



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**18TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**September 26, 2021**

**11 o'clock**

**VISION**

*Nourished by God's Word and Sacraments,*

**All: Connecting lives to Christ**

**PRELUDE**

“How Firm a Foundation”

**INTROIT**

“Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love”

(Hymn #203)

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (Based on Psalm 124)

Brad Young

*Blessed be the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth!*

**Praise be to God, the giver of many gifts!**

*Our help is from God, the One who calls us here.*

**We come with songs of praise and with prayers too deep for words.**

*Blessed be the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth!*

**Blessed be the Lord!**

**PRAYER OF PRAISE**

**Holy God, we come into your presence from many places. We come with songs of joy and shouts of gratitude; we come carrying heavy burdens and the sighs of suffering. As you welcome us into your house, lift our burdens and receive our praise. Bless us with your grace and mercy. Bind us together, that we may be at peace with one another and be strengthened to go forth in service to the world. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.**

\*HYMN #463

“How Firm a Foundation”

**CONFESSION & ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE**

*God has offered us salvation despite us being unworthy of it. In response to that amazing gift of grace, let us confess the ways we have fallen short and embrace the salvation offered to us in Jesus Christ.*

**Merciful God, you have called us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We confess that our witness is often bland and dim. Forgive us when we fail to be an influence for good, when we condone hatred and violence, and when we do what is wrong in your sight. Help us to flavor the earth with righteousness and to reflect the light of your love in a dark world.**

*Silent Prayer*

*\*Please stand as you are able.*

*Have mercy on us, O God. Amen.*

KYRIE

(Hymn #576)

*Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy on us.*

*Water is poured into the font.*

*God is faithful in word and gracious in every deed.*

Rev. Wes Pitts

*God upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. Because of Christ, we can know that we are forgiven and we can be at peace. **Thanks be to God!***

\*GLORIA PATRI

(Hymn #581)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Esther 7:1-6, 9-10; 9:20-22 (p. 621)

Mark 9:38-50 (p. 1229)

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God!**

ANTHEM

“Treasures in Heaven”

SERMON

“Teamwork”

Rev. Wes Pitts

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Invitation to silent prayer, a meditation with music, then intercessions are offered;*

*... We join our voices in the prayer Christ taught us to pray:*

**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 #819

“Be Still, My Soul”

(verses 1, 2)

\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The 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 sitteth 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.**

GIFTS OF THE PEOPLE

OFFERTORY

“Give to the Winds Thy Fears”

\*DOXOLOGY

(Hymn #606)

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION OF OFFERINGS

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S TABLE

INVITATION TO THE LORD’S TABLE

GREAT THANKSGIVING

*The Lord be with you. And also with you.*

*Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord.*

*Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

*...Therefore, we join our voices in singing:*

(Hymn #552)

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.*

*...for great is the mystery of faith:*

(Hymn #560)

*Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.*

...

PREPARING THE BREAD AND CUP

*...The gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God!*

COMMUNION

*When instructed, come forward to receive both bread and juice in an individual serving. Hold it until you get back to your pew. When all have been served you will be invited to then eat the bread and drink the cup as one body. Place the cups in the pew holder. If you would prefer the elements be brought to you, we’ll be happy to accommodate you.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

\*RESPONSE AFTER COMMUNION

*Let us sing of our faith:*

(Hymn #405)

*Praise God for this holy ground, place and people, sight and sound.  
Hal-le-lu-jah! Hal-le-lu-jah! Hal-le-lu-jah! God’s goodness is eternal.*

\*HYMN #435

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

\*BENEDICTION

\*CLOSING RESPONSE

“We Are Called”

(Hymn #, verse )

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Pastor ..... Rev. Wes Pitts  
**E-mail:** pastor@fpcreidsville.org     **Phone:** 678-409-5060

Pastor Emeritus .....Rev. Dr. Doug McLeroy  
Music Dir./Organist ..... Patricia Harden     Secretary .....Dawne Young  
Treasurers..... Michael Brisson & Jim Murray     Congregational Nurse .... Stokes Ann Hunt  
Child Development Director .....Tamela Dillard

**Office Hours:** 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.     **Office Phone & Email:** 336-349-3474  
Monday – Friday     office@fpcreidsville.org

**www.fpcreidsville.org**



## Welcome

Welcome to First Presbyterian Church, we're so glad you're here! We believe we are made stronger and better by all who gather with us in worship. Our vision for ministry is simple - that we are nurtured by God's Word and sacraments to connect lives to Christ. We strive to live into that vision through our worship, study, fellowship, and mission activities. If you have any questions about our church, please reach out to one of our elders (their names and phone numbers are printed in the bulletin) or our pastor. If you are in need of any kind of assistance, you may speak to the elder on call or the pastor. If you are looking for a church to call home, consider the fellowship and ministry we share together at First Presbyterian! Any of our elders or the pastor can give you more information. We'd love to find out more about you - please fill out a visitor card and place it in the offering plate. We promise not to pester you, but if you'd like further contact, please note that on the card. Once again, welcome!

## Today's Announcements – September 26, 2021

**Elder on Call:** Becky Norman is available for congregational needs this week.

**Spiritual Formation** will meet in the fellowship hall at 9:45am. We will be studying the gospel of John. Duke Theology professor Dr. Mickey Efird teaches this class using a DVD format. Next session: John 17-20.

In order to get Jesus in trouble, a Pharisee lawyer asked Jesus a question. Is Jesus' answer to that question relevant to our mission as disciples in current times? As we finish our Spiritual Formation class study of John's gospel in the next few weeks, we will begin a study of Jesus' answer using the book "Reckless Love" by author Tom Berlin. (Books are available for purchase in the church office for \$10.00.) Please join us for an interesting discussion on this vital topic.

**Soup Kitchen:** Today our team is serving lunch to our neighbors in need through the Soup Kitchen. We give thanks for them and this ministry!

**Pennies For Hunger** will be received October 3.

**Peace & Global Witness Offering** will be received October 3.

The offering supports a variety of peacemaking efforts:

25 percent is retained by the congregation, 25 percent is used by Synods and Presbyteries, and 50 percent is allocated by the General Assembly ministries.

**All in worship are required to wear a mask.** We are sorry for the inconvenience, but since there have been many breakthrough COVID cases with the Delta variant, and we still have young children unable to be vaccinated in the congregation, the Session is asking that we all wear a mask to help protect those most vulnerable in our midst. We will have extra masks on hand for any who might need one.

**This Week at First Presbyterian**

Sunday, September 26	Spiritual Formation (Fellowship Hall) .....9:45am
	Worship (Sanctuary)..... 11:00am
	Alcoholics Anonymous (AA Room) ..... 8:00pm
Monday, September 27	Soup Kitchen Bible Study ..... 6:00pm
	Alcoholics Anonymous (AA Room) ..... 8:00pm
Wednesday, September 29	Adult Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)..... 7:00pm
Thursday, September 30	Soup Kitchen Bible Study ..... 6:00pm
	Alcoholics Anonymous (AA Room) ..... 8:00pm
Saturday, October 2	Alcoholics Anonymous (AA Room) ..... 8:00pm
Sunday, October 3	Spiritual Formation (Fellowship Hall) .....9:45am
	Worship (Sanctuary)..... 11:00am
	Alcoholics Anonymous (AA Room) ..... 8:00pm

**SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

4 – Dustin Crutchfield	8 – Jenny Farver	24 – Sue McMichael
6 – Charlie Adams	11 – Mary Ellen Elliott	27 – Becky Cooley
6 – Ruby Mae Crabtree	17 – Pat Smith	29 – Skip Balsley
8 – Lucy Byers	18 – Ron Elliott	

**SERVING IN SEPTEMBER**

**Communion Servers**

Becky Cooley  
Becky Norman  
Ken Norman

**Ushers**

Tom Callicutt  
Becky Cooley  
Becky Norman  
Ken Norman

**Greeters**

Jane Harrill  
Phil & Martha Neal

**LOCAL MISSION OFFERINGS**

Pennies for Hunger:	SEPTEMBER	Year-To-Date
	\$141.36	\$970.49

*The Pennies for Hunger offering, collected on the first Sunday of each month, supports feeding ministries throughout central North Carolina, with 50% of our collection staying in Rockingham County and supporting the Reidsville Outreach Center. The other 50% is distributed by Salem Presbytery through grants to non-profit organizations that work to alleviate hunger in their communities.*

Habitat for Humanity:	SEPTEMBER	Year-To-Date
	\$75.00	\$739.06

*The Habitat offering, collected on the third Sunday of each month, supports the Greater Reidsville chapter of Habitat for Humanity in its mission to build and improve homes in the Reidsville area so that all may have access to safe and affordable housing.*

## SESSION

Moderator: Rev. Wes Pitts

### **Class of 2021**

Tilda Balsley  
*Grounds*

Tom Callicutt  
*Montreat*

Phil Neal  
*Fellowship*

Becky Norman  
*Worship*

Thomas Thompson  
*Finance*

### **Class of 2022**

Ed Conroy  
*Clerk*

Scott Greene  
*Personnel*

Jane Harrill  
*Caregivers*

Jim Murray  
*Christian Education*

### **Class of 2023**

Billy Coleman  
*Mission*

Emma Crabtree  
*Newcomers/Communication*

Rick McKinney  
*Property*

**Upcoming Session Meeting:** Thursday, October 14, 2021

## CAREGIVERS TEAM

Jane Harrill – Chair

Class of 2021: Susie Cole, Jenny Farver, Denice Whitley

Class of 2022: Susan McLeod, Margo Lindsey, Lynn Wilkins

Class of 2023: Anne Covington, Mary Fagan, Meredith Harris

## PRAYER CONCERNS

***Please be in prayer for the following:***

**Church members:** Lucy Byers, Anne Dell Hardingham, Wes Harris, Betty Jones, Faye Pierce, Pat Smith, Claire Smothers

**Family and friends of the congregation:** Steve Banks, Waddell Bullock, Jody Crabtree, Jeff Crisp, Chad Davis, Talea Dillard, Don Ella Drew, Gaye Evans, Treva Garrison, Carole Hendrix Grady, Lori Johnson, Suzanne Johnson, Isaac Lyall, Scott & Lori Martin, Jillian McInnis, Joe Mountjoy, Sandy & Joe Nicastro, Geoff Peoples, Joe Pitts, Jimmy Rayburn, Debbie Robbins, Si Rothrock, Michael Serra, Bill Thompson, Harold Vaden, Hailey Vega, Bradley Young, Sr.

**Military service:** Seth Brooks, Don Pierce

***If you have submitted names for our prayer list, and know of their recovery, please contact us with the good news!***



## Week of September 26, 2021

### Matthew 23

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and his disciples, <sup>2</sup> "The legal experts and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup> Therefore, you must take care to do everything they say. But don't do what they do. <sup>4</sup> For they tie together heavy packs that are impossible to carry. They put them on the shoulders of others, but are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. <sup>5</sup> Everything they do, they do to be noticed by others. They make extra-wide prayer bands for their arms and long tassels for their clothes. <sup>6</sup> They love to sit in places of honor at banquets and in the synagogues. <sup>7</sup> They love to be greeted with honor in the markets and to be addressed as 'Rabbi.' <sup>8</sup> But you shouldn't be called Rabbi, because you have one teacher, and all of you are brothers and sisters. <sup>9</sup> Don't call anybody on earth your father, because you have one Father, who is heavenly. <sup>10</sup> Don't be called teacher, because Christ is your one teacher. <sup>11</sup> But the one who is greatest among you will be your servant. <sup>12</sup> All who lift themselves up will be brought low. But all who make themselves low will be lifted up. <sup>13</sup> How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You shut people out of the kingdom of heaven. You don't enter yourselves, and you won't allow those who want to enter to do so. <sup>14</sup> How terrible it will be for you, legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You travel over sea and land to make one convert. But when they've been converted, they become twice the child of hell you are. <sup>15</sup> How terrible it will be for you blind guides who say, 'If people swear by the temple, it's nothing. But if people swear by the gold in the temple, they are obligated to do what they swore.' <sup>16</sup> You foolish and blind people! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold holy? <sup>17</sup> You say, 'If people swear by the altar, it's nothing. But if they swear by the gift on the altar, they are obligated to do what they swore.' <sup>18</sup> You blind people! Which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy? <sup>19</sup> Therefore, those who swear by the altar swear by it and by everything that's on it. <sup>20</sup> Those who swear by the temple swear by it and by everything that's part of it. <sup>21</sup> Those who swear by heaven swear by God's throne and by the one who sits on it. <sup>22</sup> How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You give to God a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, but you forget about the more important matters of the Law: justice, peace, and faith. You ought to give a tenth but without forgetting about those more important matters. <sup>23</sup> You blind guides! You filter out an ant but swallow a camel. <sup>24</sup> How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and plate, but inside they are full of violence and pleasure seeking. <sup>25</sup> Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup so that the outside of the cup will be clean too. <sup>26</sup> How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs. They look beautiful on the outside. But inside they are full of dead bones and all kinds of filth. <sup>27</sup> In the same way you look righteous to people. But inside you are full of pretense and rebellion. <sup>28</sup> How terrible it will be for you legal experts and Pharisees! Hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. <sup>29</sup> You say, 'If we had lived in our ancestors' days, we wouldn't have joined them in killing the prophets.' <sup>30</sup> You testify against yourselves that you are children of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>31</sup> Go ahead, complete what your ancestors did. <sup>32</sup> You snakes! You children of snakes! How will you be able to escape the judgment of hell? <sup>33</sup> Therefore, look, I'm sending you prophets, wise people, and legal experts. Some of them you will kill and crucify. And some you will beat in your synagogues and chase from city to city. <sup>34</sup> Therefore, upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been poured out on the earth, from the blood of that righteous man Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. <sup>35</sup> I assure you that all these things will come upon this generation. <sup>36</sup> Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you. How often I wanted to gather your people together, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you didn't want that. <sup>37</sup> Look, your house is left to you deserted. <sup>38</sup> I tell you, you won't see me until you say, Blessings on the one who comes in the Lord's name."

---

### A Line in the Sand

In his most forceful attack against the systems of oppression and malice found in the institutional Judaism of his day, Jesus drew a very forceful line in the sand against acts he found to be incompatible with God's vision. The root of this was hypocrisy - the Pharisees and legal experts proclaimed one thing and did another. Hypocrisy in organized religion continues to be a sticking point for many, but it's not the faith that's the problem, it's the people. Human beings are, innately, hypocritical - we all profess certain things and then fail to live up to those ideals. This isn't a problem so far as we're able to recognize our shortcomings and strive to correct our behaviors or moderate our ideals. It is a problem, however, when some build their lives around telling people how to think or act and then have zero interest in living it themselves or believe

they are above the rules they set out for others. This is especially true for anyone in positions of power, from parents to pastors to politicians. The Pharisees and legal experts met Jesus' ire because they were the interpreters of the Law for first century Jews and they used that power to demand actions that lifted them up instead of actions that were faithful to God. One of the ways Jesus said this was most evident was in their rigidity with the law of tenth part offerings, an offering that went to the temple and helped make them rich, while ignoring the laws of justice, peace, and faith, which are far more important to God's law. The gift of sacrifice was meant to serve the purpose of justice, not undermine it.

Jesus, in the last few days of his ministry before his death, was finished playing nice. He knew his death was imminent, and that it would be at the hands of the so-called "faithful," so he exposed them for what they were while also providing instruction for those who followed. In this angry speech, Jesus gave three specific instructions: 1. Don't let your faith be ostentatious; 2. Don't follow figure heads - follow Jesus; and 3. Don't become one of those figure heads. For many, modern Christianity has become cults of personality. Mega churches are filled with people who hang onto every word of their superstar pastor, and those superstar pastors face inevitable downfalls when it comes out that they, too, are human. Their followers feel disappointed in the pastor, and the pastor is shamed. Humility is the only solution. We should remember that we are all human, all make mistakes, and all can fall victim to hypocrisy. But we put our faith in one that is not. That is why Christ is our only teacher, why God is our only father, and why those who serve others are the ones who live their faith best.

---

*In our desire to follow you, O God, we have turned to those with ego and great ambition for answers instead of the teacher you gave us - our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Help us to turn to Jesus' instruction first, living out his rule of love and mercy, that we may discover what faith really means. Amen.*