



March 17, 2024
Fifth Sunday in Lent

**Wandering
Heart**
"Teach me"



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**
COVINGTON, GA

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



Gathering As God's Beloved People

Gathering Music

Prelude

O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee

Composed by Gordon Young

Chiming of the Hour

Welcome and Announcements

✦ **Call to Worship**

Why are you here?

**I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind, with a fire burning in my bones.**

I see it! You're in the right place!

This is God's house. The door is open to you.

Why are *you* here?

I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind, with a fire burning in my bones.

We see that in you! You're in the right place.

This is God's house. The door is open to you.

Let us worship God.

Let us learn from the Spirit. Amen!

✦ **Hymn of Praise 408**

There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit

SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT

✦ **Call to Confession**

Friends, when you study Peter's story in scripture it's almost impossible to ignore how much he loved to ask questions. He asks Jesus: "What does the parable mean?" "Where are you going?" "How many times should we forgive?"

Like a tenacious toddler, Peter was full of questions, because Peter was eager to learn. I wish I was more like that. I still have so much to learn.

So friends, let's be like Peter. Let's return to Christ with the humility of a student as we pray together the prayer of confession. Let this be a moment of learning. Let us pray, first silently then communally:

✠ Silent Personal Confession

✠ Community Confession

Holy God,

We long to be lifelong learners. We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind. Instead, we often live as if we know best.

We forget that the disciples called you “Rabbi, Teacher.”

Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious. Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best. Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers.

Like Peter—who was brave enough to ask, “How many times should we forgive?”—make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters.

With hope and humility we pray, 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

Family of faith,

When Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive?”

Jesus responded with abundance. That abundance exists for you as well.

No matter what you have done or left undone, no matter what lessons you have learned or are still learning, God’s abundant grace exists for you. God’s love will never run out.

So hear and rest in this good news: You are forgiven. You are loved. You are invited to serve. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Church, we are forgiven!

We are free to try again.

Let us join our voices and sing...

✠ 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

Baptism of Parker Leonard Firkus

Elder Donna Weesner

Baptismal Response

Jesus Loves Me!

JESUS LOVES ME

Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so.

Little ones to him belong. They are weak, but he is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!

Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Anthem

My Tribute
Mark Fiddie

André Crouch

Centering Prayer

with handbells

Scripture Reading

Matthew 18:15-22

Pew Bible page 20

Reader's Theater

Holden Evans, Harper Holder

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Message

Wandering Heart: Teach Me to Forgive

Rev. Erin Morgan



Responding to the Word

✦ **Hymn of Response 444**

Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive

DETROIT

✦ **Affirmation of Faith**

We believe that questions are a building block of faith.

"How many times should I forgive?"

"Jesus, where are you going?"

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes.

"Where does it hurt?"

"What do you need?"

"How can I help?"

We believe that God is a teacher.

"Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

"Here I am."

"Send me."

We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage,

with all our heart,

with all our mind,

with all our strength.

We believe. Help our unbelief.

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: 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

Herzlich tut mich erfreuen

Johannes Brahms

✠ 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.

Poetry and Prayer

Teach Me

by Rev. Sarah Speed

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



Being the Church in the World

✠ Sending Hymn 316

Where Charity and Love Prevail

TWENTY-FOURTH

✠ 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

Kyria, Gott Vater in Ewigkeit

J.S. Bach



Worship Practices

Baptism—Baptism is one of two sacraments practiced by Presbyterians; Communion is the other. The act of baptism is deceptively simple—but in a handful of water, there is a deep well of mystery and meaning.

In baptism, we are called to a new way of life as Christ's disciples, sharing the good news of the gospel with all the world. Presbyterians describe baptism as a sign and seal of the covenant of grace made by God through Jesus and extended to us. In baptism, God claims us as beloved children and members of Christ's body, the church, washing us clean from sin as we renounce the power of evil and seek the will and way of God.

All four Gospels report the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34). When we are baptized with water in the name of the Trinity, we share in Christ's own baptism.

Presbyterians celebrate baptism as a communal act of public worship! Today we, as the body of Christ, will say "YES" to walking alongside Parker Firkus as we seek to nurture and love him as his family of faith!

We invite you to speak to Pastors Neeley or Erin if you are interested in baptism for yourself or your child.

Worship Art—This Lenten season we are displaying art in the Narthex and Sanctuary 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 Lauren Wright Pittman titled "Seventy-seven Times". The following is an excerpt from the artist's statement:

In this mandala, I wanted to follow a person through the process of reproof, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration as Jesus describes in Matthew 18. When I was drawing the figures from the center out, it began to look like a dance. Is this the picture that grace paints? Forgiveness cannot happen in isolation and certainly neither can reconciliation nor restoration. The movement toward wholeness is the movement toward one another.

Perhaps craving more tangibility and practicality, Peter asks how many times he should forgive someone who has wronged him, and Jesus says, "Not seven times, but I tell you, seventy-seven times". This piece contains seventy-seven people and flowers to represent the abundance of grace that Jesus calls us into. The gold represents the divine presence of empathy, compassion, grace, and love throughout this dance from isolation toward community, from brokenness toward wholeness, and from guilt and shame toward freedom.

Accessibility—In an effort to make FPC a welcoming place for ALL of God's people we have removed a portion of one of our pews in the Sanctuary to make our space more accessible to wheelchair and walker users! We've also recently updated our sound system to have Bluetooth capabilities. 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: “Seventy-seven Times” by Lauren Wright Pittman | Liturgy by Sarah Speed | Poetry: “Teach Me” by Sarah Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Serving Today

Guest Organist | We welcome Mr. Phillip Skerrett to worship this morning as a guest organist and we thank him for sharing his musical gifts with us at FPC.

Tech Team | Dan Walden, Kenny Compton, Jonny Atkins, Brad Hawley, Kraig Howell
Acolytes | Amelia Evans, Holden Evans **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	Jahniah 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.

Sunday School

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

FPC Youth

Youth Hang-Outing

March 20th @ 6:00pm
We will have a Youth Hang at
Lily & Sparrow
Coffee + Mercantile

email questions to
erin@fpecov.org

O.A.S.I.S.

Lunch Bunch

FPC

March
Lunch

11:30AM on March 20th at Tava's Diner

6154 Washington St, Covington, GA 30014

RSVP to FPC by March 19th

Older Adults Sharing In Service
O.A.S.I.S. at FPC

Town House Café at 8:00am
Saturday, March 23rd

Men's Prayer Breakfast



Sunday, March 17

Fifth Sunday in Lent

9:45am Sunday School
11:00am Worship—Teach Me

Monday, March 18

4:00pm Finance Team Meeting
5:30pm "Have a Beautiful, Terrible Lent" Study

Tuesday, March 19

12:00pm Lectio Divina—Pastor's Bible Study
5:30pm Session Meeting

Wednesday, March 20

10:00am Coffee Club
11:45am Lunch Bunch
3:30pm Staff Meeting
5:00pm Children's Choir
6:00pm Youth Hang-Outing
6:00pm Handbell Choir
7:00pm Chancel Choir

Thursday, March 21

RSVP for Men's Prayer Breakfast
10:00am Pastors & Ambassador Choir at Merryvale

Saturday, March 23

8:00am Men's Prayer Breakfast

Sunday, March 24

Palm-Passion Sunday

Easter lily deadline

9:45am Sunday School
11:00am Worship with the Children's Palm Parade

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 30th
10:00am FPC Playground

Want to donate for a great
Easter Egg Hunt? Bring
candy filled eggs to the
church by March 26th!

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.

Easter Sunday

Traditional service

11:00am Sanctuary &
on Facebook Live

March 31

Sunrise service

6:45am | FPC Memorial Garden
Please bring your own folding or lawn
chairs to the Sunrise Garden service

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Illness and Strife

- ✦ Tammy Quick, friend of Donna Weesner - recovering from ankle surgery
- ✦ Ken Fullerton, father of Scott Fullerton & Pawpaw to Audrey - health issues
- ✦ Nancy, friend of Mark & Jennifer Fogarty - stage IV pancreatic cancer
- ✦ 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
- ✦ 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

Condolences

- ✦ Our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of Jack Wheeler as they mourn his passing on March 3rd, 2024. A funeral was held on Friday, March 8th.

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

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
- ✦ 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.

Dedicate an Easter lily to a loved one and help decorate the Sanctuary for Easter Sunday!



The names that donations are made in memory or in honor of will be listed in the worship guide on Easter Sunday so the deadline to submit names is NEXT SUNDAY, March 24th. Find the form at fpccov.org/lent or in the Narthex!

Palm - Passion Sunday

March 24 | 11:00am
Sanctuary

Featuring the
Children's Palm Parade

Maundy Thursday

March 28 | 6:00pm
Sanctuary

Experience communion
around The Lord's Table

Good Friday

March 29 | 12:00pm
at Grace United
Methodist Church
Sermon by
Neeley Rentz Lane



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

On Easter Sunday, we will collect for
One Great Hour of Sharing,
a PCUSA special offering.

Join Presbyterians worldwide in sharing
God's love without neighbors-in-need
around the world by providing relief from
natural disasters, food for the hungry, and
support for the poor and oppressed.

Foot & Hand Washing

Thursday, March 28 | 5:30pm
Maundy Thursday | Narthex
A special Maundy Thursday offering
from the pastors.

FLOWERING of the CROSS

Bring fresh flowers to fill the Easter cross
starting Saturday, March 30th
on the front lawn of the church