ **Community Confession**

God of new life, you call us into unknown places,  
**and we bury our heads in the sand.**

✦ *Please stand in body or spirit*

You promise all the stars in the sky,  
**and we doubt it can be true.**

You speak of new life in the Spirit,  
**and we tell ourselves we've missed our chance.**

Over and over and over again, you invite us closer to you.

**Show us the way. Forgive our mistakes.**

**Give us the courage to begin again with you. Amen.**

## ✠ **Response 288**

*Spirit of the Living God*

LIVING GOD

***Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.***

***Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.***

***Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.***

***Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.***

## ✠ **Assurance of God's Love and Forgiveness**

Family of faith, hear and believe this good news:

There is a grace to God's love that is bigger than we can imagine.

No matter what we did or didn't do yesterday, we have been forgiven.

Today, the slate is wiped clean. Today, we are made new.

Join me in saying:

**We belong to God. We are held in God's love. We are made new.**

Church, we are forgiven!

**We are free to try again.**

## ✠ **Passing of the Peace**



*Proclaiming the Word*

## **Wondering with God's Children**

### **Anthem**

*Unbounded Grace*

Text by John E. Walvoord

Music by Don Wyrzten

## **Prayer for God's Wisdom and Understanding**

### **Scripture Reading**

John 3:1-17

Pew Bible New Testament page 94

Responding to the Word

Hymn of Response

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

BEGINNINGS

*Unison*

1 This is a day of new be - gin-nings, time to re - mem - ber  
 2 For by the life and death of Je - sus, love's might-y Spir - it,  
 3 Then let us, with the Spir - it's dar - ing, step from the past and  
 4 Christ is a - live, and goes be - fore us to show and share what  
 \*4 In faith we'll gath - er round the ta - ble to taste and share what

and move on, time to be - lieve what love is bring - ing,  
 now as then, can make for us a world of dif - ference,  
 leave be - hind our dis - ap - point - ment, guilt, and griev - ing,  
 love can do. This is a day of new be - gin-nings;  
 love can do. This is a day of new be - gin-nings;

lay - ing to rest the pain that's gone.  
 as faith and hope are born a - gain.  
 seek - ing new paths, and sure to find.  
 our God is mak - ing all things new.  
 our God is mak - ing all things new.

\*Alternate text for Holy Communion

## ✠ Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in a God who meets us in the shadows,  
who welcomes our questions,  
who invites us to begin again.**

**We believe that Jesus showed us a new way,  
a deeper faith,  
a more compassionate existence.**

**We believe that all of our beginnings should return us to this foundation,  
and that no matter how many times we lose our way,  
God always welcomes us home. Amen.**

## 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.**

## Offering Our Gifts

### Offertory

*The Gospel of Grace*  
*Amazing Grace and I'm New Born Again*

Traditional Spirituals  
Arr. by Mark Hayes

### ✠ Response 606

*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

OLD HUNREDTH

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

## Prayer of Gratitude

*All are invited to join in our community Prayer of Gratitude by lifting up a one-word  
prayer of thanksgiving.*



*Being the Church in the World*

### ✠ Sending Hymn 175

*Seek Ye First*

LAFFERTY

## ✦ Charge and Benediction

**As you leave this place, may God bless you with seeking. Seek out the hungry. Seek the weary. Seek the good in every person you pass. Seek out the hopeful. Seek the faithful. Seek God in each of us. As you seek and as you wonder, may you find what you are looking for. In the name of our loving God, who is always seeking us, go now in peace. Amen.**

## Postlude

*Prelude and Fugue in F*

Dietrich Buxtehude



## *Worship Practices*

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### **Friendship Registers**

Friendship Registers are back! In each pew there is a pad with a black cover that we invite everyone to fill out. If the Friendship Register is nearest to you, please fill it out and pass it down the pew so it can reach everyone. When you pass it on, we invite you to introduce yourself to your pew friends! We encourage visitors and newcomers to connect with us by filling out the Friendship Register so we can be sure to send you a message to thank you for joining us.

### **Children in Worship**

Children are always welcome to wiggle and giggle in the pews at FPC! There are Worship Bags for children on the rack outside the Sanctuary. During worship children are invited to join us at the front of the Sanctuary for a time of Wondering with God's Children. Afterwards, children planning to go to the nursery will be escorted downstairs by Pastor Neeley or Pastor Erin. They will sign in your children in the nursery so you can sign them out when you pick them up! This is to help you stay in worship and us get them to the nursery safely. If you need help finding the nursery, you are invited to ask an usher to point the way.

### **Serving Today**

Tech Team | Dan Walden, Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley

Usher Chair | Stan Hall    Acolyte | Palmer Wilson



## *Worship Art Notes*

This week's worship guide cover is the *Seeking* logo, designed by Rev. Lauren Wight Pittman.

**logo imagery key** *what do you see?*



**eye-** The eye holds all of the logo's imagery and summarizes the theme of seeking, while referencing various narratives from the scriptural texts: Adam & Eve's eyes are opened, Jesus rubs mud on the blind man's eyes, Jesus asks Mary, "Who are you looking for?" The circles that create the pupil and iris can also represent: an aerial view of the well, the water basin at the footwashing, or the stone and tombs of Lazarus and Jesus.



**veil-** This curved line and the shape it creates repeats throughout the *Seeking* branding. The veil references the confusion and revelations that occur in a journey of seeking.



**mud / garden soil-** The drop of mud represents the dirt and garden imagery that is found throughout the scriptural texts: the Garden of Eden, the mud that is rubbed in the blind man's eyes, the garden of Gethsemane. It also references when Jesus is mistaken as a gardener at the empty tomb.



**water-** The drop of water references the many times water is mentioned in the texts. Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born of water and spirit. Moses strikes a rock to find water. At the well, Jesus asks a Samaritan woman for a drink and offers her living water. Jesus meets the blind man at the pool of Siloam. Jesus washes the disciples' feet. The water drop can also reference a tear; Jesus weeps at the mouth of his friend Lazarus' tomb, and Mary weeps at the mouth of Jesus' tomb.



**vessel-** The shape of the vessel can be seen as a cup or a jar poured out. The vessel represents: the jar the woman leaves behind at the well after meeting Jesus, the jar of sour wine offered to Jesus while on the cross, and the communion cup present at our remembrance of Christ's sacrifice.



**star / night-** The star references a couple of the narratives that take place under the veil of night. Nicodemus finds and questions Jesus at night, and Mary comes to the tomb while it is still dark. In reference to the logo's overall eye composition, the star represents the glistening of recognition in one's eye.



**leaf-** The leaf represents the foliage present throughout the texts, and further supports the repetition of garden imagery. Adam & Eve create fig leaf coverings in the shadow of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and upon Jesus' humble entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the crowds wave palm branches.

## ❖ Lenten Theme

“This Lent, we invite you to engage in the spiritual practice of seeking. The eye may seem at first glance to be somewhat obvious, but at closer inspection, it can expand, confuse, and surprise the viewer.”

“We encourage you to stay curious, open, and nimble. We hope you will soften your assumptions and expand your perspectives. We pray that these questions will create a safe space to explore—to be drawn more deeply into the fullness of life, into the heart of God.”

—A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



**1169 Clark Street SW, Covington, GA 30014 | [fpccov.org](http://fpccov.org) | 770.786.7321**

### Our Mission Statement

First Presbyterian Church Covington is a Christian community existing to glorify God by welcoming all of God’s children. We celebrate through serving, teaching, praying, eating, crying, singing, and dancing with the Holy Spirit. As works in progress, we seek to respond to God’s presence in our church, lives, and community.

### Want to Get Involved?

Reach out to become a more involved member of the church! We always have something happening that we would love for you to be a part of. You could be an integrated member of our church by volunteering with witness team, becoming an usher, joining a book club, singing in the choir or many other activities. Contact the office and we’ll point you in the right direction!  
Email: [catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org) or call: 770-786-7321

### Officers

<b>Reaching Out</b>	
Curtis Watson	<i>Witness (2024)</i>
<b>Engaging</b>	
Charles Ardis	<i>Christian Ed (2025)</i>
Pat Harper	<i>Worship (2024)</i>
Nichole Howell	<i>Worship (2025)</i>
Mary Catherine Whisnant	<i>Christian Ed (2024)</i>
<b>Belonging</b>	
Doug Bolton	<i>Welcome (2025)</i>
Louly Hay Kapp	<i>Marketing (2023)</i>
Bob Tabb	<i>Finance (2023)</i>
<b>Connecting (Deacons)</b>	
Tom Crews	<i>Pastoral Care (2025)</i>
Dana Hall	<i>Faith &amp; Fellowship (2025)</i>
Eleanor Scarborough	<i>Pastoral Care (2023)</i>
Darcel Tabb	<i>Faith &amp; Fellowship (2024)</i>
<b>More</b>	
Billy Fortson	<i>Personnel (2024)</i>
Stan Hall	<i>Facilities (2023)</i>
John McCarthy	<i>Clerk of Session</i>
Ed Perkerson	<i>Strategic Planning (2023)</i>

### First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	<i>Senior Pastor</i>	
Erin Morgan	<i>Associate Pastor</i>	
Alicia Taylor	<i>Dir. of Music &amp; Worship Arts</i>	<i>Nursery Staff</i>
Alice Walker	<i>CAGO, AAGO Organist/ Ambassador Choir</i>	Hattie Bellinger
Catherine Laseter	<i>Dir. of Communications &amp; Operations</i>	Laina Lalane
Peni Kehoe	<i>Finance Administrator</i>	Amanda Sotolongo
		Kyla White



## In Our Thoughts and Prayers

### Illness

- ✦ Brenda Buckelew, mother of Jennifer Buckelew
- ✦ Benson Dial, friend of Judy and Dennis Hooten - cancer
- ✦ Patsy Freeman, sister of Judy Davis - dementia
- ✦ Dionne Young, friend of Alice Walker - recovering from concussion
- ✦ E.W. Sims, great-uncle of Robert Lane
- ✦ Beverly Beasley, friend of Jean Elder - caring for husband who has leukemia
- ✦ Patrick Carmichael
- ✦ Ellen Clary, ex-wife of Bill Clary - ovarian cancer
- ✦ Larry Cox, brother-in-law of Randy Layton - cancer
- ✦ Bob Darby, friend of Jeff MacKenzie - leg amputated, kidney problems

- ✦ Linea Lott, niece of Tricia Hinton - leukemia treatment
- ✦ Karen Lein Kaasa, sister-in-law of Julie MacKenzie - home health care
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining - vision loss
- ✦ Blair Weaver - health issues
- ✦ Joyce Williams, sister of Danny Vining - Alzheimer's

### Condolences

- ✦ Our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of Jim Stillerman as they mourn his passing on February 25th. A funeral service was held on March 2nd, 2023.
- ✦ Our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of Julia Brubaker as they mourn her passing on February 22nd. A service will be scheduled at a later date.

### Military Service

- ✦ Billy Scarborough - Marines
- ✦ Koen Ardis - Navy

### Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Penny Blakeney - Oaks Assisted Living
- ✦ Jean Elder - Florida with her daughter
- ✦ Dot Fincher - Merryvale
- ✦ Jean Carol Mundy - Merryvale
- ✦ Travis Moss - Westbury, Conyers
- ✦ Gene Wallace - Merryvale
- ✦ Louise White - Merryvale

### Prayer Requests

All prayer requests should be sent to:  
[catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org)  
 Requests may be removed after three weeks if not updated.

**TODAY!**

## Youth Fundraising Lunch

The youth are holding a luncheon with soups and salads to raise money for their trip to the 2023 Montreat Middle School Conference in July.

**Sunday, March 5 at 12 pm  
 in the Fellowship Hall**

**Any donations are appreciated!**

**NO RESERVATIONS NECESSARY**

You are invited to  
**"Text to Give"**  
 your offering.  
 Text FPCCOV  
 followed by your  
 donation amount  
 to: 73256  
*Or point your  
 camera at the  
 QR code*



**Lead by Pastors Erin and Neeley**

**Open to the community**

WEEKLY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

**Mondays, from April 17 - May 22  
 at 6:00pm-7:30pm in the Parlor**

Cost for class: \$20  
 (includes personal workbook)  
 Register by April 3 by contacting Neeley  
[neeley@fpccov.org](mailto:neeley@fpccov.org)

**Have you been thinking about officially joining the church family of FPC?**

**On Sunday, March 12 immediately following worship we will meet in the Gathering Room to receive new members!**

This will be a time of celebration as you say YES to becoming an official member of FPC! Our church elders are excited to get to know you and greet you!

If you plan to join please let Neeley know!

**in the Gathering Room on  
 March 12. 12:00pm- 12:30pm**

### Sunday School

Sunday School classes are at 9:45am on Sunday mornings.

- Children's Class (PreK-4th)
- Youth Class (5th and up)
- Foundations Adult Class
- The Wired WORD Class

Interested in teaching?  
 Email [erin@fpccov.org](mailto:erin@fpccov.org)



## Life at FPC



# EASTER PAINT PARTY

at WILD Art  
THURSDAY, MARCH 23  
AT 6:00PM

RSVP to the FPC Office by March 13  
\$20 per person limited space

# SOUL FEAST



Feed your body and soul with FPC  
in the Fellowship Hall at 5:15pm.  
RSVP by Monday, March 6th at  
12:00pm to [catherine@fpccov.org](mailto:catherine@fpccov.org)  
or 770-786-7321

Join us in the Gathering Room following Soul Feast on March 8th  
at 6:00pm to learn about **Lament and Hope in the Psalms.**



PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN

PW Circles meet this  
Tuesday, March 6th to  
discuss Lesson 7:  
Sabbath and Self-Care.  
Elizabeth Ann: Zoom/  
Fellowship Hall at  
10:00am  
Martha: Contact a  
member for  
location. 10:30am

## MARCH 8

### ON THE MENU: BRISKET

Signup with Erin  
to bring your  
favorite side!  
[erin@fpccov.org](mailto:erin@fpccov.org)

### Sunday, March 5 Second Sunday in Lent

11:00am Worship—PW Birthday Offering  
12:00pm Youth Fundraising Lunch  
7:00pm Jammies and Jesus

### Monday, March 6

RSVP deadline for Soul Feast

6:00pm Lenten Book Study on Zoom

### Tuesday, March 7

10:00am Elizabeth Ann Circle  
10:30am Martha Circle  
12:00pm Lectio Divina

### Wednesday, March 8

10:00am Coffee and Conversation  
4:30pm Joyful Noise  
4:30pm Blessed Parenting Class  
5:00pm Hallelujah Kids  
5:15pm Soul Feast  
6:00pm Carillon Handbell Choir  
7:00pm Chancel Choir

### Saturday, March 11

10:00am Church Retreat

### Sunday, March 12 Third Sunday in Lent

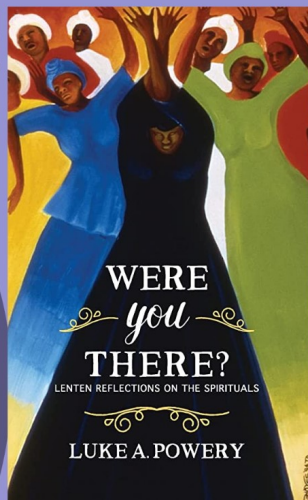
9:45am Sunday School  
11:00am Worship  
12:00pm New Member Affirmation  
7:00pm Jammies and Jesus

## WERE YOU THERE?

Join Neeley and Erin  
Mondays in March at  
6:00pm on Zoom to study  
*Were You There?:  
Lenten Reflections  
on the Spirituals*  
by Luke A. Powery.

Contact the office if you  
would like to order your  
book through the church.

For the class link visit  
[fpccov.org/zoom-links](http://fpccov.org/zoom-links)



## LENTEN BOOK STUDY

# BLESSING OF A SKINNED KNEE

BLESSED PARENTING CLASS  
Wednesdays, March 8 & 29

4:30-5:30pm in the Gathering Room  
Childcare provided.

Ask Erin if you want us to order your book.



2023

# Birthday Offering

OF PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

*So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time,  
if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity,  
let us work for the good of all,  
and especially for those of the family of faith.*

—Galatians 6:9-10



# 2023 Presbyterian Women *Birthday Offering* Recipients

## **Making Miracles Group Home**

### **Phase II Group Home**

[makingmiraclesgrouphome.org](http://makingmiraclesgrouphome.org)

Tallahassee, Florida

\$150,000

Making Miracles Group Home (MMGH) helps young mothers break the cycle of abusive relationships, addiction, incarceration and early motherhood—a repeating pattern that is difficult to break and overcome. Since its inception in 2010, MMGH has served over 100 women and their children by providing a one-year, live-in program designed to support young mothers and help them develop skills to live independently and care for their children.

Current eligibility criteria require residents to be pregnant and/or have a single child up to age three, but mothers who have a single child older than age three or multiple children often seek help. With the Birthday Offering grant, MMGH will purchase a second group home to serve an additional five families who are at risk of experiencing homelessness. With loving support and tools to establish stable, permanent housing, these families can look forward to a hopeful and successful future.

## **Berhane Yesus Elementary School**

### **Kindergarten School Construction**

[berhane-yesus.info](http://berhane-yesus.info)

Dembi Dollo, Ethiopia

\$99,400

Berhane Yesus Elementary School, located in the western highlands of Ethiopia, seeks to change lives by sharing the “Light of Jesus” and by providing the best possible educational experience for the children of Dembi Dollo. Berhane Yesus provides children with the possibility of a better future by preparing them for a rigorous high school education and a life of Christian service. The school is the first entry point to education for children of subsistence farmers, migrant workers and displaced groups of people.

This K-8th grade school has been serving the community and been a part of the Presbyterian Church in this rural community since 1921. A kindergarten was added to the school in 2012, but with no available space for class, the children met in the chapel. Over the years the number of kindergarten students has increased and now space of their own is not only needed but is required by the government to remain open. Western Wollega Bethel Synod provided land for the classroom and the Birthday Offering grant will provide all necessary funding for its construction.