

May 18, 2025  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter



# *First Presbyterian Church Aiken, South Carolina*

A community actively seeking ways to continue:

*... writing new chapters in an old story ...*



*A Stephen Ministry Congregation.*

First Presbyterian Church of Aiken extends a simple and unqualified welcome, in Christ's name, to all who seek to join us. We affirm that there can be no exclusiveness within the body of Christ, and therefore we invite all children of God into our worship, study, mission, and fellowship as we together seek ways to live in grace and respond with gratitude. We would be happy to answer any questions about our mission, ministry, and membership.

We invite you to please join us again in worship.

### Call To Worship

Gathering Music: The people are called to worship God through the Gift of Music.

Congregational: The people are called to worship God. Words from scripture are spoken or sung to proclaim who God is and what God has done. We are thus reminded that our worship centers in God and not in ourselves. "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." (Psalm 124:8).

### Prayer Of Confession

is intended to encourage people to lay down any burdens of guilt, regret, sense of failure, or inadequacy, and to reaffirm their trust in Christ's unfailing love and forgiveness.

### Assurance Of Pardon

in the waters of baptism, God claimed you and named you a child of God. In the waters of baptism, we receive God's forgiveness, healing, and love.

**Gloria Patri** giving glory to the Good Father in thanksgiving for grace and forgiveness.

✠ Please rise in body or spirit.

## GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

### PRELUDE

### STRIKING OF THE BELLS

### PROCESSION OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WELCOME

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

### GATHERING MUSIC

HYMN TO JOY  
Carillon Ringers

### CONGREGATIONAL CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise God in the heights!

All: **Praise the Lord, all the angels; praise God, all the host!**

One: Praise the Lord, sun and moon; praise God, all you shining stars!

All: **Praise the Lord, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!**

One: Let them praise the name of the Lord, for God commanded and they were created.

All: **The Lord established them forever and ever; God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**

### ✠ HYMN 248

CHRIST IS RISEN! SHOUT HOSANNA!

### ✠ INVITATION TO CONFESSION OF SIN

*(Silent Confession)*

**Loving God, you have invited us to abide in you in every season.  
However, we allow distractions to drag us away from your presence.  
Forgive us when we seek shelter in our own comfort and control.  
Teach us again to trust you, O God, our Protector and Provider.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### ✠ ASSURANCE OF PARDON

### ✠ GLORY TO GOD 591

HALLE, HALLE, HALLELUJAH!

**Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

### ✠ PASSING OF THE PEACE - WELCOMING OUR NEIGHBORS

### TIME WITH THE YOUNGER CHURCH

Tamra Erde

### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES SLIDE SHOW PRESENTATION

## LITURGY OF CELEBRATION FOR OUR GRADUATES

One: God of truth and knowledge, by your wisdom we are taught the way and the truth. Bless our graduates as they now finish this course of study.

**All: We thank you for those who taught and worked beside them, and all who supported them along the way.**

One: Walk with the graduates as they leave and move forward in life. Take away their anxiety and confusion of purpose.

**All: Strengthen their many talents and skills, instill in them a confidence in the future you plan, where energies may be gathered up and used for the good of all people.**

One: For the graduates, this truly is a day of new beginnings, a time to remember and move on, and a time to believe what love is bringing.

**All: May they always know that Christ is alive and goes before us, to show and share what love can do. This is a day of new beginnings, our God is making all things new.**

## PRAYER FOR GRADUATES 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.**

## PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD

### ✠HYMN 203

JESU, JESU, FILL US WITH YOUR LOVE

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

#### FIRST LESSON

ACTS 11:1-18

#### SECOND LESSON

PSALM 148

#### THIRD LESSON

JOHN 13:31-35

#### SERMON

"We'll always be with you"

Rev. Dr. Christopher Erde

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### ✠AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*APOSTLES' CREED*

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES, GIFTS, AND OFFERINGS

*Please sign and pass the friendship register on your pew during this time.*

#### OFFERTORY MUSIC

MAKE US INSTRUMENTS OF YOUR PEACE  
Sanctuary Choir

### Passing of the Peace

worshippers may share signs of Christ's peace welcoming each other i.e. "The peace of Christ be with you" response "and also with you".

### Prayer For

**Illumination** is a prayer seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to lead us to a deeper understanding of the reading, hearing, and proclaiming of God's word.

### Sermon Or

**Meditation** when the Bible has been read, its message is proclaimed in a sermon or other form of exposition of God's Word. The God who speaks in scripture speaks to us now. The God who acted in biblical history acts today. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is presented in the sermon, offering grace and calling for obedience.

### Affirmation of Faith

the congregation speaks as one, affirming essential tenets of the reformed Christian faith.

### The Offering is a

significant part of our response to the Gospel. As we present the financial gifts that represent our commitment to the work of the church. We resolve to maintain this community of worship, fellowship, and service.

**The Doxology** is sung, ascribing glory to God in three persons - praising Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Charge And Benediction** are delivered from the pulpit, font, or table. The charge is a challenge to take the lessons learned in worship, and apply them to our lives. The benediction concludes the worship service, and confers the Triune God's blessing upon the congregation.

**Congregational Blessing** we join hands and voices as we acknowledge God's blessing which binds us together in ministry.

# ✦ **DOXOLOGY 232 v. 4**

4. Sing we to our God a - bove,  
Al - le - lu - ia!  
praise e - ter - nal as God's love.  
Al - le - lu - ia!  
Praise our God ye heaven - ly host.  
Al - le - lu - ia!  
Fa - ther Son and Ho - ly Ghost.  
Al - le - lu - ia!

## ✦ **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

## ✦ **HYMN 300**

WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT

## **BEARING AND FOLLOWING GOD'S WORD INTO THE WORLD**

### **INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP**

### **CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

### **CONGREGATIONAL BLESSING 240 ALLELUIA REFRAIN**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
Give thanks to the ris - en Lord.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!  
Give praise to his name.

### **POSTLUDE**

JUDAS MACCABEUS

## WORSHIP NOTES

Lay Reader: Melissa Patterson

Head Usher: Steve Salzman

Large print hymnals, bulletins, and wireless assisted hearing receivers are available from any usher.

Childcare is available during Sunday school and worship for our youngest members (infant through kindergarten). Join us in Room 6.

Worship Bags are available in the Narthex for children through 5th grade.

Offering Cards have been added to the pews for our online givers. Please use these during the offering as the plates are passed.



The rose on the chancel is in celebration of Colt Lawton Carter, born May 15, 2025 to Bradley and Caroline Carter, the proud grandparents are John and Suzi Kilgo.

The Sanctuary flowers are dedicated to the 2025 High School Graduates by FPCA.

## CHURCH AT WORK

**Save The Date** - Join us for Vacation Bible School, June 2-6 8:45 AM to noon as we trek on an Alaskan adventure to find our way in a world gone wild! Registration forms available on church website and church office for rising 4k-5th grade.

We will collect donations for Thornwell Home for Children throughout the week of VBS. If you so choose, please bring in new items as follows:

- Individually wrapped snacks
- Craft supplies
- Linens
- Outdoor toys
- Sports equipment
- Pool toys
- Books age appropriate for children and youth
- Hygiene products: body wash, shampoo, deodorant, feminine products, lotion

(Monetary donations can be made as well, cash or checks made out to FPCA with Thornwell in memo)

**Art Wall** - Today is the final Sunday we display the artwork of Dave Mulhbaier and Marjorie Milne which include works with acrylics and oil, paintings of still life and landscapes. Be sure to stop by the Parlor if you haven't had a chance to yet.

**ACTS Donations** - Please leave your contributions for ACTS in the baskets in the narthex wings or at the Henderson Lane office entrance. May: Pasta Sauce

**Keep our Stephen Minister Trainees in Your Prayers** - Oh Lord, as our Stephen Minister training continues, we lift up the Stephen Leaders as they teach the classes and our Stephen Minister trainees as they learn new concepts and apply their gifts and skills to share your love and care with others. Draw them closer to you so that they may stand firm in your love as they reach out to others. By the power of your Spirit. Amen.

**Church Picnic Sunday** - May 25, 2025  
Meet on the West Lawn after the 10:30 AM worship service. Please bring a side dish to share. Burgers, hot dogs, meatless varieties, potato chips, drinks, and ice cream will be provided. The Fellowship Hall will have tables and chairs for those who prefer to eat indoors.



## CHURCH CALENDAR

### Sunday, May 18, 2025

9:15 AM - 9:30 AM Coffee  
9:15 AM - 11:30 AM Nursery  
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Sunday School  
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Diaconate Meeting  
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM Youth end of Year Party  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Indoor Soccer  
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Men's Basketball

### Monday, May 19, 2025

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM Preschool  
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Tai-Chi  
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Stephen Leader  
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Aiken Athletic

### Tuesday, May 20, 2025

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM Preschool  
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Prayer Shawl  
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Stephen Ministry  
6:45 PM - 9:00 PM Summer Futsal  
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Boy Scouts Troop  
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM BSA Girls Troop

### Wednesday, May 21, 2025

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM Preschool  
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Preschool Spring Program  
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Tai-Chi  
10:15 AM - 11:15 AM PS 5K Graduation Brunch  
12:15 PM - 1:15 PM PS Teacher Lunch  
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM Handbells  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Session  
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Aiken Athletic  
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir

### Thursday, May 22, 2025

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM Stephen Minister  
6:45 PM - 8:00 PM Aiken Athletic  
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM South Boundary

### Friday, May 23, 2025

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Tai-Chi  
6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Summer Futsal

### Sunday, May 25, 2025

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM No Youth or Children  
Sunday School  
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Focus Class Sunday School  
10:15 AM - 11:45 AM Nursery  
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship  
10:45 AM - 11:30 AM JAM  
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM Art Wall Reception  
11:30 AM - 2:00 PM Memorial Day Picnic  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Indoor Soccer  
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Men's Basketball

## CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF

**Church Officers** the congregation of the PCUSA operate using a model of shared leadership and responsibility. Ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament work along side men and women called to serve in the ordained officers of Elders (the Session) and Deacon (the Diaconate). In the PCUSA, the gifts of leadership and ministry are affirmed and celebrated in all people and the service of all is appreciated.

### First Presbyterian Church

224 Barnwell Ave. NW Aiken, SC 29801 (803) 648-2662

E-mail: [aikenpresbyterian@aikenpresbyterian.org](mailto:aikenpresbyterian@aikenpresbyterian.org)

Website: [www.aikenpresbyterian.org](http://www.aikenpresbyterian.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/aikenpres>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/aikenpres/>

Office hours Monday- Thursday 9:00 AM- 3:00 PM

Friday 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

### The Church Organized For Work

Pastor/Head of Staff	Rev. Dr. Christopher Erde
Parish Associate	Rev. Dr. Beth Yarborough
Director of Operations and Media	Joanna Hamilton
Director of Christian Education	Tamra Erde
Director of Music	Daniel Hamilton
Director of Finance	Jaimie Dandridge
Office Manager	Debby Dugan
Organist/Accompanist	Kathy Clark
Preschool Director	Mary Maddrey
Finance	Suzanne McLeod

### The Session

Moderator: Rev. Dr. Christopher Erde

Clerk of Session: Clark McCants

#### Class of 2025

Katie Brown  
Trey Brown  
Suzanne McLeod  
Connor Patterson  
Melissa Patterson  
Graham Reynolds  
Wayne Rickman

#### Class of 2026

Richard Abney  
Christa Budney  
Wallace Fraser  
Martha Funk  
Sharon Rodgers  
Bill Tucker

#### Class of 2027

Paul Crook  
John Gordon  
Christine Kupcha  
Eric Muhlbaier  
Dee Verley-Matthews  
Tom Thome

### The Deacons

#### Class of 2025

Barbara Bower  
Anne Elkins  
Mary Hunter

#### Class of 2026

Mike Anderson  
Gail Ebner  
Brock McLeod

#### Class of 2027

Adam Garcia  
Sue Todd  
Lisa Woods

### The Trustees

#### Class of 2025

David Keisler

#### Class of 2026

Bob Buchanan

#### Class of 2027

Vic Sowers

### Stephen Ministry

Rob Gray, Mary Maddrey, Lucy Sutter, and Vic Sowers

If you are wanting a Stephen Minister assigned please contact:

Gayle Gordon (803) 507-7725, Karalee Kludzuweit (803) 335-8632, or

Julie Taylor (803) 979-9919

### Presbyterian Women

Moderator:

Sandy Evans

Gathering Contacts:

Amy Gray and Margot Salzman

