



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
COVINGTON, GA



seeking:
Who sinned?

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT
MARCH 19, 2023

✠ Please stand in body or spirit



Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

Prelude on "Cantad al Senor"
Everybody Sing Praise to the Lord
Toccata on "A Mighty Fortress"

Brazilian Melody
Marilyn Arison
Austin C. Lovelace

Prelude

O, When Shall I See Jesus?

THE MORNING TRUMPET

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

✠ Call to Worship

Scripture is full of questions...

Where are you?

Am I my brother's keeper?

Whom shall I send?

Who do you say that I am?

Who sinned?

How many times shall I forgive?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Scripture is full of questions, so just like those in our scriptures,
may we bring our full curiosity and wonder into this space.

Let us ask and seek after our merciful God.

✠ Hymn of Praise 490

Wash, O God, Your Sons and Daughters BEACH SPRING

✠ Call to Confession

Yvonne Hill Davenport

✠ Community Confession

Who here has sinned?

We have sinned.

**We put our heads in the sand.
We ignore people in need.
We make false assumptions and fail to be kind.
We are in need of forgiveness.**

Good news! Our God is a merciful God. God does not punish, hold grudges, or keep score. When you suffer, God weeps. When you sin, God forgives. When you lose your way, God comes running.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

✦ **Hymn of Response 469**

Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound

AMAZING GRACE

***Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.***

✦ **Assurance of God's Love and Forgiveness**

Church, we are forgiven!

We are free to try again.

✦ **Passing of the Peace**



Proclaiming the Word

Wondering with God's Children

Larry Kennon

Anthem

Be Thou My Vision
Karen Bergmann, cello

Traditional Irish Hymn
Arranged by Dan Forrest

Prayer for God's Wisdom and Understanding

Old Testament Reading

Psalm 23

Pew Bible page 501

Message

Seeking: Who Sinned?

Rev. Erin Morgan



Responding to the Word

✠ **Hymn of Response 314**

Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness

CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT

✠ **Affirmation of Faith**

We believe in a merciful God,
a God who does not keep score,
a God who wants good for us.
We believe in a creative God,
a God who would heal with mud,
a God capable of seeing what we cannot.
We believe in a saving God,
a God who heals,
a God who greets our questions with patience,
a God who sends us out with hope in our step.
What wondrous love is this. 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

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring

Karen Bergmann, cello

Johann Sebastian Bach

Arranged by Daniel Kelley

✠Hymn of Response 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

OLD HUNDRETH

***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

Partita on TRURO

Maureen Howell



Worship Practices

Music printed in our bulletin and streamed online is covered by One License #A-728738 authorizing their use. Liturgy by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | Logo and branding by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | Art: *Insight* by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Serving Today

Tech Team | Dan Walden, Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley

Usher Chair | Billy Fortson

Acolyte | Amelia Evans

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.

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.

Sound System

Please know we recognize the need for improving our sound system. We have new microphones and we are evaluating new settings while we plan for better solutions. Currently, we encourage congregants who are hearing impaired to move closer to the front near the main speakers.

❖ *Worship Art Notes*

This week's worship guide cover is a silk painting with digital drawing and collage by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity titled *Insight*. It was inspired by John 9:8-41. Following is an excerpt from the artist's statement.

In seven verses, the gospel writer tells us that a man born blind is given sight. But after that, the narrator devotes thirty-three verses to the details of disagreement that swell after the healing takes place. I used to find this second part of the story tedious and exhausting. In a world with constant conflict, I'm tired of listening to endless bickering.

However, this second half of the story makes me realize that this encounter is hardly about physical healing or literal blindness. It's about how harmful theology can prevent us from seeing people—truly seeing them. It's about how our narrow imagination can harden into accusation and blame. It's about how we can be threatened by new ideas or shifts in someone's identity. It's about how our doctrine can lead to exile. Ultimately, it's a story about our resistance to change. Can this be a cautionary tale for us?

In this image, hands expressing denial and exclusion press in on the man. In the background, I wrote a barrage of questions I imagine emerging from the crowd: *Why did God heal you? What did you do to cause this? Who sinned?* Alongside those questions, I wove in contemporary statements I've heard spoken in situations when we think a tidy rationale will comfort us: *Everything happens for a reason. God only gives you as much as you can handle. Pray harder.*

I wonder what this story would look like had better questions been asked. What if his neighbors had instead asked the blind man, *"How do you feel?"* What if the man had asked the crowd, *"What are you afraid of?"* What if the Pharisees had asked one another, *"What if it's time to change?"*

Surrounded by remnants of narrow vision, the man has new insight. He looks beyond the words, beyond the crowd, beyond the accusations driving him out of town. Can we seek understanding without denigrating or objectifying humans in the process?

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity



1169 Clark Street SW, Covington, GA 30014 | 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 or call: 770-786-7321

First Presbyterian Church Staff

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

Officers

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

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Illness

- ✦ Dan Walden - knee surgery
- ✦ Jennifer Idrobo, friend of Jonny Atkins - bone marrow biopsy
- ✦ Brenda Buckelew, mother of Jennifer Buckelew
- ✦ Patsy Freeman, sister of Judy Davis - dementia
- ✦ 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

Military Service

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

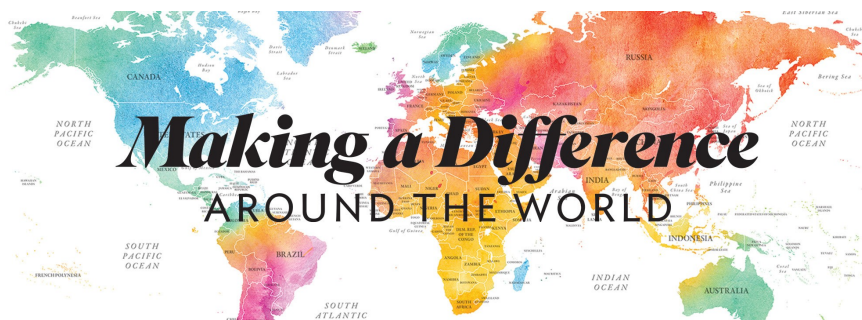
Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ 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
 Requests may be removed after three weeks if not updated.

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING



At FPC we will take up an offering for One Great Hour of Sharing on Easter Sunday. Envelopes for this special offering will be provided. If you give online, choose the fund "One Great Hour."



Visit pcusa.org/oghsmap for more information on One Great Hour of Sharing and their projects around the world.

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 to give online.

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



Led 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)

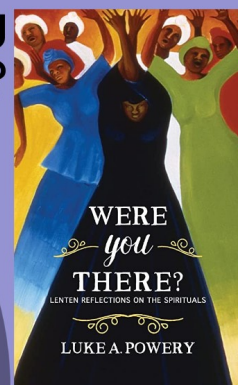
Register by April 3 by contacting Neeley
neeley@fpccov.org

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.

For the class link visit
fpccov.org/zoom-links



**LENTEN
 BOOK
 STUDY**

Life at FPC

Want to donate for a great
Easter Egg Hunt?

We need some regular sized empty plastic eggs and our
go to Easter candies: Starburst and Skittles!

EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, March 25th at 3:00pm
FPC Playground

Music for Lent & Noonday Prayer

St. Simon's Episcopal Church
in Conyers, GA



Featuring Alice Walker
and Becky Ramsey
on Wednesday,
March 22nd
at 12:00PM

Free and Open to All

Lunch to follow at 12:30pm

Saturday, March 25th at 8:00am
Town House Café
RSVP to Neeley by March 23rd

Men's Prayer Breakfast



BLESSING OF A SKINNED KNEE

BLESSED PARENTING CLASS

Twice a month on Wednesdays
4:30-5:30pm in the Gathering Room
Childcare provided.
March 29 | April 12 | April 19

Sunday, March 19 Fourth Sunday in Lent

11:00am Worship
12:00pm Child Protective Training
7:00pm Jammies and Jesus

Monday, March 20

Thriving Congregations
6:00pm Lenten Book Study on Zoom

Tuesday, March 21

Thriving Congregations
10:00am Sandwich Ministry

Wednesday, March 22

Thriving Congregations
10:00am Coffee and Conversation
10:00am Egg Stuffing Party
12:00pm Alice playing Lenten Music
4:30pm Joyful Noise
5:00pm Hallelujah Kids
6:00pm Carillon Handbell Choir
7:00pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, March 23

RSVP for Men's Prayer Breakfast
6:00pm Easter Paint Party

Saturday, March 25

8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast
9:00am Meals on Wheels Delivery
3:00pm Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, March 26 Fifth Sunday in Lent

9:45am Sunday School
11:00am Worship
12:00pm Session Meeting
7:00pm Jammies and Jesus



Witness and Easter Lilies

If you would like to make a donation this Easter to honor or memorialize a loved one, fill out this form and attach a check made out to FPC and place it in the offering plate or drop it off at the church office. Please put "lilies" or "Easter Witness" in the memo space on your check or envelope.

Donations can also be made via Text to Give, by texting
FPCCOV to: 73256

Please email catherine@fpccov.org with your "in memory" and "in honor" details if you use Text to Give.

The deadline is Sunday, April 2nd and a minimum donation of \$12 is suggested.

Donations we collect over the cost of the flowers will fund witness and outreach projects.

Thank you!

Given by _____

Please use the first and last names for any person being remembered.

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

please circle one cash check online