



FIRST UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

695 E. Calvin Street, Fayetteville, AR 72703 • (479) 442-4411 • www.fupcfay.org

September 8, 2024

11:00 a.m.

GATHERING

(Please use this time to prepare reflectively for worship.)

RINGING OF THE BELL

Bo Morton and Lindley Ramsey

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

PRELUDE

Discovery at Night
Music by Ludovico Einaudi

Isaac Thomas, piano

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: We come into the presence of the Holy God,

People: Who may not be grasped, but may be gazed upon;

Leader: Who is not easily understood,

People: But is full of understanding;

Leader: Who does not always come at our beck and call,

People: But who is always near.

Leader: We gather as God's children

People: In confident assurance that God is here.

Unison: Let us join to sing praises to the living and loving God!!

*HYMN 267

Come, Christians, to Sing
Words by Christian H. Bateman; Spanish Folk Melody

Glory to God

Come, Christians, join to sing: Alleluia! Amen!

Loud praise to Christ our king: Alleluia! Amen!

Let all with heart and voice, before his throne rejoice;

Praise is his gracious choice: Alleluia! Amen!

Come, lift your hearts on high: Alleluia! Amen!

Let praises fill the sky: Alleluia! Amen!

He is our guide and friend; to us he'll condescend;

His love shall never end: Alleluia! Amen!

Praise yet our Christ again: Alleluia! Amen!

Life shall not end the strain: Alleluia! Amen!

On heaven's blissful shore his goodness we'll adore,

Singing forevermore: Alleluia! Amen!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(seated, unison)*

Lisa Talbert

All embracing God, we confess the judgments we make and the walls we build that are far from Your will, and far from the example of Jesus Christ. We like the comfort of being with people like ourselves. We are reluctant to reach out and include those that are not in our inner circles. We make judgments based on appearances and stereotypes and fail to see people as You see them. We tend to "write people off" when they fail to meet our standards and expectations. But You, O God, have not written us off. Have mercy on us and strengthen us to be the people You have called us to be. Help us to break through the boundaries we have placed around us and seize the opportunities for compassion and service in Your kingdom on earth.....

(silent confession) Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends, believe the good news of the gospel! **In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.**

*RESPONSE 437

You Are the Lord, Giver of Mercy
Traditional Liturgical text; Music from the Westminster Press

Glory to God

**You are the Lord, giver of mercy.
You are the Christ, giver of mercy.
You are the Lord, giver of mercy.**

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you! **And also, with you.**

Hendrix Oxner

CHILDREN'S SONG (use screens or bulletin) *Strong Gentle Children*
Words and Music by Dan Damon

**Strong, gentle children, God made you beautiful,
gave you the wisdom and power you need;
speak in the stillness all you are longing for,
live out your calling to love and to lead.**

TIME FOR CHILDREN

Kristi Button

LITANY FOR THE NEW YEAR

Leader: God of all learning, we pray for our schools- We pray for First School, for elementary, middle, junior high and high schools. We pray for the University of Arkansas and all places of higher learning. We pray for the year ahead and the education of our children, from the smallest children, who are new to school, to the young adults seeking learning that will pave the path for their next steps.

People: We pray that each learner will be given the best opportunity to reach their full potential.

Leader: We pray for all who teach and learn in their homes.

People: Give parents and guardians the patience and guidance to share their wisdom with their children.

Leader: We pray for all who lead and direct our schools.

People: May they have the wisdom and resources to put the needs of the children and young people in their care at the top of the list.

Leader: We pray for all our teachers and all the time they invest in our children. May they see how their dedication forever impacts generations.

People: May their energy and joy be contagious and may have everything they need to stay grounded in their concern and love for their students.

Leader: We pray for all who support and cheer on our children in supporting roles. We pray for the counselors, the cleaning staff, the nurses, librarians and those in the school office.

People: May they know that they are a very important and needed part of the team of support for our young people.

Leader: We pray for all of us as learners, O God. We know that we never stop learning about your love and faithfulness and the world around us.

People: May each learner be safe, nurtured and supported as they continue to learn and grow.

Unison: Bless this school year, God. We thank you for gifting us with curiosity and learning. Give all students, teachers, and caregivers a clear sense of your love. May they feel your presence throughout this school year. Amen

ANTHEM

Sing to the Lord a Marvelous Song
Words adapted from Psalm 96 and Joel 2:13 ; Music by Eugene Butler

Chancel Choir

Sing to the Lord a marvelous song: a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous, marvelous song!
Sing to the Lord a marvelous song: a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous, marvelous song!
Sing to the Lord a marvelous song: a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous, marvelous song!
Bring to the Lord a joyful song: a joyful, joyful, joyful, joyful new song.
Bring to the Lord a joyful song: a joyful, joyful, joyful, joyful new song.

Rend your heart and not your garments. Turn unto the Lord your God.
He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.
Sing to the Lord a marvelous song: a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous, marvelous song!
Sing to the Lord a marvelous song: a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous, marvelous song!
O sing, sing, sing, sing, sing, sing a marvelous, marvelous, marvelous, marvelous new song!

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Stewart Smith

SCRIPTURE READING

John 3:1-10

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ²He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." ³Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶What is born of flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

SERMON

Some things are better caught, than taught

Rev. Stewart Smith

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (From "A Brief Statement of Faith")

Rev. Stewart Smith

We trust in God the Holy Spirit everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church. 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!"

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Stewart Smith

OFFERTORY

Change My Heart, O God
Music by Eddie Espinosa; Music by Mark Hayes

Isaac Thomas, piano

*RESPONSE 606

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow (Doxology)
Words by Thomas Ken; Music from the Genevan Psalter, 1551

Glory to God

**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 DEDICATION

Stewart Smith

We bring these gifts, O God to You and we bring our lives as well. Consecrate us to faithful living with our families at home and our colleagues at work and at school, and in all our daily living. Bless these gifts we pray. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Amanda McDonald

God, in your grace. **You hear our prayer.**

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.

SENDING

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Stewart Smith

***HYMN 743**

O God, You Are My God (Step by Step)
Words and Music by David Strasser

Glory to God

**O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
O God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you.
I will seek you in the morning, and I will learn to walk in your ways
And step by step you'll lead me, and I will follow you all of my days.**

***BENEDICTION**

Stewart Smith

POSTLUDE

He is Exalted
Music by Twila Paris; Arranged by Wayne Oquin

Isaac Thomas, piano

*(Our worship continues through the Postlude.
If you need to leave, please do so quietly. Otherwise, please remain seated.)*

Participants

Greeters – David Rogers and Chris Bell

Interim Senior Pastor – Rev. Stewart Smith

Minister of Music/Commissioned Ruling Elder- Isaac Thomas

Choral Interns - Ceci Allen, Cole Jackson, Jeffrey Kerst, Isabelle Pennick, Verna Labitad, and Will Trotter-Wright

Audio/Visual Team - Christopher Verdery, Connor Button, and Drew Parker

Director of Christian Education - Kristi Button

Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries - Amanda McDonald

Membership Coordinator - Amy McCann

Childcare Coordinator - Lee Pendley