

March 23, 2025  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent



# *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.

# GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

## 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.

## PRELUDE

## STRIKING OF THE BELLS

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WELCOME

One: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

## GATHERING MUSIC

I THINK

## CONGREGATIONAL CALL TO WORSHIP

One: O God, you are our God, we seek you, our soul thirsts for you;

All: **My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

One: So we have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

All: **Because your steadfast love is better than life, our lips will praise you.**

One: So we will bless you as long as we live;

All: **We lift up our hands and call on your name.**

## ✠ HYMN 415

COME, YE SINNERS, POOR AND NEEDY

## ✠ INVITATION TO CONFESSION OF SIN

*(Silent Confession)*

**Merciful God, we confess that we have been quick to judge others and slow to make changes in our own lives. We confess that we have focused on others' shortcomings instead reforming our own. Turn us, O Lord, from these ways that lead to perishing. Lead us, O Lord, in your ways that lead to abundant life. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## ASSURANCE OF PARDON

## ✠ RESPONSE 695

CHANGE MY HEART, O GOD

**Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.  
Change my heart,  
O God; may I be like you.**

**You are the Potter; I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me;  
this is what I pray.**

**Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.  
Change my heart,  
O God; may I be like you.**

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

**TIME WITH THE YOUNGER CHURCH**

Tamra Erde

4K-5th please exit with Mrs. Tamra for the JAM! Worship Experience

**PROCLAIMING GOD'S WORD**

**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.**

✠ **HYMN 438**

ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME

**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

**FIRST READING** PSALM 63:1-8

**SECOND READING** ISAIAH 55:1-9

**THIRD READING** LUKE 13:1-9

**SERMON** "LIVING WATERS OF MERCY" 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** WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS  
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 607**

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow;  
 praise Christ, all peo - ple here be low;  
 praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more;  
 praise Tri - une God whom we a - dore A - men ,

♠ **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

♠ **HYMN 816** IF THOU BUT TRUST IN GOD TO GUIDE THEE

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

**INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP**

**CHARGE AND BENEDICTION**

**CONGREGATIONAL BLESSING 306**

Blest be the tie that binds  
 Our hearts in Chris - tian love  
 The fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds  
 is like to that a - bove

**POSTLUDE**

**CHRIST BE OUR LIGHT**

## WORSHIP NOTES

Lay Reader: Doug Engebretson

Head Ushers: John Shafer



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 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

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

## CHURCH AT WORK

**Mustard Seed Garden** - The MSG will have several items available for purchase today after worship. Be sure to stop by their table to help this mission grow!

**Youth Activities** - All youth will meet this Sunday, from 5:30-7:00PM. Come join us for fun, food, & fellowship in Room 2.

**Youth Candy Collection** - The FPCA Youth are asking for donations of candy to 'stuff' eggs for the Easter Egg Hunt. If you would like to donate candy, please bring small, individually wrapped pieces to the church by April 9.

**Lenten Short studies** - Although Holy Week is just a short seven days, many events occur during this week leading up to the crucifixion. Join us for a discussion of these events Thursdays, at 10:30 AM through April 10 in the Fellowship Hall. Beth Yarborough will be leading this study using the book *Entering the Passion of Jesus* by Amy-Jill Levine as a guide. Books will be available for purchase.

**Art Wall** - It is a privilege to feature the artwork of Jean Schwalbert. The display includes paintings of landscapes, portraits of family, and people in other countries. Jean's work will be on display until the end of March.

**2025 Montreat Women's Connection** - August 8-10. Hard to believe we are already planning for August, but registration is open for the Montreat Women's Connection! The keynote speaker this year is Amy-Jill Levine, Rabbi, scholar, professor of New Testament studies, and author of numerous publications. If you would like more information, please sign up by calling the church office or let Tamra know you are interested in coming. Rates for this year are \$275 (covers lodging, conference fees, and breakfast/lunch)

**Children's Sunday School** - There will be no Sunday School for children and youth March 30th and April 6th. We will return on Palm Sunday, April 13th.

**March Music Madness** - The nominations are in! As college basketball gets ready for upsets in the NCAA tournament, we are getting ready to find out our congregation's favorite hymns! Please vote each week as we march to the Final Four. Will your favorite hymn make it to the end and be crowned FPCA's favorite hymn? Voting will take place online. The link will be found in the Weekly Update email, QR Code on the back of the bulletin, or the church website. As a note, only nominations from our hymnal, GLORY TO GOD were included. Thanks for your nominations! Happy voting!



**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 world gone wild! Registration forms available on church website, Narthex, and church office.

## CHURCH CALENDAR

### **Sunday, March 23, 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  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Indoor Soccer  
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Youth Group  
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Men's Basketball

### **Monday, March 24, 2025**

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM Preschool  
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Covenant Ploegerl  
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Book Group

### **Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM Preschool  
9:00 AM - 9:15 AM Preschool Chapel  
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM BSA Pack 110  
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM Boy Scouts Troop  
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM BSA Girls Troop

### **Wednesday, March 26, 2025**

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM Preschool  
8:45 AM - 9:15 AM Morning Prayer  
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Staff Meeting  
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM Handbells  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM PW Celestial Circle  
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Choir

### **Thursday, March 27, 2025**

7:30 AM - 3:00 PM Preschool  
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Guide to Holy Week  
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Small Group  
5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM Stephen Minister Training

### **Friday, March 28, 2025**

7:30 AM - 03:00 PM Preschool

### **Sunday, March 30, 2025**

9:15 AM - 9:30 AM Coffee  
9:15 AM - 11:30 AM Nursery  
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Adult Sunday School only  
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Worship  
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Indoor Soccer  
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Men's Basketball

### **Monday, March 31, 2025**

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Pickleball  
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Stephen Leader Meeting

## CHURCH OFFICERS AND STAFF

### 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	Cassie Buchanan
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  
Tom Thome  
Dee Verley-Matthews

### 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

**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.

