



Third Sunday in Lent
March 3, 2024

Wandering
Heart
"Praise the mount"



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
COVINGTON, GA

✠ *You are invited to stand in body or spirit*



Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

*Prelude on WONDROUS LOVE
There Is a Balm in Gilead
For the Beauty of the Earth*

Neil Harmon
Edwin T. Childs
Charles Callahan

Prelude

In Christ There Is No East or West

African American Spiritual

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

✠ **Call to Worship**

inspired by Psalm 19

If you ask the sky who God is,

the sky will tell you of God's reach.

If you ask the day who God is,

the sun will tell you of God's warmth.

If you ask the night who God is,

the moon will tell you of God's comfort.

"The heavens are telling the glory of God."

Are you listening?

We are listening!

We will sing of God's glory.

Let us worship the Holy God.

✠ **Hymn of Praise 35**

Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty

LOBE DEN HERREN

✠ **Call to Confession**

In our scripture for today, Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?"

Peter said, "You are the Messiah."

Have you ever wondered if his voice faltered when he answered?
Did he respond loudly and with confidence,
or with a tentative whisper?

We'll never know. The text doesn't provide those details.

But we can trust that, no matter how we speak to God,
when we speak, God is listening.

So friends, join me in the prayer of confession.

Whether you whisper these words or speak them with conviction,
may you trust that our gracious and merciful God is listening with love.

✠Silent Personal Confession

✠Community Confession

Holy God,

Some days, we are quick to declare your goodness.

Like Peter, we see you in our midst and we are confident in our faith.

Other days, we are distracted and uncertain, desperate for answers.

Forgive us for losing sight of you.

Some days we are quick to trust your blessings—

trusting that we are called, that we can make a difference.

Other days, our praise falls silent and doubt creeps in.

Forgive us for losing sight of ourselves.

We know that fear and doubt are part of the journey of faith.

But for the days when we are far from you and far from ourselves,
we ask for your tender grace.

Pull us closer toward you.

Remind us of the mountaintop moments of our faith. Amen.

✠Confessional Hymn 227

Jesus, Remember Me

REMEMBER ME

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

✠ Assurance of God's Love and Forgiveness

Friends,
Whether you speak to God
in a whisper or with clear conviction,
with questions or with answers,
with hope in your heart or with doubt in your throat—
God will always listen with love and mercy.
So rest in this good news:
regardless of how loudly you live your faith—you belong to God.
You are loved. You are claimed. You are forgiven.
Speak that good news with confidence.

Church, we are forgiven!
We are free to try again.

✠ Response to God's Grace 215 *What Wondrous Love Is This* WONDROUS LOVE **Verses 1, 4**

✠ Passing of the Peace

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you!



Proclaiming the Word

Wondering with God's Children

Anthem

Fount of Every Blessing
Chancel Choir

Arr. Lloyd Larson

Centering Prayer

with handbells

Scripture Reading

Matthew 16:13-20

Pew Bible page 18

Reader's Theater

Doug Bolton, Scott Fullerton, Debi Selin

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Message

Wandering Heart: Praise the Mount

Rev. Neeley Rentz Lane



Responding to the Word

✦ Hymn of Response 630

Fairest Lord Jesus

CRUSADERS' HYMN

✦ Affirmation of Faith

Jesus asked the disciples, "But what about you? Who do you say that I am?"

Church, what do you say?

**Jesus is a hand reaching out in the storm,
the voice of truth spoken over us,
and love without walls.**

**Jesus is justice for the weary,
healing for the hurt,
and welcome for the stranger.**

**Jesus is teacher, Messiah, and friend—
with me on the mountain
and beside me in the valley.**

**Jesus is a star in the night,
and the love that knows my name.**

Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?"

Like Peter, we say, "Jesus, you are the Messiah, son of the Living God."

Installation of Officer

Kenny Compton

Offering Our Gifts: An Invitation to Generosity

You are invited to "Text to Give" your offering! Text* FPCCOV followed by your donation amount to: 73256 and follow the link to give online, or scan the QR Code to visit the giving page! Select "2024 Pledge" if you made a stewardship pledge. Select "Non-Pledge" for a general plate offering.



Offertory

Spirit Song
Mark Fiddie

Composed by John Wimber

✦ Response 634

God is So Good

GOD IS SO GOOD

Poetry and Prayer

Praise the Mount

by Sarah Are Speed

You are invited to lift up a one word prayer of gratitude for this day!



Being the Church in the World

✦ Sending Hymn 625

How Great Thou Art

HOW GREAT THOU ART

✦ Charge and Benediction

Beloved wanderers, as we leave this place,

may we carry our curious heart on our sleeves.

May we look for God in every face.

May we find the courage to get out of the boat,

to run to the tomb, and to speak of our faith.

And when the world falls apart,

may we hear God's voice deep within,

saying, "Take heart, it is I, be not afraid."

We are called. We are blessed.

In both our ups and our downs,

we always belong to God.

Go now in peace. Go trusting that good news. Amen.

✦ Postlude

Toccata

Theodore DuBois



Worship Practices

Worship Art—This Lenten season we are displaying art in the Narthex by the children and youth of FPC and children of Southern Heartland Art under the instruction of Elise Hammond.

Our worship guide cover today is a digital painting by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman titled “Who Do You Say That I Am?” The following is an excerpt from the artist’s statement:

I don’t know if this was a moment of clarity for Peter, if he was regurgitating the answer he thought Jesus wanted to hear, or if he was trying to convince himself that dropping everything and following this man was worth it, but I imagine this was a breakthrough for Peter.

I wanted to capture this as a moment of seeing and being seen. Jesus sees him as more than Simon, a fisherman and son of Jonah, and renames him Peter, the blessed foundation through which his ministry would take root and continue to grow. Jesus sees Peter through the eyes of God.

Peter sees Jesus as more than a teacher and companion. He sees through the veil of confusion concerning Jesus’ identity. He doesn’t see him as the reincarnation of a former prophet, or another contemporary baptizer pointing the way. He names Jesus as the “anointed one,” the one his people have so desperately longed for. Peter proclaims Jesus as Messiah and Son of the living God.

Sound System—If you'd like to learn about connecting your Bluetooth hearing aids to our Sanctuary sound system we invite you to talk to Dan Walden on the Tech Team.

Children in Worship—We have a “Children in Worship” guiding brochure available in the Narthex! This brochure is intended to serve as an aid to parents and others in our congregation in welcoming our children to worship. Children are always welcome to wiggle and giggle in the pews at FPC! During worship children are invited to join us at the front of the Sanctuary for a time of Wondering with God’s Children. Then children planning to go to the nursery will be escorted downstairs by Pastors Neeley or Erin. If you need help finding the nursery, please ask an usher to point the way.

Friendship Registers—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.

Use—One License #A-728728 authorizes the use of music printed in our worship guide and streamed online. *Messages and data rates may apply when using Text to Give. Message frequency varies. Text HELP to 73256 for help. Text STOP to 73256 to cancel | Wandering Heart Graphic Design by Lauren Wright Pittman | Art: “Who Do You Say That I Am?” by Lauren Wright Pittman | Liturgy by Sarah Speed | Poetry: “Praise the Mount” by Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Serving Today

Tech Team | Dan Walden, Kenny Compton,
Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley, Kraig Howell
Acolytes | Kora Howell
Usher Chair | Curtis Watson



fpccov.org 770.786.7321
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First Presbyterian Church Staff

Neeley Rentz Lane	Senior Pastor	Nursery Staff
Erin Morgan	Associate Pastor	
Mark Fiddie	Dir. of Music & Worship Arts	Hattie Bellinger
Peni Kehoe	Finance Administrator	Sierra BlackShear
Catherine Laseter	Dir. of Communications & Operations	Catrina Crowe
Alice Walker	CAGO, AAGO Organist	Jahniyah Greene
		Laina Lalane

Officers

Reaching Out	
Luke Usry	Witness (2026)
Curtis Watson	Witness (2024)
Engaging	
Charles Ardis	Faith Formation (2025)
Pat Harper	Worship (2024)
Nichole Howell	Worship (2025)
Mary Catherine Whisnant	Faith Formation (2024)
Belonging	
Doug Bolton	Welcome (2025)
Pam Stillerman	Welcome, Worship (2026)
Billy Fortson	Finance, Personnel (2024)
Connecting (Deacons)	
Janet Carmichael	Pastoral Care (2026)
Tom Crews	Pastoral Care (2025)
Dana Hall	Faith & Fellowship (2025)
Darcel Tabb	Faith & Fellowship (2024)
More	
Jodi Atkins	Strategic Planning (2026)
Kenny Compton	Facilities (2026)
John McCarthy	Clerk of Session
Danny Vining	Personnel (2026)

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.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Illness and Strife

- ✦ Jack Wheeler - hospital
- ✦ Ken Fullerton, father of Scott Fullerton - health issues
- ✦ Susan Hammond, aunt of Erin Morgan - cancer
- ✦ Christy Blanchford & daughter Samantha, friends of the congregation - mourning loss of husband, Sam Johnson
- ✦ Brian, brother of Adriane Ivey
- ✦ Jeanelle Brown - cousin for Randy Layton
- ✦ Armondo Castro, friend of Mark Fogarty
- ✦ Vonzella Lee, friend of Barbara Martin - gastric cancer
- ✦ Joel Kitchens
- ✦ Sheree Evans, friend of Cathy & Denny Dobbs - treatment for cancer
- ✦ Emmie Alexander, friend of the congregation
- ✦ Debra Hales, daughter of Faye & Joel Kitchens - upcoming heart surgery
- ✦ Larry Cox, brother-in-law of Randy Layton - cancer
- ✦ Terry Smith, friend of Denny Dobbs - pneumonia with respiratory rehab

- ✦ Memama, great-grandma of Paisley Lane
- ✦ Bernice Bailey
- ✦ Brenda Buckelew, mother of Jennifer Buckelew
- ✦ Katherine Carey, mother of Erin Stillerman
- ✦ Jana Carter, aunt of Luke Usry - cancer
- ✦ Bob Darby, friend of Jeff MacKenzie - leg amputated, kidney problems
- ✦ Patsy Freeman, sister of Judy Davis
- ✦ Randy Jones, nephew of Faye Kitchens - lung cancer
- ✦ Joyce, sister of Faye Kitchens
- ✦ Karen Lein Kaasa, sister-in-law of Julie MacKenzie - home health care
- ✦ Rosalia Meadors, friend of Tom Crews - three year old with bone marrow failure
- ✦ Grant Moss & Chris Mattice, family of Louly Fowler Hay - cancer & care
- ✦ Meredith Nash, friend of Barbara Martin - four year old with stage IV kidney cancer
- ✦ Donald Vining, brother of Danny Vining - vision loss
- ✦ Carolyn Watson

Condolences

Our prayers are with the following people and their families as they mourn the passing of a loved one:

- ✦ Cathy Dobbs—mourning her sister Eileen Wells
- ✦ Jo Anna Fish—mourning her mother Elizabeth Baarda
- ✦ Danny Vining—mourning his sister Joyce Williams

Military Service

- ✦ Koen Ardis - Navy
- ✦ Billy Scarborough - Marines
- ✦ Clint Williams - Army
- ✦ Daryl Williams - Army

Independent and Assisted Living

- ✦ Penny Blakeney - Oaks Assisted Living
- ✦ Homer Borders - Presbyterian Village
- ✦ Jean Elder - Florida with her daughter
- ✦ Dot Fincher - Madison
- ✦ Louly Hay - Presbyterian Village Athens
- ✦ Travis Moss - Westbury, Conyers
- ✦ Louise White - Merryvale

All **prayer requests** should be sent to: catherine@fpccov.org
Requests may be removed after three weeks if not updated.



Maundy Thursday
March 28
Streams of mercy
6:00pm
Sanctuary with communion
foot & hand washing will be offered in the Narthex before and after worship



Easter Sunday
March 31
And I hope
11:00am
Sanctuary
Sunrise service
6:45am in the Memorial Garden

We welcome everyone into our church family!

We'd LOVE to have you become an official MEMBER!

Sunday, March 10th
after worship
Talk to Neeley if you are interested!

Becoming a member is a valuable way to say

"I have chosen FPC Covington as my home to trust in our Lord, Jesus Christ!"



NEELEY'S NOOK LEADERSHIP BOOK CLUB

MONTHLY TUESDAYS
6:00PM-7:00PM ON ZOOM

VISIT [FPCCOV.ORG](https://fpccov.org)/ZOOM-LINKS TO JOIN!

PURSuing GOD'S WILL TOGETHER: A DISCERNMENT PRACTICE FOR LEADERSHIP
BY RUTH HALEY BARTON

MAR. 12TH

Sunday School

Sunday School classes are held at 9:45am.
Children's Class (PreK-4th)
Youth Class (5th+)
Foundations Adult Class
The Wired WORD

SOUL FEAST

MARCH 6



**ON THE MENU:
BRADLEY'S BBQ**

Feed your body and soul in the Fellowship Hall at 5:15pm.

Adults: \$5 RSVP by Monday, March 4th to

Kids: \$2 catherine@fpccov.org or

Family max: \$20 770-786-7321

Following Soul Feast we test our Bible knowledge with a game of **TRIVIA!**

Sunday, March 3

Third Sunday in Lent

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship—Praise the Mount

Monday, March 4

RSVP for Soul Feast

12:00pm— Blood Drive

5:00pm

5:30pm "Have a Beautiful, Terrible Lent" Study

Tuesday, March 5

10:00am Elizabeth Ann Circle

10:30am Martha Circle

12:00pm Lectio Divina—Pastor's Bible Study

4:00pm Thriving Congregations Team

Wednesday, March 6

10:00am Coffee Club

3:30pm Staff Meeting

5:00pm Children's Choir

5:15pm Soul Feast & Trivia

6:00pm Kids' Stained Glass Art Class

6:00pm Youth Hang

6:00pm Handbell Choir

6:00pm Maundy Thursday Practice

7:00pm Chancel Choir

Saturday, March 9

10:00am— Let Love Lead—FPC Spring Day Retreat

3:00pm

Sunday, March 10

Fourth Sunday in Lent

9:45am Sunday School

11:00am Worship—I'm Fixed Upon It

12:00pm New Member Welcome

12:15pm Worship Team

7:00pm Jammies & Jesus



**American
Red Cross**
at FPC Covington

BLOOD DRIVE

MONDAY, MARCH 4TH

12:00PM-5:00PM

In the FPC Fellowship Hall

**DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

To register visit
RedCrossBlood.org
Walk-ins welcome!



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

**Tuesday
March 5th**

*Elizabeth Ann
Circle*

10:00am on Zoom
and in the
Fellowship Hall

Martha Circle

10:30am hosted
by rotating
members

*Have a
Beautiful
Terrible
Lent!*

***Mondays in Lent
at 5:30pm in the Parlor***

*Feb. 26, March 4,
March 11, March 18*

*Enter through
the office door.*

*Led by Erin and Neeley
Childcare available.*

What do you believe?

Discerning and Creating a Statement of Faith

Take a sheet of paper and divide it into **five or ten-year increments** across the top of the page. *(We've left the back of this sheet empty for you to use if you'd like!)*

Then **highlight formative faith moments within those age periods**, jotting down significant events that occurred. An event could be hearing a sermon, reading a book or poem, attending a conference as a youth or adult, an encounter with another person, a conversation—you name it!

Then recount **the ways you have seen God** at work in your life. Recount also those events in which **your faith was tested**, when life was turbulent.

As you work on this, keep the following questions in mind?

- ◇ How did a given event draw you closer to *(or keep you further away from)* God?
 - ◇ How was your spiritual life strengthened *(or weakened)* at that moment?
- ◇ What were your earliest experiences of faith?
 - ◇ When was the first time you remember believing in God?
- ◇ When did you decide to become active in a church and why?
- ◇ Who has been the most influential person in your spiritual growth?
 - ◇ How has that person influenced you?
- ◇ What speaks to you about communion and baptism?
- ◇ What things make believing in God difficult for you?
- ◇ How do you experience God most? *Through worship, nature, friends, family, Bible study, people who live as examples of faith, prayer, meditation and contemplation, the arts (music, poetry, architecture, etc.), service to others, nature, or something else?*
- ◇ What is your understanding of God?
- ◇ Who is Jesus?
- ◇ How have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Explain your faith in one sentence. We invite you to write your statement of faith and keep it where you can be reminded of and reflect on it during times of great hope or strife. Put it in your journal, hang it on your fridge, place it in your Bible, share it with your loved ones *(Neeley loves to read faith statements if you'd like a captive reader)*, or **whatever the Spirit calls you to do.**



Easter Lilies

If you would like to help decorate the Sanctuary with lilies on Easter Sunday, make a donation to honor or memorialize a loved one. To do so, 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 flowers" in the memo space on your check or envelope.

Donations made online should be given under the dropdown fund option "flowers-all."
Please email catherine@fpccov.org with your dedications if you give online.

The deadline is Sunday, March 24, 2024 and a minimum donation of \$12 is suggested.

Donations we collect over the cost of the flowers will help fund our FPC Youth's journey to Montreat Middle School Conference this summer.

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